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Animal Others and Biopolitical Futures: A Zoocritical Analysis of Atwood's MaddAddam Trilogy

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Abstract

This paper examines Margaret Atwood's MaddAddam trilogy through the lens of zoocriticism, a branch of ecocriticism that scrutinizes the representation of animals in literature and the complex human-animal-environment relationships. Zoocriticism not only highlights the often-overlooked roles of animals in literary texts but also critiques anthropocentric narratives. The study employs a framework of practical zoocriticism to analyse how Atwood's dystopian vision, marked by ecological collapse and unchecked genetic engineering, shapes societal views on animals. The analysis focuses on how Atwood uses animal imagery, motifs, and symbols, particularly the genetically engineered species of animals, to critique the exploitation of living beings for profit and to illustrate the intertwined fates of humanity and the natural world. It explores the objectification of female protagonists like Toby and Ren, linking their exploitation to the commodification of animals and broader patriarchal structures, thereby drawing parallels between ecofeminist and zoocritical concerns. Furthermore, the paper investigates the symbolic significance of bees and birds, highlighting nature's resilience and the shifting power dynamics in a post-apocalyptic landscape.

Keywords: zoocriticism, ecocriticism, Margaret Atwood, MaddAddam trilogy

Introduction

Zoocriticism, a branch of ecocriticism, examines the representation of animals in literature, emphasising the intricate relationships between humans, animals, and the environment. This interdisciplinary approach not only highlights the often-overlooked roles of animals in literary texts but also critiques the anthropocentric narratives that dominate mainstream literature. This perspective is informed by ecocriticism, expanding its scope to consider how non-human animals are depicted and the ethical, environmental, and sociocultural dynamics that inform these narratives.

Zoocriticism integrates various fields such as ecology, literature, and philosophy, fostering a comprehensive understanding of human-animal relationships (Sarmento & Moura, 2024). The framework of practical zoocriticism is employed to analyse how literature shapes societal views on animals (Allmark-Kent, 2023). Among the living elements of nature are animals, insects, and countless invisible microbes. Broadly speaking, nature is often divided into humans and non-humans—a classification that remains problematic due to its anthropocentric basis. Ecocritical analysis of a text should, therefore, also engage

with the non-human world. Authors often incorporate animal imagery, motifs, and symbols as literary devices.

The foundations of zoocriticism are deeply intertwined with ecocriticism, as both fields explore the intricate connections between human agency, non-human entities, and the environment. Ecocriticism studies the environmental implications of human actions, while zoocriticism extends this inquiry by placing a specific focus on non-human animals and their roles within these discourses. Ryan articulates that ecocriticism encompasses a broad range of critical theories including zoocriticism, which allows for deeper engagement with the ethical concerns surrounding human-animal relationships (Ryan, 2020). This intersection emphasizes the necessity of recognizing animals not merely as passive subjects but as active participants in the narrative fabric of literature.

An ecocritical analysis of a text should examine how non-human elements are represented and explore the relationships formed between the characters and these non-human entities. In the introduction to *Postcolonial Ecocriticism, Literature, Animal, Environment*, Graham Huggan and Helen Tiffin (2015) write:

Meanwhile, whereas ecocriticism, at least in part, has developed out of literary studies in response to changes in perception of the extra-human and its place in literature, animal studies have developed independently through disciplines such as philosophy, zoology and religion. Not surprisingly, zoocriticism – as we might term its practice in literary studies – is concerned not just with animal representation but also with animal rights, and, this different genesis and trajectory from that of ecocriticism necessarily informs its intersection with the postcolonial. (17-18)

Huggan and Tiffin explore zoocritical perspectives within postcolonial literature, examining the relationships between humans, animals, and the environment. They analyse narratives of development and themes of entitlement and belonging, contributing to the discourse on zoocriticism in literature. Zoocriticism sets itself apart through its ethical stance and its dedication to viewing the animal community as fundamentally important, rather than simply treating it as a thematic element in literature (Majumder, 2017).

Human exploitation of animals spans various activities such as sourcing food, clothing, sport, trophies, and ornamental use. This excessive and often unnecessary exploitation of wildlife is a recurring concern highlighted in many ecocritical interpretations. Huggan and Tiffin (2015) say, “contemporary humanity, having materially destroyed vast areas of wilderness – and many other animals – is now routinely configured as spiritually hollow, as lacking the essence of the human” (134).

