

# "It's some cannibal thing": Canada and Brazil in Margaret Atwood's MaddAddam Trilogy

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**ABSTRACT**

Brazilian modernist Oswald de Andrade's artistic and philosophical manifesto of Brazilian cannibalism best enables readers to grasp Canadian author Margaret Atwood's trilogy *MaddAddam*, in terms of its treatment of settler and Indigenous relationality in its satirical posthuman world. *MaddAddam* is a work of speculative fiction that satirically predicts possible outcomes of early 21st century neoliberalism. A survival tale, the trilogy articulates its angle of vision through motifs of literal and figurative cannibalism, highlighting settler and Indigenous relationality in the Americas. While situated in Canadian literary traditions, the work engages Brazilian anthropophagic (cannibalist) strategies to craft an ending that is ambivalent about settler futures.

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Only anthropophagy unites us. Socially. Economically. Philosophically...

Magic and life. We had the roster and the distribution of physical goods, of moral goods, of dignity goods. And we knew how to transpose mystery and death with the aid of some grammatical forms....

But who came were not crusaders. There were fugitives from a civilization we are eating up, because we are as strong and as vengeful as the land turtle.

-Oswald de Andrade, "Cannibalist Manifesto"

Margaret Atwood's *MaddAddam* trilogy – comprised of the novels *Oryx and Crake*, *The Year of the Flood*, and *MaddAddam* – is a work of speculative fiction that satirically predicts possible outcomes of early 21<sup>st</sup> century neoliberalism. The story begins in the days after a deadly global pandemic. Deregulated capitalism has led to circumstances in which a rogue US-American bioengineer, Crake, has released an apocalyptic plague. A survival tale, *MaddAddam* articulates its angle of vision through motifs of literal and figurative cannibalism, highlighting settler and Indigenous relationality in the Americas. While situated in Canadian literary traditions (see Frew; DiMarco), the work engages Brazilian anthropophagic (cannibalist) strategies to craft an ending that is ambivalent about settler futures. Brazilian modernist Oswald de Andrade's artistic and philosophical manifesto of Brazilian cannibalism best enables readers to grasp *MaddAddam's* treatment of settler and Indigenous relationality in its satirical posthuman world. That the trilogy's plague begins in Brazil underscores the reach of US-American neoliberalism, and ongoing histories of United States elites orchestrating harm and deadly oppression in South America, which have directly benefitted Canadians (see Klein). Atwood's first focalizing character, Jimmy/Snowman, reflects a Canadian settler neurosis, a sense of victimization and powerlessness, while her later male focalizer, Zeb, delineates masculine settler agency. Many elements of Zeb's story convey to readers a sense that he has discovered or acquired Indigeneity, a plot that drives settler narratives across the Americas. This plot unfolds in the story of Zeb as well as in the literary histories of settler nations in both hemispheres.

Jimmy/Snowman and Zeb's stories incarnate twinned versions of settler ideologies, which are then cannibalized in the creation stories of the posthuman, genetically-spliced Craker characters, Indigenous to the post-flood world. While Jimmy/Snowman's Canadian subject position has been previously theorized by Atwood herself in her 1970 work of literary criticism *Survival*, each of the settler colonial "moves to innocence" (Tuck and Yang 1) articulated by these characters are more recently theorized at the intersection of settler

colonial studies and Indigenous studies (Tuck and Yang). As Eve Tuck and T. Wayne Yang write: "Indigenous peoples are those who have creation stories, not colonization stories, about how we/they came to be in a particular place - indeed how we/they came to *be a place*" (6; italics in the original). Toby, a female survivor and Zeb's lover, narrates this creation story, caring for the satirically Indigenous Crakers and acquiring her own belonging through her benevolent tutelage of the Craker child Bluebeard and her romantic union with Zeb. I see the Crakers' Indigeneity as satirical for two reasons, the first is that the book is a satire and Atwood's portrayal of the Crakers borrows heavily from "noble savage" stereotypes of Indigenous peoples, and the second is that, in my view, a settler artistic creation, such as Margaret Atwood's book, can never be "Indigenous." When she dies, Bluebeard, grown up, takes over. Atwood's trilogy spans a range of settler colonial identities to arrive at their cessation in *MaddAddam's* ending, with the death of these characters. Bluebeard and the Crakers translate the stories of Jimmy, Toby, and Zeb in a shared future in which Craker perspectives predominate and few human beings remain.

