To the ends of the earth: Post-Anthropocene cosmopolitanism in the novels of Kazuo Ishiguro, Margaret Atwood, and David Mitchell

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Abstract

This thesis examines the ethics and politics of cosmopolitanism beyond the Anthropocene by interrogating the presentation of the human in relation to other-than-humans in the novels of Kazuo Ishiguro, Margaret Atwood, and David Mitchell. The mounting global uncertainty and environmental crises have heightened fears that humanity may not survive beyond the third millennium, but these apocalyptic predictions reveal an anthropocentric concern with the planet's ability to sustain human life in capitalist societies rather than the wellbeing of the planet.

I argue that ensuring the survival of humanity *and* the planet demands a new vision of cosmopolitanism that recognises the planetary interconnectedness and interdependence of all present and future beings who share the biosphere. This proposition calls for a redefinition of the human and an expansion of the communities that humans belong to and coheres with the aim of eco-cosmopolitanism to connect the human, nonhuman, and the ecological.

Using the lenses of posthumanism, ecocriticism, and cosmopolitanism, I examine how, despite their speculative content, the three authors' novels convincingly portray the experience of 'dislocation' brought about by globalisation and provoke fundamental questions about what constitutes the human and how this human subject might relate to nonhuman and posthuman others ethically and equitably. Through the interrogation of these issues, this thesis also shows how these works transcend the confines of fiction to inspire and challenge our current practices of cosmopolitanism.

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Chapter 1. Introduction: Cosmopolitanism in the Anthropocene and Beyond

The period between the second half of the twentieth to the first two decades of the twenty-first century is marked by the increasingly powerful forces of globalisation, technological advancements and their accompanying disruptions, and environmental degradation. At the same time, the anxieties caused by the prevalence of neoliberalism are also set against the contradictory worry that it will one day run its course and mark the demise of human societies. In 1947, to symbolically demarcate the threat of a man-made global catastrophe, the *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* created a Doomsday Clock. Each year, the Bulletin's Science and Security Board (SASB) assesses the proximity of humanity's destruction in relation to the severity of global threats, updating the position of the Clock's hands relative to midnight, which marks the hour of the hypothetical apocalypse.

As at the start of 2021, the Clock is poised at one hundred seconds to midnight, having advanced twenty seconds from two minutes to midnight at the start of 2020. This is the closest the time on the Clock has ever been to symbolic doom. According to the 2021 Doomsday Clock Statement, this proximity is due to the heightened intensity of the threats of nuclear weapons, climate change, the ongoing extinction of species or the Anthropocene/sixth extinction, and the "COVID wake-up call."[1] While a pandemic is not considered an existential threat, and human civilisation is unlikely to be wiped out by it (as opposed to what happens after the fictional pandemic in Margaret Atwood's trilogy that I will examine later), the staggering death rates of Covid-19 – which have passed the four million mark by

[1] John Mecklin, ed., "This is Your COVID Wake-Up Call: It is 100 Seconds to Midnight – 2019 Doomsday Clock Statement," *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, January 27, 2021, https://thebulletin.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/2021-doomsday-clock-statement-1.pdf.

mid-2021 – only confirm the importance of mutual support between countries and a coordinated international system to respond to global emergencies. To develop strategies to combat not only unexpected global disease outbreaks but the more devastating and irreversible world-changing effects of human activities on the earth's ecosystem that are depleting the earth's resources, therefore, 'cosmopolitan' thinking needs to be urgently promoted and cultivated.

A growing number of literary works produced at the threshold of the twenty-first century and in the first two decades of the third millennium have tried and are trying to confront these anxieties by imagining future catastrophic outcomes, assessing their past and present roots, and, at least implicitly, suggesting possible cosmopolitan road maps to avert the disasters they present us with. For my thesis, I focus on seven novels published between 1999 and 2014 – namely, Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go* (2005); Margaret Atwood's *MaddAddam* trilogy, which comprises *Oryx and Crake* (2003), *The Year of the Flood* (2009), and *MaddAddam* (2013); and David Mitchell's *Ghostwritten* (1999), *Cloud Atlas* (2004), and *The Bone Clocks* (2014).

I have chosen these works because they present posthuman possibilities that are embedded in the alternate past of *Never Let Me Go*, in the apocalyptic future of the *MaddAddam* trilogy, and in both the past and future of Mitchell's novels. Most importantly, together, these novels examine how humans regard themselves, their communities, and the planet, as well as the relationship between humanity and past, present, and future beings who share the biosphere, and demand a reframing that is in line with a cosmopolitan framework. It is also significant that the publication dates of these novels are somewhat synchronous with the inception of the term

"Anthropocene,"[2] which acknowledges the direct impact of human activity on the nonhuman environment. In the discussion on the interconnectedness of the human and the nonhuman, this time period is especially apt.

As global fiction, or fiction that, as we will see later, displays qualities of what Berthold Schoene calls new 'cosmopolitan' novels,[3] the works examined in this thesis not only represent the collective human experience beyond the local, provincial, and/or nationalistic experience, but they also cast a critical eye on humanity in late-capitalist societies.

Earlier novels in the later part of the twentieth century do convey the anxieties triggered by globalisation, but the focus is mostly on the human agent. This is true of novels that relay the science-fictional fears of human-initiated apocalypse, such as Don DeLillo's *White Noise* (1985). Among its concerns are the constant deluge of media that desensitises humans to the disasters affecting others, and modern inventions that distract humans from the reality of living, at their own peril. In what is considered a landmark cyberpunk novel reflecting the rapid advancements of computer science and technology in the eighties, the main questions that William Gibson's *Neuromancer* (1985) sparks are related to the impact of virtual reality on human subjectivity. Interestingly, Gibson's novel features Molly Millions, a character with prosthetic body parts who is arguably a literal figuration of Donna Haraway's cyborg.[4] However, in the novel, Molly remains a nebulous and objectified figure whose perspective is hidden from the readers. In contrast, the novels in this thesis feature the perspectives of posthuman characters, most prominently in the first-person narrative of the human clone Kathy H. in *Never Let Me Go*.

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[2] I will return with more details about this term later in this chapter.
[3] Berthold Schoene, *The Cosmopolitan Novel* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009), 12–15.
[4] Incidentally, Haraway's cyborg manifesto, which I examine in greater detail later in the chapter, was published in the same year as Gibson's novel.

Further, as it will become clear later, while I include the cyborg manifesto in my theoretical framework, I employ it in conjunction with Haraway's later work on companion species to interrogate the concept of making kin (with nonhumans and posthumans) within the larger context of intra- and inter-species cosmopolitanism, rather than to examine in detail the more literal material figurations of human-nonhuman hybrids. Importantly, the novels that I have selected can be said to articulate a post-Anthropocene cosmopolitan vision that speculates on the prospects for the entire human race as well as other beings in the face of bioethical concerns about genetic engineering and (particularly in Atwood and Mitchell's novels) environmental collapse.

The novels I examine also qualify as world literature, according to David Damrosch's criteria that they should be works that move "beyond their culture or origin, either in translation or in their original language."[5] Each of the three authors' novels have been translated into many other languages, and the authors and their novels can be said to enjoy strong global presence. However, the fact that these authors are from the 'global north' does create some tension in the notion of connectedness and inclusivity that this thesis advocates. Even though Ishiguro's Japanese roots and Mitchell's geographical relocations[6] may make them less definitively Eurocentric, Atwood's firm Canadian identity[7] weakens the case for contextualising these authors beyond their vantage point in the American North and Western Europe. Nonetheless, I would argue that this limitation of perspective

[5] David Damrosch, *What is World Literature?* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003), 4.
[6] Mitchell is what one might describe as a 'global' citizen. The trajectory of his geographical relocations, in a sense, run contrary to Ishiguro's from Japan to England; Mitchell taught English in Hiroshima, Japan, for eight years before returning to England with his Japanese wife to raise his family.
[7] Atwood has lived in Canada and rooted almost all her writing in her home country throughout her long and illustrious career. To date, *The Handmaid's Tale* (1984) and the *MaddAddam* trilogy are the only novels she has set outside Canada and in the United States.

deepens and complicates the conversation in a self-referential manner, because it also draws attention to the larger (and irresolvable) issue that an argument for a post-Anthropocene cosmopolitanism, which is at the heart of this thesis, is inevitably made from a human perspective.

Collectively, these novels elicit critical thought about the politics of human domination within and without human communities. I will begin my thesis with Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go* which allows me to go to the root of the problem in many ways. I will show how the normative society's treatment of human clones serves as a critical lens through which Ishiguro examines the way dominant groups of humans construct and have always strategically recast minorities as nonhuman 'others' in order to exploit and subjugate them. Shedding an oblique light on the inequitable way human relationships tend to be configured, *Never Let me Go* invites readers to consider (future) relationships beyond the human species and paves the way for the interrogation of the potentialities of multispecies cosmopolitan egalitarianism in the other two writers' texts.

In the next two chapters, in fact, we turn from the counterfactual near past of Ishiguro's novel to the speculative near future of Atwood's novels and the expansive temporality of Mitchell's novels. I first examine in Chapter 3, Atwood's post-apocalyptic trilogy which features nonhuman and posthuman characters sharing a near future and addresses directly the issues of (post)human relationality implicitly referenced in Chapter 2. The posthuman Crakers in the *MaddAddam* trilogy are an advanced race of biogenetically engineered humanoids that their misanthrope creator Crake envisions as human replacements in the post-pandemic world which follows his unleashing of a lethal virus that almost annihilates the entire human population. Atwood explores interspecies solidarity by showing how a band of

humans survive and form an uneasy coalition with the Pigoons (technologically manipulated hybrid animals) while taking the Crakers under their wing: eventually, by the end of the trilogy, a small but budding interspecies community is set up in a neo-prelapsarian space that they carve out of the post-urban rubble.

In the final chapter, we turn our attention to Mitchell's novels, significant portions of which are set in the context of environmental devastation and/or economic collapse in apocalyptic and post-apocalyptic futures, and which address the theme of cosmopolitanism more overtly than Atwood's or Ishiguro's novels. Mitchell's literary world-building dynamically complicates the concept of cosmopolitanism with a complex biblioverse that connects his characters across different spatiotemporal zones within each novel and also between novels. These narrative features creatively expand the scope of cosmopolitanism to traverse not only space but also time, which invite critical thought about the kind of cosmopolitan identities needed to negotiate all these different types and levels of interconnectivity. Mitchell's novels feature other-than-human characters who are seamlessly connected with human characters: for example, a noncorporeal spirit in *Ghostwritten* may transmigrate from one human host to another, and the atemporal Horologists or disembodied immortals in *The Bone Clocks* may inhabit the bodies of human characters. These transmigrations, far from establishing parasitic relations, play important roles in saving human lives at both the individual level (for the noncorpum) as well as at the species level (for the Horologists). Similarly, *Cloud Atlas*'s Sonmi~451 is a genomed fabricant who is artificially reproduced like the clones in *Never Let Me Go* but is biotechnologically manipulated from a set number of stem types and physically inseparable from other Sonmis who are enslaved as servers for a fast-food conglomerate. Nonetheless, as an individual, she is an integral part of the

‘human’ story that consists of five other narrator-focalisers within the nested narrative structure of the novel, and her kinship with humans across different temporal zones is evidenced by a comet-shaped birthmark that she shares with other characters. The entanglement of Mitchell’s human and other-than-human characters and their blurred ontological distinctions not only complicate the notion of human and nonhuman subjectivity but, as anticipated, also broaden the scope of cosmopolitanism discussed in the previous chapters.

The trajectory of this thesis, therefore, will take us from an interrogation of the finitude of the not-yet-extinct humans residing in the Anthropocene, the construction of their subjectivity, and the configuration of their relationships with those they deem as nonhuman others in Ishiguro’s novel, to an assessment of the potentialities for a post-Anthropocene cosmopolitanism and eco-egalitarianism in Atwood’s and Mitchell’s works. I will approach all the texts in question through the lenses of posthumanism, ecocriticism, and cosmopolitanism.

One of the major concerns of the Anthropocene is the impact of science and technology on culture and society especially from the late twentieth century onwards, and whether these advances could signal the displacement or even dissolution of the human by a more advanced being, or the posthuman. The neologism “posthumanism” is concurrently a social discourse, a cultural theory, a philosophy, and a concept, as well as a movement; and as a term, it often yields varied and contradictory meanings. As a theory, there are many approaches to posthumanism – for example, cultural posthumanism, philosophical posthumanism, and New Materialism – and while many of these different strands of posthuman thought overlap in their concerns, the most prominent strand which is relevant to our study is critical posthumanism. As a contemporary social discourse, critical posthumanism

engages with questions about what it means to be human in an age where globalisation, late capitalism, the advent of technoscience, and climate change – the main concerns of the novels I will be examining – are very much part of the political and social landscape.

The posthuman is a popular concept in science fiction or sf, [8] and as a trans-disciplinary critical discourse, posthumanism crosses the boundaries of sf, critical studies of science and technology, and cultural theory. These disparate disciplines or fields of study nonetheless share concerns about the rapid advancements in both biotechnology and information technology, and the ways in which they are both transforming human life and humanity and complicating the concepts of subjectivity and identity. Posthumanism addresses these anxieties about the uncertain future of humanity and proposes ways to map out possible future directions. For instance, in the novels at the heart of this thesis, posthuman figures are posited as important entities that could supersede humans and as plausible survivors in a post-apocalyptic world.

Although posthumanism is a recent critical discourse, the posthuman movement is thought to have begun much earlier. Most scholars place the origins of the posthuman movement in the 1960s and 1970s,[9] and, more precisely, from Michel Foucault's pronouncement of the "end of Man" in his monumental *The Order of Things* originally published 1966 in French. The most impactful notion brought forth by Foucault is in the ending of the book where he observes that "[a]s the

[8] Sometimes presented in uppercasing "SF" or "Sci-Fi," or spelt out in full, science fiction is a broad and often contested genre. I prefer to use the lower case "sf" here and throughout the dissertation to keep the definition open for the purposes of studying how the novels in my study challenge or even transgress the assumed boundaries of this genre.

[9] Though posthumanism (and transhumanism with which it is oft-inaccurately conflated) rose to prominence in the late eighties and early nineties, one of the earliest mentions of the term "posthumanism" is thought to have been in Ihab Habib Hassan's article, "Prometheus as Performer: Toward a Posthumanist Culture?" *The Georgia Review* 31, no. 4 (Winter 1977): 830–50.

archaeology of our thought easily shows, man is an invention of recent date. And one perhaps nearing its end."[10] Foucault was here critiquing the Western liberal humanist subject as the defining status of human existence.[11] As such, it is impossible to discuss posthumanism without first of all considering humanism, or more specifically, the Western Humanist ideal of 'Man,' which regards 'Man' as the universal representative of the human. In fact, according to Stefan Herbrechter, critical posthumanism "maps and engages with the ongoing deconstruction of humanism."[12] In its simplest form, humanism treats the human subject as a unitary and singular entity that possesses agency, autonomy, and exceptionalism; qualities that are supposed to be unique to him and which separate him from the nonhuman world. Several problems besiege this representation of the universal 'Man': Rosi Braidotti rightly points out, for example, that 'he' is inevitably presented as "masculine, white, urbanized, speaking a standard language, heterosexually inscribed in a reproductive unit, and a full citizen of a recognized polity."[13] Posthumanism is a rejection of such a singular and monolithic definition of human subjectivity, recognising instead that the 'human' can be 'many,' and cannot be narrowed down to a "coherent and stable ontological category."[14]

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[10] Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences*, trans. A. Sheridan (London: Routledge, 2002), 422, PDF e-book.
[11] Questions about the human subject and subjectivity feature in other critical practices and theories like feminism, postcolonialism, poststructuralism, and postmodernism. However, what separates these disparate yet related critical perspectives from posthumanism is the latter's main focus on the limits of the concept of the human.
[12] Stefan Herbrechter, "Critical Posthumanism," in *Posthuman Glossary*, ed. Rosi Braidotti and Maria Hlavajova (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2018), 94, Kindle.
[13] Rosi Braidotti, "Posthuman Critical Theory," in *Critical Posthumanism and Planetary Futures*, eds. D. Banerji and M. R. Paranjape (India: Springer, 2016), 15, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-81-322-3637-5_2.
[14] Veronica Hollinger, "Posthumanism and Cyborg Theory," in *The Routledge Companion to Science Fiction*, ed. Mark Bould, Andrew M. Butler, Adam Roberts, and Sherryl Vint (New York: Routledge, 2009), 269.

Biases inherent in humanism, such as the favouring of some humans as being 'more human' than others, are evident in the various hierarchical frameworks and the interplay of power and subjugation that characterise human relationships. These inequalities are rooted in gender, class, race, and ethnicity, and even in terms of physical health and how able-bodied one is. Braidotti and Maria Hlavajova explain that the criteria that define 'acceptable humanity' only serve to enforce further exclusion of those who do not fulfil them and expose the "universalist pretensions of the humanist tradition."[15] In its rejection of hierarchical discrimination and embrace of plurality, posthumanism resonates with the notion of cosmopolitanism.

The term 'cosmopolitan' comes from the French word *cosmopolite*, which originated from the Greek word *kosmopolites*. The Cynic Diogenes's proclamation, "I am a citizen of the world [*kosmopolites*]," [16] came to represent a call for membership to a universal community regardless of social and political affiliation, and is what cosmopolitanism is most commonly taken to mean today.[17] The Stoics later introduced the concept of a universal moral law that fosters ethical responsibility to people close to the individual and to a worldwide community in the enlarged sphere of the cosmos,[18] and it became the basis for the idea of ethical justice in later cosmopolitan systems of thought.

In the Enlightenment period, Immanuel Kant built on Stoic philosophy to propose a cosmopolitan law that complemented constitutional and international law and endowed the individual with the status of "citizen of the earth" beyond "citizen of a state." Of course, Kant assumed that humans were rational beings, and that these

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[15] Rosi Braidotti and Maria Hlavajova, "Introduction," in Braidotti and Hlavajova, *Posthuman Glossary*, 2.
[16] See Diogenes Laertius, *The Lives of Eminent Philosophers*, Book VI, passage 63, trans. R. D. Hicks, Perseus Digital Library, accessed March 18, 2019, http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/.
[17] Patrick Hayden, *Cosmopolitan Global Politics* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), 13.
[18] Ibid., 14, and David Held, *Cosmopolitanism: Ideals and Realities* (Cambridge: Polity, 2010), 40.

laws would necessarily be self-imposed because they should be consistent with the values that were 'natural' to them. Since all members of this "kingdom of ends"[19] or the ideal moral community were makers and followers of the law, in principle, every human in the community should be equal and free. Critics of Kant such as Charles W. Mills, however, noted the Eurocentric and racist overtones of Kant's cosmopolitanism that excluded those he understood to be less than human (according to the Western concept of humanity) and therefore outside the sphere of ethical treatment and cosmopolitan engagement.[20] Troublingly, historical exclusionary perspectives and practices prove that cosmopolitanism, when associated with its Western colonial ontology, is mired with misogynist, racist, nationalist, religious, or class-based biases and inconsistencies, because the "universal" does not always encompass "difference," but implies uniformity and homogeneity.

Against these exclusivist tendencies, the cosmopolitanism that I subscribe to and which I anchor my study on is one that promotes interdependence and recognises that our identity (and potential) as human is contingent on our engagement with diverse others in ethical relationships that are governed by the principles of reciprocity and hospitality.

Recognising the inconsistences in the understanding and application of cosmopolitanism, I employ posthumanism to critique the pitfalls and limitations of the concept and, in casting an ecocritical eye on its human-centredness, I also argue that the notion of communal relationality and accountability should be extended beyond the human realm. Critical posthumanism, in particular, alerts us to the fact

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[19] Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals* [1785], trans. Thomas E. Hill Jr. and Arnulf Zweig (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 233-37.
[20] Charles W. Mills, *The Racial Contract*. Ithaca, NY: Connell University Press, 1997.

that the same mechanisms of inclusion in and exclusion from the *polis* can be easily redeployed to regulate and control inclusion in and exclusion from the '*cosmopolis*,' and its critique of speciesism and debunking of human exceptionalism invites us to recast the notion of cosmopolitanism to envisage a community which includes but goes beyond the human species. Moreover, by incorporating post-anthropocentricism to its range of concerns and drawing attention to its rejection of the Western hierarchical structure[21] that accords the human an unparalleled privileged position over other creatures (or anything that is nonhuman), posthumanism intersects with Ursula K. Heise's notion of eco-cosmopolitanism. Heise's concept is an environmentally oriented cosmopolitanism that takes into account the 'more-than-human world' in the envisaging of a planetary citizenship and the politics of interspecies solidarity.[22]

As such, I integrate posthumanism and eco-cosmopolitanism in the following ways in my thesis. I deploy posthumanist thought to destabilise and disprove liberal humanism's representation of the human as central to the world and the origin of meaning and history, as a singular entity entirely distinct from the nonhuman, and as a being that shares a universal essence with all other humans.[23] By incorporating an ecocritical perspective that acknowledges the ecological interconnectedness of humans and other lifeforms, this thesis critiques the biases of an *Anthropos*-centred cosmopolitanism and advocates a new cosmopolitanism that appreciates the human as only one element in the larger ecology of other beings. In other words, the kind of

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[21] Also known as the Great Chain of Being, this hierarchical structure has its roots in Greek philosophy as well as medieval Christianity, which places God at the head of this chain, followed by Man above the animals, plants, and minerals. See Arthur O. Lovejoy, *The Great Chain of Being: A Study of the History of an Idea* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1971).

[22] Ursula K. Heise, *Sense of Place and Sense of Planet* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 60, Kindle.

[23] Neil Badmington, "Mapping Posthumanism: An Exchange," *Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space*36, no. 8 (August 2004): 1344–51. https://doi.org/10.1068/a37127.

cosmopolitanism I am concerned with is not just about the connectedness between humans, but more importantly, the connectedness between humans and nonhumans (and posthumans). As such, this thesis examines how humans and nonhumans/posthumans could co-exist, co-evolve, and regard one another as kin in the Anthropocene and beyond.

In the process, the thesis will show how, by bringing to focus the perspectives of posthumans, these novels articulate what it feels like to be at the receiving end of 'uncosmopolitan' behaviour. The posthuman perspectives in these novels are not unlike those of the about-to-be-colonised natives of an alien planet, who are "on the wrong side of the strange-looking spaceship that appears out of nowhere,"[24] underlining the politics of alienation that Jamaican-born Canadian writer Nalo Hopkinson observes of space exploration narratives. This is especially true of *Never Let Me Go*'s human clone Kathy H., whose first-person narrative carries the entire novel; in parts of Atwood's and Mitchell's novels, the readers also share the perspective of various posthumans, such the Craker boy Blackbeard, as well as the noncorpum, the fabricant Sonmi~451, and the horologist Marinus. What will be particularly striking is the fact that, that despite their experience of less than "cosmopolitan hospitality" (a concept that will become clearer later), these posthumans play important roles in showing humans how to be cosmopolitan.

I will return to eco-cosmopolitanism later in this introduction, but it is worth noting here that the need to expand the anthropocentric limits of cosmopolitanism to incorporate the rights of nonhumans is already inscribed in the Constitutions of Ecuador and Switzerland which recognise the rights of nature and other organisms.

[24] Nalo Hopkinson, "Introduction," in *So Long Been Dreaming: Postcolonial Science Fiction and Fantasy*, ed. Nalo Hopkinson and Uppinder Mehan (Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp, 2004), 7.

Other communities around the world are also beginning to adopt 'Rights of Nature,' a legal and jurisprudential theory that relies on alliance and coalition building to "establish rights that can be enforced into the future,"[25] rather than merely relying on conventional environmental laws which still configure nature as passive and inanimate.

The need to expand the limits of a planetary-level politics beyond humankind is triggered by the fears of shared ecological crises which are likely to be generated by anthropogenic changes to the environment. In order to denote the present time as the geological epoch where humans (or the 'anthro') dominate over and have a direct (and negative) impact on the earth's ecosystem with the aid of technology, the Nobel Prize winning chemist Paul J. Crutzen popularised the term "Anthropocene."[26] Crutzen did not intend for the Anthropocene to refute the Holocene[27] which encompasses a much longer period, but as a supplementary term to more accurately define the latter part of the eighteenth century when a marked increase in the concentration of carbon dioxide was detected in the air pockets of polar ice analysed by scientists.[28] Crutzen attributes this phenomenon to anthropogenic emissions, which resulted in extensive climate change. This discovery coincided with and could be attributed to the start of the Industrial Revolution, most notably marked by James Watt's invention of the steam engine in 1784. More recently, as the result of a study conducted by a synthesis team of the International Geosphere-Biosphere Programme in 2015, the start date for the Anthropocene was shifted to post-1950, to

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[25] Emily Levang, "Can We Protect Nature by Giving It Legal Rights?," *Ensia*, February 4, 2020, accessed April 16, 2020, https://ensia.com/articles/legal-rights-of-nature/.
[26] While Crutzen is often attributed with developing the term and bringing it to prominence in "Geology of Mankind," *Nature* 415 (January 3, 2002), https://doi.org/10.1038/415023a, it was first introduced by Crutzen and Eugene F. Stoermer in "The Anthropocene," in *IGBP Newsletter* 41 (May 2000):17–8. http://www.igbp.net/download/18.316f18321323470177580001401/1376383088452/NL41.pdf.
[27] This refers to the current post-glacial geological epoch which started about 12,000 years ago when agriculture, settled communities, and the great human civilizations first came about.
[28] Crutzen, "Geology of Mankind," 23.

more accurately account for the impact of human-driven changes to the Earth system seen in the Great Acceleration.[29] This change in the start date of the Anthropocene has been widely accepted, though it has yet to be formally confirmed.[30] It is also interesting to note that while the Anthropocene was a term that had been popularly used by scientists, it had not been accepted as a formal term to describe the current epoch till as recently as August 2016 at the International Geological Congress.

However, there are some issues with the Anthropocene perspective that problematise our study of post-Anthropocene cosmopolitanism, not least in the way the Anthropocene conceives of the human species as an undifferentiated and universal geological force impacting the environment. This species-level classification of humans is at odds with the identity politics of cosmopolitanism, where not only is differentiation among different groups acknowledged, but each person's individuality is also recognised and he/she is incorporated into a universal community as an equal and unique member.[31] The Anthropocene's monolithic representation of human actors, moreover, also casts all other organisms and the environment in passive roles and without agency, hampering the envisioning of a post-Anthropocene cosmopolitanism that divorces itself from anthropocentric thought. It should be noted, in fact, that discussions on the Anthropocene can at times display an anthropocentric tendency to conflate the depletion of earth's resources to sustain human life with the death of the planet itself.

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[29] A term closely related with the Anthropocene, the 'Great Acceleration' refers to the period within this epoch where human activity has most greatly affected the planet and its ecosystems, specifically after World War II.