Bandyopadhyay’s study of animated retellings of Moby Dick illustrates how zoocriticism operates within contemporary narratives. His analysis of Samson and Sally and Dot and the Whale showcases how these animated films provide alternative portrayals that challenge the anthropocentric narratives dominant in traditional literature, such as the representation of whales as antagonistic monsters. These works foreground non-human perspectives, prompting a rethinking of how monstrous representations are constructed in literature and suggesting that zoocriticism may offer important counter-narratives that confront established ideologies (Bandyopadhyay, 2024). This highlights zoocriticism as a vital discourse that questions dominant depictions of animals in literary texts, advocating for narratives that foster empathy and ethical consideration.

Pisa et al’s (2016) study encompasses animal representations in literary works, provoking ethical reflections on animal subjectivity. Furthermore, the impact of postcolonial and anthropocentric critiques has significantly informed zoocritical discourse. In the context of postcolonial ecocriticism, Miller

highlights the importance of considering how historical structures of power influenced both land and animal exploitation, revealing the interconnectedness of environmental and animal rights issues (Miller, 2012). This historical lens complements zoocriticism by situating non-human animals within the broader socio-political context, demonstrating how colonial power dynamics have shaped human perceptions and treatment of different species.

As contemporary literature increasingly engages with themes of environmental degradation and extinction, zoocriticism emerges as a critical tool for understanding the narrative complexities surrounding animal representations. For instance, Abolfotoh discusses how zoocritical perspectives provide avenues to critique anthropocentric practices that imperil both the environment and animal species, thereby reinforcing the urgency of re-evaluating our ethical commitments toward non-human life (Abolfotoh, 2023).

The works of Edgar Allan Poe illustrate the relevance of zoocriticism in contemporary discussions of literature and environmental issues. Studniarz notes how Poe's narratives resonate with current ecological concerns, making a compelling case for the applicability of zoocritical analysis to historical literary texts (Studniarz, 2022). By revealing the connections between human narratives and their non-human counterparts, zoocriticism invites a reevaluation of literary legacies, urging a dialogue that transcends temporal boundaries.

This paper studies the Maddaddam trilogy of Margaret Atwood, consisting of the three novels namely *Oryx and Crake, The Year of The Flood,* and *Maddaddam*, from the perspective of Zoocriticism. Atwood's work has been pivotal in exploring themes of ecological disaster, genetic engineering, and the complex intersections of gender and species. Margaret Atwood's MaddAddam trilogy qualifies as dystopian fiction through its depiction of a future world marked by oppressive, dehumanizing conditions. Set against a backdrop of ecological collapse, unchecked genetic engineering, and corporate dominance, the novels portray a society in ruins. Within this landscape, characters grapple with survival as the lines between humans and animals blur, and the relentless pursuit of profit and power has brought about the devastation of the natural environment. Atwood's narratives, especially in her speculative fiction, articulate profound reflections on humanity's environmental impact and the role of non-human entities within a changing world.

Analysis

The MaddAddam trilogy, particularly Oryx and Crake, foregrounds the intricate connections between ecological devastation and the lives of both human and non-human characters. Caracciolo et al. assert that Atwood's work embodies metaphorical patterns that illustrate the Anthropocene's anxieties, grappling with ecological catastrophe and biodiversity loss (Caracciolo et al., 2019). The trilogy has been heralded for its eco-apocalyptic vision, unearthing deep-rooted issues of survival, extinction, and sustainability (Bouson, 2016; Brandão & Cavalcanti, 2020).

Atwood's *Oryx and Crake*, the first novel of the trilogy, serves as a critical examination of bioengineering and the ethical dilemmas surrounding it. Atwood's narrative reflects contemporary ecological and health crises, such as the implications of diseases cross-species, and serves as a cautionary tale about humanity's manipulation of nature (Rajeshwari & Meenakshi, 2022). The character of Crake epitomizes the human desire to exert control over biological entities, leading to the genetic engineering of the Crakers—beings intended to embody a more harmonious existence with nature.