Atwood formally begins her trilogy with the settler aesthetics of Northern cannibalism, ending with her version of South American articulations in terms of how the latter historically have responded, in the arts, to the ongoing processes of Northern violence. Atwood's first focalizer, Jimmy/Snowman, is initially blasé about the Brazilian outbreak. He fails to sense or care for the imbrications of North and South America, being primarily concerned about himself. Danette DiMarco argues that Jimmy/Snowman embodies spiritual selfishness resembling the Northern Indigenous Anishinaabe Wendigo, or cannibal spirit. Atwood has argued that the Wendigo is often deployed in Indigenous narratives to describe settler colonists. She argues that he redeems his humanity through storytelling, providing spiritual sustenance to Crake's new species, the Crakers, made to replace humanity, who, in the vein of Andrade's cannibalist, transformative approach to narrative, consume his story (139). Atwood portrays her later character, Zeb, similarly in that he interacts with and embodies multiple appropriated Indigenous lands and signifiers, epistemologies and ontologies. His ambiguous ethnicity will, for some readers, delineate the settler fantasy of discovery or acquiring Indigeneity, as a "settler move to innocence" (Tuck and Yang 1). Zeb's character, and the trilogy's obvious fondness for him, communicates a fantasy of deserved belonging within Atwood's feminist, posthuman vision of settler futures, within a satiric narrative leading, instead of to futures, to settler cessation and incorporation within an Indigenous posthuman reality.

The Crakers enact modernist Andrade's 1928 "Cannibalist Manifesto," positing a "new method of cultural production" wherein "imported cultural influences must be

devoured, digested, and critically re-elaborated in terms of local conditions” (Johnson 49-50). As Andrade writes, this is a “[t]ransfiguration of taboo into totem. Cannibalism” (n.p.). Andrade mimicked the cannibalism of Brazilian Indigenous peoples, the Tupi, referenced in the line “Tupi or not Tupi that is the question” (n.p.). This line celebrates the Tupi while mocking and cannibalizing English and the Empire by eating Shakespeare. Similarly, the Crakers in Atwood’s satire incorporate the “Old World” human narrative, where their narrative consumption and retelling creates a world ontologically distinct from the neoliberal conditions from which they came. For Calina Ciobanu (2014) and Shelley Boyd (2015), the trilogy moves from individualism and anthropocene to reciprocity and feminist, ethical trans-species flourishing. The surviving community of scientists, members of the God’s Gardeners eco cult, and Crakers negotiate beneficial communal trans-species relationships through relations of literal and then metaphorical consumption. The survivor community makes peace with Pigeons, pigs with human neocortex tissue, previously enemies who were eaten cannibalistically as food. Their precarious relationships repeat the past, but with key differences, following what Brazilian poet Haroldo de Campos understood as “transcriação” (transcreation).

The Crakers embody their final transformation through Atwood’s thematic and formal deployment of Andrade’s Southern American anthropophagy. The bioengineer Crake creates and unleashes the plague and Crakers simultaneously, commits a murder-suicide in which he manipulates Jimmy into killing him, and thus initiates a transition from a Northern society that, he decides, must die. It is unclear what motivates Crake to destroy humanity or what future he imagines for his post-human Crakers. What Beth Conklin (2001) terms “compassionate cannibalism,” practices of the Brazilian Amazonian Wari whose funerary customs involved eating the beloved dead of their own community, also resonates with Atwood’s contemporary, posthuman feminist ethics, and with Andrade’s manifesto, signaling the ambiguous and ambivalently satirical Indigeneity of Atwood’s fictional Crakers. *MaddAddam* figuratively devours and repurposes Indigenous ontologies, for its final community to satirically articulate what “survival” can mean in a posthuman future, from Atwood’s Canadian settler speculative perspective.