[30] Will Steffen, Wendy Broadgate, Lisa Deutsch, Owen Gaffney, and Cornelia Ludwig, "The Trajectory of the Anthropocene: The Great Acceleration," *The Anthropocene Review* 2, no. 1 (2015): 81, https://doi.org/10.1177%2F2053019614564785.

[31] Patrick Hayden, *Cosmopolitan Global Politics* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), 153.

Posthumanism's interrogation of the anthropocentric bias of humanism and reframing of the dichotomy between the human and the nonhuman in symbiotic terms, therefore, make it a means of addressing the problems of anthropocentrism. As a post-dualistic critical theory which acknowledges the "hybrid and relational terms of existence,"[32] posthumanism not only embraces the decentring of the human, but also highlights the advantages such a process can offer. Braidotti for instance calls for a disposition of "caring disidentification from human supremacy"[33] that looks to the welfare of future generations. The cultivation of this attitude requires a re-definition of human subjectivity which takes into account inter-human relations but also relations beyond the human species[34] that demand the acknowledgement of mutually dependent beings who are co-evolving in the Anthropocene. As such, a reconceptualisation of the post-Anthropocene to denote more than just the 'after-human' is needed.

In line with this thinking, it follows that subjectivity should not be a human prerogative because, as Braidotti reasons, the nonhuman, which includes plant and animal life (or *zoe*) and even technological artefacts, are recognised for their "respective degrees of intelligence and creativity,"[35] and should be acknowledged as agents in their own right. Bruno Latour's Actor Network Theory (ANT) too, ascribes agency to nonhumans and postulates a flatter ontology between humans and nonhumans by viewing nonhumans in relational terms with humans and not just as passive beings. Far from prioritising humans, ANT attributes equal status to human and nonhuman actors (such as objects, materials, and processes) and re-

[32] Francesca Ferrando, "Transhumanism / Posthumanism," in *Posthuman Glossary*, 439.
[33] Braidotti, "Posthuman Critical Theory [2016]," 22.
[34] Ibid.
[35] Braidotti, "Posthuman Critical Theory," in *Posthuman Glossary*, 340.

conceptualises human society's constantly evolving relationship with technology and other nonhuman actors.[36]

Considering how "we" have entered a posthuman universe, Braidotti clarifies that "[t]he 'we' in action here is not a unitary – let alone universal – entity but rather a nomadic assemblage: relational, transversal and affirmative."[37] This "nomadic assemblage" is a constantly shifting subjectivity that embraces a multitude of experiences and is relational because it is determined by its interaction with others and not by its existence as a single entity; most importantly, it includes collaboration and ethical accountability between human and non-human agents, or "non-anthropomorphic elements."[38] While this is a more inclusive and less dichotomous way of viewing humans and nonhumans, it can still be seen as the expression of an anthropocentric perspective because the relationship is inevitably framed in accordance with human terms, arguably replicating power relations.

The novels I have selected often lay bare the power relations and reveal the arbitrariness of the criteria for distinguishing the human from the nonhuman. For example, the human clones of Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go* may be biologically human, but their humanity is not accepted by the normative society in the novel, arguably for strategic reasons. Similarly, the fabricants of Mitchell's *Cloud Atlas*, the AI and noncorpum of *Ghostwritten*, the Horologists of *Bone Clocks*, and the genetically modified humanlike Crakers and the artificially enhanced animals with human neocortex (the Pigoons) in Atwood's *MaddAddam* trilogy, further challenge and complicate the epistemological and ontological boundaries of human identity and subjectivity, inviting us to rethink the very definitions of 'human' and 'nonhuman'

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[36] Bruno Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern*, trans. Catherine Porter (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993), PDF e-book.
[37] Braidotti, "Posthuman Critical Theory [2016],"16.
[38] Braidotti, "Posthuman Critical Theory," in *Posthuman Glossary*, 340.

and to interrogate their underlying biases. A useful springboard for this interrogation is cyborg theory which redefines the relationship between humans and technology.

Cyborg, a term used in science before it was adopted in critical usage, is derived from the term "cybernetic organism," and is commonly used in sf and late 20th century cultural theory to describe the melding of the human and the nonhuman in a single entity. An example of a cyborg would be a person whose abilities are enhanced or augmented with technological parts or organs using robotics. Manfred Clynes is credited with inventing the term 'cyborg,'[39] which he, together with his collaborator, Nathan S. Kline, envisioned in the context of anticipating future space travel. The cyborg is meant to be a "self-regulating man-machine system"[40] that technologically augments the space explorer's body so that *he*[41] could focus on the business of exploration and discovery without the distraction of having to keep himself alive. However, it was Norbert Wiener, the founder of cybernetics, who first introduced the idea of integration between humans and machines in the 1940s with the use of prostheses for lost and paralysed limbs as the most practical application of cybernetic theory, foreshadowing Clynes and Kline's cyborg. Consequently, when the medical community adopted the concept and applied it to patients with prosthetics and implants, it cohered with Wiener's vision for cybernetics where the prostheses and the person using them become part of a single system. In this sense, first-wave cybernetics' invaluable contribution to posthumanism is twofold: by extending the limits of the human body with prosthetic limbs, cybernetics revealed

[39] Clynes first used the term in Clynes and Nathan S. Kline, "Cyborgs and Space," *Astronautics* 5, no. 9 (1960): 26–27, 74–76.
[40] Clynes and Kline, "Cyborgs and Space," 27.
[41] Haraway herself challenges such androcentric presumptions of the cyborg as a gendered subject in her construction of the cyborg in "A Cyborg Manifesto [1985]," in *Science Fiction Criticism: An Anthology of Essential Writings*, ed. Rob Latham (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2017), Kindle.

the arbitrariness of boundaries governing the human subject and, secondly, as posthumanist theorist N. Katherine Hayles points out, it effectively redefined humans' relationship with technology by "[c]onceptualizing control, communication, and information as an integrated system."[42]

One of the most prominent cultural critics who used the concept of the cyborg to articulate the ambivalence of this relationship between humanity and technology is Donna Haraway. In "A Cyborg Manifesto" (1985), she dispels the binaries between 'human' and 'machine' with the cyborg, which also acts as a metaphor to encourage feminists to look beyond the borders of gender, traditional feminism, and politics. She defines the cyborg as "a hybrid of machine and organism, a creature of social reality as well as a creature of fiction."[43] She has been credited as the originator of cyborg theory, which rejects essentialism and embraces the notion that "we are all chimeras, theorized and fabricated hybrids of machine and organism,"[44] or cyborg. Haraway postulated the cyborg as "a creature in a post-gender world"[45] to challenge the favouring of sexualism and the treatment of sex as the primary arbiter of identity and socialisation. Beyond gender, Haraway challenges us to reassess our perceptions of ourselves as human, proposing that we may be better described as cyborgs given our strong dependency on machines.

As such, the cyborg represents an eradication of the boundaries between the organic (or human) and the machine, which, according to Veronica Hollinger, may arouse contradictory impulses "of both fascination and anxiety."[46] In indicating "the

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[42] N. Katherine Hayles, *How We Became Posthuman: Virtual Bodies in Cybernetics, Literature and Informatics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 84, Kindle.
[43] Haraway, "Cyborg Manifesto," 306.
[44] Ibid., 307.
[45] Ibid.
[46] Hollinger, "Posthumanism and Cyborg Theory," 273.

increasingly intimate relations between humanity and technology,"[47] the cyborg becomes "a harbinger of the posthuman that remains expressive of a particular experience of (techno)embodiment."[48] In other words, instead of regarding technology as a tool to serve humanity, we are now confronted with the idea that there is a more intimate and less utilitarian relationship between us and technology. Deciding whether this "(techno)embodiment" is an enhancement or an invasion of our bodies by technology incites our contradictory feelings towards the cyborg. Perhaps acknowledging these ambivalent reactions to the cyborg, Haraway explains that her postulation is "an argument for pleasure in the confusion of boundaries [between organism and machine] and for responsibility in their construction."[49] In the process, she sees her cyborg as a contribution to "imagining a world without gender, which is perhaps a world without genesis, but maybe also a world without end."[50] In a way, because the cyborg does not have an "origin story"[51] or any vision of the future to foster a need for salvation, Haraway presents 'it' as an idealised survivor in post-apocalyptic times, with the ability to "subvert the apocalypse of returning to nuclear dust in the manic compulsion to name the Enemy,"[52] or technology in this case.

Haraway's manifesto critically embraces the potential of humans becoming posthuman in transcending the limitations of the human body, although its main aim is to dispel dualism and embrace the fusion of the organic and the technological. By being neither all machine nor all human, Haraway's cyborg resists the binary oppositions of humans and nonhumans, and the very notion of 'others,' because

[47] Ibid.
[48] Ibid.
[49] Haraway, "Cyborg Manifesto," 307.
[50] Ibid.
[51] Ibid.
[52] Ibid., 308.

there is no longer a definable or collective ‘we’ in the first place. Furthermore, Haraway qualifies that her “cyborg myth” considers not just the transgression of the boundary between the human and the technological but the human and the animal.[53] This idea extends the cyborg’s reach as a metaphorical or allegorical posthuman figure which, I argue, should rightfully incorporate the fabricants and hominoids of the novels we encounter in this study.

As a figure without a sense of origin (birth story) or history, Haraway’s cyborg represents the potential for engendering brand-new identities, relationships, and alliances without prior prejudices and inherited hierarchies. It is notable that Crake in *Oryx and Crake* also envisions these potentials in his gene-spliced species, the Crakers, but, as we will see in Chapter 3, his vision is somewhat thwarted. The Crakers question their origin and crave for a mythology to help them make sense of the world and build some form of culture, betraying also, by the end of the trilogy, an increasingly sophisticated sense of community and social organisation. These features sneak through despite Crake’s best efforts to sieve out ‘problematic’ human impulses in their genetic programming and to keep them as simple and ‘unintelligent’ as possible. On the other hand, Crake also created the Pigoons, or pigs with human neocortex tissue which endows them with human intelligence. The Crakers and the Pigoons complicate the human and nonhuman hybridisation suggested by the cyborg figure and raise more questions about what makes humans human. Ishiguro’s clones, on the other hand, are wholly organic (though genetically engineered) human copies who are in all aspects taxonomically human, and the contestation of their human status by the normative humans in fact calls into question the latter’s own humanity. In Mitchell’s novels, the human and other-than-

[53] Ibid., 310.

human characters are so closely intertwined that they not only reside within the same body (in the case of noncorpum and the Horologists taking possession of, or inhabiting human bodies), but five of the six focalisers (including the fabricant Sonmi~451) of *Cloud Atlas* also bear identical comet-shaped birthmarks on their bodies, as if to show that their identities are palimpsests of one another, thereby signalling even more so the hybrid nature of human and posthuman subjectivity.

Posthumanism's decentring of the human, its questioning of the dichotomy between the human and nonhuman, as well as the problematising of these categories and relationships in Haraway's cyborg, are further enriched, if not made more complex, when placed in dialogue with environmental perspectives, especially the ecocentric branch of ecocriticism. As a literary response to the Anthropocene, the term "ecocriticism" was first used in the 1970s, and most critics have adopted Cheryll Glotfelty's definition of it as "the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment" with "an earth-centred approach to literary studies."[54] The 1960s and the 1970s also marked the time when literary and cultural critics such as Raymond Williams expressed keen interest in unravelling what literature could tell us about our relationship with the natural world, and our environmental crisis.[55] These critics began analysing works from Thoreau or Wordsworth which dealt with the celebration of the wilderness and romantic notions of 'nature,'[56] and the ecocritical thought of those two decades (and of much of the rest of the twentieth century) was characterised by a pastoral tone and focus and has been broadly

[54] Cheryll Glotfelty, "Literary Studies in an Age of Environmental Crisis," in *Ecocriticism: The Essential Reader*, ed. Ken Hiltner (Abingdon: Routledge, 2015), 122.
[55] See Raymond Williams, *The Country and the City* [1973] (London: Hogarth Press, 1993).
[56] However, as Ken Hiltner observes in *Ecocriticism: The Essential Reader* (1–2), environmental concerns like deforestation, air pollution, and animal rights, had already appeared in Western literature for hundreds or even thousands of years. He also lists *The Epic of Gilgamesh*, a text from Mesopotamia almost five thousand years old and which featured an (allegorical) deforestation, as an example of how an ancient culture grappled with the need to clear land for human survival.

labelled as the first-wave ecocriticism. It was not till the second wave or revisionist ecocriticism toward the end of the twentieth century that the theory broadened its focus in a sociocentric direction to encompass other (mostly urban) landscapes and genres and with a stronger focus on accountability and environmental commitment.[57] While there was more concern about the anthropogenic impact on the environment and issues like global warming, many ecocritics took issue with the anthropocentric focus of the discipline and argued for more consideration of other species of living beings that share the environment with humans. These ecocritics propose an ecocentric slant to the discipline, characterised by fair representation of the interests of all the inhabitants of the biosphere.[58]

Ecocentrism and biocentrism are both antithetical to anthropocentrism as they signal a move away from privileging the human as the centre and towards an identification of all life as part of an ecosystem. Almost identical in their philosophies and regarded as "semi-synonyms,"[59] they differ in their respective treatment of the abiotic environment: where ecocentrism places the interest of the ecosphere over that of individual species, including humans, and is concerned with "the interlinkage of the organismal and the inanimate,"[60] biocentrism endorses "the view that all organisms, including humans, are part of a larger biotic web or network or community whose interests must constrain or direct or govern the human interest."[61] Although both expound similar environmental ethics, ecocentrism's consideration of

[57] Lawrence Buell, *The Future of Environmental Criticism: Environmental Crisis and Literary Imagination* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2005), 138.
[58] These ecocentric leanings were already evident in first wave ecocriticism, albeit in idealised representations (and romanticisation) of 'wilderness' as untouched by human civilisation and 'nature' writing.
[59] Buell, *Future of Environmental Criticism*, 135.
[60] Ibid., 137.
[61] Ibid., 134.

both animate and inanimate organisms (the abiotic or non-living components of the ecosystem) can be said to be more encompassing than biocentrism.

Taken to extremes, ecocentrism can be manifested as a misanthropic ideal, more aligned to the philosophy of deep ecology. Not misanthropic in itself, deep ecology was introduced by Arne Naess to critique the 'shallow environmentalism' of campaigns to stop pollution and the depletion of resources, mainly to the benefit of the privileged in developed countries. Deep ecology was envisioned as a paradigm shift that emphasises the intrinsic value and worth of human and nonhuman life, especially noting that these values are independent of how useful the nonhuman world is for human exploitation. However, it is deep ecology's argument that a smaller human population is necessary for a sustainable future[62] that has invited more radical interpretations and actions that diverged from biocentrism or ecocentrism. This is the case with *Earth First!*, a radical environmental organisation set up in the 1980s in North America. In its early days, it advocated a stance towards biocentric equality, coupled with a strong belief that modernity exerted an environmentally destructive force on the natural world and had to be defeated. In this sense, the doctrine of *Earth First!* was antimodernist, preaching the virtue of simple and responsible living that does not destroy the natural environment: while warning against the exploitation and/or preservation of nature for the benefit of humans alone, it demanded that nature be regarded as part of a holistic system of which humans are just one of its many components. *Earth First!* eventually broke into two factions, with the more misanthropic group adopting radical strategies to defend nature from humans at all costs, even if it meant the extinction of humanity.

[62] Arne Naess, "The Deep Ecological Movement: Some Philosophical Aspects [1986]," in *Deep Ecology for the Twenty-First Century*, ed. George Sessions (Boston: Shambhala, 1995), 68.

Humanity and the wild were therefore viewed in opposition in a dualistic moral schema at odds with a truly ecocentric perspective.[63] Though *Earth First!* has been a fractured movement since its leader Dave Foreman left in 1990, many scattered groups loosely affiliated with the original group are still in existence.[64]

J. Brooks Bouson observes that *Earth First!*, and the brand of deep ecology it subscribes to, served as inspiration for the God's Gardeners in Atwood's *The Year of the Flood*,[65] an environmentalist cult which embarks on a quest for a new Eden and preaches an ecocritical theology which is apocalyptically ecocentric at the expense of humanity and even adopts a bioterrorism agenda. While large-scale bioterrorist acts targeted at entire human populations have not become a reality as yet,[66] Atwood's fictional universe does provide a prophetic commentary on the dangerous potential of radical environmentalist groups like the splintered *Earth First!* and its affiliates. One could argue that Atwood's God's Gardeners' willingness to accept the sacrifice of individual species for the greater good of the planet also implies an acceptance of inaction, which contravenes the radical ecologists' purported biocentric and ecocentric ideals of championing the rights of *all* organisms and species. The roots of the Gardeners' stance might be found in the Gaia hypothesis, which James Lovelock postulated in the 1970s. In this hypothesis, the earth is envisaged as a super-organism made up of all the living matter on it, self-regulating

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[63] Greg Garrard, *Ecocriticism: The New Critical Idiom*, 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2011), 111, Kindle.
[64] David Peterson del Mar, *Environmentalism* (Harlow: Pearson, 2006), 141.
[65] J. Brooks Bouson, "A 'Joke-Filled Romp' Through End Times: Radical Environmentalism, Deep Ecology, and Human Extinction in Margaret Awood's Eco-Apocalyptic *MaddAddam* Trilogy," *The Journal of Commonwealth Literature* 51, no. 3 (2016): 342, https://doi.org/10.1177/0021989415573558.
[66] Bioterrorism, nonetheless, has been and continues to be a very real threat, especially since the later part of the twentieth century. One of the more prominent cases was the Tokyo Subway Sarin Incident in 1995, which killed thirteen commuters and injured many others. The opening and closing sections of Mitchell's *Ghostwritten* mirror this event. The series of anthrax attacks in the United States in 2001 also yielded several fatalities, though neither of these two serious cases came anywhere close to the reach of what God's Gardeners in *The Year of the Flood* envisaged.

and sustaining the material conditions integral to life, and possessing the ability and predisposition to keep itself in balance or regain stability should circumstances cause it to lose that balance.[67] Humans are encouraged to consider the effects of their actions on the biosphere, but Lovelock dismissed large plants and animals as "desirable perhaps, but not essential,"[68] and explicitly proclaimed a confidence that Gaia will not be eventually impacted much by our technological advancements: even if some species, including humans, are destroyed, Lovelock insisted, Gaia will endure.[69] As Greg Garrard has observed, from the levity with which Lovelock regards the wellbeing of certain species in favour of the planet's survival, the preferred view of radical ecologists in the long run seems to be "fatalism as regards individual species, including our own."[70]

Ironically, perhaps, this extreme decentring of the human in favour of other organisms betrays an unspoken assumption that humans know what is best for these organisms and that it is only through human agency that these passive others can be saved. Moreover, not only can an ecocentric agenda prove itself to be anthropocentric: it can also potentially be egocentric when actions stemming from such an agenda could lead to the preservation of only organisms and species deemed important enough (by humans) to maintain a human-engineered rather than a natural diverse ecosystem, regardless of the fact that the balance of life in the biosphere could still be radically destroyed with the loss of 'selected' species. The inherent contradictions found in these branches of ecocritical thought are indicative in large part of the tenacity of the anthropocentric perspective and alluded to by the

[67] James Lovelock, *Gaia: A New Look at Life on Earth*, 2nd ed. (1979; repr., Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 37.
[68] Ibid., 37.
[69] Ibid., 100–1.
[70] Garrard, *Ecocriticism*, 111.

way Atwood's Gardeners regard the pandemic (or the "Waterless Flood") as a means to speed up the annihilation of the earth species to set up a new Eden for themselves.

At the same time, it is undeniable that our current dire environmental situation is a result of anthropogenic activity. None of the other organisms or species are perpetuators of environmental problems like global warming but, importantly for our purposes, they do not seem to have the ability (at least as far as we know) to construct such apocalyptic narratives. For example, the greenhouse gases that create the warming effect are natural, but the new sources of greenhouse effects that severely alter the climate, like mining and burning of fossil fuels, are attributed to human forces. However, *individua*l human agency alone is not powerful enough to wield such a devastating force on the environment, despite the tendency in popular environmental discourse to assume that a cosmos-level phenomenon can be reversed by the singular effect of local or even individual actions. Timothy Clark calls this reductive kind of discourse a "crisis of scale […] a derangement of linguistic and intellectual proportion […] a breakdown of 'decorum' in the strict sense."[71] It is only at the societal level and on a global scale that major changes can be enforced, changes which require the radical transformation of political and economic systems, and an upheaval of neoliberal ideology. Recently, climate scientists have tried to devise solutions on a global scale: one of them is climate engineering (geoengineering) or "the deliberate manipulation of the global climate using grand-scale technologies."[72] There are of course safety concerns, and issues related to

[71] Timothy Clark, *Ecocriticism on the Edge: The Anthropocene as a Threshold Concept* (London: Bloomsbury, 2015), 37.
[72] Jonas Anshelm and Anders Hansson, "The Last Chance to Save the Planet? An Analysis of the Geoengineering Advocacy Discourse in the Public Debate," *Environmental Humanities* 5, no. 1 (2014): 101, https://doi.org/10.1215/22011919-3615433.

human-nature relationship, ethics, and the global governance needed,[73] but what was once considered the stuff of science fiction is now becoming a viable way of 'managing' the environment.[74] Most importantly, geoengineering is a project of a global scale that demands international debate and cooperation or, in other words, the need for a cosmopolitan ethics. While human society is the source of environmental crises, it can also become the site of positive change to counter political inertia and turn the (impending) apocalyptic narrative around if it recognises the value of mutual interdependence and the need for reciprocity and accountability. The authors I am concerned with here seem persuaded that literature can play an important part in re-visioning the narrative by showing how the survival of both humanity and the planet requires the recognition of planetary interconnectedness and interdependence of not just humans but all present and future beings and organisms who share the biosphere. In so doing, these authors bring to the fore a new (eco)cosmopolitan vision that shapes new (eco)cosmopolitan identities.

As I have briefly anticipated, while cosmopolitanism is confined to the human social domain, eco-cosmopolitanism extends the cosmopolitan ethics of a "shared humanity" to the 'more-than-human world,' or "the realm of nonhuman species [and] also that of connectedness with both animate and inanimate networks of influence and exchange."[75] The cultivation of such a disposition requires what Paul Shephard calls in reference to ecological thinking "a kind of vision across boundaries," which is quite different from our "habits of perception," facilitated by our language that

[73] Ibid., 102.
[74] The paradox of this idea is not lost on me; there remains an unresolvable tension between wanting to save the environment and acknowledging that perhaps the environment is not 'ours' to save. Nonetheless, while geoengineering may not be the answer as it positions the planet as passive and to be acted on, it could be a start to global thinking to help to foster cosmopolitan spirit, which is arguably what we need to help us move on to the next level of thinking, which is eco-cosmopolitanism.
[75] Heise, *Sense of Place*, 60–1.

"encourages us to see ourselves – or the plant or animal – as an isolated sack, a thing, a contained self."[76] This recommendation has important bearings on the issue of human continuity, because it suggests that thinking about humanity in ecological terms has the potential to activate an (eco)cosmopolitan attitude. An eco-cosmopolitan solidarity that promotes multispecies justice prefigures the coexistence of humans and nonhumans in equitable terms and in shared ecosystems. Fostering belonging and solidarity across species, eco-cosmopolitanism aims to establish a planetary identity that traverses all kinds of differences to not only drive home an awareness that ecological crises are shared globally, but also to inspire political thought that takes into account multispecies justice as part of its long-term goals. Heise acknowledges that such an idea may sound utopian and unachievable because it requires imagination beyond our current political practice[77] but, arguably, the novels I am analysing here allow us precisely to 'imagine' a variety of scenarios where a new environmental politics and new modes of thinking are revealed as both urgent and desirable. Fully recognising that humans are more likely to want to protect their habitat if there is a chance for their own preservation – as Garrard insists that "[o]nly if we imagine that the planet has a future, after all, are we likely to take responsibility for it"[78] – Atwood, Ishiguro, and Mitchell sound the call for humans to take action because they want humanity to survive and endure, perhaps in as yet undeterminable (posthuman) forms. This intrinsic confidence in human survival is arguably what underpins ecocriticism (and also posthumanism), because by its interrogation of the human's role and place in the ecosystem, it proposes new ways

[76] Paul Shepard, "Ecology and Man: A Viewpoint," in Hiltner, *Ecocriticism: The Essential Reader*, 63.
[77] Heise, *Imagining Extinction: The Cultural Meanings of Endangered Species* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2016), 269, Kindle.
[78] Garrard, *Ecocriticism*, 116.

of relating to the environment, suggesting a firm belief in a tenable future for the (post)human.

Sf – as well as texts like those in my study which share features of this genre – offers a privileged vehicle for not only imagining possible futures for the planet but also for exploring (and transcending) the boundaries between the human and the nonhuman and to support an eco-cosmopolitan agenda aimed at redefining (and possibly expanding) the idea of 'community.' By and large, sf has not been regarded as 'serious literary fiction' or 'real' literature even though the study of it as a genre in its own right began as early as the 1950s. Sf only became more prominent with the founding of the Science Fiction Research Association in 1970 by scholar Thomas D. Clareson and the publication of various sf journals, like the *Science Fiction Studies* (SFS) co-founded by Darko Suvin[79] and R.D. Mullen. Suvin defines sf as "the literature of cognitive estrangement" and explains that cognitive estrangement is at work when the author presents an element that appears to operate on a logic that is peculiar to the world of the sf text: readers recognise a disparity between the sf world and their own and yet they accept that this said element is perfectly logical and consistent with the rules of that fictional world. The activation of the readers' recognition that the familiar is somehow disrupted causes a feeling of estrangement and "the crucial separator between sf and other forms of imaginative or fantastic literature," according to Suvin, is this disparity or 'point of difference' between the sf world and our own and what Suvin calls a *novum* (plural *nova*) or "new thing."[80]

[79] Suvin would play a significant role in establishing sf as a tenable genre, especially with his monumental work, *Metamorphoses of Science Fiction* (1979), which became a major influence on the academic study of the genre.
[80] Darko Suvin, *Metamorphoses of Science Fiction: On the Poetics and History of a Literary Genre* (Massachusetts: Yale University Press, 1979), 6.