Moreover, Atwood's exploration of gender and identity within her narratives is intricately tied to her portrayal of animals and the environment. The feminist dimensions in Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale* reveal not only the oppression of women but also the implications of patriarchal control over reproduction—an issue that resonates with non-human reproductive politics (Alwan, 2023; Arbaoui, 2018). In *The Edible Woman*, meat consumption serves as a poignant metaphor expressing the societal roles imposed on women and the inherent struggles they face within a patriarchal structure, thus linking zoocritical themes to gender discourse (Meklash, 2024). This intersection highlights how Atwood's characters often negotiate their identities in relation to the physical and natural world around them.

In *The Year of the Flood*, Margaret Atwood makes frequent and deliberate use of animal references to enrich the novel's thematic landscape. Throughout the text, readers encounter the names of approximately 134 distinct species, encompassing a wide range of life forms—from fish, birds, and insects to mammals. These references include not only familiar animals from our current ecosystems but also genetically engineered hybrids that exist solely within the novel's speculative world, such as pigoons, liobams, and rakunks. These invented species, while fictional, are disturbingly plausible and reflect Atwood's critical engagement with biotechnology and genetic manipulation.

One particularly notable term is "pleebrats," which refers to the feral street children inhabiting the impoverished urban areas known as the Pleeblands. The word fuses "pleeb," derived from "plebeian," with "rats," subtly dehumanizing these children while simultaneously likening them to scavenging animals. This linguistic choice underscores the blurring of boundaries between human and animal, civilization and savagery, a recurring motif in the novel.

Animals in *The Year of the Flood* are not relegated to the margins as mere environmental features or sources of food. Instead, they occupy a central place in the novel's broader meditation on ecological collapse and moral decay. They are portrayed as companions, victims, symbols, and agents within a world that has lost its ethical compass. The presence of hybrid creatures like the pigoons—genetically modified pigs designed to grow human organs—and rakunks—chimeric raccoon-skunk pets—highlights the extent to which corporate interests have commodified life itself. These bioengineered animals stand as stark reminders of the dangers of unchecked scientific ambition when guided by profit rather than ethical responsibility.

Ultimately, Atwood's use of animal imagery and hybrid creations serves a dual purpose. It critiques the exploitation of living beings in the name of progress and profit, while also illustrating a broader theme: the intertwined fates of humanity and the natural world. In Atwood's vision, the fall of human civilization is inseparable from the abuse and degradation of nonhuman life. Yet, within this bleak depiction, there are also seeds of regeneration. Animals, in their enduring presence and resilience, offer a glimpse of a possible future in which the bonds between species might be reimagined and restored.

Toby's personality development is linked by Atwood to her comprehension of animals or non-human beings throughout the narrative. To begin with, Toby was a Gardener, someone who had vowed to be vegetarian and who had been trained to respect all of nature's non-human beings. Every time Gardeners ate meat, they apologized to the dead flesh and asked for its pardon. She came out after the epidemic and battled the intelligent pigoons that were starting to harm the environment. Jimmy had to seek refuge in trees in the last book after being attacked by pigoons and other nasty hybrids produced in the lab. Toby was able to survive the virus incidentally as was hiding inside a facility; but as she came out after the apocalypse, she could not get out of the building due to the threat of the pigoons. She even had to kill one of them using a gun:

Toby's hands are shaking. You've snuffed a life, she tells herself. You've acted rashly and from anger. You ought to feel guilty. Still, she thinks of going out with one of the kitchen knives and sawing off a ham. She'd taken the Vegivows when she joined the Gardeners, but the prospect of a bacon sandwich is a great temptation right now. She resists it, however: animal protein should be the last resort. (YoF 22)

She gradually changed her attitude towards the animals as her survival instinct overpowered her fear and her vows. She felt some regret after killing the genetically engineered pig because she had been raised by the Gardeners and was accustomed to non-violence.

After the death of her parents, she was forced to live in a small rented room situated directly above a slaughterhouse. The establishment below, ironically named Slink, specialised in selling meat from endangered species at luxury prices. Her living space was constantly invaded by the stench of chemicals and rancid fat through the ventilation system, while the cries and braying of dying animals echoed through the floor, making her increasingly restless and emotionally distressed.