Atwood’s analysis of Canadian literature in *Survival* is an apt lens for considering Jimmy/Snowman as an introductory frame for the rest of the books (see also Frew). The trilogy’s action mostly takes place in an unnamed coastal United States, but Atwood’s first focalizer could be from Southern Ontario, Canada. Neoliberalism has historically eroded borders between nations, as Atwood has warned (“Blind Faith and Free Trade”). With his pre-plague identity and home gone, he existentially asks Northrop Frye’s quintessential

Canadian question, “where is here?” (219). Feeling doomed, he does not belong in the new world. Jimmy/Snowman is semi-monstrous post-plague, telling the Crakers he is “Snowman.” Settler Canadian forms of imagining survival are key to *MaddAddam* (Atwood winks, referencing science fiction and apocalypse, in the 2004 edition of *Survival*’s preface). Atwood has previously presented the Wendigo as “a giant spirit-creature with a heart and sometimes an entire body of ice” (*Strange Things* 66). For DiMarco, Jimmy/Snowman’s tale is a monster story, an example of how neoliberal society has “gone Wendigo” (138).<sup>1</sup> He is animal-like, a cannibalistic spirit: “He’s rank, he’s gamy, he reeks like a walrus - oily, salty, fishy” (7), he “grunts and squeals like a pigoon, or howls like a wolvog: Aroo! Aroo!” (10). Atwood’s own settler perspective and purpose shapes Jimmy/Snowman’s Wendigo becoming-animal description, as she fashions its engagement with North American Indigenous forms. Frew maintains that *Oryx and Crake* perpetuates erasure of Indigenous peoples, as “ongoing colonizing acts are obscured by the text’s privileging of a settler subject-position [Jimmy] imagined as beset by the imperium of modernity” (199). As Jimmy attempts to survive in a “new” Indigenous landscape, Frew argues, his description also appropriates Indigenous peoples’ stories and relations (Abominable Snowman or Yeti; Wendigo; becoming-animal).

Atwood portrays her characters in ways that suggest that satirical solutions to settler colonial and neoliberal subject positions are available in the appropriation of North and South American Indigenous aesthetics and ontologies. For example, *MaddAddam*, a pre-plague anti-capitalist eco-movement led by Zeb, harbours Crake’s illicit cell of bioengineers and comprises nearly all post-plague characters, named for recently extinct animals such as Swift Fox. Eco-activist appropriation of Indigenous naming reflects the North American settler fantasy of Indigenous peoples disappearing for all intents and purposes. Their ontologies become means for settler survival, or appropriations that articulate resistance to the neoliberal mainstream. *MaddAddam*’s settler coloniality expresses and exceeds Atwood’s analysis of the Canadian literary imagination in *Survival*, including and exceeding the appropriation of animals for the purpose of articulating human identity, the sense of victimization that settler perpetrators feel, and the relief offered in settler “moves to innocence” (Tuck and Yang 1) that *Survival* does not explore within its hemispheric scope.

For American Indigenous communities, neoliberalism intensifies the liberal settler state and has been world destroying from the start.<sup>2</sup> The trilogy reiterates settler colonial

<sup>1</sup> Marlene Goldman similarly argues that Atwood’s short story collection *Wilderness Tips* is “apocalyptic cannibalist fiction.” (83)

<sup>2</sup> Chris Vials (2015) argues that *MaddAddam* is ultimately about the outcomes of neoliberal economics.

appropriations in its world order. In imagining apocalypse, why describe a future warningly, when many of its aspects are the present for Indigenous communities? Perhaps these communities already know answers to questions posed by these texts, but many reading Atwood outside these communities cannot yet hear them. In *Oryx and Crake* Jimmy reflects upon extinction: “Hang on to the word, he tells himself. The odd words, the old words, the rare ones...[w]hen they’re gone out of his head, these words, they’ll be gone, everywhere, forever. As if they had never been” (82). Earlier, when he learns of the Brazilian outbreak of Crake’s plague he reflects “It’s too far away to concern us” (*Oryx and Crake* 388). Extinction to Jimmy/Snowman, typical of his civilization, means little until it hits home to him personally. Atwood’s narrative structures and signifiers, including her heedless, narrowly self-centered first focalizer, as well as the renegade band of eco-activists, desire and consume the Indigenous.