Robert Scholes too emphasises the divergence of the world presented in the sf text from the readers' and calls it "structural fabulation."[81] Scholes believes that the "radically discontinuous" world in the sf text causes the readers to reflect on the disjuncture between the fictional world and their lived experience and incites a "[return] to confront that known world in some cognitive way."[82] In both cognitive estrangement and structural fabulation then, 'cognition' implies not only a "reflecting *of* but also *on* reality… [which is] a creative approach tending toward a dynamic transformation rather than toward a static mirroring[83] of the author's environment."[84]

To complicate the discussion, there is another term, 'speculative fiction,' which is variously defined as a subgenre of sf,[85] set in opposition to it, or even used as an overarching umbrella term that encompasses, besides sf, all other fantastical fiction that is non-mimetic in nature. Robert A. Heinlein is often credited with coining this term in 1947 when he defined speculative fiction as a 'what if' story where "accepted science and established fiefs are extrapolated to produce a new situation, a new framework for human action."[86] Heinlein distinguished speculative fiction from the more popular and formulaic science fiction, most often associated with stories in pulp science fiction magazines from the 1920s, in which the primary focus was on futuristic technology rather than the human characters. These stories, Heinlein

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[81] Robert Scholes's *Structural Fabulation* (1975) discusses this concept.
[82] Scholes, *Structural Fabulation: An Essay on Fiction of the Future* (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1975), 2. A point of difference is Suvin's rejection of fantasy nova as "non-cognitive" whereas Scholes does not make the distinction between sf and fantasy nova.
[83] Suvin associates "static mirroring" with the mimetic nature of realist fiction.
[84] Suvin, "On the Poetics of the Science Fiction Genre [1972]," in Latham, *Science Fiction Criticism*, 120.
[85] As sf is a very broad genre, there are many other ways of defining the genre. Besides cognitive estrangement and structural fabulation, the notion of sf as a "mega-text" with established "icons" and "interpretive schemata" that can be decoded by the reader from his prior access to other sf works is another critically acknowledged definition. One of the critics popularly associated with this definition is Damien Broderick, who discusses this characterisation of sf in "Reading SF as a Mega-text [1992]," in Latham, *Science Fiction Criticism*, 139–48.
[86] Robert Heinlein, "On the Writing of Speculative Fiction [1947]," in *Science Fiction Criticism*, 19.

argued, are either set "in the future, or on another planet, or in another dimension" but otherwise resemble "straight adventure stor[ies]" without "the pseudo-scientific double-talk and the blaster guns."[87] Atwood too seems to advocate this distinction when she describes *Oryx and Crake* as speculative fiction rather than sf, reasoning that while science fiction features "talking squid,"[88] her novel does not. This comment triggered some critical response, most notably from Ursula Le Guin and Marleen S. Barr, who took issue with what they understood to be Atwood's rejection of science fiction as a genre lacking in prestige or canonical literary status.[89] Barr, especially, felt that Atwood's distinction between sf and speculative fiction was a denigration of the sf genre, and she made a case for sf to be taken seriously.[90] Although Heinlein's distinction (and consequently, Atwood's) does seem disparaging of sf, it points to the focus of speculative fiction on human rather than technological problems. It is interesting that Ishiguro, who expressed concern that the readers of his novel *The Buried Giant* (2015) might be "prejudiced against the surface elements…. [and] say this is fantasy,"[91] was also subjected to Le Guin's accusation of genre snobbery.[92] Though sf and fantasy are different if related genres, Le Guin's quarrel with Ishiguro is similar in spirit with her criticism of Atwood, which Ishiguro gave a passing nod to,

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[87] Heinlein, "Speculative Fiction," 19.
[88] Margaret Atwood, "*The Handmaid's Tale* and *Oryx and Crake* 'In Context,'" *PMLA* 119, no. 3 (May 2004): 513. https://www.jstor.org/stable/25486066.
[89] Ursula K. Le Guin, "*The Year of the Flood* by Margaret Atwood," book review, *Guardian*, August 29, 2009, accessed January 18, 2019, https://www.theguardian.com/books/2009/aug/29/margaret-atwood-year-of-flood.
[90] Marleen S. Barr, "Introduction: Textism: An Emancipation Proclamation," *PMLA* 119, no. 3 (May 2004): 430, http://www.jstor.org/stable/25486059.
[91] Alexandra Alter, "For Kazuo Ishiguro, 'The Buried Giant' Is A Departure," *The New York Times*, February 19, 2015, accessed December 18, 2018, http://www.nytimes.com/2015/02/20/books/for-kazuo-ishiguro-the-buried-giant-is-a-departure.html?_r=2.
[92] Le Guin, "Are They Going to Say This is Fantasy?," *Book View Café* (blog), March 2, 2015, accessed January 25, 2016, http://bookviewcafe.com/blog/2015/03/02/are-they-going-to-say-this-is-fantasy/.

claiming that Le Guin wanted him to be "the new Margaret Atwood."[93] However, these debates surrounding Atwood and Ishiguro are not just limited to genre prestige and snobbery, but gesture to the larger issue of how the contemporary cultural realities of a globalised and cosmopolitan world are becoming increasingly fantastical and estranging such that it is difficult to maintain genre boundaries between mimetic and non-mimetic fiction.

Another crucial aspect of sf evoked by Atwood's remark about "talking squid" is its concern with the encounter with difference or with the alien 'other,' an encounter which is not only at the heart of the texts under scrutiny here but also, albeit in a different way, of Berthold Schoene's call for new 'cosmopolitan' novels which overcome national borders and nationalistic and territorialistic concerns.[94] Schoene is concerned with the need to "weav[e] one mutually pervasive pattern of contemporary human circumstance and experience"[95] in the context of selected Anglophone novels.[96] For our purposes, however, I would argue that the novels I have selected here are eco-cosmopolitan novels which, to paraphrase Schoene above, 'weave mutually pervasive patterns,' but of human *with* posthuman and nonhuman circumstances and experience.

As Ulrich Beck advises, the changed social reality marked by "global crises and dangers produced by civilization" demands that the old national outlook which has once been promoted as the most natural paradigm of modern societies needs to

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[93] Sian Cain, "Writer's Indignation: Kazuo Ishiguro Rejects Claims of Genre Snobbery," *The Guardian*, March 8, 2015, accessed December 14, 2018, https://www.theguardian.com/books/2015/mar/08/kazuo-ishiguro-rebuffs-genre-snobbery.
[94] Berthold Schoene, *The Cosmopolitan Novel* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009), 12, 15.
[95] Schoene, *Cosmopolitan Novel*, 15–6.
[96] Schoene's focus is on the contemporary British novel and his selection criteria appears to be Anglophone novels published in the United Kingdom. Besides works by English writers Ian McEwan and David Mitchell and Scottish writer James Kelman, he also includes in his study a novel by Canadian-born writer Rachel Cusk, who is based in the United Kingdom, as well as works by three Indian novelists Kiran Desai, Arundhati Roy, and Hari Kunzru.

be replaced by “a new cosmopolitan realism… [for] survival.”[97] So if the need, as Beck has put it, ‘to break out of the self-narcissism of the national outlook and […] enlighten human beings concerning the real, internal, cosmopolitanization of their lifeworlds and institutions”[98] is an urgent one in the context of a world that is increasingly connected and mutually interdependent, one can argue that the need to think beyond human/posthuman and human/nonhuman binaries is equally prevalent.

Connectivity and interdependency, however, do not presuppose equality: globalisation is strictly linked to market forces of neoliberal technocapitalism[99] which, more often than not further exacerbate unequal power relations. For instance, Beck believes that ‘borderless’ ecological threats have the ability to bind the late twentieth century world together in a risk society[100] and “[p]aradoxical[ly]… arous[e] a *cosmopolitan* everyday consciousness which transcends even the borders between man, animal and plant” because “[t]hreats create society, and global threats create global society.”[101] However, only with a willingness to acknowledge that climate crisis applies to all strata of society can Beck’s envisioned “utopian ecological democracy”[102] with its attendant cosmopolitan outlook and mutual accountability become a possibility. The implicit assumption in Beck’s proposition is that the impact of the climate crisis cuts equally across the different social classes and that physical geography would determine who is most vulnerable. Theorists like Heise have however countered this assumption and noted that class divisions are usually

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[97] Ulrich Beck, *Cosmopolitan Vision*, trans. Ciaran Cronin (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2006), 14.
[98] Ibid., 2.
[99] David Held, *Cosmopolitanism: Ideals and Realities* (Cambridge: Polity, 2010), 28–31.
[100] British sociologist Anthony Giddens, who co-developed the risk society hypothesis with Beck, has used the term to characterise a society that looks to the future rather than the past while focusing on its safety and security issues. See, for example, Giddens, *The Consequences of Modernity* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990).
[101] Beck, *What is Globalization?*, trans. Patrick Camiller, (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2000), 38, italics in original.
[102] Ibid., 99.

reinforced in the face of ecological crises because the reality is that it is still those in the poorer parts of the world that are hit the hardest but lack the resources to fight them.[103]

The novels under scrutiny here take class (but not only class) division and inequality on board in more or less overt ways: for example, in *Never Let Me Go*, the exploitation of the clones resonates with the exploitation of the lower classes (but also with slavery and the way in which the 'invisible' work of women benefits society at large but goes unacknowledged). In the pre-pandemic world of Atwood's trilogy, the female protagonists, Toby and Ren, are sexually exploited and abused in their respective jobs as (under-) minimum wage fast food server and burlesque dancer/hostess and they narrowly avoid the gruesome fate of being murdered on the job like some of their less fortunate colleagues. What makes their dire circumstances more devastating is that these unfair practices are abetted and authorised by the corrupt corporations and their police forces. The living and work conditions of the fabricants in Mitchell's *Cloud Atlas* make an even more overt nod to slavery, but with a cruel twist: their lifelong stints as indentured labour end in their brutal execution and not the elevation to full-fledged 'human' status and liberation from enslavement that they have been promised.

In these ways and more, as this thesis will show, the fictional worlds in Atwood's, Ishiguro's, and Mitchell's novels, in fact, mirror the fragmented but interconnected world that the readers inhabit, as well as possible worlds that the readers can imagine. As these novels accurately describe the 'estranging' nature of contemporary cultural realities in the late twentieth to the first part of the twenty-first century, they provoke fundamental epistemological and ontological questions about

[103] Heise, *Imagining Extinction*, 266.

these realities, and also inspire critical thought about the kind of relationships, both human and nonhuman, that should be cultivated not only in future but also in the present. In so doing, this study hopes to pave the way for the reading of other narratives that articulate new and plausible human, nonhuman, and posthuman identities and communities with a recognition of the planetary interconnectedness and interdependence of all present and future beings in the shared biosphere.

Chapter 2. Being Human in Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go*

The novels we discuss in this thesis are mainly concerned with contemporary cultural realities and the anxieties of a globalised and cosmopolitan world, such as the apocalyptic effects of anthropogenic climate change and consumer capitalism, as well as the unintended consequences of relentless technological advances of the late twentieth century to the early decades of the twenty-first century. Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go* (2005), however, does not appear to fall neatly into this constellation of works because not only does it not deal with planetary level issues like climate change or environmental crises, but it also gives the impression that its concerns are more prosaic and intimate, focusing on the everyday lives of its protagonists, a supposition that is reinforced by the introspective nature of the novel's first-person narrative. The epigraph of the novel also states that it is set in "England, late 1990s," signposting a distinct span of time in a clearly circumscribed place within a realist chronology, which further contrasts with the futuristic setting of Atwood's *MaddAddam* trilogy and the expansive temporal and geographical reach of Mitchell's novels.

However, Ishiguro's novel frustrates those initial impressions and instead raises questions about the definitions, limits, and boundaries of the human, which provide important material to the discussion on the posthuman and (interspecific) relationality. The focus on the posthuman figure of the clone in Ishiguro's novel paves the way for the examination of how the technological advances of the late twentieth and twenty-first century have contributed to the blurring between artificiality and nature and repositioned the human through the various posthuman figures in Atwood's and Mitchell's novels.

Unlike the posthumanoid Crakers in the *MaddAddam* trilogy, the clones in *Never Let Me Go* are not bioengineered with enhanced physical qualities to replace the human population. They are not augmented humans and do not fall under the category of the transhuman, which Nick Bostrum configures as "an intermediary form between the human and the posthuman"[104] in the technological sense. Neither are Ishiguro's clones like the fabricants of *Cloud Atlas* who are "genomed" from only a few specific stem types to produce hordes of identical clones.[105] Ishiguro's clones are fully organic and individuated human replicas who are raised to be living organ donors for the normative humans in their society when they reach young adulthood. The fact that these clones are nonetheless subjected to discrimination and their murder is legitimised by virtue of their biotechnological origins evoke bioethical concerns about genetic engineering and gesture to the novel's dalliance with the themes of critical sf.

As we will see, these concerns notwithstanding, Ishiguro seems intent on using the clones' exploitation and dehumanisation as a lens through which to examine how, both historically and in the present time, dominant powers have arbitrarily constructed and continue to construct 'others' as nonhuman in order to exploit and subjugate them. Arguably, if Ishiguro resorts to the sf 'novum' of the clone, he also undermines the cognitive estrangement that it could engender by choosing a setting that is close to the readers' own recent past. Situating his imaginative story about clones in a contemporaneous if counterfactual setting could be seen as a deliberate attempt to make the text as 'accessible' as possible for

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[104] Nick Bostrum, *The Transhumanist FAQ: A General Introduction*, Version 2.1. (Willington, Connecticut: World Transhumanist Association, 2003), 6, https://www.nickbostrom.com/views/transhumanist.pdf.

[105] The stem types of the fabricants determine which job functions they perform in service of the other humans.

readers and without creating too much distraction from the issues of difference and exploitation, which are the main focus of the novel. Moreover, deploying the human clone rather than an 'alien other' also gives the readers one less cognitive hurdle to overcome: configured as fully organic creatures who inhabit the same biosphere and possess the same biological material as the readers, the clones are better suited to represent discriminated subjects in the readers' own world. It would not be wrong to surmise, therefore, that Ishiguro has harnessed speculative fiction about dehumanised posthumans to critically examine the issues of human rights and justice in the twenty-first century. John David Schwetman, in fact, credits Ishiguro's use of clones with providing a timely update on the "almost unrepresentable experiences of the radically dehumanized Other,"[106] while proving that these issues, which are not any less urgent in a technologically advanced age, are in fact further complicated by rapid mechanical and biomedical inventions.

So, it stands to reason that although *Never Let Me Go* gestures towards sf, it also complicates genre allocations. Ishiguro had already pushed the boundaries of genre and experimented with displaced time and place as a narrative strategy in his fourth novel, *The Unconsoled* (1995): set in an imaginary yet oddly familiar Central European city, it features a destabilised flow of time and place, but the dreamlike sequences – which reflect the protagonist Ryder's state of mind – remind one more of a psychological study than an sf novel. Even though *The Unconsoled* arguably signalled a new direction in Ishiguro's writing, like *Never Let Me Go*, it resisted neat labels as non-realist fiction, and mixed realism with fantasy. Unsurprisingly, critics have been both careful and nuanced with the generic description of *Never Let Me*

[106] John David Schwetman, "'Shadowy Objects in Test Tubes': The Ethics of Grievance in Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go*," *Interdisciplinary Literary Studies* 19, no. 4 (2017): 423. https://muse.jhu.edu/article/678511.

Go. Instead of the carry-all term of sf, they have used a litany of phrases like "literary hybrid,"[107] an "[act] of testimony,"[108] a "speculative memoir,"[109] or "a fable of the recent past."[110] Although critics like John Marks read the novel in an arguably conventional manner as a "literary [interrogation] of the bioethical implications of cloning,"[111] Ishiguro seems less interested in such a restrictive reading of his novel. He has insisted, for example, that his intention is for the novel to be more than just about cloning and that it examines how, in spite of human mortality and people knowing that "[they] will all fade away and die… [they still] find the energy to create little pockets of happiness and decency."[112] The clones' acceptance of their fates might ultimately attest to the power of dominating forces in people's lives that can convince them to accept the unfairest treatment, but *Never Let Me Go* also celebrates the human ability to try to find meaning and fulfilment in diminished lives. Nevertheless, I would also argue that what Ishiguro brings to the table with *Never Let Me Go* is a compelling narrative about power relations and the strategic manipulation of marginalised subjects that offers an important perspective to the concept of anthropocentrism.

Ishiguro's first-hand experience of marginality and liminal status as an Asian Anglophone writer is central to what this novel tries to explore. Ishiguro has spoken of thinking himself "a kind of homeless writer," being neither a "very English

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[107] Margaret Atwood, *In Other Worlds: SF and the Human Imagination* (London: Hachette Digital, 2011), 168, Kindle.
[108] Ivan Stacy, "Complicity in Dystopia: Failures of Witnessing in China Mieville's *The City and the City* and Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go*," *Partial Answers: Journal of Literature and the History of Ideas* 13, no. 2 (June 2015): 225, https://doi.org/10.1353/pan.2015.0021.
[109] Keith McDonald, "Days of Past Futures: Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go* as 'Speculative Memoir,'" *Biography* 30, no. 1 (Winter 2007): 75, http://www.jstor.org/stable/23540599.
[110] Paul Sheehan, "Posthuman Bodies," in *The Cambridge Companion to the Body in Literature*, ed. David Hillman and Ulrika Maude (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 256.
[111] John Marks, "Clone Stories: 'Shallow Are the Souls That Have Forgotten How to Shudder,'" *Paragraph* 33, no. 3 (November 2010): 331, https://www.jstor.org/stable/43151855.
[112] Kazuo Ishiguro, "Interview with Kazuo Ishiguro," by K.G. Bates in *Conversations with Kazuo Ishiguro*, ed. B. Shaffer and C.F. Wong (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2008), 202.

Englishman" nor "a very Japanese Japanese."[113] He has admitted to feeling a tenuous connection to his birth country, an imagined if "detailed place called 'Japan,'" which he considers, above all, "an emotional construct."[114] Ishiguro may have gained widespread recognition as a 'British' writer when he published his first novel, *A Pale View of the Hills*, in 1982, but he has since also been described as an 'Anglo-Japanese' novelist, an 'international' writer (a term he himself had embraced), an "Anglophone writer of the Asian diaspora,"[115] and most objectively as "an author who writes in English."[116] Ishiguro can be said to have channelled his professed feelings of displacement, his sense of not belonging in any one place, and of always being on the "margins" through a first-person narrator (often unreliable) whose detached perspective arises from his or her disenfranchised situation in most of his novels, not just *Never Let Me Go*.

For instance, the butler Stevens in *Remains of the Day* (1989) presents a veneer of professional pride and contentment in his job, but it becomes apparent in the novel that he maintains his professionalism at the expense of his true feelings and connections with others. In *The Unconsoled*, Ryder is a guest musician in a foreign city who feels an exaggerated sense of public duty to a place he does not belong. His hosts put a myriad of never-ending demands on him that impose on his preparation for his performance, and ultimately, he is unable to fulfil expectations of him at both the familial and professional front. It is tragic that both characters, who are crucially also narrators, never quite realise that their false sense of importance

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[113] Kazuo Ishiguro and Kenzaburō Ōe, "The Novelist in Today's World: A Conversation," *Boundary 2* 18, no. 3 (1991): 115, https://doi.org/10.2307/303205.
[114] Kazuo Ishiguro, "My Twentieth Century Evening – and Other Small Breakthroughs," *The Nobel Prize*, December 7, 2017, accessed July 18, 2019, https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/literature/2017/ishiguro/25124-kazuo-ishiguro-nobel-lecture-2017/.
[115] Robbie B. H. Goh, "The Postclone-nial in Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go* and Amitav Ghosh's *The Calcutta Chromosome*: Science and the Body in the Asian Diaspora," *Ariel* 41, no. 3–4 (2010): 45, https://journalhosting.ucalgary.ca/index.php/ariel/article/view/35086.
[116] Ishiguro and Ōe, "The Novelist," 117.

have blinded them to their marginal status in their respective social realms. With *Never Let Me Go*, Ishiguro uses the singular perspective of a narrator who is similarly reluctant to confront her predicament – or is at least ambivalent towards the possibility of fully confronting it – to extend his study of marginalisation to an entire class of people who are victims of subjugation, discrimination, and exclusion and, in doing so, he also addresses the issue of anthropocentrism.

Discussions on anthropocentrism tend to focus on how the prioritisation of the human over other forms of life has contributed to other-than-human species being seen as expendable and treated as such. Historically, however, it is also well-known that members of races and ethnicities different from those of the ruling powers were "cast outside the realm of anthropocentric thought," "confined within non-human life (*zoe*),"[117] and marginalised, exploited, and rendered dispensable. Despite deploying the biotechnological subject of cloning in his novel, in fact, Ishiguro has indicated that with *Never Let Me Go*, he really wanted to explore what being 'human' might mean and entail:

> Paradoxically… having clones as central characters made it very easy to allude to some of the oldest questions in literature…. [such as,] 'What does it mean to be human?' 'What is the soul?' 'What is the purpose for which we've been created, and should we try to fulfil it?'[118]

Acknowledging that these questions "have become a little awkward to raise in fiction" because they can come across as "pompous or archaic," Ishiguro resorted to using clones in this novel to "reawaken these questions for modern readers" as a "futuristic way of going ancient."[119] By using the 'human copy' to revisit the boundaries that

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[117] Braidotti and Hlavajova, "Critical Posthumanism," 2.
[118] Kazuo Ishiguro, "Future Imperfect," *The Guardian,* March 25, 2006, accessed July 5, 2019, https://www.theguardian.com/books/2006/mar/25/featuresreviews.guardianreview36.
[119] Ibid.

divide the 'humans' in charge from their 'nonhuman' subjugated counterparts, he exposes the arbitrariness of these categories and prioritisations.

Ishiguro's novel, therefore, addresses concerns beyond the domain of imaginative fiction. The motif of genetic engineering and human cloning is not just one of the most enduring motifs in science fiction studies of the twentieth century,[120] but it is also often used to articulate the anxieties with preserving the so-called integrity of human subjectivity. That Ishiguro uses the clone figure to interrogate the limits of the human is not just a happy coincidence; his novel is also contemporaneous with societal and theoretical debates about cloning sparked by the rapid scientific and technological advancements in the second half of the century.

For a topic that arouses so much controversy, the word "clone" had an unremarkably innocuous origin. It is derived from the Greek word *klon* (twig or shoot) to refer to a process whereby a new plant could be birthed from its part and was adopted by plant physiologist Herbert J. Webber as a botanical term in 1903.[121] Later, the term became associated with animal reproduction procedures and the alteration of the genetic makeup of organisms for the benefit of humans in medicine and agriculture. It was only when the cloning of mammals became a reality with the successful cloning of Dolly the sheep by Wilmut and Campbell in 1997 that the possibility of human cloning started to ignite ethical debates about the sanctity of life and how cloning threatens human dignity. As an indication that these concerns were taking root, President Bill Clinton issued a moratorium on human cloning pending a

[120] Joan Slonczewski and Michael Levy, "Science Fiction and the Life Sciences," in *The Cambridge Companion to Science Fiction*, ed. James Edward and Farah Mendelsohn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003). 180–81.
[121] Herbert J. Webber, "New Horticultural and Agricultural Terms," *Science* 18 (1903): 501–3, https://doi.org/10.1126/science.18.459.501-b.

National Bioethics Advisory Commission investigation, outlawing human cloning for five years from 1997 in the US.[122]

Despite these measures in the US, something contrary was happening across the pond; UK legalised therapeutic cloning, which is the production of stem cells to replace or repair damaged tissues and organs in the treatment of diseases, in 2002. This method of cloning may be different from human reproductive cloning that produces a copy of a specific human being, but it signalled the possibilities for genetic modification and artificial production of human organs for harvesting. Ishiguro's novel about organ transplants falls within the context of these developments. The debates surrounding the ethics of cloning continue to gain momentum in the third millennium; the rapid developments in biotechnology and gene technology, the successful mapping of the human genome in the Human Genome Project in 2001, and increasing research on the stem cell and xenotransplantation further confirm that we have entered the posthuman age.

Understandably, one of the main controversies surrounding human cloning is how the process becomes an artificial substitute for the sexual reproduction of human life. A major issue the novel addresses, though obliquely, is the clones' humanity and why it is cast in doubt. Biologically, Ishiguro's clones are of the human species, but they are not regarded as fully human by the normative society in which they live because of their artificial origins.

The artificiality of the process of cloning is also one of the main objections to cloning for prominent anti-cloning bioethicist Leon R. Kass. To him, cloning

[122] Meredith Wadman, "US Biologists Adopt Cloning Moratorium." *Nature* 389 (September 25, 1997): 319, https://doi.org/10.1038/38562.

represents “the violation of things that we rightfully hold dear,”[123] that is, the “unspeakably profound” domain of ‘natural’ human reproduction.[124] As we will see, in some respects, Kass’s negative feelings about cloning resonate with those experienced by some humans in Ishiguro’s fictional society. What, to Kass, is natural human “repugnance” towards cloning and clones is a kind of “warning… not to transgress” but to defend what he calls “the central core of our humanity.”[125] Kass does not explain what this “central core” is, but it can be inferred that he holds on to the humanist idea of humans as unique and independent individuals, and that he objects to the threat that cloning poses to the concept. Kass’s overall thesis is to appeal not only to his readers’ revulsion at the trespass of some ethical boundary, but also to their fear of the artificiality of this creature which ‘approximates’ the human. Even though Ishiguro professes to be interested in addressing primarily the “oldest questions” about the human, one could argue that his novel engages obliquely with Kass’s notion of repugnance to cloning because, by making a clone his narrator, he forces readers to share the perspective of the clones, prompting them to query and reassess their own feelings about cloning and clones, and by extension, those they consider different from themselves. Ishiguro also questions the notion of the “central core” of the human head-on in his novel and critiques the basis for the arbitrarily drawn boundaries between human and nonhuman in the politics of exclusion, employing a range of strategies to address these issues, one of which, as we will see, is the presentation of the clones’ world.

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[123] Leon R. Kass, “The Wisdom of Repugnance: Why We Should Ban the Cloning of Humans,” *Valparaiso University Law Review* 32, no. 2 (Spring 1998): 687. http://scholar.valpo.edu/vulr/vol32/iss2/12.
[124] Ibid.
[125] Ibid.

Furthermore, one of the main concerns of the Council on Bioethics that President Bush set up in 2001 was the possibility that genetic engineering and cloning could radically change the nature of parent-child relations: instead of "seeing a child as an unconditionally welcome gift… [parents may regard] him as a conditionally acceptable product."[126] This effectively commodifies the child and eventually marks a shift towards a utilitarian approach to life itself. *Never Let Me Go* presents the other end of the same spectrum in that instead of designer children, hordes of children are artificially produced and raised to provide their body parts for the normative humans in their society. The desensitisation to the sanctity of life portrayed in the novel, however, is less the effect of the biotechnological advancement per se than of the fact that the clones' lives are devalued, and they become commodified as mere organ factories. Miss Emily, the former head guardian of the boarding school where the clones had grown up in, admits near the end of the novel that "there wasn't time to take stock, to ask the sensible questions"[127] when there were all "these new possibilities… all these ways to cure so many previously incurable conditions" (*Never*, 240), which is a sober reflection of how the lure of rapid and "great breakthroughs in science" (*Never*, 240) can cause moral and ethical considerations to be swept aside. Technology by itself is a useful tool, but it has no moral code, and it is in the way it is politically deployed in the novel that betrays the ethical apathy of the normative society. As such, Ishiguro's novel materialises these abstract, and at times unquantifiable, unethical practices in the form of living and breathing human clone bodies, made even more relatable to readers by the familiar setting.