Viewed through the lens of zoocriticism, her situation highlights the normalized violence and objectification of animals in a capitalist society that treats nonhuman life as a luxury commodity. The fact that Slink butchers endangered species underscores the moral bankruptcy of such exploitation, where ecological crisis is commodified for elite consumption. Her visceral reaction to the sounds and smells of slaughter marks her as a reluctant witness to systemic zoocide. She is involuntarily immersed in a site of suffering, one most people are sheltered from, and this forces her—and by extension the reader—to confront the silenced realities of animal exploitation. Her restlessness becomes a quiet form of resistance, a moral response to the violence humans often choose to ignore.

Symbolically, her position above the slaughterhouse represents the thin boundary between human privilege and animal suffering. The vertical arrangement—life above, death below—mirrors the hierarchies of speciesism and the moral distance that enables exploitation. In this way, the text not only critiques the commodification of animals but also challenges readers to reconsider their own complicity in these structures.

Motivated by a long-standing, selfish desire to own nature's most magnificent rarity, mankind has long been willing to ignore the high environmental prices, littering history with the carcasses of extinct species. The second circle also started in the rarefied heights of high couture, meeting the demand of the client for "fashionable" clothing. Exotic skins and fur life stolen from rare and endangered animals, including the wolverine and the oryx, is a must-have fashion. This heartless chasing of fashion fads does force one to reflect on the long sweep of human history, a story punctuated by the ceaseless stalking and plundering of animals and other creatures to the edge of oblivion, driven too often by personal interest and oblivious to the interrelations between living things. Edward Wilson (2003) says the:

Sumatran rhino and white abalone are textbook examples of the legion of species around the world so savaged by over-harvesting and other human activities as to be one short step from what conservation scientists call "global" extinction, leaving no surviving individuals anywhere. (88-89)

This deeply held anthropocentric philosophy has blinded us and led to an almost perverse ignorance of the silent suffering of hundreds of species on the verge of extinction all around us. Peering into the grim reality of the endangered species trade reveals a truly horrifying picture of the ruthlessness and callous indifference humanity has developed towards the non-human world.

Eating meat is a personal choice, but a taste for exotic and often endangered species, such as tigers, sharks, whales, pangolins, American black bears, and so forth, persists and threatens ecological balance. Margaret Atwood's characteristic sarcasm is evident in The Year of the Flood's discussion of this topic. Rarity is a

satirical name for a chain of restaurants that offered meat that was certified disease-free and entirely organic so that it could be cooked rare. But in the private banquet rooms with high-security entrance, "you could eat endangered species. The profits were immense, one of bottle tiger-bone wine alone was worth a neckful of diamonds" (*Oryx* 37). Here the author exposes yet another ugly side of humanity's capacity to be horrible. A general lack of concern for nature is one thing but consuming endangered wildlife takes it to an even more frightening level and draws attention to an incredibly deep and worrying disconnection to what we should actually consider sentient beings.

In this dystopic tale, we are shown cannibalism in the harshest of light, bordering on the grotesque. The first book in the trilogy talked about eating human flesh, in the meat of the pigoons, which involved some part of human genes for human organ harvesting. Toby was employed by the SecretBurgers restaurant business. As the name suggests, the recipe or selection of the several types of meat used to make the burger is kept secret. One theory is that Secret Burgers used inexpensive pig meat. Even though there was no proof that actual human carcasses or dead bodies had been placed in the meat grinder, the entire situation appeared bleak when rumours about grinding human flesh started to circulate in the novel. It's thought that animals with a human gene contribute to the burgers' flavour. By using the blame game and defamation laws to protect the corporation, CorpSeCorp, the corporate security firm, attempted to control the situation. The prospect of cannibalism in one form or another appeared to have been driven by the supply and demand for food in the overpopulated world.

The portrayal of the two female protagonists, Toby and Ren, positions them as animalistic objects, embodying the concept of the "other." This immediately recalls Sherry B. Ortner's influential essay, *Is Female to Male as Nature Is to Culture?*, offering a potent lens for eco-feminist analysis. Ortner argues that culture, a human creation, consistently elevates the masculine while relegating nature to the status of a passive commodity, a subordinate "other." Through this framework, Toby and Ren's objectification as animalistic figures can be interpreted as a manifestation of this very dynamic, where the feminine is symbolically aligned with the devalued realm of nature within a patriarchal cultural construct. Richard Kerridge (2006) has also presented a binary opposition which gives a key insight into ecofeminism: "Beliefs that legitimate the oppression of women also legitimate environmental degradation... fundamental binary oppositions fit neatly over one another, creating the ideology basis for both sorts of harm: male/female; culture/nature; reason/emotion; mind/body." (538)

Women are often seen like nature because they can give birth and care for children, just like nature gives us life. Culture, which is made by humans, is usually seen as male-like and focuses only on humans. Animals are part of nature, so when women are also seen like nature, both women and animals end up being treated like objects.