As Atwood argues in *Survival*, Canadian stories convey fear of cannibalism, fears of the survivor-perpetrator who feels himself a victim: “tales not of those who made it but of those who made it back from the awful experience – the North, the snowstorm, the sinking ship – that killed everyone else. The survivor has no triumph or victory but the fact of his survival” (*Survival* 28). In *Oryx and Crake*, Jimmy/Snowman lives on an Earth free of snow due to global warming, yet tells Crakers his name is “Snowman,” nodding to Northern origins in Atwood’s imagination, as well as Northern literature and colonial appropriations. Jimmy/Snowman ruminates on his new name: Crake has decided for the Crakers there shall be no words referring to what cannot be seen empirically; all must be interpreted through instrumental reason, a colonial stance intensified by neoliberal ideology. Jimmy/Snowman resists, naming himself: “The Abominable Snowman, existing and not existing, flickering at the edges of blizzards...Mountain tribes were said to have chased it down and killed it when they have the chance...boiled it, roasted it, all the more exciting because it bordered on cannibalism” (*Oryx and Crake* 10). Jimmy appropriates the Abominable Snowman myth (with ties to the North American Indigenous (and sacred figure) “Big Foot” or “Sasquatch”). He links settler colonialism, cannibalism and Indigenous peoples, methods of consumption (boiled, roasted), appropriation, or transcreation (Snowman no longer means “snow” in this new context), representation (signifiers), and naming. His are the ways of the colonizer, grasping at the sacred Indigenous to create new meanings ‘outside’ the tyranny of hegemonic, instrumental reason. He positions himself outside his society by “acquiring” Indigeneity through his choice of name. Indigeneity is here tokenized where “claims to pain equate to claims to being an innocent non-oppressor” (Tuck and Wang 16). As a consumer and perpetrator, he feels like a victim. At the same

time, readers encounter him through a textual lens holding him more accountable than he holds himself.

In the trilogy’s final novel, *MaddAddam*, the character Zeb also becomes a cannibal, in a section called “The Fur Trade” that is replete with Canadian colonial imagery and references, within an exciting Northern adventure tale. Zeb’s narrative recounts his travels from the Canadian Arctic, through Los Angeles, to Rio de Janeiro emphasizing the tale’s hemispheric scope, and conceptual movement from North to South. Readers encounter this tale through two levels of mediation, as Zeb tells his lover and fellow post-flood survivor Toby about his life, so she can tell the Crakers. These storytelling scenarios highlight the metaphorical consumption, or cannibalist incorporation, inherent in the storytelling acts for both Toby and the Crakers. Zeb works up North in the Arctic and his adopted father, murderous head of the Church of PetrOleum, sends an assassin to kill him in an act of revenge for exposing his father’s murder of Adam One’s mother, as well as his nefarious uses of Church of PetrOleum funds. Atwood satirically wraps the Whitehorse scene in colonial language of do-gooders and Southern men escaping the law, and does not mention Dene or Inuit peoples, repeating the invisibilization of Indigenous peoples. For Zeb the Bearlift “Save the Bears” organization for which he works, feeding bears as a cover for his criminal hacker activity, is composed of a bunch of “fur fuckers” who felt they were “saving some rag from their primordial authentic ancestral past, a tiny shred of their collective soul dressed up in a cute bearsuit” (*MaddAddam* 59). Earnest but condescending do-gooder attitudes recall typical colonial ones towards Northern Indigenous peoples. Zeb describes to Toby the “plan to feed them our trash until they adapt,” claiming this only taught them to be dependent on the trash brought up by Southerners destroying their bio-zone, mimicking the ecocide of the original Fur Trade. Together they agree that “adapt” meant “tough luck” (*MaddAddam* 59).