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[126] Maxwell J Mehlman, *Transhumanist Dreams and Dystopian Nightmares: The Promise and Peril of Genetic Engineering* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2012), 77.
[127] Kazuo Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go* (London: Faber and Faber, 2005), 240, Kindle. Subsequent page references in text and cited as *Never*.

As we mentioned earlier, the epigraph of the novel indicates that it is set in the recent past, but it becomes apparent to the readers that this seemingly familiar place is an alternative late-twentieth century England. As Earl G. Ingersoll observes, *Never Let Me Go*'s setting is "different in ways similar to the worlds of speculative fiction, and certainly science fiction,"[128] and though it may seem like the past, it also gestures towards a "chilling sense of a futuristic dimension."[129] Nonetheless, there is little else in this futuristic dimension to suggest that the depicted world of the novel is different from the readers' own. The capitalist structures that must undergird the donor system seemingly needs no explanation and it is left to readers to infer that this system privileges the affluent with the means of extending their lives by the implantation of replacement organs from these living clones.

The uncomfortable interplay of the familiar and the unfamiliar with which Ishiguro presents us offers no clarification for how this fictional society has managed to successfully achieve the biotechnological breakthrough of human cloning: neither are the details surrounding the ghastlier medical feat of keeping the clones alive for the harvesting of their organs revealed in the text. Readers are instead presented with the *fait accompli* that human society has normalised the treatment of clones as less than human on the basis of their artificial creation and has commodified them as body parts to be used to cure disease and prolong human lives. The novel reframes the human-clone relationship along lines which evoke historical and contemporary discriminatory practices that arbitrarily differentiate between those considered as human and those who are not. In so doing, the novel not only critiques and undermines the strategic assumptions that the clones are not 'human' by challenging

[128] Earl G. Ingersoll, "Taking Off into the Realm of Metaphor: Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go*," *Studies in the Humanities* 34, no. 1 (June 2007): 43.
[129] Ibid., 45.

the notion of what 'human' is, but it also exposes the fallacious nature of the assumptions by which dominant groups assert their superiority over 'others.'

The lack of explanation for the priorities, social mores, and unethical practices of this fictional society, which should be completely alien to the readers' own, urges readers to interrogate themselves about the discriminatory practices and abuse of others in their own world. As Titus Levy points out, moreover, the "transform[ation of] the fantastic into something verging on [the] mundane mirrors the disturbing attitude taken towards atrocity throughout the text, as something ordinary, systemic and utterly unremarkable."[130] The normalisation of the extraordinary atrocity committed against the clones is as horrific, if not more so, than the heinous acts on which such atrocity depends because it is integrated into the everyday life of the novel.

Ishiguro's novel allegorises the historical and current dehumanisation of sectors of the human population and concurrently engages with the issue of anthropocentric prioritisation of the human over other forms of life. In synthesising these two important issues, the novel addresses and builds on one of the core questions in this thesis: namely, are humans ready to act ethically and accord equal rights to nonhuman others (such as animals and the environment)? Ishiguro's novel enriches and complicates our discussion because the clones are intrinsically human but regarded as nonhuman and, as such, exploited by human society. Relatedly, it bears mentioning that the use of the hyphen in "non-human" in some discussions on posthumanism signposts the clear disjuncture between the human and that which is not, which is something that dominant discourses have always posited and continue to posit. This disjuncture, it goes without saying, unwittingly reinforces binary or

[130] Titus Levy, Human Rights Storytelling and Trauma Narrative in Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go*," *Journal of Human Rights* 10, no. 1 (2011): 7, https://doi.org/10.1080/14754835.2011.546242.

dichotomous thinking and does not convey the sense of the rhizomatic entanglements (to borrow Deleuze and Guattari's term)[131] of the nonhuman and the human central to my discussion.

These entanglements are amplified by Ishiguro's choice of narrator for this gruesome story. While it gestures further that Ishiguro is more interested in the inner lives of his characters than examining their biostatus, presenting the narrative entirely from the perspective of the young adult clone Kathy H. forces the readers to confront her dehumanising experience in her society head on.[132] Ultimately, of course, the narrative of *Never Let Me Go* is controlled by Ishiguro, the 'human' writer, but the fact that he makes Kathy, the 'nonhuman other,' his sole narrator, furthers the case for her agency, emotions, and subjectivity and invites the readers to interrogate their own assumptions about the 'humanness' of the clones. Ishiguro does not portray his clones as representations of all that might be objectionable and monstrous about science and biotechnology, or as what Marks observes of the depictions of fictional clones in general, "project[ing] an aura of otherness, and of… deficient uniformity…. lack[ing] diversity, vitality and self-determination."[133] Instead, Ishiguro can be said to "[break] away from existing discourses of bioethical alarm"[134] with his fully differentiated and individualistic clones who are also moral creatures that do not lack what one would consider requisite normative 'human' qualities, facts that Kathy's society prefers not to contemplate or acknowledge.

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[131] See Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi (London: Continuum, 2004).
[132] The fabricant Sonmi~451's narrative in *Cloud Atlas* may also be in the first person, but since her account is a transcript of her interrogation by the Archivist, it is mediated by the questions that are asked of her and framed by a human interlocutor.
[133] Marks, "Clone Stories," 333.
[134] Ibid.

Yet, if Ishiguro's choice of a clone as the first-person narrator validates the interiority of these characters and puts them on par with the normative humans to alert the readers to the heinous acts they are subjected to, the shock to the readers, as Karl Shaddox argues, is not so much that the "clones are human but that these humans are clones."[135] The surprise element hinges on the readers' initial ambivalence about the biostatus of the clones and their assumption of a human-clone binary, which is dismantled when the readers come to terms that Kathy is both clone *and* human. As a matter of fact, not only are Ishiguro's clones not depicted as intrinsically 'other' (as some sf narratives and discourse do),[136] but it is only well into the narrative that readers discover Kathy's true identity. Nonetheless, readers might still regard Ishiguro's use of a clone narrator as a betrayal or challenge because, as Cristina Diamant reasons, it involves the breaking of a "fictional pact" and "they feel tricked into listening to alien stories that, according to popular culture, belong to potential villains."[137] Ishiguro's 'betrayal' with Kathy's 'alien' narrative challenges the readers to interrogate their assumptions of the human-clone binary and any exclusion biases they may have unconsciously carried into their reading of the text. This is because Ishiguro's use of clones as an analogy for human others applies also on a literal level – the clones are not only metaphorical representations of humans, but they are also fully human and discriminated as nonhuman others. Readers need to grapple with the fact that they are essentially not so different from Kathy and that

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[135] Karl Shaddox, "Generic Considerations in Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go*," *Human Rights Quarterly* 35, no. 2 (May 2013): 453, http://www.jstor.org/stable/24518023.

[136] Clone fiction like Ira Levin's *The Stepford Wives* (New York: Random House, 1972) portray these clone characters as somewhat deficient and subhuman, yet strikingly similar to 'natural' organic humans, which makes it easy to view them as uncanny others, echoing the ethical fears about cloning evinced in critical discourse like Kass's that we saw earlier.

[137] Cristina Diamant, "To Trust an 'I'/Eye: Reader Response to Posthuman Voices in Contemporary British Novels," *British and American Studies* 24 (2018): 217, https://www.proquest.com/docview/2115984617?accountid=10766.

her artificial mode of birth is only given significance by the normative society and deployed as the basis to brand her as a 'nonhuman.' Nonetheless, the readers recognise that despite their identification with Kathy in the narrative, they are not clones.

As such, Kathy's address of the readers – or at least her implied readers – as if they knew and accepted the way her world worked, would disorient them. She initially reveals that she is a "carer" for other "donors," but she leaves these terms unexplained, and it is only later that readers find out that carers are nurses for these donors, and that the latter are fellow clones undergoing organ extraction. Most importantly, at the start of her narrative, she seems to assume that her readers are clone carers like her: for example, Kathy reveals that Hailsham was "one of the… privileged" (*Never*, 3) boarding schools she and her friends grew up in and when she recounts her school days, she assumes her readers shared similar experiences at other schools for clones: "I don't know how it was where you were, but at Hailsham we had to have some form of medical almost every week" (*Never*, 12).[138] When she reports the popular perception that unlike other carers, ex-Hailsham students enjoyed certain perks in their job, she addresses the readers saying, "If you're one of them, I can understand how you might get resentful" (*Never*, 3).

Poignantly, when Kathy recounts how she had begun to realise that she and her fellow schoolmates "were different from [their] guardians, and also from the *normal* people outside" (*Never*, 63, emphasis mine) Hailsham or the "normals" (*Never*, 88), there is no sign that she associates her readers with these normative humans. In fact, Kathy's disclosure is one where she seeks commiseration from her readers whom she assumes are like her in their *difference* from other normative

[138] The reader is alerted that the frequency of these medicals is hardly ordinary in schools.

humans. Having set up her readers as clone carers like her, she seems fully confident of their empathy, which her description of an encounter with a mysterious art gallery owner simply known as Madame[139] illustrates. Kathy and her friends had meant to play a prank on Madame by surrounding her on one of her monthly visits to Hailsham because they sensed that Madame was afraid of them. However, they had not expected her fear to be laced with disgust "in the same way someone might be afraid of spiders" (*Never*, 32).[140] Recounting how the woman's reaction to Kathy and her schoolmates made Kathy not just painfully aware of their alterity, but of Madame's perception of them as somewhat nonhuman, she appeals to her readers: "I'm sure somewhere in your childhood, you too had an experience like ours that day; similar if not in the actual details, then inside, in the feelings" (*Never*, 33).

Eluned Summers-Bremner reckons that the readers' "identification hits an impasse"[141] as Kathy's words resonate with them in various ways: not being clones, they cannot have had exactly the same experience but, being human, they might have felt marginalised by dominant groups or seen similar dehumanising mechanisms at work. This is complicated by the readers' awareness that, if they had been part of Kathy's fictional world, they would by right be a member of Madame's camp, and not Kathy's. In this sense, Kathy 'unknowingly' appeals to 'the enemy' when she assumes that her readers should share her experience of dehumanisation. Kathy's 'mistaken belief' in the readers' identity prompts them to evaluate their own prejudices and ask themselves if they have been guilty of perpetuating analogous

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[139] Her name, Marie-Claude, is revealed near the end of Kathy's narrative.
[140] Madame's feeling of disgust would become significant later when we examine how this mechanism of dehumanisation is employed in Hailsham and discuss the comparison between Hailsham and concentration camps.
[141] Eluned Summers-Bremner, "Ishiguro's and Coetzee's Imaginary Animals," *Mosaic: An Interdisciplinary Critical Journal* 39, no. 4, (December 2006): 157, https://www.jstor.org/stable/44030442.

acts of dehumanisation in their own world, whether in a personal capacity or as a participant in a social institution or an organisational setting. It bears mentioning that, as such, the readers are compelled to look beyond Kathy's personal narrative to the society that approved and authorised the donor system in the first place.

The fact that the clones are the products of a state-sanctioned project, and not the uncanny inventions of a 'mad' scientist with a god complex,[142] invokes reflection from the readers on the systemic abuse in their world as they witness the institutionalised and normalised exploitation of the clones in the novel. A parallel can be made with Ishiguro's *Remains of the Day*: the butler Stevens may not be accountable for his employer Lord Darlington's anti-Semitism, but his implicit alliance with Darlington made him dismiss two maids because they were Jewish, an act he tries to excuse as "insignificant."[143] In this respect, the readers might find that they too, could be guilty of complicit behaviour like Stevens in his blind loyalty or as instinctively xenophobic as Madame in her reaction to others.

At first glance, Kathy's 'error' in assuming her readers are adult clone carers like her may seem like an ironic subversion of the very same discursive strategies used by dominant groups to subjugate others. Those in power put themselves on centre stage, address only those who are like themselves, and silence the oppressed by making them disappear into the margins. Kathy, by gaining control of her narrative, is in fact speaking to those who abuse her, but by assuming the readers are no different from her, she appears to break the silence to which she and others like her are condemned and to undermine the hierarchical structure. Kathy may not be cognisant of the implicit challenge her narrative poses to hegemonic

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[142] The misanthrope Crake in Atwood's *Oryx and Crake* that we will discuss in the following chapter is one such figure.

[143] Kazuo Ishiguro, *The Remains of the Day* (London: Faber and Faber, 1989), 145, Kindle. Subsequent page references in text.

power, but we can be sure Ishiguro is in control. Kathy's reflections, doubts, and anxieties in fact reveal the uncomfortable truth that, rather than fully accepting their destiny, the clones do question both their status and the status quo. Kathy's narrative, therefore, has the potential to be subversive whether it is directed to clones (it helps them 'crystallise' their doubts and reservations) or to humans (it invites them to interrogate themselves and their complicity in the system of exploitation they preside over). Moreover, in letting Kathy forge close relationships with the readers, Ishiguro could be said to mimic (but with a difference) what Suzanne Keen calls the "ambassadorial strategic empathy"[144] that is also found in some abolitionist literature of the eighteenth and nineteenth century. This narrative technique uses a member of an out-group to speak to an in-group with the aim of eliciting empathy for the outgroup.[145] Like Kathy's narrative, these works, where marginalised narrators often address readers directly, do not outrightly contest dominant forces. Instead, they implicitly restore humanity to those who had been dehumanised by eliciting the readers' emotional response to personally identifiable experiences, like the pain and anxiety of separation when family members are being torn from one another in the slave trade.

There are, however, subtle but important differences between these slave narratives and Kathy's. Unlike the slave narrators, Kathy is not conscious that she is addressing her oppressors since she assumes her readers are clones like herself. As we saw earlier, the readers also come to an awareness that Kathy is a clone only later in the narrative. The fact that both Kathy and her readers 'mistake' each other's 'real' identity also dismantles the clear in-group/out-group dichotomy of slave

[144] Suzanne Keen, "A Theory of Narrative Empathy," *Narrative* 14, no. 3 (October 2006): 215, https://www.jstor.org/stable/20107388.
[145] Ibid.

narratives and disproves her intention to elicit sympathy from a perceived in-group. Instead, Kathy can be said to decentre the normative human with her narrative, exposing the human as a social construct.

In the process of reflecting on the dismantled human-clone binary, the readers also grapple with the givenness of their own human status as they align themselves to Kathy's narrative. As such, even though the novel contains speculative elements, the prescient "what if?" question is not so much to address the possibility of human cloning and its consequences for humans, but to explore what it means to be 'clones' (or members of an actual disenfranchised and marginalised group of people) born to be discriminated and exploited. In the context of the following chapters, therefore, Ishiguro's novel interrogates how anthropocentrism could influence the way humans view other human groups and invites us to question our aspirations for a relational and collaborative ethics between humans and nonhumans that looks towards the post-Anthropocene from the perspective of the disenfranchised.

Kathy's narrative reveals disturbingly that for victims of discrimination and exploitation, there may be a disjuncture between their circumstances and what they appear to make of them. At least, in the narrative present, she seems oblivious to her dehumanisation or suppresses that knowledge, even when her childhood experience of Madame's reaction to her and her friends is not so far behind her. In fact, she focuses on aspects of her life to be contented with, presenting her current carer job as a fulfilling one because it gives her the freedom to roam and explore the country. In reality, however, her time is closely controlled by her duties, and her journeys are circumscribed by the long distances she needs to drive between hospitals and recovery centres. Kathy only associates the roads she drives on with

her marginalisation after meeting Miss Emily and Madame.[146] She consciously chooses “obscure back roads” and imagines that “these dark byways of the country existed just for the likes of us, while the big glittering motorways with their huge signs and super cafes were for everyone else” (*Never*, 249). What Kathy initially does not seem to recognise or want to acknowledge is that her work is invisible labour that is akin to slave labour, as this harsh reality is disguised by the provisions of the material comforts of a car and a bedsit by the invisible authorities. Rather, reflecting on her unusually long stint as a carer, she lets on rather proudly that “they” wanted her to continue a little longer in this role, and that she “do[es] know for a fact they’ve been pleased with [her] work” (*Never*, 3).

Kathy’s lack of volition and resistance has puzzled some critics. John Marks conjectures that, given the clones’ artificial origins, it is not unthinkable that their agential qualities might have been genetically interfered with, like their ability to reproduce.[147] Martin Puchner agrees that Kathy’s lack of outrage at her impending fate is consistent with the deficiencies that “one might expect from a manufactured creature,”[148] but contends that her passivity does not quite square with her assertion that “carers are not machines” (*Never*, 4). Such critical perspectives, however, tend to gather evidence to prove (or disprove) the clones’ humanity and condemn the injustice of their exploitation on that basis, which runs the danger of inevitably reinstating anthropocentric thinking.

Instead of revisiting the debate on the clones’ humanity, it would be more pertinent to examine Kathy’s implicit allegiance to the system that exploits her in

[146] The meeting is a pivotal event late in the novel, when Kathy confronts the truth about Hailsham.
[147] Marks, “Clone Stories,” 348–49.
[148] Martin Puchner, “When We Were Clones,” *Raritan: A Quarterly Review* 27, no. 4 (2008): 36, https://raritanquarterly.rutgers.edu/issue-index/all-volumes-issues/volume-27/volume-27-number-4.

relation to the Marxist concept of "false consciousness," a term[149] that philosopher Georg Lukács first coined. According to Marxist thought, the subordinate classes are subjected to a mental representation of the social relations that systematically conceals and obscures the realities of their subordination and exploitation, and members not only embody but are so wholly immersed in the intricate workings of these tightly maintained networks that it is impossible for them to imagine the world operating differently. As a result, they are made to believe that they have important defined roles in the world, and this belief disables them from formulating thoughts of rebellion or to even entertain alternative modes of thinking that are dissonant with dominant narratives. It is also not unusual for members of these oppressed and subjugated groups to salvage some sense of self-worth by holding on to any evidence that they might be favoured over others. Kathy reveals her pride at being set apart from others when she boasts about the privilege of having gone to Hailsham and betrays some enjoyment at the resentment she attracts from other carers because of her background. More than this, she unwittingly reveals her subscription to the same politics of separation that she is a victim of when she professes her preference to be a carer of former Hailsham students: "So when you get a chance to choose, of course you choose your own kind. That's natural" (*Never*, 4). Kathy's self-satisfied comments show how power dynamics 'naturalise' the abhorrent status quo and reveal her desperate need for belonging to some kind of community, even if these are, to reference Benedict Anderson, "imagined communities."[150] Kathy might not have personally known all the clones who studied at Hailsham, but she assumes they are closer to her than clones from other places.

[149] Georg Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness: Studies in Marxist Dialectics*, trans. Rodney Livingstone (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1971).
[150] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, 2nd ed. (New York: Verso, 2006).

Kathy's narration into her past reveals where these ideas might have taken root. It becomes clear to the readers that Hailsham, which was both home and school to Kathy and her fellow clones as children, was the primary site of the clones' identity formation and indoctrination during their formative years. Hailsham's strong hold on Kathy is evident as her memories of the place form a large part of her narrative. From the outside, Hailsham is a typical middle-class English boarding school, with its idyllic surroundings in the countryside to heighten this impression of its exclusivity and privacy. However, the truth is that its isolated location serves the purpose of segregating the clone students from the external human society. From Kathy's perspective, Hailsham, sitting in "a smooth hollow with fields rising on all sides" (*Never*, 31), offers the students a good view of the vehicles that came down the narrow road but its slightly depressed position actually hides the school from public view and obscures the clones' sight of the world. Kathy admits that the students felt so insulated that "any place beyond Hailsham was like a fantasy land" (*Never*, 60). They had no contact beyond their guardians, and besides the delivery men, workmen, and Madame with whom they had hardly any interaction, there were no other visitors.

By and large, Hailsham maintained its façade as a humane and nurturing place: the kind of discipline the clones are subjected to is typical of other schoolchildren's experience at boarding schools all over England. The mirroring of Hailsham against these boarding schools alerts the readers to the indirect reference that Ishiguro could be making to the 'dark side' of these educational institutions and their complicity in producing 'model citizens' to continue to support the system. The tussle between self-actualisation and conformity to fulfil specific roles in society is an age-old issue, but with Hailsham, Ishiguro puts a sinister spin to the role of the

school system as not just a cog in the mechanism regulating social stratification but one that perpetuates the discrimination and exploitation of future generations. Ishiguro complicates the picture because he does not portray Hailsham as an explicitly oppressive institution that imprisoned and abused her students. Instead, Hailsham had two faces; the explicitly nurturing side that cultivated personal growth hid its insidious restrictive side. The students at conventional educational institutions learn to balance individual freedom against societal demands, but the students at Hailsham do not have any such room for compromise because *none* of the individual freedoms signalled by what they learn from their arts and humanities education will be made available to them. Instead, they will be totally stripped of their subjectivity and agency to carry out their roles as living donors forced on them by the invisible yet omnipresent 'State.'

The key to this systematic conditioning lies in the psychologically stunting education Hailsham provides its students which ensured that they were always in a state of partial awareness or understanding. Kathy recalls that the Hailsham guardians reined in their students and forestalled any resistance by feeding them information in piecemeal fashion, so that the students were "told and not told" (*Never*, 73) about their impending fates. As Kathy admits, "we perhaps even knew that a long way down the line there were donations waiting for us. But we didn't really know what that meant" (*Never*, 63). Tommy, Kathy's closest friend and eventually lover, reflects on hindsight that the guardians must have "timed very carefully and deliberately everything they told [the students] so that [they] were always just too young to understand the latest piece of information" (*Never*, 74). By the time a composite narrative had been formed in their consciousness, the atrocities that awaited them were already normalised.

At other times, the students seemed to actively choose ignorance over knowledge, even when the opportunity to ascertain what awaited them presented itself to them. Kathy remembers that Miss Lucy, one of the more renegade guardians who deeply sympathised with her students, had alluded to their fates in the midst of her lessons but stopped short of revealing more, yet nobody probed Miss Lucy for more details. Kathy explains why: “If we were keen to avoid certain topics, it was probably more because it *embarrassed* us” (*Never*, 63, emphasis in original). The pressure on the students to think they should be ashamed to investigate further may seem self-imposed, but it is also part of Hailsham’s efficient system to prevent the students from raising inconvenient questions. Bearing in mind that these clones were very young, and that the guardians were the only authority figures they were exposed to within their cloistered existence, they would have learned to pick up any subtle cues from their guardians to regulate their behaviour and possibly self-censor any nagging questions they may have had.

Kathy affirms this when she recalls that the students were uncomfortable that “[their] guardians, usually so on top of everything, became so awkward” when topics related to the clones’ future were broached and that “it unnerved [the students] to see them change like that” (*Never*, 63). While the guardians’ awkwardness may have been genuine because some of them could have been morally conflicted about their own culpability in the whole setup, their reactions suggested to the students that some balance had been shaken by these questions, and the students were anxious to restore the equilibrium of their respective positions as student and guardian. In this way, Hailsham could rely on the students’ fear of offending their guardians and desire to maintain their own wellbeing to avoid uncomfortable topics.

Besides their firmly circumscribed roles, the guardians' names also hint at the overarching need to maintain their distance from their charges. The clones' surnames are indicated only by initials which signal their anonymous origins, but the guardians are referred to by their first names only. One suspects that these first names are pseudonyms, and the absence of any surnames is to discourage speculation from the students that a guardian with initials that matched theirs could possibly be their genetic parent. In this way, the guardian-student relationship was carefully regulated, with no chance of any claims to intimacy or familial feelings. Yet, if, for the most part, the guardians were authoritarian figures, Kathy explains that there were favourites like Miss Geraldine. Ruth, one of Kathy's closest friends, and some of the clones adored and imagined a more intimate connection with Miss Geraldine: they even formed a club of "secret guards" to protect her from imaginary kidnappers (*Never*, 45). The desire for a guardian to single them out for attention, with "a spontaneous hug, a secret letter, a gift" (*Never*, 55), is ordinary enough in a school setting. In the case of these parentless clones, who were not unlike orphans, the need for some affection from their guardians, whom they regarded as surrogate parental figures, shows how much they wanted to establish closer ties with their guardians. However, it is clear that these familial feelings were not, or could not be reciprocated, and for reasons less to do with propriety and maintenance of a strict school code than the glaring fact of the assumed human-clone divide. Miss Emily professes that she would have preferred to call them "*students*" (*Never*, 239, emphasis in original) rather than clones, as if this preference was borne out of her wish to address them in more humanising terms. However, the truth was that she was unable to think of them as authentic children, a point made more obvious by her own admission that she "had to fight back [her] dread of them all almost every day

[she] was at Hailsham" (*Never*, 245). "There were times," the readers are told, when she would "look down at [them] all from [her] study window and [she]'d feel such revulsion" (*Never*, 245–46). Miss Emily appeared to share the feeling that Kass had identified as a deterrent to cloning but she directs her revulsion at the 'products' rather than at the system which had created them to become organ donors.

Miss Emily's revulsion or disgust and Madame's reaction to the clones (seen by Kathy as the kind that one could have towards spiders) recall the mechanism of dehumanisation and animalisation employed against the Jews in Nazi Germany to incite their feelings of worthlessness and uncleanliness. The reference to spiders, in particular, invokes Nazi racist ideology that characterised Jews as "parasitic vermin." Even if Miss Emily's revulsion was admittedly less explicit than Madame's, the clones would have picked up subtle signs from these few adult figures in their lives, and their reactions would have affected them growing up, no matter how much Kathy may have tried to minimise the impact on her by forgetting them. Madame's and Miss Emily's behaviour was especially damaging to the clones because, as figures of authority who were supposedly the more compassionate humans dedicated to the care of the clones, they confirm that they regarded the clones as somewhat subhuman.

It is likely that Madame's and Miss Emily's compassion is flawed because they have (consciously or not) imposed a mental limit to how much they could or should do for these 'unnatural' and 'repulsive' creatures. In their minds, they have already gone beyond the call of duty and provided the clones with "wonderful surroundings" (*Never*, 238) for which (at least) Miss Emily expects gratitude when she says: "I hope you can appreciate how much we *were* able to secure for you" (*Never*, 238, emphasis in original), even though these relative comforts were not

accompanied by a commuting of their death sentences. The chauvinistic benevolence of these authority figures is based on their assumption that the clones are inferior creatures who do not have the ability, much less the right, to demand for more. This is apparent in Madame's disbelief at Kathy's and Tommy's proclamation of their love for each other and their request for a deferral (*Never*, 230–31). From a posthumanist perspective, the way these normative humans reject the clones as autonomous and agential equals is consistent with how the Anthropocene's monolithic representation of humans as the only actors of this epoch has effectively negated the agency of all other organisms in the biosphere. Madame and Miss Emily, while sympathetic to the clones, regard them as nonhuman, and employ the same inequitable principle of anthropocentrism, configuring them as passive others,[151] rather than, as Haraway would recommend, "multispecies assemblages" that they could "make kin"[152] with. Haraway's "assemblages" are made up of "organic species and abiotic actors" and include "something other/more than entities tied by ancestry or genealogy,"[153] and while Ishiguro's clones are of the human species, they occupy an interesting liminal space because they can also be seen as biotechnological "assemblages."[154] In a sense, the clones' condition is made all the more poignant because what they lack is a sense of kinship, something they desired from their guardians but could not receive, the kind of relationship that had the

[151] At the other end of the spectrum though, the humans in the novels we examine sometimes resort to the anthropomorphising of non-anthropocentric others to relate to them on more equitable terms, as we will see in the *MaddAddam* trilogy when Toby attributed human qualities to the Pigoons.
[152] Donna J. Haraway, *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2016), 1, Kindle.
[153] Haraway, *Staying with the Trouble*, 100–2.
[154] Although the clones do not share the same ancestry or genealogy as other normals in the traditional sense because of their artificial origin, they inherit genetic material from what the novel calls their "originals."

qualities of “enduring, mutual, obligatory, non-optional, you-can’t-just-cast-that-away-when-it-gets-inconvenient, enduring relatedness that carries consequences.”[155]

As far as relationality goes, it may also seem strange that sympathy, while often regarded as the basis for cosmopolitan practice, also contributes to conditions of inequality that cosmopolitanism aims to eradicate. Whether cosmopolitan sympathy is seen to be an ontological quality that all humans share[156] or a quality that can be cultivated,[157] the danger of basing cosmopolitanism on sympathetic feelings is that sympathising subjects may regard the recipients of their sympathy as passively acquiescent objects who are somehow less endowed with rational powers.