Toby and Ren were hurt in their bodies and spirits. The way they were treated is similar to how animals are used and hurt. Ren was a dancer in a club called Scales and Tails. There, the women wore costumes that made them look like birds, snakes, lizards, or other animals. Sometimes, they even had scales put under their skin through surgery or as tattoos. Men in the club liked to watch these women dressed as reptiles. If the dancers tried to run away, they were hurt. The cruelty shown to these women is like the cruelty shown to animals, and this has a deeper meaning.

Toby connected her suffering to the pain of the animals she heard being slaughtered in the same building where she lived. To survive, she sold her hair illegally on the black market, as a corporatized synthetic human-like hair from Mo'Hair sheep made selling real human hair unlawful. The money she received was

minimal. Subsequently, she sold her eggs at an infertility clinic for two cycles. A medical error during one procedure resulted in her accidental sterilization and permanent infertility.

In essence, both female protagonists experienced exploitation akin to that of animals under human dominance. Their bodies were commodified, similar to the selling of animal parts. Their character development mirrors the potential recovery of nature. Just as nature began to reclaim its space after the apocalypse, Toby and Ren survived and resisted in the post-apocalyptic world, adapting to the altered environment and new way of life. The narrative shifts, indicating a loss of established human culture alongside the decline of humanity. What remained was nature's resurgence and renewal.

Another area for zoocritical analysis within *The Year of the Flood* is the representation of bees. Initially wild, bees were domesticated by humans for honey production, used as food and medicine. Many scientists believe that if the bees all over the earth are killed by some disease or chemicals, the entire ecosystem will be disturbed. Pollination is an important part of our ecosystem and the role of the bees in this process is very significant. Bees are very efficient as pollinators "and the only dependable pollinators, because they visit flowers methodically to collect nectar and pollen and do not destroy the flower or the plant in the process" (Devillers 7). Many of the crop plants depend on bees, wild and domesticated, for pollination. Around one hundred food crops feed the world and "15% of these crops are serviced by domestic honey bees, while at least 80% are pollinated by wild bees and other wildlife" (Ingram et.al 2). Melissa Petruzzello summarises the importance of bees in ecology by saying that "without bees, the availability and diversity of fresh produce would decline substantially, and human nutrition would likely suffer".

Beyond their ecological role in pollination, bees hold symbolic significance as enigmatic creatures in various cultures and belief systems. For the Gardeners, they find God in all of nature's creations. The children of the Gardeners are taught about bees and the part they play in maintaining a healthy ecosystem. Pilar, a member of the God's Gardeners, viewed bees as companions with whom personal sorrows could be shared. She developed specific ideas about the arrival of bee swarms during different months of the summer. Pilar thought that her small part in saving the bees by keeping them in the Edencliff Rooftop garden would contribute to the cause of the environment. In the chapter "Pollination Day," the corporate government converted bees into 'cyborg spies' by seizing the bees while still in larval form and micro-mechanical systems are inserted into them. "Tissue grows around the insert, and when the full adult or "imago" emerges, it is a bee cyborg spy controllable by a CorpSeCorps operator" (YoF 329). The Gardeners believed this to be an abomination which goes against everything that they believed about the bees.

Birds emerge as a significant and recurring motif throughout Margaret Atwood's "The Year of the Flood," acting as potent symbols of nature's resilience and the shifting power dynamics in the post-apocalyptic landscape. In the initial chapters, the delicate chirping of sparrows pierces the profound silence that descended after the Waterless Flood, their song a fragile yet hopeful melody that subtly lightens the otherwise sombre tone of the novel. This re-emergence of avian sounds signifies a crucial turning point. For years, the cacophony of anthropogenic activities had effectively muted nature's voice. Now, in the aftermath of the human-induced catastrophe, the natural world begins its quiet but determined reclamation, subtly inverting the established order where the few surviving humans now occupy the marginalized position of the "other".