Zeb describes the Canadian North as a lawless environment, shielding criminals from authorities, like his view of, and experience in, Brazil. This, too, recalls the fur trade: “They weren’t all fur-fuckers... Some claimed to be along for the challenge. Adventurous devil-may-care, no strings on me, tattoo-upholstered, with greasy ponytails like bikers... boundary-pushing muscle-flexers” (*MaddAddam* 59). He notes, “Things in the North were always a little fuzzy around the edges, law-wise. So you never knew” (60). An assassin, sent by Zeb’s father to kill him, rides with Zeb in a ‘Thopter, which crashes as a result of their tussle. After his ‘Thopter accident, “Zeb was lost. He sat down under the tree. Or not lost completely. A spindly kind of spruce with lichens” (77). The scene recalls a Group of Seven painting: the imagery classically Canadian, a man lost in the North, telling of mastery

and spiritual union with the land once he is South again. Zeb literally becomes cannibal as he takes some of his dead co-pilot, humorously named Chuck, to eat. Like Jimmy/Snowman, Zeb accrues as animal metaphor, Indigenous signifiers, and cannibal. He fears data smugglers will remove data from his brain, leaving him a “pithed and shriveled husk” (pithing is a method of euthanizing an animal) (*MaddAddam* 70). He recalls a “local legend” in the north of a crew of workers who ended up stranded: “a third of them went crazy due to the snow and twenty-four hour darkness” (*MaddAddam* 74). This disaster-survival legend lends a quintessentially colonial context to Zeb’s situation. He walks the white expanse, to find a bear to eat it, feeling his boundaries dissolving, and “becoming the landscape” (*MaddAddam* 80-1). Then, a bear is upon him and he kills and eats it: wondering, “having eaten the heart, could he now speak the language of bears?” (81). He is called “Spirit Bear” having eaten a Pizzlie or Grolar bear, animal symbols of racial intermixture. He fuses spiritually with the land, as though the land confers belonging to him. Atwood’s portrayal of his perspective appropriates Indigenous stories of becoming with animals and the land.

Earned belonging defines his character as woodsy and competent: Zeb as the ideal colonial Canadian artist.<sup>3</sup> Zeb being “in the picture,” unlike the Group of Seven paintings in which there are no people in the frame, is ambivalent. His presence within the frame of the scene subjects the figure that he represents to our analysis. Zeb is charming and even dashing, having a humbly ‘uncool’ sex appeal enhanced by self-deprecating humor. His location on the land is different from that of the Group of Seven painters, in that he is subject to our gaze, within the frame. This lack of disembodiment or power to see without oneself being seen, perhaps articulates synergistically with Zeb’s ambiguous ethnicity and lack of class privilege, endearing him to readers. However, the coloniality of his narrative persists.

Zeb, whose name means dwelling, habitation, or home, learns he was adopted late in life, explaining his ambiguous ethnicity. He passes for Mexican and could be Indigenous, recalling, “they thought I looked kind of Tex-Mex, or maybe like a hybrid that contained some of that DNA. Which I do, as was discovered not long after that” (*MaddAddam* 320). His vaguely Mexican appearance does not imply Indigeneity, but his ambiguous ethnicity, with other narrative elements, makes this possible, while at the same time he connects North and South America. Zeb embodies and signals settler fantasies of authentic belonging through the discovery of unknown Indigenous ancestry, which would ease feelings of culpability in a “move to innocence”(Tuck and Wayne 1). Atwood’s references to colonial history, metaphor, and narrative in the Americas fundamentally ask questions about who

belongs, in what community, on whose terms. Her portrayal of Zeb highlights both Brazil and Canada as settler colonies of Indigenous places, while also emphasizing the neoliberal domination of the southern hemisphere by the global North.

His first reference to Brazil is to mention that when fixing Northern helicopters, “Questionable digimechanics had to be called in, or rather smuggled in, from Brazil, where the digital darkside flourished,” then adding, “That was one reason I was taking a breather at Bearlift: it was ultra far from Brazil” (59). Having lived in Brazil, on the run from his father and involved in numerous illicit digital activities, Zeb tells Toby that Rio de Janeiro was called “the Hackery” “the wild west of the web” (176). After the flood, Zeb, “Spirit Bear,” narrates Brazil and the Canadian North back-to-back, as places of hiding, underground economy, and hacking. Atwood does not reference unceded Indigenous lands, but her descriptions use “Wild West” and other colonial narratives such as the Fur Trade to describe both countries as neoliberal frontiers. Her depictions of the Canadian North and Brazil present different spaces that have shared qualities, not least of which is their ongoing relationality with the Indigenous. Zeb hides to evade hegemonic powers, a colonial narrative, in both countries; indigenous ontologies continue in these places. Zeb’s story strikingly signals Brazil and Canada together, differentially settler colonial, Indigenous, and neoliberal.