It is clear that this relational mode that the guardians adopt with the clones causes irreparable damage to the latter. The impact of the clones’ childhood experiences on their sense of self-worth is evident when the adolescent Ruth proclaims that they must be “modelled from trash” (*Never*, 152). Kathy takes Ruth’s proclamation to heart and secretly looks for her ‘possible’ between the pages of pornographic magazines, assuming that she should be among these ‘despicable’ women from the underclass of society. Not only is Kathy convinced that she originates from this disposable underclass (and is therefore herself “trash”), but she is also persuaded that she lacks ‘humanity’ and exhibits ‘animalistic’ tendencies. She has misgivings about her own sexual appetite, wondering if it is excessive and if her emotional detachment from partners other than Tommy is proof of her animalistic nature. Since Kathy and her fellow clones have minimal and contradictory

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[155] Donna J. Haraway, “Making Kin: An Interview with Donna Haraway,” by Steve Paulson, *Los Angeles Review of Book*s, December 6, 2019, accessed March 2, 2021, https://lareviewofbooks.org/article/making-kin-an-interview-with-donna-haraway/.
[156] See Kwame Anthony Appiah, “Cosmopolitan Reading,” in *Cosmopolitan Geographies: New Locations in Literature and Culture*, ed. Vinay Dharwadker (New York: Routledge, 2001).
[157] See Martha C. Nussbaum, *For Love of Country?*, ed. Joshua Cohen (Boston: Beacon Press, 2002).

information about sex, which they gather haphazardly from unreliable sources, they believe that they will inevitably come up short when measured against the normals, such as an (allegedly) 'normal' human sexual appetite and the (allegedly) 'normal' emotional attachments sex is supposed to foster. Such feelings come easily to the clones because they have been socialised to think they are already different and inferior to humans to begin with.

The students' identification with trash reflects their growing (if subconscious) awareness of how they are regarded as what Robbie H. Goh calls "abject possessions"[158] of not just the institution, but also the larger power system that their guardians are a part of. Internalising their low status as biological waste, the students come to some acceptance that their value rests solely on their organs and not on their identities as individuals.[159] This uneasy acceptance can be seen in the mechanism they put in place to negotiate and deflect their prescient horror of how their disposable bodies are to be discarded once their prized organs are extracted. When Tommy has a sporting accident, his schoolmates convince him that his injured elbow might "unzip like a bag opening up" (*Never*, 77), and they soon develop the ghastly yet strangely comforting notion that organ extractions would be like that: "you'd be able to just unzip a bit of yourself, a kidney or something would slide out, and you'd hand it over" (*Never*, 79).

Having incomplete information may have made it easier for the students/clones to accept what lay ahead because they did not have a clear idea of

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[158] Goh, "The Postclone-nial," 60.

[159] Judith Butler's notions of "subject" and "abject" in her theory of gender applies here: she critiqued the presentation of Turkish refugees as anonymous and with "no specificity" in the German press in Irene Costera Mejer and Baukje Prins, "How Bodies Come to Matter: An Interview with Judith Butler," *Signs* 23, no. 2 (1998): 281, http://www.jstor.org/stable/3175091. Just like the refugees and their abject bodies are unacknowledged as individual lives, the clones do not figure as 'lives' to the normal and their "materiality is understood not to 'matter'" ("How Bodies Come to Matter," 281).

what that future involved. Sharing the same lack of complete information because they were "told and not told"[160] also strengthened the clones' sense of belonging to an out-group. They could feel a sense of security by navigating the unknown territory together. Goh observes that "the main response on the part of the abject… is to band together as a means of dealing with the fear of the outside."[161] This instinct to "[huddle] together" (*Never*, 109) against external threats would stay with them even when they were no longer children. The clones neither tried to escape from Hailsham, nor later on from the Cottages, a kind of intermediate place they resided in before they become carers or donors. Kathy confesses that "somewhere underneath, a part of us stayed like that: fearful of the world around us, and – no matter how much we despised ourselves for it – unable quite to let each other go" (*Never*, 109): clearly this proves how successfully Hailsham had conditioned the clones to be obedient and compliant, making sure that the exclusionary system was maintained. Goh observes how this self-isolation as a group only "accords all too well with society's project of keeping the abject 'in the shadows' of their marginal and functional place in the scheme of things."[162] The clones' banding together suppressed their individualism and agency in favour of a collective and passive identity, further accentuating their alterity and subordination. By remaining herded together like livestock within the donor system, it is near impossible for Ishiguro's clones to be seen as individuals deserving of moral equality.

As 'holding pens' (suitably fashioned from disused farms) for the invisible underclass of the normative society, the Cottages could not disguise the clones' xenophobic segregation from the normative society as effectively as Hailsham did.

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[160] The readers are like the clones in this respect; They never quite know the whole story. In a way, Kathy's narrative mirrors Hailsham's control of information for the clones.
[161] Goh, "The Postclone-nial," 67.
[162] Ibid.

While the latter had a purported role as a place of education and nurture for the clones, the Cottages laid bare the inequalities of marginalisation and dislocation the clones suffered. There is no equivalent place resembling the Cottages for young people in the normative society after they leave school, save perhaps for apprentice schools or vocational colleges, and the Cottages were clearly neither of these because there was no training conducted for the clones. Instead, Kathy documents their indolent days of television watching, daydreaming, and casual flings with one another, though they also purportedly spent time reading literary classics as an indication of "how well [they] were *coping*" (*Never*, 112, emphasis in original). Implicitly, this lull period before what came next for them was one of hidden apprehension and fear. As Kathy admits, there was "an unspoken agreement to allow for a mysterious dimension where we went off and did all this reading" (*Never*, 112), which suggested that this intellectual pursuit was a farce, and that it was to hide the fact that they were not "coping." In any case, there was not much chance of them doing anything alone when, like cattle or livestock[163] on a farm, they were always corralled together, though it was more or less voluntary. Their fear of what was outside meant they hardly ventured out of the Cottages, even though they had relative freedom to do so: "We all knew no one would stop us if we wandered off, provided we were back by the day and the time we entered into Keffers's ledgerbook" (*Never*, 107). Keffers, their caretaker, only occasionally visited them, and there was no sign of other policing measures. The clones' compliant behaviour coheres with Mark Currie's reading of the title of the novel as a "request for

[163] As we will see later, this is an image that is also conjured by Miss Emily's usage of "rearing" to refer to their upbringing.

everlasting captivity,"[164] that views the clones as 'willing' prisoners not unlike the victims of the Stockholm Syndrome. Read in this light, the clones would seem to welcome their physical and psychological incarceration by first their guardians, and then their caretaker Keffers, who had cultivated a relationship with them resembling that between a warden and his prisoners. However, the sense of belonging they felt in that depersonalised place was not unlike that of a surrogate family, with their jailers playing the role of their parents and the other (prisoner) clones acting the part of their siblings.

The clones' imprisonment is something the novel makes explicit. In one of Miss Lucy's lessons, she drew a comparison between Hailsham and concentration camps. The class were discussing soldiers kept in prison camps during World War II and they wondered if the fences around those camps had been electrified, and what it must have been like to live in a place where committing suicide was so easy. Kathy was keeping a close eye on Miss Lucy during this discussion and picked up a fleeting moment where:

> a ghostly expression came over her face as she watched the class in front of her. Then … she pulled herself together, smiled and said: 'It's just as well the fences at Hailsham aren't electrified. You get terrible accidents sometimes' (*Never*, 71).

That these remarks and Miss Lucy's demeanour are picked up and reported by Kathy complicates the readers' view of Kathy's level of awareness and active suppression of her knowledge and is consistent with her belated 'awakening' as acceptance of reality. Miss Lucy's remarks, however, also draw the readers'

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[164] Mark Currie, "Controlling Time: Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go*," in *Kazuo Ishiguro: Contemporary Critical Perspectives*, ed. Sean Matthews and Sebastian Groes (London: Continuum Publishing Group, 2009), 91.

attention to the presence of fences around Hailsham. The ominous reference to "accidents" suggests that electric fences were used in other schools for clones, making an even closer parallel between the situation of the clones and those of war prisoners. Electrified or not, it is clear that the fences served the purpose of keeping the students *inside* Hailsham rather than protecting them from what was *outside*.[165] Most significantly, these "terrible accidents" suggest that the clones' suicides as well as their attempts at escaping the schools/camps were not unheard of and that some clones, painfully aware of their condition, were indeed prepared to reject their destiny by trying to escape the system or even taking their own life. Kathy might not have tried to cross the fence to either go into the woods behind the school or leave Hailsham entirely (at least by her account), but she and her fellow students were morbidly fascinated by rumours of what had happened to the ones who had tried to escape or had committed suicide. The students' fascination with these occluded events are at odds with their apparent compliance, as well as their complicity with the consciousness-shaping mechanisms they were subjected to. It may have seemed incongruous to the students that there were others who shared their relatively comfortable existences and yet were desperately unhappy enough to want to take their own lives. However, these unverified rumours probably also made them wonder if things were a lot worse than they had imagined, and if there might not be something wrong with them to not feel or react as strongly.

These undercurrents in Kathy's narrative, in fact, reveal that she and her friends were cognisant, at least to an extent, of the mechanisms that oppressed them and were desperately trying to negate or negotiate its repercussions. The

[165] The reality of the clones' imprisonment and the mechanisms of dehumanisation deployed against them further compare with the plight of the German Jews during the Holocaust.

episode above illustrates the clones' attempts to fit the reality of their exploitation into their cognitive framework even though it defies logic and their sense of fairness. As rightful humans who are trying to come to terms with their identities in accordance with what society has constructed for them as clones, they are not entirely successful in their attempts. Ruth, for example, seems to calmly and chillingly affirm her purpose in life when, just before her last donation, she declares to Kathy and Tommy: "I was pretty much ready when I became a donor. It felt right" (*Never*, 207). However, her conviction is cast in doubt when she adds her question, "After all, it's what we're *supposed* to be doing, isn't it?" (*Never*, 207, emphasis in original). The implied emphasis of the italicised "supposed" weakens her expressed conviction and the tag "isn't it?" signals her need for assurance from her interlocutors. There are also signs of suppressed rebellion in Ruth as, prior to her assertion above, she had been angry when Kathy related their friend Rodney's reaction to the news that his ex-girlfriend Chrissie had "completed." Rodney reportedly told Kathy that "he thought Chrissie wouldn't have minded too much," but the readers are informed that Ruth countered that "[i]t wasn't him on that table, trying to cling onto life. How would he know?" (*Never*, 206). Put in context, Ruth's emotional retort was not so much an indication of her strong empathy with Chrissie, but of her fear about her own impending fate. That Ruth's outburst preceded her forcibly calm declaration of her assigned fate shows the readers the struggle she must have gone through to come to some desperate surrender. That Kathy is the one who relates these events and interactions betrays her own anxiety. The last lines of the novel echo Ruth's words, conveying Kathy's resignation as she "turned back to the car, to drive off to wherever it was [she] was *supposed* to be" (*Never*, 263, emphasis mine). By that point, Kathy knew that her stint as a carer was coming to an end, and that she was to embark on

her new and terminal role as a donor, fulfilling the duty forced upon her and all the other clones.

Kathy is also (seemingly belatedly) aware of the disjuncture between Hailsham's main purpose and the otherwise ordinary education the students received, an education that promised a future that would not be available to them. As adults, Kathy and Tommy confront Miss Emily over this in the denouement: "Why did we do all of that work in the first place? Why train us, encourage us, make us produce all of that? If we're just going to give donations anyway, then die, why all those lessons? Why all those books and discussions?" (*Never*, 237). Besides the basics of mainstream curriculum, Hailsham placed an especially strong emphasis on art and expression. Students, in fact, were taught to not only value these creative traits in themselves, but they were also "encouraged to value each other's work" (*Never*, 15): during regular Art Exchanges the students' artworks were 'sold' to their schoolmates to attribute value to their creative originality. It was rumoured that the reason for Madame's monthly visits to Miss Emily was to collect the best students' art projects for display in "the Gallery." The rumour soon evolved in such a way that the students believed that these pieces would go some way towards proving their creativity and therefore how human-like they were so that they could defer their donations (but crucially, not abolish the system altogether). The humanity or non-humanity of slaves, subjugated indigenous populations, and other disenfranchised groups has often resided on whether they were recognised as having or not a 'soul,' and Miss Emily admits to Kathy and Tommy that art was mobilised to "*prove* [*they*] *had souls*" (*Never*, 238, emphasis in original). The art programme, however, was also part of a larger project to position Hailsham as an 'ethical' alternative to more functional and cruel ways of raising cloned children. By showing that her students

were not mere bodies or biological substance but that they possessed an *aspect* of humanity, a "deep down" (*Never*, 146) in their innermost being, Miss Emily, who headed this experimental project, attempted to win sympathy for the clones. However, the project had no higher aspirations beyond that – in fact, it was doubly cruel to insist that the clones prove they had creative originality, only to regard them as little more than superior copies of humans.

Even though the teachers at Hailsham never did explicitly tell their students that they should prove they were 'almost' human (just 'not quite'), this subliminal message must have made its way into their consciousness and can be best seen in Tommy's art. His "deliberately childish pictures" (*Never*, 18) at Hailsham did not quite qualify as the kind of art that would help showcase a human soul, at least by Hailsham's standards. It was only later at the Cottages that he began drawing "imaginary animals" and "fantastic creatures" (*Never*, 163) which resembled intricate mechanisms when seen in detail, or what "you'd get if you took the back off a radio set… only when you held the page away could you see it was some kind of armadillo, say, or a bird" (*Never*, 171). These drawings proved Tommy was extremely talented and had a creative flair, but more crucially, they also revealed his own belief that he had a mechanised, and to himself, not completely human self. As Summers-Bremner observes, these drawings looked as if

> they were made by someone who was not completely human, and whose understanding of his soul was similarly compromised: detailed, thoughtful, but mechanistic. While humans anthropomorphize animals, Tommy too creates them in his image.[166]

[166] Summers-Bremner, "Imaginary Animals," 157.

Nonetheless, even though Tommy's self-image appears to be severely distorted, his melding of the organic and the mechanical components in his imaginary animals also presents a viable picture of how living creatures might actually be configured.

Perhaps, as Shameem Black theorises, "[Tommy's] art… [knew] more than his conscious mind [could] express": by revealing that inside the animals were "the workings of an intricate form of machinery,"[167] his drawings implicitly suggested that all living organisms, including humans, were in fact 'mechanised' at the core. Tommy's animals beckon to Haraway's "chimeras [or] theorized and fabricated hybrids of machine and organism; in short… cyborgs"[168] that herald the posthuman age. The "tiny canals, weaving tendons, miniature screws and wheels" (*Never*, 171) that make up Tommy's animals, however, can also be interpreted as a metaphor for the 'mechanical' nature of the human body. Just as the intricate mechanisms in Tommy's animals were visible only when seen up close, the (mechanistic) inner workings of humans may not be visible outwardly but are necessary to existence. Arguably, in fact, individual human organs are like mechanical parts that regulate the human body, and when one of them breaks down, the human body stops working properly. In the context of the novel, when a 'faulty part' is substituted by an organ harvested from a clone, and if the clone that provides it is characterised as nonhuman, it should follow that the human who receives the organ incorporates nonhuman parts and becomes a human/nonhuman hybrid. Tommy's mechanised animals, therefore, provoke a rethinking about the arbitrary boundaries set up between the categories of human, animal, and machine, and it seems to be Ishiguro's intention for readers to see that it takes a clone like Tommy to dissect

[167] Shameem Black, "Ishiguro's Inhuman Aesthetics," *MFS Modern Fiction Studies* 55, no. 4 (Winter 2009): 801, https://doi.org/10.1353/mfs.0.1637.
[168] Haraway, "Cyborg Manifesto," 307.

what humans are really like internally as he goes about “post-anthropomorphising” his animals.

The mechanical and hybrid elements of the human body obliquely revealed by Tommy’s drawings constitute a reality that the normals would rather not acknowledge as they are clearly invested in insisting that they are radically different from the clones. So, it does not come as a huge surprise that Miss Emily’s project was never meant to prove that the clones were human in the first place. This is made clear when Miss Emily finally explains its goals to Tommy and Kathy long after they have left Hailsham. Through her choice of words, she unwittingly reveals that she regarded her charges only as *approximations* of human beings who had the potential to be “*as* sensitive and intelligent *as* any ordinary human being” (*Never*, 238, emphasis mine), but never completely human. Fundamentally, Miss Emily’s perception of her charges was not all that different from the dominant opinion that branded them as mere organ factories.

We had seen earlier how the Cottages were refashioned from disused farms and here, it is telling that when Miss Emily discusses her students’ upbringing, she describes them as being “reared in humane, cultivated environments” (*Never*, 238), suggesting that she saw her students as animals or livestock, while Madame also uses dehumanising vocabulary, repeatedly referring to them as “poor creatures” (*Never*, 232, 249). Once again, the reference to historical emancipatory discourses is unmissable as Miss Emily’s focus on the importance of rearing and nurturing resonates with the arguments of some abolitionists who underlined that, if properly educated, slaves could show their humanity: such arguments, however, did not always fully acknowledge that slaves were in fact human to begin with. Miss Emily’s project, therefore, when seen in the light of the post-Anthropocene cosmopolitan

concerns of this thesis, alerts us to the egalitarian aspirations of posthuman ethics and warns us that it is not sufficient to base such projects on romanticised or sentimentalised egalitarian ideals without radically shifting from an anthropocentric perspective.

The Hailsham project might have positioned itself as a humane alternative to the "deplorable conditions" (*Never*, 238) in other centres for clones, but it stopped short of challenging the clones' exploitation because it implicitly supported the donor system. In other words, the focus of the project did not detract from the goal of ensuring these clones were able to sustain the lives of the normals. Better living conditions did not change the fact that these clones could be murdered for their organs with impunity because they did not receive protection from the law. One could argue that in some ways, Ishiguro's clones approximate the condition of Giorgio Agamben's "bare life" encapsulated in the figure of *homo sacer*,[169] whose "entire existence is… stripped of every right by virtue of the fact that anyone can kill him without committing homicide."[170]

The intersections between the politics of discrimination and posthumanist discourse in the novel become more apparent here. If the clones represent those historically marginalised because of race, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, religious beliefs, or other reasons, they also stimulate discussion on posthuman ethics. Drawing a parallel between the treatment of the clones with the treatment of nonhuman others, the hypocrisy of the Hailsham project makes us question the impetus behind any eco-cosmopolitan project. In Ishiguro's novel, since even those

[169] Literally meaning "sacred man," Agamben has been credited with delving into the multiple levels of meaning of this concept, questioning the notion of the sacred and what the political realm actually demands of the people it is supposed to serve.
[170] Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, trans. Daniel Heller-Roazen (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), 183.

who champion the humane treatment of the clones are incapable of recognising them as equals, any attempt to change a morally bankrupt system is doomed to fail; similarly, in our current climate crisis, acting for the sake of humankind only, without demonstrating a real concern for nonhumans and a true eco-egalitarianism, is equally futile and unsustainable.

Madame is more than an appropriate example: like Miss Emily, she might have been sympathetic to the clones, but her feelings, directed at “creatures” whom she believed did not share an equal position to hers, were borne out of a generalised sense of pity. Her feelings were devoid of a consciousness that a terrible injustice was being committed against the clones and is in accord with the limitations of sympathy we discussed earlier. Madame’s detachment from the clones is most evident in one of the more illuminating moments in the novel. When Madame chances upon Kathy dancing alone in her room at Hailsham to the song “Never Let Me Go,” she cries at the sight of young Kathy cradling her make-believe baby. Kathy, who misinterprets the song as being about an infertile woman who had finally given birth but is afraid of being separated from her baby, thinks that Madame’s tears are caused by her sadness to see Kathy’s oblivion to her own barrenness as a clone. Madame, however, later clarifies that what had moved her to tears was the thought of “a new world coming rapidly…. a harsh and cruel world” (*Never*, 248). In other words, her reaction had nothing to do with Kathy but with the fact that Kathy looked as if she was clutching “the old kind world, one that [Madame] knew in her heart could not remain” (*Never*, 248). Though Kathy had credited Madame with the capacity for empathy, Madame revealed herself not to have even thought of Kathy, much less to have been moved by her condition or to have been even ready to admit that Kathy could have feelings like her. In fact, Madame was only concerned about

the way in which her old world was disappearing and worried about how she could negotiate that change. Similarly, when Kathy and Tommy ask Madame about a deferment of their donations, hoping that a profession of love for each other might make them eligible, she questions them in an “almost sarcastic” tone: “How can you know [you’re in love]? You think love is so simple?... You believe this? That you’re deeply in love?” (*Never*, 231). Her reaction shows that she found it absurd and even felt outraged that the clones had the audacity to believe that they could feel love and empathy, and she considered it her duty to disabuse them of what she was only too keen to consider a delusion.

Much more disturbingly, it is the clones’ most sympathetic guardian, Miss Lucy, who is keen for them to come to terms with their status as less than human, most likely to share the burden of responsibility she found so hard to bear on her own. In an intense scene, she urges them to give thoughtful consideration to their futures and not to just know in a subliminal manner what lay ahead. Unable to bear the fact that their education in a boarding school disguises the clones’ fates beyond the school gates, Miss Lucy puts a decisive stop to their daydreams of an unattainable future. She tells them: “None of you will go to America, none of you will be film stars. And none of you will be working in supermarkets as I heard some of you planning the other day. Your lives are set out for you” (*Never*, 73). She insists that it is only through the clones’ acceptance of the condition of “bare life” that they can possibly lead fulfilling lives. She advises her students that in order to “have decent lives, [they have] to know who [they are] and what [lay] ahead of [them]” (*Never*, 73). What Miss Lucy wants was for them “to know and know properly” (*Never*, 73) their inescapable fate as organ donors, that they will all, barring any “accident,” “complete” at the operating table. Miss Lucy’s advice is of course

impossible to adhere to: not only is she demanding that the clones seek contentment in bare life, but she is suggesting that a life predestined to end in such a horrific fashion can be a "decent life." Her passionate rhetoric is only an outlet for her ineffectual anger at the deceitfulness of Hailsham and a self-preserving move aimed at assuaging her sense of guilt: she does not try to encourage them to liberate themselves from their fates. Again, we see how Haraway's concept of "making kin" could apply. While Miss Lucy, more so than Miss Emily and Madame, had genuinely meant to be kind, she does not adhere to Haraway's dictum that "to be kind is to be kin,"[171] because she does not see her students as kin, and as such, her kindness fell short.

The irreconcilable advice Miss Lucy gives the clones only serves to perpetuate their subjugation and keep them in their place. It is significant that even someone who is sympathetic to the plight of the clones finds it hard to break away from the dominant narrative of oppression. Miss Lucy, ultimately, could not see, or rather, did not want to see any alternative to the donor system because she was not prepared to renounce the benefits and privileges that she was able to enjoy, thanks to it. When she lectures the students on the perils of smoking, in fact, she makes the distinction that "keeping [themselves] healthy inside [was] much more important for each of [them] than it [was] for [her]" (*Never*, 63). In other words, Miss Lucy could afford to be careless about her own health because she could always rely on replacement organs from the clones if hers should 'expire.' She too, imposed a limit on how far she would go for the clones – her relationship with them was never an

[171] Haraway, "Making Kin Interview."

"enduring relatedness that carries consequences."[172] At some point, she had to look out for herself because she was not obligated to save them, as kin would be.

Miss Lucy's advice, however, also highlights how, ultimately, the only distinction between the normals and the clones in the novel is in the role the latter are forced to play. When Kathy and her friends go on a day trip to Norfolk, no one on the street can single them out as clones; the lady in the art gallery mistakes them for art students and does not think anything is amiss when they present themselves as art enthusiasts (*Never*, 149). The ultimate proof that clones are not distinguishable from normals, is in the very fact that they had to be "kept in the shadows" (*Never*, 240) so that the normals could physically remove them from their moral orbit, which was something that Hailsham and the Cottages facilitated. Miss Emily admits that the normals "*preferred* to believe these organs appeared out of nowhere, or at most that they grew in a kind of vacuum" (*Never*, 240, emphasis mine); it was a conscious choice to configure the clones as "less than human so [their murder] didn't matter" (*Never*, 240).[173] Kathy, however, lets on that it was never clear if the fourth donation really meant certain death for the clones, or the more gruesome possibility that "even if you've technically completed, you're still conscious in some sort of way" (*Never*, 255). She continues by equating these kinds of questions to "horror movie stuff," adding that, "most of the time, people don't want to think about it" (*Never*, 255).

It is ironic that in order to enjoy an extended mortality and more durable bodies, the normals need to sacrifice any potential humanity they had and rely on lies and fabrications to normalise their treatment of the clones. When Kathy and

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[172] Ibid.

[173] Nonetheless, Miss Emily tried to defend the clones' murder as a legitimate act that saved the normals' loved ones from life-threatening diseases, explaining that "their overwhelming concern was that their own children, their spouses, their parents, their friends, did not die from cancer, motor neurone disease, heart disease" (*Never*, 240).

Tommy visited Miss Emily as adults and found her frail and wheelchair-bound, Miss Emily, who was probably about to be a beneficiary of clone organs, notes their discomfiture at the sight of her weakened state but expresses the confidence that "this contraption [wasn't] a permanent thing" (*Never*, 234). That Miss Emily does not think it inappropriate and insensitive to share that information with her students, given who they were and what they were already going through,[174] is consistent with how little she regarded them as human.