Atwood masterfully employs bird imagery to underscore her projection of nature's tenacious revival. A poignant example is the transformation of a swimming pool, once a symbol of human leisure and control over the environment, into a burgeoning natural habitat. Here, aquatic birds such as herons, alongside

small animals and amphibians, begin to establish a miniature ecosystem. Toby's observation of water birds preying on frogs highlights the re-establishment of natural food chains, a subtle yet powerful indicator of nature's self-regulation. Her subsequent thought that fish might eventually populate the pool further reinforces the idea of a self-healing environment, slowly but surely returning to a state of ecological balance.

In stark contrast to these symbols of renewal, the recurring image of the vulture offers a darker, yet equally essential, perspective on nature's post-apocalyptic role. Described by Atwood as "God's necessary Dark Angels" (YoF 4), these scavengers are presented not as harbingers of death, but as nature's appointed purifiers. Their gruesome task of devouring carrion becomes a vital act of cleansing, a natural mechanism for processing the vast casualties of the pandemic and preventing further decay and disease. This unflinching portrayal of the vulture highlights nature's pragmatic and often brutal efficiency in the face of human-caused devastation. Through these contrasting avian images – the delicate sparrow heralding a new dawn and the scavenging vulture fulfilling a necessary, if grim, function – Atwood paints a complex and nuanced picture of nature's resurgence, a force both gentle in its reawakening and ruthless in its restorative processes. The Gardeners prioritised the protection and preservation of all living creatures, considering them as part of the interconnected web of life. Through the Gardeners' teachings and practices, Atwood emphasizes the importance of recognizing the value and rights of animals.

The trilogy, particularly *The Year of the Flood*, highlights the theme of animal empathy and survival. The protagonist, Ren, developed a close bond with the animals she encountered, particularly the "Mo'Hairs" (genetically engineered sheep). Her connection with these creatures challenges the notion of human exceptionalism and emphasizes the shared vulnerability and struggle for survival among all living beings. Atwood portrays how animal empathy can offer a sense of purpose and connection for human characters in a dystopian world filled with despair and destruction. Animals are not merely background elements but are given agency and significance within the narrative.

Furthermore, Atwood explores the concept of interspecies empathy and communication. The character of Snowman developed a unique bond with the animals around him, particularly the genetically modified hybrid species known as the Crakers. Snowman's interactions with the Crakers highlight the potential for understanding and connection between humans and animals. Through the representation of animals, Atwood prompts readers to reflect on their relationship with the natural world and the ethical considerations surrounding the treatment of animals. The novel challenges the anthropocentric worldview that places humans at the centre and encourages a more empathetic and interconnected perspective.

Atwood's narratives serve as a critique of anthropocentrism, as they disrupt traditional boundaries between humans and animals. This is evidenced in her work, which asks readers to rethink the roles of both human and non-human animals in the quest for survival and moral accountability in an ecological context (Bouson, 2016; Cock et al., 2019). By portraying animals not merely as background elements but as active participants in the unfolding narrative, Atwood imbues her critique with urgency, prompting a reevaluation of ethical responsibilities toward both the environment and the animal kingdom. The engagement with zoocritical themes in Atwood's work illustrates a broader commentary on how society's treatment of the environment and non-human beings reflects and impacts human social structures. As such, her work aligns closely with the principles of zoocriticism, inviting readers to acknowledge and challenge the interconnected systems of oppression faced by both humans and non-humans alike.

Conclusion

The trilogy highlights the erasure of natural animal identities and poses moral questions regarding synthetic biology and species modification via the prism of zoocriticism. In contrast to the aggressive and exploitative behaviours of pre-apocalyptic mankind, the Crakers, who are manufactured posthuman people, represent a reinvented connection with animals—one of peace and respect.

Zoocriticism prompts discussions about ethical responsibilities towards animals and nature. Atwood presents a world where humans have exerted control over animals' genetic makeup, raising questions about the morality of such actions and their repercussions. The Maddaddam Trilogy's exploration of zoocriticism encapsulates a broader examination of the relationship between humans and the natural world. Through the intricate interplay of animal symbolism, genetic manipulation, ecological reflection, and ethical considerations, Atwood challenges readers to contemplate the consequences of human actions on the environment, species diversity, and the boundaries between humanity and the animal kingdom. By weaving these themes throughout the trilogy, Atwood invites us to reconsider our roles as stewards of the Earth and participants in a shared global ecosystem.

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