For Brazilian poets Andrade and Campos, aesthetics of intermixture are aligned with Brazilian versions of the Indigenous. Brazil is the plague’s “ground zero” location (*Oryx and Crake* 388), and Atwood’s paralleling Brazil and Canada highlights their differently shared settler colonial status. For the Wari in Brazil, cannibalism, which transforms loved ones into animal spirits, lovingly preserves them within the ecosystem, rather than burying them in the lonely, cold ground (Conklin 85). This could describe Zeb’s experience. His transition into Big Foot parallels Jimmy’s as the Abominable Snowman as he walks back to Whitehorse wearing bear fur, and is mistaken for “Big Foot.” Both Zeb and Jimmy transform through consumption behaviors, taking on the title of sacred Indigenous figures. For Leanne Simpson, Big Foot refers to a protector spirit, living among the Anishinaabe, not unlike Atwood’s appropriation of the concept of spirit animals to name Zeb “Spirit Bear.” Simpson describes a present-day Big Foot as not only a spirit but also a woman who protects her children “like a momma bear protects her cubs” (38). Zeb, Toby’s constant protector, and she tells Zeb Spirit Bears are “hard to find, but good luck if you see one” (231). He is a sacred protector offering belonging, unlike Jimmy who embodies a settler “victim” role.

While Jimmy/Snowman is more obviously Canadian, Zeb embodies Canadian settler themes; Zeb, like Jimmy, needs a map and does not have one (*MaddAddam*

<sup>3</sup> For examples of historical figures fitting this archetype, see Davies (1935).

72). He struggles in landscapes for which he has no experience or guide. His adopted brother, Adam One, manipulates Zeb into killing their father, just as Crake manipulates Jimmy. While Jimmy tells the Crakers a “Wendigo story” of neoliberal consumption, in which he is complicit, Zeb has a hard time swallowing what DiMarco describes as “how a society goes Wendigo” (137). He recalls, in the section “Bigfoot:” “there were some swallowing issues with eating Chuck” (*MaddAddam* 77). Zeb reflects that because during his childhood his adopted father forced him to eat his own vomit and feces, he is capable of swallowing human tissue (*MaddAddam* 77). This may reference Joseph Conrad’s ironic colonial ideal of intestinal fortitude in hostile environments in the modernist classic, *Heart of Darkness*, which Jimmy seeks (*Oryx and Crake* 172) but Zeb embodies. Pre-flood, Zeb is a freedom fighter, opposing the CorpSeCorps private militias. His cannibalism is distasteful but necessary means to survive. The Crakers consume both men’s stories as spiritual sustenance, as their creation story: symbolic, spiritual, and communal. Toby tells the Crakers about Zeb informing his story with love, unlike Jimmy’s, individual and informed by self-loathing and trauma. Zeb’s double-voiced story moves the books’ consumption as appropriation metaphor in a positive direction.

In offering Zeb’s story to the Crakers, Toby continues Jimmy/Snowman’s work of keeping them safe by offering stories though she simplifies his experience for the them: “There’s the story, then there’s 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” (*MaddAddam* 56). This statement recalls colonial blindness, as signifiers of Indigeneity are everywhere, and yet never directly acknowledged as an ongoing presence in the landscape, given the standpoints of Atwood’s focalizers: “what you leave out of the story [...] is part of the story too” (*MaddAddam* 56). This ambivalent phrase suggests, as well, through the section title “The Fur Trade,” that readers can find the Indigenous in the settler, because they are composed relationally through each other (Morgensen 2011). This phrase also recalls Canadian fur trade histories; stories not involving circumspection or restitution for the settler ecocide of Indigenous peoples. The fur trade story as a foundational story of settler Canada has not typically included Indigenous perspectives. Yet, in Atwood’s tale the Indigenous persists. Zeb, the settler focalizer, first embodies ideal settler masculinity, becoming a figure that embodies the fantasy of acquired Indigeneity, having had a spiritual experience on the land, become cannibal, and embodied the spirit of the Northern bear, as appropriative a narrative as there could be. Furthermore, he discovers he is genetically hybrid and potentially of Indigenous descent.