Miss Emily's and Miss Lucy's hypocritical stance clearly shows that having generalised feelings of sympathy for others without a willingness to acknowledge them as equals and decisive action to stop exploiting them is not authentic compassion. Changes need to be first made to the way humans regard and treat human others before we can address concerns about eco-egalitarianism and ecological justice. In order for humans to change their anthropocentric mindsets and be willing to give up certain privileges they appropriate as their right at the expense of other-than-humans and adopt new cosmopolitan identities, they must first relinquish their politics of dominance and oppression.

The discussion of the discrimination and exploitation of the clones in *Never Let Me Go* has uncovered the historical mistreatment of people deemed to be or constructed as different from the dominant group, revealing the intersections between posthumanist discourse and human rights issues. Ishiguro's novel demonstrates that the question about who inherently possesses human dignity is dependent on different understandings of who can claim to be 'human,' and why and how this has arbitrarily limited the coverage of who should be protected and why.

[174] Tommy was already approaching his last donation, and Kathy was at the tail-end of her stint as a carer at that juncture in the novel.

The novel, however, also raises other questions: why should the exploitation of clones be objectionable only when one recognises that they were in fact human? Anthropocentrism often also rears its ugly head when human rights discourses emphasise the favouring of human life over other life forms. To quote philosopher Mortimer J. Adler, human exceptionalism prevents "superior men" from "justify[ing] their enslavement, exploitation, or even genocide of inferior human groups on factual and moral grounds akin to those we now rely on to justify our treatment of the animals we harness as beasts of burden."[175] However, the bigger issue the novel raises is the underlying assumption about the relative importance of humanity against those who are deemed to be nonhuman others. While it could be argued that the novel presents a strong case against the mistreatment of fellow humans from a humanist perspective, a posthumanist reading would counter that it is not so much that the clones should be treated fairly because they are human, but that nonhumans and the nonhuman world should not be marginalised and exploited. To simply condemn the exploitation of the clones because they are 'human,' in other words, is to reinstate speciesism and human chauvinism: even though the normals in the novel prefer not to think of clones as humans, they also never question if it is ethical to sacrifice 'non'-humans in the cruellest manner to meet their own needs. According to Gabriele Griffin, the novel earns its critical science fiction label because the unreflective, and we may add, speciesist, behaviour of the normals in the novel demands that readers reassess "what [they] think is acceptable, ethically, humanly

[175] Mortimer J. Adler, *The Difference of Man and the Difference it Makes* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1993), 264.

responsible behaviour towards those *or that* which [they] deem or designate potentially non-human."[176]

While the texts in the following chapters are concerned with mainly inter-specific relationships that are focused on the collective ecological imperatives in the context of planetary crises – such as the interspecies collaboration and emergent multispecies community of *MaddAddam* and the proposed egalitarian cosmopolitan identities and interdependencies between humans and posthumans in Mitchell's novels – *Never Let Me Go* brings into focus the intraspecies relationships between different groups of 'humans' to show how they inform interspecies ones and how much they are in need of reconfiguration.

We had conjectured earlier that the clone can be seen as one of Haraway's "multispecies assemblages,"[177] and as concomitantly a metaphorical representation of the historical and current marginalised *human* other as well as the *nonhuman* other who shares the ecosystem: in fact, this emergent posthuman subject is not just a biotechnological assemblage, but truly "multispecies" because it embodies these human and nonhuman configurations. As such, how humans make kin with the clone could reveal inherent human attitudes and dispositions, which from Kathy's experiences in the novel, are found wanting.

As such, the novel could be said to conclude with a pessimistic view for a posthuman future. Kathy's narrative ends not with her eventual liberation but a short reflection on her deceased friends and "everything [she]'d ever lost since [her] childhood" (*Never*, 263), before she starts her transition from carer to donor. Kathy's fate lays bare the human propensity to assert total mastery over others which is at

[176] Gabriele Griffin, "Science and the Cultural Imaginary: The Case of Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go*," *Textual Practice* 23, no. 4 (2009): 656, italics in original, https://doi.org/10.1080/09502360903000570.
[177] Haraway, *Staying with the Trouble*, 101.

the heart of anthropocentrism, and the novel issues this challenge: that the most basic and yet the most urgent and difficult change needed for a *zoe*-centred egalitarianism is in fact a total reconfiguration of relations and of the principles along which one understands relationality. In other words, one of the major obstacles to conquer in the quest for a cosmopolitan approach in the post-Anthropocene, Ishiguro insists, is for humans to resist their proclivities towards configuring relations that adhere to the well-rehearsed master–slave or dominant–subaltern model. When humans are able to reconfigure their relationships with one another on egalitarian terms, there is hope that they may begin to regard other species according to these principles.

Chapter 3. Margaret Atwood's *MaddAddam* Trilogy and the End of *Our* World

In examining Kazuo Ishiguro's novel in the previous chapter, we saw how the configuration of inter-human relations according to dominant–subaltern models poses a major obstacle to cosmopolitan aspirations for the post-Anthropocene. In this chapter, we will examine these issues in the light of the apocalyptic environmentalism of Margaret Atwood's *MaddAddam* Trilogy, which comprises *Oryx and Crake* (2003), *The Year of the Flood* (2009), and *MaddAddam* (2013). While *Never Let Me Go* allegorises the practices of anthropocentrism through the exploitation of Ishiguro's clones, Atwood's trilogy discloses in a more literal manner the human disregard for nonhuman others through the capitalist and environmental recklessness that brings the world to the brink of politico-social and ecological collapse.

The trilogy examines how the indiscriminate and unethical use of science and biotechnology to enhance the wellbeing of humans not only threatens their very existence but also wreaks irreparable ecological damage. Interestingly, the more these post- and trans-human projects attempt to assert human dominance over other beings, the more they challenge the assumptions of human exceptionalism and unsettle the binary between humans and nonhumans. Through the enactment of a global apocalypse in the speculative near future, Atwood reconfigures a 'human' that dismantles the hierarchies of speciesism and anthropocentrism and gestures to a new communal relationality with the nonhuman and posthuman on ethico-social rather than biological or specieist terms. As such, the trilogy highlights the interconnectedness of posthumanism, cosmopolitanism, and ecological concerns in the Anthropocene.

The September 11 attacks, and the bombings in the cosmopolitan cities, Madrid and London, in 2004 and 2005 respectively, have had a deep impact on the contemporary cultural landscape, which had already been in the process of radical change by the forces of globalisation. These attacks heightened people's awareness that, even though they may be separated by geographical and national boundaries, they were connected by the collective nightmare of terrorism. This reality is mirrored in the 'every-city-state' setting of the pre-apocalyptic portions of *Oryx and Crake*, published shortly after 9/11, and the other two novels that followed the London and Madrid attacks. Even though it is not specifically stated in the texts, it is generally postulated that the events of the trilogy occur in a near future version of the United States,[178] close enough to the world that contemporary readers inhabit, but recognisable as worse in most instances.

In the trilogy's extrapolated future, humanity is on the brink of extinction, but when the cataclysm arrives, it is in the form of a manmade pandemic instead of a natural calamity. Told from a few survivors' point of view, the trilogy alternates between a pre-catastrophic past and a post-cataclysmic present. The first two books, *Oryx and Crake* and *The Year of the Flood*, are concerned with events that happen before, during, and immediately after the event. They move in tandem as simultaneuls[179] and converge when the focalisers of the two books meet at a climactic moment at the end of both narratives. *MaddAddam* resumes the story from

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[178] Some scholars and critics place Snowman's post-apocalyptic present within the first quarter of the twenty-first century: Coral Ann Howells postulates that it is "around 2025" (Howells, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Margaret Atwood* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006], 163), while Mel Gussow claims that Atwood had indicated that Snowman was born in 1999 and is 28 when the novel begins, which is close to what Howells conjectured (Gussow, "Atwood's Dystopian Warning; Hand-Wringer's Tale of Tomorrow," *New York Times*, June 24, 2003, accessed April 14, 2015, https://nyti.ms/2ofDzrq.

[179] A word Atwood coins to describe *The Year of the Flood* in "People Should Live Joyfully," interview with Arifa Akbar in The Independent, September 4, 2009, accessed March 20, 2015, http://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/books/features/margaret-atwood-people-should-live-joyfully-1781166.html.

that point and focuses on the setting up of a post-Anthropocene community made up of the handful of human survivors and other species.

One of the effects of globalisation that the first two books address especially, is the increase in the power and reach of multinational corporations that blur the distinction between nation-states but create other means of territorial boundaries. Although the concept of national citizenship no longer holds in the pre-apocalyptic world of *Oryx and Crake*, society is segregated into the corporate "Compounds" (gated communities housing elite scientists and the rich) and the "Pleeblands" (impoverished slum cities) and is hardly cosmopolitan in character. The Compound inhabitants are protected from the proletarian poor or "pleeblanders" by a privately-run police force, the "CorpSeCorps" (a morbid abbreviation for "Corporation Security Corps"), who are owned by rival multinational corporations. The novel details how one of the titular characters Crake, a scientist at one of the leading and most powerful Compounds, RejoovenEsense, unleashes a haemorrhagic virus disguised as a miracle prophylactic, the BlyssPluss pill, which causes a global pandemic. The pill is purportedly designed to protect the user from sexually transmitted diseases, improve libido and "prolong youth,"[180] while also sterilising the users without their knowledge to "automatically [lower] the population level" (*Oryx*, 294).

Crake manages to keep under wraps the rest of what he calls the "Paradice Project," which involves the total replacement of humans with an advanced race of biogenetically engineered humanoids referred to as "the Crakers." They are initially prototypes or "floor models" (*Oryx*, 302) for "totally chosen babies" (*Oryx*, 304) that supposedly trump naturally conceived ones because they "would incorporate any

[180] Margaret Atwood, *Oryx and Crake* [2003] (London: Hachette Digital, 2009), 294, Kindle. Subsequent page references in text and cited as *Oryx*.

feature, physical or mental or spiritual, that the buyer might wish to select" (*Oryx*, 304). In view of Crake's increasingly hubristic experiments to enhance humans, it is not surprising that he decides he may as well replace these naturally flawed beings with a new species that fulfils the transhumanist ideal of the perfectible human. Created from a selection of choice genetic information from human, animal, and botanical sources, the Crakers are endowed with "rapid-growth factors" (*Oryx*, 303), UV resistant skin with inbuilt insect and viral repellents, and the "ability to digest unrefined plant material" (*Oryx*, 304). These special characteristics would make them perfectly adaptable to the ravaged environment and help them thrive in the post-apocalypse.

Crake's intention is to speed up the repopulation of the earth with these posthumans once he has eliminated the doomed humans, which is striking in view of his misanthropy. It suggests that as much as he detests the *Anthropos*, Crake's perspective is still inevitably human-centred, which prevents him from envisioning a post-Anthropocene without some kind of recognisably human entity taking its place. At some level, Crake must believe in the intrinsic value of humans, or at least in some elements that he deems worthy of retention, which is why his vision is for an improved version based on the current model, rather than a wholly original kind of creature. What Crake wants from these posthumans is for them to establish a more sustainable and equitable relationship with the environment, which is not out of alignment with an eco-cosmopolitan aspiration.

Crake reasons that he is only expediting the process to an inevitable conclusion because humanity's route to destruction had already been set in motion by the unethical use of science and biotechnology at the hands of ruthless corporate forces. While the breeding of living organ donors in *Never Let Me Go* exposes how

far humans would go to misuse lifespan-enhancing technologies, the trilogy's pre-apocalyptic world reveals an even more decadent hyperconsumerist society that has no qualms about sacrificing both humans and nature in the pursuit of youth and beauty. The endless array of products and services produced by biotech and pharmaceutical corporations, with hyperbolic names like HelthWyzer, RejoovenEsense, and Anooyoo,[181] "prey on the phobias and void the bank accounts of the anxious and the gullible" (*Oryx*, 246) at the expense of the pleeblanders who often serve as guinea pigs for these inventions.

As to be expected, animals are not spared from these experiments, and in fact, animal genetic engineering is also one of the main features of this society. As the scientists create more and more hybrid creatures to fulfil increasing human needs and wants, they also start to "[fool] around" (*Oryx*, 51) and create hybrids like the rakunk, a raccoon-skunk splice, as "an after-hours hobby" (*Oryx*, 51) because "it made you feel like God" (*Oryx*, 51). Against such an ethically bankrupt atmosphere, soon other hybrid creatures begin to populate the environment to meet any number of practical as well as not so practical purposes: There are the disarmingly tame and friendly-looking wolvogs (wolf-dog splice) that the CorpSeCorps deploy as police dogs for the ferocity they inherit from the wolf part of their genetic makeup. Even fringe groups like the religious cult, the Lion Isaiahists, create liobams (lion and lamb hybrids) to fulfil the (distortion of a) biblical promise that the lion shall lie down with the lamb in the time of peace with the return of the Messiah.[182]

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[181] Atwood satirises real-world brand names with these farcical coinages that play on their functions, but critics like Mark Fisher feel Atwood's attempt at criticising neoliberal capitalism fails because they are too absurd to be convincing (See Fisher, "Atwood's Anti-Capitalism," in *K-punk: The Collected and Unpublished Writings of Mark Fisher [2004-2016]*, ed. Darren Ambrose [London: Repeater, 2018], 93–98, Kindle). We revisit this later in the chapter.

[182] The Bible verse that alludes to this coupling reads: "The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them" (Isaiah 11:6 AV).

The most prominent of these genetically spliced animals is the Pigoon, a "transgenic knockout pig host" (*Oryx*, 22) that is used "to grow an assortment of foolproof human-tissue organs" (*Oryx*, 22) for xenotransplantation. Although the Pigoons are living organ donors like Ishiguro's clones, the bioethical unease they generate is due to their incorporation of human DNA and neocortex tissue and overshadows any (possible) strong feelings about their commodification. Nonetheless, young Jimmy, the son of one of its inventors and Crake's best friend, shows sensitivity to the Pigoons' ontological ambiguity and is disturbed by jokes about eating them because "he thought of [them] as creatures much like himself" (*Oryx*, 24). However, for much of the post-apocalyptic present of *Oryx and Crake* and *The Year of the Flood*, the human focalisers would perceive the Pigoons as wily animal predators they have to outwit for survival. It is only when a band of human survivors find unlikely allies in the Pigoons in *MaddAddam* that these humans would have a more enlightened perspective about them.

The kind of bioengineering in the trilogy may seem outlandish, but in reality, experimentation with genetically modified plants and animals was well under way by the time *Oryx and Crake* was published. Evolutionary engineering of plants and animals developed so rapidly since the 1970s that it is now possible for faster and more radical genetic modification of plants and animals with gene splicing and recombinant DNA technology.[183] These advancements reflect a strong human desire to master the genetic future of plant and animal resources and betray a functional and exploitative view of the environment, which explains why sustainability of resources is not a main priority. If nature is depleted, alternatives could always be invented and manufactured to continue to feed human needs and desires.

[183] James D. Watson et al., *Recombinant DNA*, 2nd ed. (New York: W.H. Freeman, 1992).

As Hannes Bergthaller opines, a "more accommodating and less disgruntled version"[184] of environmental discourse is largely responsible for such complacency in environmental practice. In his opinion, sustainability has become a "notoriously fuzzy term" that humans invoke to allow them to "have [their] cake and eat it too."[185] In other words, humans can claim to want to "preserve certain natural habitats or reduce the quantity of particular harmful substances in the environment" in the name of sustainability, yet refuse to slow down "technological, economic, and social progress" that may compromise the wellbeing of the environment.[186]

Writer/social activist Naomi Klein notes how economic practices often run counter to the aims of environmental preservation when, in fact, free market fundamentalism has a direct impact on climate change. She noticed in the 2010s that not only were "green energy programs… increasingly being challenged under international trade agreements,"[187] but also that "the biggest emitters in the world [were] rushing to the WTO to knock down each other's windmills."[188] The various nations were concerned that imposing an emission reduction measure would threaten the right to free trade, which would affect sustained profits and overall GDP growth for the respective trading countries, a consideration that overrode the concern for the preservation of the environment. As such, there was a great disparity between the commitment to climate and trade agreements: while climate negotiations relied on the "honor system," trade agreements were "enforced by a dispute settlement system with real teeth."[189] The overlapping timelines of climate

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[184] Hannes Bergthaller, "Housebreaking the Human Animal: Humanism and the Problem of Sustainability in Margaret Atwood's *Oryx and Crake* and *The Year of the Flood*," *English Studies* 91, no. 7 (November 2010): 730, https://doi.org/10.1080/0013838X.2010.518042.
[185] Ibid.
[186] Ibid.
[187] Naomi Klein, *This Changes Everything: Capitalism vs the Climate* (New York: Penguin, 2014), 64, Kindle.
[188] Ibid., 65.
[189] Ibid., 76.

agreements and international trade policies also show that they were “parallel processes... which… functioned as two solitudes [as if] …. the other did not exist, ignoring the most glaring questions about how one would impact the other.”[190]

In the trilogy, Atwood critically examines the consequences of ignoring the two-way relationship between economic and environmental issues. She shows how, in a world where there are no international bodies to enforce accountability for environmental preservation, and the assault on the environment is abetted by excessive consumerism and enabled by free-market capitalism, not even the insatiable consumers themselves are safe from commodification. We already saw the exploitative attitude towards the plebian masses (pleeblanders) and nature (environment and animals), but in fact, the rival multinational corporations regard their own citizens, the supposedly privileged Compound dwellers, as expendable subjects as well. Even though the CorpSeCorps are ostensibly employed to protect the Compound dwellers and enforce law and order, they play a more insidious role of safeguarding the interests of the respective corporations. They maintain a tight control over the movement of these Compound dwellers to prevent the leakage of trade secrets in the tussle for power among these rival corporate companies, of which there “wasn’t just one other side you had to watch out for” because there were “other countries, various factions and plotters” (*Oryx*, 27). Under the invisible hegemony of capitalism and the rule of a corporate police state, the Compound citizens accept their incarceration in exchange for the provision of luxuries and protection from diseases and environmental hazards in their highly insulated environment.

[190] Ibid.

It is therefore ironic that Crake, who prides himself for being anti-establishment, fails to see that as one of the top Compound bioengineers himself, he is a commodity and a cog in the corporate machine that he claims to want to destroy. Not only that, in his warped sense of utopia for the Crakers, he replicates the artificial and insulated conditions of a Compound for them. In the pre-pandemic, he houses the Crakers in the Paradice Dome within the RejoovenEsense Compound, and it no doubt, resembles a model of paradise, with "a large central space filled with trees and plants, above them a blue sky" (*Oryx*, 302). However, the wires and scaffolding that hold up this illusion show through to expose that it was "[n]ot really a blue sky, only the curved ceiling of a bubble-Dome, with a clever projection device that simulated dawn, sunlight, evening, night…. a fake moon that went through its phases…. [and] fake rain" (*Oryx*, 302).

The artificiality of the Dome exposes it as a kind of false utopia that insulates the Crakers from external reality and restricts their freedom, representing a microcosm of the Compounds: these Compounds appear to protect their privileged and elite citizens from the lawlessness and chaos in the Pleeblands, when in fact, they also imprison their own citizens. We also recall how the clones of Ishiguro's novel are likewise segregated from normative society; first in the 'fake' boarding school and then in the 'holding pen'-like Cottages. Like the Crakers, the fabricant servers of David Mitchell's *Cloud Atlas*, whom we will meet in the next chapter, are also kept from the "purebloods" or normative humans in a "sealed dome,"[191] though theirs is located in the ninth basement of a building with regulated temperatures to mimic the changing seasons outside, and "AdVs" (monitors that televise

[191] David Mitchell, *Cloud Atlas* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 2004), 187, Kindle. Subsequent page references in text and cited as *Cloud*.

commercials) to substitute as windows. It is striking how all three writers depict the regulation of human-posthuman separation through references to systemic racial segregation – in *Never Let Me Go*, in fact, concentration camps are evoked in Miss Lucy's lesson on Word War II.

In *Oryx and Crake*, the setup of the Paradice Dome is ironic in view of Crake's grand scheme to eradicate hierarchy and the socio-political structures of human society for his new posthumans. He fully believes that the root of social ills is cultural in character and caused by destructive human inclinations that can be eradicated from what he calls the "G-spot of the brain" (*Oryx*, 157). He thinks the "G-spot" is responsible for the creation of symbolism and mythologies that lead to the founding of divisive religions because, to Crake, "*God is a cluster of neurons*" (*Oryx*, 157, italics in original). Crake is convinced that by manipulating the Crakers' "neural complexes," "[h]ierarchy could not exist among them" (*Oryx*, 305), and they would flourish equitably among themselves. However, he fails to see that he has imposed his dominance over the Crakers by controlling the features they should have and placing himself at the top of his self-made pyramid. Crake's megalomaniac aspirations are not too far removed in spirit from what Jimmy's father's scientists tried to achieve with their unrestrained gene-splicing experiments. In this respect, the trilogy critiques both the threat of what humans can do to nature with science and technology and the hierarchical relations these humans inevitably replicate even in their conception of an Edenic paradise.

Crake's version of utopia brings to mind Sir Thomas More's imaginary republic, or a place where all is well.[192] Where More is ambivalent about the possibility of this 'no place' or 'good place' (eutopia), Crake's monolithic vision to

[192] Thomas More, *Utopia* [1516], trans. Gilbert Burnet (Sweden: Wisehouse Classics, 2015), Kindle.

replace humans with his 'perfect' posthuman species in an artificial paradise aligns him with builders of utopian projects that aim to transform human nature by social and genetic engineering, eugenics, or genocide, and imaginatively portrayed in literary dystopias like Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* (1932). As Efraim Sicher and Natalia Skradol observes of such projects,

> [t]here is something inhuman (and thus potentially dysfunctional and dystopian) in the idea of a utopia which requires that human society… be replaced… by a social order based on different (implicitly non-human) characteristics.[193]

Sicher and Skradol's key concern here is not so much with the prospect of a *new* social order per se, but that it is a social order that calls for the total replacement (as Crake intends with his Crakers) and not just displacement of current forms of human life.

Nonetheless, while Crake's misguided utopian project led to what might be regarded as a 'dystopian' post-pandemic world, the founding of the interspecies commune at the end of the trilogy seems to be gesturing towards something closer to a possible 'utopian' scenario. Recognising how "utopia" and "dystopia" may not adequately describe (what was at the time of writing) the first two parts of the trilogy, Atwood combined the two terms to form "ustopia" to indicate that within "the imagined perfect society and its opposite… each contains a latent version of the other."[194] Atwood intimates that the ustopia in the post-pandemic world of *Oryx and Crake* and *The Year of the Flood* is ultimately a shared place where human survivors could "represent a dystopic threat to the tiny utopia of genetically modified, peaceful,

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[193] Efraim Sicher and Natalia Skradol, "A World Neither Brave nor New: Reading Dystopian Fiction after 9/11," *Partial Answers: Journal of Literature and the History of Ideas* 4, no.1 (January 2006): 155, https://doi.org/10.1353/pan.0.0057.
[194] Atwood, *In Other Worlds*, 66.

and sexually harmonious New Humans[195] that is set to replace them."[196] Reminding us that what seems 'utopian' for one group can be perceived as 'dystopian' for another, Atwood indicates that, not only is utopia uncertain, but it also depends on whose perspective we are assuming.

In taking the focus away from the human survivors to critique their impact *on* the Crakers, in fact, Atwood alerts us that, in the envisioning of what makes a utopian society, it is easy to succumb to the politics of domination and alienation if we neglect the experiences of 'others' or do not question who should be the subject(s) of this "social dreaming."[197] For instance, we may question what utopia represents for the Crakers, specifically, and if they even have a concept of it: when Snowman leads them out of the Dome, it is already the aftermath of the pandemic. The beach that becomes their home may be eroded with "ersatz reefs of rusted car parts and jumbled bricks and assorted rubble" (*Oryx*, 3), but it is the only environment they know outside of the Dome. Considering that they are specifically created to not only adapt to but to flourish in ravaged environments, the eroded and possibly toxic shoreline may well be the most conducive habitat for them, and they may not have "dreamed" of or even desired[198] a better place.

In this sense, the post-catastrophe rubble that makes up most of the spaces in *Oryx and Crake* may seem dystopian to the readers (and the humans in this novel and the rest of the trilogy), but the Crakers are not able to formulate such assessments, not having alternative spaces to compare the devastated environment

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[195] It is revealing that Atwood refers to the Crakers as the "New Humans," which chimes with the postulation that despite Crake's intention for the Crakers to be a new race, he still models them on humans.
[196] Atwood, *In Other Worlds*, 93.
[197] Lyman Tower Sargent, "The Three Faces of Utopianism Revisited," *Utopian Studies* 5, no. 1 (1994): 1, http://www.jstor.org/stable/20719246.
[198] See Ruth Levitas, *The Concept of Utopia* (Hemel Hempstead: Philip Allan, 1990) for her broad definition of utopia as an expression of desire for a better place.

with. The only human the Crakers have contact with (before the other survivors appear) is Snowman, whom they treat as an honorary member of their community. Being more adept at surviving in the post-catastrophe world than him, the Crakers gather food for him and take care of him however best they can. As such, it is arguable how much of an improvement[199] their co-option into the human community can be to their circumstances, barring, as we will see later, the benefit of protection from the Painballers.[200] Overall, therefore, Atwood seems to suggest that it is important not to impose a rigid version of a utopian society but to allow for alternative perspectives of different groups.

However, while Atwood professes to consider the viewpoint of the Crakers when she postulated the concept of ustopia in *In Other Worlds*, she seems more invested in her human characters than the Crakers in the novels per se.[201] As we shall see, the interspecies community is centred round the humans, and the acceptance of the Crakers and especially the Pigoons in the interspecies community is based on the terms set by the human members. Although the alliance between the humans and the Pigoons to ward off shared threats is initiated by the Pigoons and established on more egalitarian (if contractual) terms, how humanlike these nonhumans and posthumans are contributes to the humans' decision to include them in the community. It is debatable if Atwood considers the 'admission criteria' to be biased,[202] even though it does bring into focus the fact that humanist utopias may be (intentionally or not) anthropocentric. As will be evident, although Atwood shows

[199] More fundamentally, even as I argue for the Crakers' right to their version of utopia, I am imposing what I think is "better" from my point of view.
[200] Painball is a facility for hardcore criminals whose punishment is to fight to their deaths for public entertainment.
[201] cf. the first-person narrative of Kathy in *Never Let Me Go*, as well as the dominant perspectives of the posthumans in Mitchell's novels in the following chapter.
[202] The restricted admission criteria, which we examine in greater detail later, also unsettle the cosmopolitan character of this interspecies community and lay bare the tension between the exclusivist tendencies of utopia and the inclusiveness that cosmopolitanism promotes.

that the humans resort to deploying anthropomorphic terms on the Pigoons, she does not appear to find it objectionable but in fact seems just as 'guilty' of endorsing her human characters' practice of humanising the nonhuman. As such, while Atwood sets up what appears to be a universally inclusive community at the end of *MaddAddam*, she is not as consistent or successful at refraining entirely from an anthropocentric mode of thinking.

Nonetheless, in presenting the humans, posthumans, and nonhumans to be in a *better* place together at the end of the trilogy than when they were apart previously, one could argue that Atwood's ustopia resonates, in part, with Tom Moylan's notion of critical utopia.[203] Even though the community is still plagued with the "continuing presence of difference and imperfection," these problems arguably serve critical utopia's purpose of "render[ing] more recognizable and dynamic alternatives."[204]

Moylan, however, insists that a critical utopia should achieve a "*critical mass*… to make the necessary explosive reaction,"[205] suggesting that the strength of a critical utopia depends, in part, on the visibility of the means by which changes can be effected. In comparison, Atwood professes more modest and somewhat subdued aims for ustopia, affirming that it is enough for humans to "do maintenance work and minor improvements on whatever [they] actually have…. insofar as it lies within [their] power,"[206] without any details as to what these improvements might be. In this sense, Atwood's ustopia is not as overt in showing how changes can be made and,

[203] Moylan's coinage of 'critical utopia' is in reference to works in the utopian tradition that arose in the late sixties to early seventies and which simultaneously challenged the dominant cultural and social realities of the day as well as the assumptions and limitations of the genre itself. See Moylan, *Demand the Impossible: Science Fiction and the Utopian Imagination* (New York: Methuen, 1986).
[204] Moylan, *Demand the Impossible*, 11.
[205] Ibid., 10, italics in original.
[206] Atwood, *In Other Worlds*, 95.

as such, has less “explosive” impact. On the other hand, by being less resolute in making the means of change visible, Atwood’s ustopia also resists being prescriptive about the choice of mechanisms to effect change, allowing it to come from the interaction between the readers and her texts.

One could also argue that since Atwood writes mainly from the perspective of the humans in her trilogy,[207] her ‘posthuman narratives’ are less readily accessible than in Ishiguro’s and Mitchell’s novels. As Atwood has herself pointed out, she ultimately leaves the prerogative for a non-anthropocentric interpretation to her readers,[208] which is consistent with the reticent stance she takes in regard to the means by which alternatives can be effected in her ustopia. However, as we have seen, Atwood’s reservations about the “apocalyptic” label that *Oryx and Crake* and *The Year of the Flood* have attracted suggest that she wants her readers to both recognise and consider other-than-human perspectives. Her rejection of the “apocalyptic” label is motivated by the fact that, to her, “in a true apocalypse everything on Earth is destroyed, whereas in these two books the only element that is annihilated is the human race, or most of it.”[209]

Atwood’s remarks intimate that the Waterless Flood/pandemic in these novels could be considered a catastrophe or a large and (often) sudden event that causes great damage, rather than a total destruction signalled by an apocalypse. In literary plots, catastrophe is often presented as a sudden turn, or *peripeteia*. According to Frank Kermode, “peripeteia depends on our confidence of the end; it is a disconfirmation followed by a consonance.”[210] Since peripeteia is “a falsification of

[207] It is only in the final portion of *MaddAddam* that the Craker child, Blackbeard, takes over the narration.
[208] Atwood, *In Other Worlds*, 93.
[209] Ibid.
[210] Frank Kermode, *The Sense of An Ending: Studies in the Theory of Fiction* [1966] (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 18.

expectation,"[211] "in assimilating [it] we are enacting that readjustment of expectations in regard to an end which is so notable a feature of naïve apocalyptic."[212] In other words, a catastrophe (presented as peripeteia) is an unexpected turn that complicates human expectations about the end, but it is not the anticipated end itself (that humans think of as the apocalypse).

However, according to Evan Calder Williams, catastrophe is "an end without revelation,"[213] as opposed to apocalypse, which takes on the religious overtones of disclosure and revelation in traditional apocalyptic thought. If we consider Williams's distinction, the collapse of humanity and the capitalist structures that prop it up in Atwood's novels can be configured as an apocalypse rather than a catastrophe, or specifically a "capitalist apocalypse." This, to Williams, is the unveiling of "things which cannot be included in the realm of the openly visible without rupturing the very oppositions that make the whole [capitalist] enterprise move forward."[214] In Atwood's own quibble with the term "apocalyptic," she brings to the fore a crucial 'revelation' or 'disclosure' when she highlights the importance of differentiating between the end of human history (and the capitalist order in its late phase) and the end of Earth history, demonstrating how the conflation of the two reveals an inherent anthropocentric bias.

It is unsurprising that humans would (erroneously, in Atwood's view) frame the (partial) demise of humanity in apocalyptic terms because, as Kermode surmises, endings are a kind of sense-making for humans to explain their existence and impose some order and "coherent pattern"[215] on an essentially disordered world.

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[211] Ibid., 53.
[212] Ibid., 18.
[213] Evan Calder Williams, *Combined and Uneven Apocalypse* (Winchester, UK: Zero Books, 2010), 4, Kindle.
[214] Ibid., 8.
[215] Kermode, *Sense of An Ending*, 17.

Apocalypse, which, according to Kermode, "ends, transforms, and is concordant"[216] with the beginning and the middle, fulfils the human need for "intelligible Ends."[217] Importantly, Kermode observes that humans perceive of these ends with themselves "in the middest"[218] because (as he quotes St. Augustine), "anxieties about the end are always anxieties about one's own end."[219]

These explanations of apocalypse highlight the limitations of the human perspective because humans find it difficult to understand time beyond their own existence. Claire Colebrook explains why this is so: she observes that extinction once "play[ed] a role in a timeline of progressive grandeur"[220] charted by Darwinian evolution. This timeline, Colebrook argues, can suggest "a way of thinking beyond the human world to a proliferation of lifeforms beyond the world as it is now" and implies that humans are but "one moment in the history of grandeur."[221] In the context of the Anthropocene, however, the *Anthropos* became the focal point around which events occur and "the line and time of extinction" was appropriated to represent "a moment within the politics of human history."[222] According to Colebrook, humans are just not able to grapple with the notion that they may not be the "'higher animals' towards which extinction moves," and their inability prevents them from seeing their own end as "a sweeping away of feeble humanity for the sake of a more wondrous world," because they deem themselves to be the only creatures "worthy of

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[216] Ibid., 5.
[217] Ibid., 7.
[218] Ibid., 17.
[219] Ibid., 186.
[220] Claire Colebrook, "The Future in the Anthropocene: Extinction and the Imagination," in *Climate and Literature*, ed. Adeline Johns-Putra (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 263, https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108505321.017.
[221] Ibid., 263–64.
[222] Ibid., 264.

the notion of 'world.'"[223] In other words, humans have appropriated and distorted the original meaning of apocalypse by equating their extinction with the end of the world.

Atwood undermines this narcissistic conviction of human importance when she shows that the end of (most of) the human race in the *MaddAddam* trilogy did not signify the end of the Earth and reconnects the notion of (human) extinction with the apocalyptic sense of regeneration and transcendence. This near human extinction, in fact, brings into being what Colebrook would call "a transcendent and inhuman age of wonder,"[224] that puts an end to the age of human domination over animal and plant life. In fact, this new post-Anthropocene world liberates and gives the planet a chance to recover and regenerate from anthropogenic damage and anticipates posthumans (one of whom is the ecologically compatible Craker) who are not likely to replicate the destructive tendencies of their predecessors.

A striking instance of human apathy to the impact on the environment is seen when Jimmy informs the reader that

> the coastal aquifers turned salty and the northern permafrost melted and the vast tundra bubbled with methane, and the drought in the midcontinental plains regions went on and on, and the Asian steppes turned to sand dunes (*Oryx*, 24).

Despite this grim description of the devastating effects of climate change, these remarks only serve as a parenthetical backdrop to Jimmy's main concern about "the source of all the bacon and ham" because "meat became harder to come by" (*Oryx*, 27). Yet, against this bleak environment, we are reminded that what annihilates almost all of humanity is not an anthropogenic ecological collapse, and that Crake's

[223] Ibid.
[224] Ibid.

project takes on the significance of effectively stalling further environmental damage and preventing the complete destruction of the biosphere.

The human agency behind the cataclysmic event is, however, somewhat eclipsed by the eco-religious casting of the pandemic as the "Waterless Flood" in *The Year of the Flood*. God's Gardeners, an environmentalist cult that features prominently in the novel, erroneously gives the manmade pandemic an eschatological significance by propagating this pseudo-biblical myth. Like the biblical flood which wiped out all life on earth – except for Noah and his family and the ark of animals that preserved some biodiversity of species to repopulate the earth – the Gardeners envision the Waterless Flood as a complete cleansing and renewal of the earth. By anticipating an eco-religious calamity, they have accurately 'predicted'[225] the event but not the cause.

The eco-religious group is a kind of utopian "intentional community"[226] (to use Lyman Tower Sargent's term) that is founded on arbitrarily chosen principles of environmentalism and includes in its "scrambled"[227] theology some aspects of New Age spirituality, such as the belief in the infusion of the spirit in all living things. Atwood's presentation of this ecologically attuned community is satirical, and the eccentric mix of the sacred and the banal in their faith makes for comically mangled aphorisms that undermines the seriousness of their beliefs, such as the coexistence of humans with other lifeforms: "We teem with multitudes… with the myriad forms of

[225] A chain of events in *MaddAddam* implicitly suggests that Adam One might have known about the coming pandemic and framed it in the eco-religious context of a Waterless Flood for his own ends. He was the one to pass a prototype virus embedded in some pills to Crake in the pre-cataclysm, and these pills were part of the batch that his brother Zeb used to kill their father, the Rev. The way the Rev had melted into a puddle of "red foam" (*MaddAddam* [London: Virago, 2013], 373, Kindle) is similar to the haemorrhaging effects of the BlyssPluss pill. However, these connections are never made explicit in the texts.

[226] Sargent, "The Three Faces," 5.

[227] Margaret Atwood, *The Year of the Flood* [2009] (London: Hachette Digital, 2010), 56, Kindle. Subsequent page references in text and cited as *Year*.

Life that creep about beneath our feet, and… under our toenails" (*Year*, 192). To fit their environmentalist agenda, the Gardeners reinterpret Bible scripture, such as turning Jesus's call of two fishermen to be "fishers of men" into a divinely endorsed fish conservation project that "neutraliz[es] two destroyers of Fish" (*Year*, 234).

The Gardeners profess equal regard for all beings and use variations like "Fellow Creatures," "Fellow Mammals," and "Fellow Mortals" (*Year*, 13, 107, 191, 233) to address them by egalitarian terms in the special spiritual day sermons. Not only does the eco-theology of God's Gardeners privilege animal others, but it also decentres the human: Adam One, their spiritual founder and leader, urges the Gardeners to "pray that [they] may not fall into the error of pride of considering [themselves] as exceptional, alone in all Creation in having Souls; and that [they] will not vainly imagine that [they] are set above all other life" (*Year*, 63). However, they take their belief that the "knots of DNA and RNA… tie us to our many fellow Creatures" (*Year*, 63) to extremes. On what they call "April Fish Day," they "pray that none may vanish from the Earth by Human agency" (*Year*, 234), but in their desire to denounce "the Specist [sic] view that we Humans are smarter than Fish" (*Year*, 234), they proclaim a "kinship with the Fishes" (*Year*, 235) that attribute biological similarities between humans and fish which obliterate their differences instead of establishing an egalitarian interspecies relationship.

It becomes clear that the Gardeners' ecological stance is possibly as misanthropic as Crake's when their reverence for other beings takes on a belligerent tone towards humans. In reference to the Waterless Flood, Adam One expands on the original covenant that the God of Christian theology made with Noah and humankind to include "all other living Beings" (*Year*, 109). This apparent ecocentric gesture, however, reveals an *anti*-anthropocentric stance when Adam One

reinterprets the biblical promise of “every fowl of the air… into your hand are they delivered” as “a warning to God’s beloved Creatures: *Beware of Man, and of his evil heart*” (*Year*, 109, italics in original). It is therefore unsurprising when the Gardeners’ doomsday prophecies betray an alarmingly blatant disregard for the welfare of humanity and reveal an ecocentrism that aligns with the misanthropic leanings of deep ecology to argue for the reduction of the human population in order to ensure a more sustainable future.[228]

As such, the Gardener’s green practices, such as abstinence from meat and the tending of their Edencliff Rooftop Garden, take on sinister undertones because their good stewardship of nature is conducted in morbid anticipation of the decimation of the human species. There is, however, a glaring kink to their extreme ecocentrism because even though they strongly believed that

> [a] massive die-off of the human race was impending, due to overpopulation and wickedness… the Gardeners exempted themselves: they intended to float above the Waterless Flood, with the aid of the food they were stashing away in the hidden storeplaces they called Ararats (*Year*, 56).

The Gardeners are not only fully convinced that they have been divinely chosen to survive the Flood and inherit this new Paradise as post-apocalyptic Adams and Eves (which are not so coincidentally what the leaders christen themselves), but they have also made secret provisions for *only* themselves. Despite their ecocentric theology and professed responsibility to the environment in the pre-apocalyptic days, they are only interested in saving themselves and not the other humans when the Flood

[228] We had seen in Chapter 1 how *Earth First!*, which Atwood loosely modelled God’s Gardeners after, had a radical interpretation of such ideals and adopted a misanthropic agenda to defend nature at the expense of human life.

comes. In the chaos of the pandemic, Toby, one of the two female focalisers[229] in the novel and an accidental member[230] of the cult, recalls a Gardener mantra to avoid being a "straw" that others clutch at "to save themselves from downing" because "if you are clutched or even touched, you too, will drown" (*Year*, 25).

Perhaps part of the reason for the Gardeners' contradictory doctrine is the fact that an egalitarian post-anthropocentric theology is incompatible with the implicit hierarchical structure governing the cult. The patriarchal hegemony is evident in Adam One's self-anointing as leader and orginary alphamale as ascribed by the number attached to his name. He is assisted by other Adams and Eves who take on other numbers in ascending order, though it is claimed that "their numbers indicated their areas of expertise rather than their order of importance" (*Year*, 54). Toby is assigned the position of Eve Six or healer to tap on her expertise with herbs and potions gained from her training in holistic healing. Even so, Toby recognises the equality preached by Adam One applies to "the spiritual level but the same did not hold true for the material one: the Adams and the Eves ranked higher" (*Year*, 54). Even though Adam One dictates the content of the Gardeners' eco-religious doctrine, the group refuses to acknowledge the evidence of this hierarchical structure. In a sense, God's Gardeners betray their human-centred values despite their professed ecocentrism.

As comic caricatures, the Gardeners serve Atwood's more serious purpose of critiquing the apocalyptic rhetoric in radical environmentalist discourse that configures ecological disaster as already immanent and unavoidable. Atwood, by

[229] Ren, the other focaliser, is one of the Gardener children at the time that Toby joins the cult, and she is also one of Jimmy's girlfriends in *Oryx and Crake*. She becomes an exotic dancer at a strip club when she leaves the Gardeners.
[230] Toby was rescued by the Gardeners from her sexually abusive manager Blanco at a fast-food outlet and decided to stay on with the group mainly to hide from him.

juxtaposing what Hope Jennings calls her "comic vision" in the tone and framework of *The Year of the Flood* against the Gardeners' "tragic view," weighs up "tensions… between doom and hope; between warning and alternative."[231] Nonetheless, Atwood has drawn criticism that her portrayal of the eco-religious cult shows she does not have a firm handle on neoliberalism and that her environmental politics is troubled by her ambivalent and unconvincing stance against capitalism. Mark Fisher, for instance, takes umbrage at how Atwood seems to ignore the way "capitalism has absorbed the organic and the green" but that she erroneously "seek[s] out an 'authentic' organicism beyond capitalism's simulated-organic" through the Gardeners' "eco-spirituality."[232]

Atwood's satiric portrayal of the Gardeners, however, makes it quite certain that she does not endorse the Gardeners' eco-theology in *The Year of the Flood*.[233] Her critical take on green capitalism is also evident in *MaddAddam* through Adam One's brother Zeb's brief involvement in a scam wildlife relief operation. The "Bearlift" programme airlifted recycled food waste to feed starving polar bears but did more harm than good because it interfered with their natural instincts and ability to adapt to the devastated landscape. Nonetheless, this misguided operation "lived off the good intentions of city types with disposable emotions who liked to think they were saving… some rag from their primordial authentic ancestral past."[234] More importantly, Bearlift enjoyed financial backing from the CorpSeCorps because it "distracted folks from the real action, which was bulldozing the planet flat and

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[231] Hope Jennings, "The Comic Apocalypse of *The Year of the Flood*," *Margaret Atwood Studies* 3, no. 2 (August 2010): 13, https://corescholar.libraries.wright.edu/english/192.
[232] Mark Fisher, "Atwood's Anti-Capitalism," in *K-punk: The Collected and Unpublished Writings of Mark Fisher (2004-2016)*, ed. Darren Ambrose (London: Repeater, 2018), 98, Kindle.
[233] It should be added that Fisher's comments were levelled at the first two books, and his essay was written before the publication of *MaddAddam*, in which Atwood makes more explicit her critique of green capitalism, such as the Bearlift programme discussed above.
[234] Margaret Atwood, *MaddAddam* (London: Virago, 2013), 74, Kindle. Subsequent page references in text.

grabbing anything of value" (*MaddAddam*, 85), illustrating Atwood's own stand against capitalist corporations that leverage ecological programmes for their own benefit.

Atwood's satirical voice throughout the trilogy may complicate our reading of her environmental message, but she is arguably more circumspect when she details the violent potential of nihilistic apocalypticism through the guerrilla tactics of the titular MaddAddams (or MaddAddamites).[235] Unlike the eco-pacifists who prefer to passively "bear witness" (*Year*, 300) to the impending apocalypse, the MaddAddams are convinced that their aggressive "bioform resistance" (*Year*, 398) against the Corporations[236] enable "the planet [to] repair itself. Before it was too late and everything went extinct" (*Year*, 398). It is interesting that despite their divergent practices, the God's Gardeners and the MaddAddams converge in their desire for a regenesis of the earth in a post-Anthropocene age. Their aspirations stem from an implicit faith that the planet is a self-regulating system capable of repairing itself as a super-organism – just as James Lovelock theorised in the Gaia hypothesis[237] – and also betrays a sense of fatalism towards individual species (including humans) in favour of the planet's survival.

Strangely, the megalomaniac and misanthropist Crake fits into this coterie as well. Beneath Crake's sociopathic tendencies, he too wishes to protect the

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[235] In the trilogy, the names "MaddAddams" and "MaddAddamites" are used interchangeably to refer to the bioterrorist cell and the human members of the interspecies commune. To avoid confusion, I will use "MaddAddams" to refer to the cell in the pre-apocalyptic days and "MaddAddamites" to refer to the latter group.

[236] The MaddAddams are originally the Grandmasters of an online game called Extinctathon, but Crake exposes their identity as a resistance group and grants them immunity in exchange for their service as "splice geniuses" (*Oryx*, 352). After the pandemic, these surviving scientists and Gardener defectors form another version of the MaddAddams, led by Zeb who is suspected to have allegiance to both groups concurrently.

[237] James Lovelock, *Gaia: A New Look at Life on Earth*, 2nd ed. (1979; repr., Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016).

environment by replacing the destructive humans with new ecologically compatible models. When we further examine the strange concurrence of Adam One's eco-religious doomsday prophecies with Crake's atheistic apocalyptic vision, we realise they share the same Malthusian pessimism: Crake's concern about human overpopulation is echoed in Adam One's admonishment that "God's commandment to 'replenish the Earth' did not mean we should fill it to overflowing with ourselves, thus wiping out everything else" (*Year*, 63).

Besides showing his commitment to population control by limiting the Craker lifespan to prevent them from "overflowing," the other traits Crake programmes into his posthumans also seem to be aimed at restoring the "Fallen Man" in the God's Gardeners' revisionist and ecologised biblical myth. According to Adam One,

> [t]he ancestral primates fell out of the trees; then they fell from vegetarianism into meat-eating. Then they fell from instinct into reason, and thus into technology; from simple signals into complex grammar, and thus into humanity; from firelessness into fire, and thence into weaponry; and from seasonal mating into an incessant sexual twitching (*Year*, 224).

The innately vegetarian Crakers have restricted cognitive abilities that make complex reasoning inaccessible to them, and the concept of weapons is alien to them as they have no aggression. They only mate seasonally when the women literally turn "blue" as a sign of ovulation. As such, they fulfil Adam One's ideal for a return to a prelapsarian "ancestral primate."

The MaddAddams, too, have a stronger connection with Crake than they would care to admit. Although they deny their part in causing the pandemic, claiming that their leader and ex-Gardener Zeb "didn't believe in killing people, not as such" (*Year*, 398), they were involved in the creation of the BlyssPluss pill and the Crakers as Crake's "brain slaves" (*Year*, 474; *MaddAddam*, 56), whether or not they were

aware of his plans for mass human extinction. It should be noted that the MaddAddams also contributed to the depletion of traditional meat sources with their bioterrorist acts because many animals had to be routinely slaughtered and burnt in the Compounds after their exposure to the microbes the MaddAddams had planted (*Oryx* 18, 22, 298). So, ironically, the MaddAddams' acts may have indirectly given the Compound scientists valid reasons to genetically engineer creatures like the ChickieNob,[238] a mock chicken organism with only drumstick and breast parts, to cope with the loss of natural meat sources.

In essence, Atwood shows that the MaddAddams are not any less hypocritical than the Gardeners when they exempt themselves from the death sentence they mete out on humanity with their distorted and inconsistent ecocentric aspirations. In comparison, despite his god complex, Crake seems more honest in his intent when he launches his Crakers into the post-Anthropocene without including himself as a co-survivor or leader of the new race. Tellingly enough, Crake has also never once referred to his creations as "Crakers" and lay claim on them. It was in fact, Oryx,[239] his muse and briefly the Crakers' teacher in the pre-pandemic, who first used this term (*Oryx*, 311). Except for his green eyes, Crake also did not create the Crakers in his image or endow them with other qualities like his intellect, because he knows that too much intelligence can lead to contests for power and wars.

[238] The ChickieNob is an example of extreme commodification in this hyperconsumerist society. As another of Atwood's hyperbolic neologisms that critique absurd branding practices, the term confronts serious issues by deploying humour and satire. Using humour could, however, also convey frivolity and potentially trivialise these serious issues or even invite accusations of complicity, especially if the satirist is a privileged member of the society whose practices he or she mocks. The dissonance observed here is not necessarily an indictment that Atwood's anti-capitalist stance is unconvincing, but it does highlight the limitations of satire in dealing with these planetary-level issues.

[239] Although Oryx is a titular character, her role is relatively minor as Crake's personal consort and Jimmy's secret love interest. Jimmy recognises her as the little girl from a child pornography website, but her identity is never confirmed.

Despite his best intentions, Crake is mythologised as a creator figure after his death because Jimmy, who renames himself Snowman[240] in the post-pandemic world and becomes the Crakers' unwilling guardian, historian, and leader, concocts these tales for them, effectively giving them an origin story to build their culture on. The creation stories Snowman/Jimmy tells the Crakers may not be based on fact, but his mythmaking enables the Crakers to make sense of the world and their place in it. As improbable as these myths are, they serve an important function in binding the Crakers together as a community, just as they can be a unifying force within human society and shape social behaviour: arguably, Atwood might be inviting us to reflect on the function of her ustopias here since mythmaking is also an important feature of her works.

By deploying myth in her characters' storytelling, Atwood also emphasises that imagination enables compassion for other living species. While the Crakers are already naturally vegetarian, and they respect other creatures as co-species with whom they share the environment, the origin myth Snowman creates for them reinforces the equality of the Crakers and other animals. In Snowman's fictional cosmogony, the Crakers are Children of Crake, whose bones are made "*out of coral on the beach…* [and] *flesh out of a mango*," while the animals are Children of Oryx, "*hatched out of a giant egg laid by Oryx herself*" (*Oryx*, 96, italics in original).

Crake might not have been conscious of the eco-cosmopolitan disposition he had endowed his Crakers with, but the readers catch a glimpse of his ecocentric aspirations when he was still a teenager. He had been excited about the possibility of implanting ticks' saliva in "common aspirin" to make "everyone… allergic to red

[240] Jimmy chose to name himself after the Abominable Snowman as a symbolic description of his liminality as both "existing and not existing… apelike man or manlike ape" (*Oryx*, 8).

meat" and reduce the "large carbon footprint and… the depletion of forests… cleared for cattle grazing" (*MaddAddam*, 288). The modus operandi of the BlyssPluss pandemic many years later is an uncanny echo of this early idea and proves that despite Crake's genocidal tendencies, what has remained constant and unchanged is his consideration for the environment.

In keeping with Crake's apocalyptic yet somewhat ecological vision, the age of the posthuman in the post-Anthropocene does arrive, though neither in the form he imagines nor with the composition of beings he intends. By the end of the trilogy, there is a community of sorts that encompasses three species: the remaining humans (the MaddAddamites), the Crakers, and the Pigoons. The Crakers interbreed with the humans and at least three women bear "green-eyed Craker hybrid(s)" (*MaddAddam*, 461), marking the even more closely intertwined relationship between two of the species.

The impetus for the inception of this community is the recognition of a shared crisis among these co-survivors of the pandemic, which mirrors, at a microlevel, the inception of a risk society. It is especially significant that it is not the MaddAddamites who 'invite' the Pigoons, but the Pigoons who single them out to form an alliance against their common enemy, the Painballers.[241] The MaddAddamites have just managed to accept the Crakers as a co-species who are recognisably humanoid in appearance, but it is still beyond the scope of the MaddAddamites' anthropocentric minds to conceive of nonhuman animals as possible allies and collaborators. The Pigoons' initiation of contact provides an avenue by which the MaddAddamites could

[241] One of the surviving Painballers is Blanco, Toby's former abusive boss who tries to take revenge on her and harm the MaddAddamites.

recalibrate their relations with other less anthropomorphic beings in this new post-Anthropocene environment.

It becomes apparent to the MaddAddamites that although the Pigoons cannot communicate directly with humans, they exhibit qualities that are more aligned with the humans than other (hybrid) animals. The Pigoons' preternatural intelligence and devious cunning as tactical predators were already evident when they almost outwitted Snowman and threatened his survival in *Oryx and Crake* and destroyed Toby's vegetable garden in her spa hideout (as an act of vengeance for her shooting one of their own) in *The Year of the Flood*. In *MaddAddam*, the Pigoons show they are capable of expressing emotions by exhibiting what Frans de Waal might call "consolation behaviour"[242] when they join the humans in mourning their fallen comrades after their joint battle with the Painballers: "Their tails are drooping, their ears are limp; they nuzzle one another in a consoling way" (*MaddAddam*, 448). Beyond these traits that other sentient animals may also possess, the Pigoons are able to affirm their alliance with the humans through symbolic action, such as carrying the bodies of Adam One and Jimmy to the "composting" site "as a sign of friendship and interspecies co-operation" (*MaddAddam*, 454).[243] They also participate in the decision-making process as members of this new interspecies community by "vot[ing] collectively through their leader" (*MaddAddam*, 450) on the fate of the Painballers.