The story figures cannibalist consumption as symbolic communion. This process is figured in increasingly positive terms from beginning to end. In *MaddAddam*, survivors take

shelter in a Cobb house, menaced by Painballers, murderous gladiator-style criminals, and Pigoons. Former God’s Gardener Toby takes hallucinogens to receive a vision, hoping to communicate with her deceased friend and Gardener mentor, Pilar, whose body is buried in the park under the elderberry bush. In Toby’s vision, Pilar appears through animal and bush metaphor. She is a Pigoon mother, smiling and turning to the side to reveal piglets (223) whose eyes glow like elderberries. Bluebeard, Toby’s Craker mentee, says that Pilar “put on the skin of a pig, [just as Zeb] put on the skin of a bear, only she didn’t kill and eat it” (227). In Bluebeard’s narration, consumption moves from literal to figurative, how Indigenous material practices transform into the ontologically distinct ones of Andrade’s cannibalist manifesto. This process aligns with Bluebeard’s transcreative role, eventually taking over the focalizing narration. In a chapter called “Piglet,” following her vision, Toby has piglet dreams (261), after which she “can’t manage the ham” in the Cobb house breakfast (267). For Shelley Boyd, this event signals the community’s transition from atavism, in the eating of ham, perpetuating unsustainable behaviours of the past society, and a new paradigm of transpecies ethical relationship (Boyd 161). Brazilian anthropophagy fruitfully describes this new relational paradigm in the narrative’s resolution, wherein the Crakers incorporate the surviving human’s stories, rendering them as sustenance for the Craker community, who interact among species sustainably and peacefully.

In this scene the issue of consumption is, at first, materially cannibal, as the Pigoons have human DNA and brains. Toby’s vision prepares her for a meeting the Pigoons call, during which they propose joining forces with the Cobb house dwellers and Crakers, to eradicate the Painballers. The Craker child Bluebeard, who learns most closely from Toby, translates. Toby feels strangely helpless: “Oh, she thinks. Of course. We’re too stupid. We can’t understand their language. So there has to be a translator” (*MaddAddam* 270). The pigoons arrive with a dead pigoon baby, wrapped in “flowers and foliage” (269). When they leave, having negotiated a deal, they leave the baby for the people to eat. Atwood writes, “Curious funeral rites, thinks Toby. You strew the beloved with flowers, you mourn, and then you eat the corpse. No-holds-barred recycling” (*MaddAddam* 271), like the cannibal practices of the Brazilian Wari. While this is literal and material cannibalism, it consummates a transition towards figurative cannibalism, meeting the aim of trans-species community flourishing. The cannibalistic eating of the corpse of a Pigoon piglet in recognition of a new trans-species alliance resonates with the figurative swallowing of the corpses of Oryx and Crake, when Bluebeard sees their dead bodies in the Paradise Dome, and which he transcreates, through figurative narrative, into supportive benefit for his community:

Toby said the bone piles were not the real Oryx and Crake any more, they were only husks, like an eggshell.

And the Egg wasn't the real Egg, the way it is in the stories. It was only an eggshell, like the shells that are broken and left behind when the birds hatch out of them. And we ourselves were like the birds, so we did not need the broken eggshell anymore, did we?

And Oryx and Crake had different forms now, not dead ones, and they are good and kind. And beautiful. The way we know, from the stories. (*MaddAddam* 360)

The piglet, Oryx and Crake, and Jimmy, Toby, and Zeb all die. Their corpses are transcreated, in Bluebeard's narrative, into new flourishing life for his community.

The Crakers, human/animal splices, are uniquely capable communicators, able to translate/transcreate across species in figuratively cannibalistic ways. Their gifts include trans-species communication, and a form of singing in which they purr like cats, to heal others spiritually and bodily. Atwood's portrayal of the community mimics Andrade's anthropophagic consciousness. Gazi Islam writes of anthropophagic subjectivity that it involves 'a body that knows through *vibration* and *contamination* and not only through representation'. An epistemology based on 'vibration and contamination frames subjectivity as a) corporeal, inscribed in bodily experience (vibration), and b) communal, flowing through networks of social interaction (contamination). (172)

These framings echo Indigenous ontologies and materialize in Atwood's Crakers: live, constitutive contamination across species lines that vibrate (purr) to heal. They are anathema to Crake's representational science, and refute his worldview, transcreating it: constituted by it, they defy it utterly. Perceptions of the Crakers shift from character to character. Discussing the Crakers' blue genitals, the Painballers say, "Maybe it's some fuckin' savages thing...blue paint" (*The Year of the Flood* 417); the other replies "savages will tattoo anything," and "It's some cannibal thing" (476). The blue genitals are from a splice with baboons, one of the features that make the Crakers trans-species communicators. That this communicative ability, grounded in their material bodies, is aligned, from the Painballer perspective, with cannibalism and 'savagery,' signals the historical resonance between cannibalism as a theory of transcreation across antagonistic difference, and the Craker's satirical textual embodiment of the theory's engagement with trans-species, Indigenous ontology.

The Brazilian theory of anthropophagy deploys cannibalist aesthetics to negotiate settler ambivalence, like the Canadian colonial consciousness embodied in Jimmy-the-Snowman, yet more life-affirming. Andrade's manifesto responds to the history in which, while settlers colonize Brazil, they are themselves colonized by the European continent from

which they came. The Crakers, similarly, consume humans' knowledge, representative of remaining colonial powers. They gain mastery as Bluebeard takes over the narrative in the ending, translating the Creation story offered by Jimmy/Snowman and Toby into their own. They overcome destructive aspects of the human, through their animal communication and affinity, both figuratively and literally. For humans Crakers confound self and other: are they self (human) or other (nonhuman)? They emphasize humans' shared DNA with animals and a posthuman world. Islam writes that "anthropophagy marks moments of intercultural contact, where devouring the other at once acknowledges an appetitive desire for appropriation and an aggressive process of deconstruction" (163). The word 'aggression' is vigorous transformation more than violence.

Atwood describes attitudes of colonial aggression in *Year of the Flood's* ending. Painballers, criminals who, pre-flood, were consumed as entertainment for those who watched them fight to the death for sport, see the Crakers as cannibals, yet it is the Painballers who want to consume, use up sexually and eat, Craker women and all other women too (*Year of the Flood* 417). The Painballers share Jimmy's settler colonial perspective: they are fugitives, paranoid of being victims, having already been victims, while in the present they are the ones violently consuming others. Unfortunately, both of these neoliberal and settler colonial masculinities are constituted through a colonial neoliberal system. The MaddAddamites, Crakers, and Pigoons destroy the Painballers, the utmost embodiment of neoliberal consumption gone wrong, uniting the groups in constitutive, founding violence. Following this constitutive communal act, the anthropophagic quality of the ending is underscored in the Crakers' "identification with and desire for a dangerous other" [the human] (Sayers 164). The Crakers devour human stories or "the other, as work on the self" (Sayers 163). Brazilian scholar Jamille Pinheiro-Dias writes that "transcreation" is a "radical translational operation that seeks to approach the form of the original in a cannibalistic way, [and] benefits from the creative resources of the best poetry available to the translator" (n.p.). Bluebeard, like the other Crakers, consumes the stories of Jimmy/Snowman, and those of Toby, and Zeb. Bluebeard takes over Toby's journal at the end, and his people are the future of its story. Anthropophagy articulates the act of devouring, appropriating without inferiority, and in this way, the Craker's assume human tools, such as writing and stories. Atwood's satirical Craker ending draws upon Andrade's cannibal appropriation.

The trilogy employs cannibal motifs to describe neoliberal capitalism within settler colonialism, satirically theorizing a transition, through translation, into an ending of trans-species flourishing. Human focalizers chart a path out of individualism, moving from

Canadian colonial epistemologies, appropriating Indigenous ontologies, to something akin to Brazilian colonial and Indigenous themes in a communal posthuman context. *MaddAddam* presents how cannibalism as appropriation is a fundamental violence within hemispheric settler worldviews, offering readers settler subject positions to negotiate, while satirically undermining them through the text's complex deployment of Indigenous and settler relationality within neoliberal American contexts.

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