[242] Research shows that primates are able to show empathy, and studies were done on chimpanzees to examine how they attempt to console fellow chimpanzees who had suffered aggression. See Frans B.M. de Waal and Filippo Aureli, "Consolation, Reconciliation, and a Possible Cognitive Difference Between Macaques and Chimpanzees," in *Reaching into Thought: The Minds of the Great Apes*, ed. Anne E. Russon, Kim A. Bard, and Sue Taylor Parker (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 80–110.

[243] Of course, this is Toby's account of the Pigoons' intentions via Blackbeard, which could count as an anthropocentric viewpoint.

Although the MaddAddamites' recognition of these qualities in the Pigoons help them to no longer view the Pigoons as transgenic organ factories or predacious animals to be feared, their mutual relationship is not quite an equitable one. In fact, segregation between the species is maintained in this community: the MaddAddamites live in the cobb house, which comprises an old "parkette staging pavilion" (*MaddAddam*, 36) with some roughly assembled extensions, while the Crakers, who are genetically programmed to live out in the open, continue to do so by choice. The MaddAddamites allow the Crakers to move freely in and out of the cobb house compound, but they keep the Pigoons out of the commune with a peace treaty, and these exclusivist arrangements hardly make for an ideal (eco)cosmopolitan or *zoe*-centric community. To the MaddAddamites, the Pigoons are not quite permanent residents or full 'citizens' but guests or foreigners who had not yet been fully accorded Derrida's unconditional or unlimited hospitality with "a welcome without reserve and without calculation."[244] Derrida does qualify, however, that for the purposes of protecting a home, the hosts reserve the right to "suspend, at the least, even betray this principle of absolute hospitality."[245] Of course, positioning the MaddAddamites as hosts, as we mentioned earlier, also marks the community on anthropocentric terms.

Nonetheless, while this post-Anthropocene setup has not as yet attained a level of absolute hospitality, the MaddAddamites' treaty with the Pigoons bodes well as a gesture of goodwill that aligns with Derrida's future-oriented and practicable application of hospitality that he calls

[244] Jacques Derrida, "The Principle of Hospitality," *Parallax* 11, no. 1 (2005): 6, https://doi.org/10.1080/1353464052000321056.
[245] Ibid.

> the double law of hospitality: to calculate the risks, yes, but without shutting the door on the incalculable, that is, on the future and the foreigner. It defines the unstable site of strategy and decision. Of perfectibility and progress.[246]

The contractual terms of the relationship between the humans and the Pigoons may yet still evolve, considering how much their relationship has already progressed from an antagonistic one to arrive at this stage of interspecies alliance, which is reason enough not to "[shut] the door" on "the future and the foreigner." As they continue to cooperate and communicate with one another, there is no reason why their strengthened bonds would not enable them to reconstitute and adapt themselves to new relationalities demanded of their still evolving posthumanhood.

Turning to the Crakers and the Pigoons, although little attention is given to their relationship in the trilogy, it seems that they have co-existed well even before the formation of this joint-species community. The Crakers are already 'designed' to regard all beings on equitable terms, and the new human-Craker hybrids would in all probability inherit these traits. These are further promising signs that the co-evolving community would also adopt a more egalitarian approach among themselves and even in other interspecies relationships.

Even though the Pigoons already receive less than unconditional hospitality in the MaddAddamite community, there is criticism about how they are singled out from among the other laboratory spliced hyper animals. Ursula K. Heise contends that this "honorary citizenship in the new humanity" is only granted to the Pigoons on account of their "human-derived brain… whereas more robustly unhuman species are not invited."[247] There is some truth to Heise's assessment, because among the other

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[246] Ibid.
[247] Ursula K. Heise, *Imagining Extinction: The Cultural Meanings of Endangered Species* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2016), 272, Kindle.

creatures (genetically modified or not) roaming the post-apocalyptic landscape, only the Pigoons could join the community. It is difficult not to attribute their inclusion to their shared genetic material with the humans and their ability to communicate with the humans (albeit through Blackbeard). As such, it is true that the Pigoons' "human-derived brain," which allows them to negotiate the terms of their alliance, is instrumental to their acceptance in the community. Other "more robustly unhuman species" are excluded, or at best, like the Mo'hairs or gene-spliced sheep with human hair, reared as a food-and-materials resource by the MaddAddamites. Even so, the 'selection criteria' is less an indictment of the anthropocentric and exclusive nature of this post-Anthropocene community than an optimistic sign that the humans are beginning to look beyond speciest terms when determining who should be in their community and incorporating those who are invested in its formation and wellbeing.

When we examine further the members of this community, we uncover more traits that align them to configurations of the posthuman. Constituted with human and nonhuman components, the Crakers and the Pigoons are biotechnological "chimeras" or organic versions of Haraway's cyborg: the human-like Crakers with their "ancient primate brain" (*Oryx*, 305) and the animal Pigoons with their human neocortex both exemplify the quality of "partiality."[248] In their genetic makeup, as well as their interrelations within the MaddAddamite community, they "constitute new assemblages or transversal alliances between human and non-human agents"[249] in this post-anthropocentric network of relations, in alignment with Braidotti's proposed cartography of the posthuman. Even so, Atwood conveys a certain scepticism about

[248] Haraway, "Cyborg Manifesto," in Latham, 321.
[249] Braidotti, "Posthuman Critical Theory [2016]," 17.

a bioengineered posthuman future by portraying the Crakers as implausibly physically perfect yet intellectually challenged beings, making them appear more subhuman and less like the superhumans Crake intended them to be.

Perhaps, however, to gesture to her willingness to transcend the limitations of an *Anthropos* perspective (which most of her contemporary readers, as denizens of the Anthropocene, no doubt share), Atwood shows the developmental potential of these posthumans. Though still very much guileless and innocent, the Crakers become less caricature-like as they break out of their insular 'post'-human condition by interacting with and gaining knowledge from their human caretakers, first Snowman in *Oryx and Crake*, and then Toby in *MaddAddam*, as we will see later. In so doing, these Crakers manifest the qualities of Braidotti's posthuman subjects who are in the process of becoming through a relational praxis.

Although the Crakers frustrate Crake's intentions in many ways, they fulfil his vision for them to relate to the environment in a markedly different manner from the anthropocentric human. The Crakers, as well as the Pigoons, share symbiotic relationships with the environment that embed them within the planetary ecosystem. The Crakers are constituted with specially chosen genetic information from human, animal, and botanical sources to ensure that they are "perfectly adjusted to their habitat" (*Oryx*, 305) and have no need of housing, tools, weapons, or clothing. As natural herbivores who only need a small and sustainable diet of "leaves and grass and roots and a berry or two" (*Oryx*, 305) which they recycle from their excrement, they do not need to hunt for food or produce special crops that would affect the

natural lay of the land.[250] The Crakers would not "graze" (*Oryx*, 339)[251] beyond a subscribed boundary and even their children instinctively know that "after a thing has been used, it must be given back to its place of origin" (*Oryx*, 363), and they dismantle the effigy of Snowman to return "its component parts… to the beach" (*Oryx*, 363) when they have no more need for the effigy. In these ways, the Crakers embody the planetary embeddedness of an ideal posthuman figure: they are at one with the environment they inhabit, keeping it sustainable by their economical use of resources.

The Pigoons, too, have an ecological 'grasp' of life and death that does not preclude eating their dead for sustenance, and as such, they view their own bodies as part of the natural fodder. They have strict rules regarding this practice though: "dead farrow are eaten by pregnant mothers to provide more protein for growing infants, but adults, and especially adults of note, are contributed to the general ecosystem. All other species are, however, up for grabs" (*MaddAddam*, 454). After the Pigoons confirm their treaty with the humans to go to battle against the Painballers, they leave behind the corpse of the slain piglet, which Blackbeard tells Toby is for the humans to "eat it or not eat it, as you choose," adding that "[t]hey would eat it themselves, otherwise" (*MaddAddam*, 329). To Toby, this "[n]o-holds-barred recycling" (*MaddAddam*, 329) surpasses even the ecological practices of God's Gardeners. The Pigoons not only have their own set of cultural ethics that govern how they dispose of their dead, but they also respect the practices of others. In what can be seen as a cross-cultural exchange, the Pigoons verify that the

[250] A student on Jimmy's campus alludes to the irreversible long-term damage of agriculture on the environment when he opined that "it had been game over once agriculture was invented, six or seven thousand years ago" (*Oryx*, 242).
[251] Though a tellingly animalistic reference, Snowman/Jimmy uses this description on himself both in the pre-apocalypse (*Oryx*, 295) and in the first weeks after the pandemic hits (*Oryx*, 340), blurring in his mind the divide between human and the animal.

humans would not wish to eat the corpses of Adam and Jimmy nor for them to do so either.

However, the Pigoons' "curious funeral rites" (*MaddAddam*, 329) and eco-ethical practices are viewed from an anthropocentric perspective which ascribes a certain 'human' meaning to the Pigoons' actions and locates them within an anthropomorphised culture. Of course, it can be argued that these are thoughts directly conveyed by the Pigoons and translated for the humans, rather than a projection of the human perspective. However, this defence is problematic because the communication between the humans and the Pigoons is mediated by the Crakers, specifically Blackbeard, or across species from human to posthuman to nonhuman animal (in humanist terms) and vice versa. As we have established, the Crakers are very literal in their understanding and have difficulty grappling with abstract concepts and figurative expressions. When Snowman utters a profanity, the Crakers assume he is addressing his peer, which leads to their hilarious mythologising of the divine being, "Fuck… in the sky" (*MaddAddam*, 179) to match the semidivine status they confer on Snowman. When Blackbeard uses words like "bad men" to refer to the Painballers, or "smelly bone" to refer to meat which the Crakers do not eat, there is no telling if the Pigoons understand these terms as Blackbeard intends, and if Blackbeard in turn, interprets the Pigoons' thoughts in accordance with what they intend. Blackbeard's translation is at best an approximation, as far as linguistic and cross-cultural translations go.

Ultimately, the question is if it would ever be possible or even desirable to fully know and understand the other. As Haraway conjectures, we cannot claim to be "inside our own minds," much less another human being's, so to want to fully know (ourselves and) others is a violent fantasy akin to "kidnapping" or "a possession of

self and others."[252] To counter these difficulties, she proposes an ethics of honouring unknowability and otherness[253] that draws on the "quasi-Buddhist value"[254] of not knowing, and where an "appreciation of not knowing and letting that be"[255] can be the mark of a serious relationship. Instead of attempting the impossible task of knowing the other fully, Haraway configures her relationship with her sporting companion and athletic herding dog in a more equitable manner that focuses on mutual influence and the co-forming of identities by asking: "Who are we? Who do we make each other?"[256] Although Haraway's example pertains to the special relationship between a human and her nonhuman companion, we can take the cue from this mode of relationality and adapt it to describe the MaddAddamites and the Pigoons as companion species that work together to mutually sustain one another in their shared community.

Besides honouring unknowability, the communication network in this post-Anthropocene community also decentralises the humans and removes any hierarchical distinction among the species as the MaddAddamites have to rely on Blackbeard to translate the telepathic transmissions from the Pigoons. As a meta-narrative device, this interspecies communication goes some way towards resolving the difficulties of representing non-anthropocentric discourse and other-than-human perspectives. That this transmission involves an intermediary species (the Crakers) further strengthens the interspecies network. In fact, this three-way communication among species can be said to mirror the equitable interactive approach of the Actor

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[252] Haraway, "Making Kin Interview."
[253] Haraway's ethical stand brings to mind Edouard Glissant's concept of opacity in *Poetics of Relation*, trans. Betty Wing (Michigan: University of Michigan, 1997). To Glissant, making everyone fully intelligible and knowable is a kind of "reductive transparency": opacity "protects the Diverse" (*Poetics*, 62) and connotes an implicit reverence for difference and unknowability, celebrating the "exultant divergences of humanities" (*Poetics*, 190).
[254] Haraway, "Making Kin Interview."
[255] Ibid.
[256] Ibid.

Network Theory (ANT) that acknowledges that sources of agency can be human or nonhuman. Blackbeard exemplifies Bruno Latour's nonhuman "actant" with his pivotal role as translator/mediator, but the Pigoons too, are part of this budding community's interspecies communication network. As such, the fact that all three species are actants in this network rebalances the asymmetry Latour observed of the relationship between humans and nonhumans and achieves a flatter ontological playing field.[257] The MaddAddamites' exclusion from the direct communication between the Crakers and the Pigoons, in fact, displaces the humans as the locus of power and redistributes control to the other species.

Nonetheless, merely sustaining this interspecies interaction and recognising that all parties are actants in their own right may not be enough to stanch the anthropocentric bias that still lurks, especially in the MaddAddamites' perception of the Pigoons. For example, Toby has to recalibrate her thoughts about the subjectivity of the Pigoons as she retells the story of "Snowman-the-Jimmy"[258] being carried by one of them on a scouting mission. She had thought of Jimmy "clinging to *its* back" (*MaddAddam*, 426, emphasis mine) and promptly corrects herself: "*Her* back. The Pigoons were not objects. She had to get that right. It was only respectful" (*MaddAddam*, 426, emphasis in original). Toby's self-correction alerts us that for her and the MaddAddamites to regard the Pigoons (and other lifeforms for that matter) on more equal terms is not a natural disposition and that an egalitarian ethics that encompasses nonhuman animals and nature in an inter-relational manner must be conscientiously and persistently cultivated. Even so, Toby's way of rectifying speciesism is to 'humanise' the Pigoon in order to accord "her" some respect, which

[257] Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern*, 10–13.
[258] The Crakers are confused when they hear Toby and Ren refer to Snowman as "Jimmy" in *MaddAddam*, so Toby has to use both the names as one reference, "Snowman-the-Jimmy," in the stories she tells them.

brings to mind how easily an interspecies egalitarianism may succumb to the anthropomorphising of nonhuman others.

Rosi Braidotti, for instance, notes that in the second half of the twentieth century, an elevated concern for "the well-being of non-anthropocentric others" was also accompanied by animal theorists endowing non-anthropomorphic others with humanist values like "unitary identity, self-reflexive consciousness, moral rationality and the capacity to share emotions like empathy and solidarity."[259] To Braidotti, the "compensatory efforts on behalf of animals" by these "post-anthropocentric neo-humanists"[260] reinforce the binary distinction between humans and animals by imposing this hegemonic category of the human on others and reinstate Humanism "under the aegis of species egalitarianism."[261]

There are, however, more equitable approaches to address the issue of basic justice for animals. For example, Martha Nussbaum considers the "species norm" as "the appropriate benchmark… for judging whether a given creature has decent opportunities for flourishing,"[262] which means looking beyond the capacities of creatures to the requirements for them to function in their respective communities. To illustrate this, she reasons that when we are presented with a chimpanzee that has greater cognitive abilities than a mentally disabled child, there is no question that it is the child – whose condition would prevent her from functioning well or "flourishing" in her community – who should be given the requisite benefits to support her. In comparison, whether or not the chimpanzee is taught language, for instance,

[259] Rosi Braidotti, *The Posthuman* (Cambridge: Polity, 2013), 76, PDF e-book.
[260] Ibid., 78–9.
[261] Ibid., 79.
[262] Martha C. Nussbaum, "Beyond 'Compassion and Humanity': Justice for Nonhuman Animals," in *Animal Rights: Current Debates and New Directions*, ed. Cass R. Sunstein and Martha C. Nussbaum (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 310.

has nothing to do with basic justice because its "cognitive endowment"[263] does not impact its normal functioning in its community in any way. Nussbaum's differentiation of what basic justice entails for the human and the animal may strive to be a more equitable approach, but there are some issues. Posthumanist theorist Cary Wolfe, for instance, is sceptical especially about what human "flourishing" entails and if it precludes exercising rights that are harmful to animals, but he also remarks how Nussbaum inevitably replicates the utilitarian principles she claims to oppose, such as "rank[ing] competing 'interests.'"[264] Another more basic issue relevant to the discussion at hand is how these human-assigned benchmarks reinforce the animals' status as passive objects that need to be spoken for.

When animal rights discourse is framed in the same mould as human rights discourse, it is not surprising that problems like those raised above would surface. To a certain extent, the same can be said for how posthuman animal voices are represented in *MaddAddam*: the anthropomorphising of the Pigoons by the MaddAddamites (and perhaps, as we suggested earlier, even Atwood) raises concerns that the utopian post-Anthropocene community at the end of the trilogy may replicate the anthropocentrism of animal rights theory. While it can be argued that there are hardly any alternatives for Toby to deploy, her resorting to anthropomorphic terms to describe the Pigoon also reveals how our relational ethics may never be free of human categories as long as humans are the focus of dominant discourse.

Even so, the MaddAddamites' inclusion of the Pigoons in their community on the basis of their joint interests is an optimistic start that offsets, to some extent, their

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[263] Ibid., 310.
[264] Cary Wolfe, *What is Posthumanism?* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009), 67, PDF e-book.

anthropomorphisation of the Pigoons. In the process, the MaddAddamites also inhabit a new posthumanhood with their recalibrated perception of the Pigoons from other/predator to member/collaborator. These changes may not be biological, unlike the birth of the hybrid human-Craker progeny from their physical union with the Crakers, but the MaddAddamites are nevertheless transformed by their new ethico-social relationship with the Pigoons.

When Heise criticises the inclusion of the Pigoons in the community on the basis of their human brain, she also alerts us to the ethics of "violent exclusion"[265] that this new community operates on: the Painballers, "who are judged to be subhuman,"[266] are not only excluded but put to death after their defeat and capture by the joint army of humans and Pigoons.[267] However, if we consider Heise's observation in the light of a *zoe*-centred egalitarianism, we can argue that the exclusion of the Painballers in fact proves that being biologically human is not a criterion for membership in this community. While Heise means to draw attention to the MaddAddamites' exclusionary ethics, what is evident from the inclusion of the Pigoons and the exclusion of the Painballers is that membership in this new community (and possibly future society) is not dependent on species affiliation but on shared values and mutual respect. In other words, instead of a species-based anthropocentrism that favours humans over other-than-humans, new alliances that transcend biological (and ontological) categories are prioritised to evince an interspecies cosmopolitanism in this community.

Even so, it is important to note that Ren feels compelled to extend hospitality to the Painballers after overpowering and capturing them with Toby at the end of *The*

[265] Heise, *Imagining Extinction*, 271.
[266] Ibid., 272.
[267] Ibid.

Year of the Flood, even if it is not the most instinctive thing for her to do: “We’re sitting around the fire – Toby and Amanda[268] and me. And Jimmy. And the two Gold Team Painballers. I have to include them” (*Year*, 512). Significantly, when pressed about what to do with the Painballers, Toby, too, decides to delay that decision till after the Feast that marks All Souls Day, a Gardeners’ Holy Day. Her move to defer the act of judgement in honour of this day is significant because All Souls Day celebrates not just human souls but “encompasses the Souls of all the living Creatures…. For in this our World, and in the eye of God, not a single atom that has ever existed is truly lost” (*Year*, 507). Toby does not extend this grace period on account of the Painballers being fellow humans but because they are one of the living creatures on the planet. It is only when the Painballers persist in their belligerent and sadistic acts against the MaddAddamites and the Pigoons that they effectively surrender any claim on membership in the community – they not only mutilate their human victims and hang them, but they also kill the Pigoons’ young for sport (*MaddAddam*, 327).

However, even when the MaddAddamites and the Pigoons overcome and capture the Painballers, they do not kill the Painballers immediately but hold a trial to determine their fate. As proof of the inclusiveness of this community, the Pigoons cast their votes through their leader, while the Crakers are exempted because they have neither an understanding of what a trial meant or what voting entailed. Although the Painballers are eventually executed when the community reached a collective decision, we must remember that mercy was extended to them, and they were not subjected to the brutality that they had meted out on others. That the

[268] Amanda is Ren’s childhood friend and a fellow ex-Gardener, and after the outbreak of the pandemic, Amanda had been the one to rescue Ren from a biocontainment chamber at the sex-club where Ren worked. The girls were later captured by the Painballers, though Ren managed to escape with Toby’s help, while Amanda remained their captive till the scene described above.

MaddAddamites uphold the rule of law and the administration of justice despite the absence of a governing system proves that this community is built on civil rules and order.

The participation of nonhuman animals in this informal interspecies tribunal to address the human Painballers' crimes is also significant because it troubles the relative positions of the human and the nonhuman. When reflecting on the savagery of the Painballers, the MaddAddamite Rhino contends: "Who cares what we call them…. So long as it's not *people*" (*MaddAddam*, 447). To Rhino, the term "people" is reserved for beings who possess civil and ethical traits, and the description rules out the ruthless Painballers because they are totally bereft of these qualities. While this distinction inevitably reinstates the human-animal dichotomy, Rhino's sentiments gesture to the fact that the human is much more complex than just his or her biological makeup.

This is something that Crake fails to understand when he tries to perfect his posthuman race by focusing only on the Crakers' biological and genetic attributes but neglecting to consider the influence of learning and their environment. Ironically, as Crake's design shows, he is not as impervious to these influences as he thinks. The mating ritual that Crake programmes into the Crakers is more of a cultural than a strictly biological act, even if he did not recognise it to be so. He may have modelled the presentation of flowers, the singing, and coordinated dancelike movements after the courtship rituals of various animals (*Oryx*, 164), but aspects of these rituals have also been adapted by human cultures: as a result, when his posthumans anthropomorphise what he thinks are exclusively animalistic actions, they imitate human as much as animal rituals. Crake's pre-programmed tasks for the Craker men and women are also modelled on traditional gender roles: the men

secure the borders of their territory (*Oryx*, 154)[269] with predator-repelling urine while women take on child-rearing responsibilities, exposing Crake's own patriarchal bias.

In a bid to protect his posthumans from known human ills, Crake eliminates what he brands as "harmful symbolisms, such as kingdoms, icons, gods, or money" (*Oryx*, 359) from their constitution. Before the pandemic, Crake warns Jimmy, whom he had likely already chosen as the future caretaker of the Crakers, to "[*w*]*atch out for art*…. *As soon as they start doing art, we're in trouble*. Symbolic thinking of any kind would signal downfall" (*Oryx*, 419, italics in original). Indeed, despite Crake's best intentions and designs, the Crakers display their capacity for art, symbolic representation, and deification. They build a "scarecrowlike effigy" (*Oryx*, 360) of Snowman from a jar lid and a mop, chanting to it and playing makeshift percussion instruments to guide him back safely from his foraging trip. Snowman mishears their chanting of his name as "Amen" (*Oryx*, 360), which gestures to the religious tone of their invocation. They assume he had gone to meet Crake, whom they deify from Snowman's mythological tales about Crake's "attributes of thunder and lightning" (*Oryx*, 420),[270] and by association, they assume Snowman to be "almost like Crake" and therefore, just as divine. The Crakers' ability to believe in the spiritual proves that there is more than a neurological explanation for human belief systems and that other social factors are involved.

Crake does not seem to have anticipated that the Crakers would communicate with one another, and yet he intends for them to live communally. There is probably some truth to Jimmy's playful assessment of Crake as one of the

[269] This detail also shows up another unacknowledged contradiction in Crake's design. He had presumably removed any sense of territorial possession from the Crakers' psyche, but they are simultaneously programmed to circumscribe the boundaries of their territory.

[270] Jimmy's deification of Crake and his creation of an origin myth for the Crakers defy Crake's plans for his posthumanoid race and may be Jimmy's way of taking revenge against Crake for forcing the sole guardianship of the Crakers on him.

"[d]emi-autistic" individuals who had "single-track tunnel-vision minds" and "a marked degree of social ineptitude" (*Oryx*, 193). Crake, being differently-adjusted socially, is unlikely to have understood the importance of social connection in a community but thinks it is sufficient for his posthumans to physically coexist with their environment.

As we have seen, however, Snowman's storytelling helps the Crakers to establish their own culture and hone their collective identity, and, through his interactions with them, he unconsciously helps to shape their individual identities and beliefs. Between the Crakers' appearance in *Oryx and Crake* and *MaddAddam*,[271] they evolve from chanting like a Greek chorus to speaking in more distinctively individual voices. Snowman notices one of the Craker men, Abraham Lincoln,[272] becoming more prominent and speaking up more, and recalls Crake's warning to "[*w*]*atch out for the leaders*…. *First the leaders and the led, then the tyrants and the slaves, then the massacres. That's how it's always gone*" (*Oryx*, 155, italics in original). Crake's worst fears, however, prove to be unfounded because these dire predictions never materialise in the trilogy: perhaps because the Craker community had not been founded on war and conquest and they have no sense of territorialism (safe for marking out the boundaries of their modest circle with pee), there is hope that they will not replicate the worst traits of the pre-apocalyptic society.

The gradual individuation of the Crakers also paves the way for their post-anthropocentric voices to be heard. In *MaddAddam*, the Craker child Blackbeard becomes an increasingly distinctive narrative voice as he learns how to read and write from Toby. While the Crakers' voices are mediated through Snowman's

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[271] The Crakers do not feature at all in *The Year of the Flood*, safe for an oblique description of them as products of Crake's "big experiment: some kind of perfectly beautiful human gene splice that could live forever" (*Year*, 474), which is technically inaccurate, given how the Crakers are programmed to die by the time they turn thirty.

[272] As an ironic gesture to their lack of intelligence, "it had amused Crake to name his Crakers after eminent historical figures" (*Oryx*, 116).

narrative in *Oryx and Crake*, or Toby's for the most part of *MaddAddam*, Blackbeard's perspective alone closes the trilogy, claiming a post-anthropocentric narrative authority. He reveals his plans to hand over the narrative to the Craker-hybrid children eventually, signalling not only that the Crakers would continue to evolve socially and culturally in this human-posthuman community, but also that all its members will co-evolve and shape one another. Importantly, the decentralisation of humans in this community does not mean that they become displaced entirely. When a MaddAddamite, Lotis Blue, is pregnant with a human child, she calls it "a thing of hope" (*MaddAddam*, 462), which signals the persistence of the human race in this new posthuman age. Eventually, the term 'posthuman' should function less as an identifier of an ontological category than a description of the MaddAddamite community's shared existence in the post-Anthropocene.

We see the stirrings of this reconfigured posthumanhood when Snowman ponders on his new subjectivity in the post-Anthropocene as possibly the last human standing in *Oryx and Crake*: "He's humanoid, he's hominid, he's an aberration, he's abominable; he'd be legendary, if there was anyone left to relate legends" (*Oryx*, 307). Snowman's thoughts draw attention to two qualities of his self-identity: one, that it is plural; and two, that it is defined relationally with others. Ontologically fluid, he's not fully human but humanlike (a "humanoid"), at the most basic level of the human as a primate (a "hominid"), an "aberration" because he has survived when his own species (or so he thinks) has become extinct, and therefore "abominable" or monstrous for his otherness. However, all these identities he gives himself are meaningless if there is no relationality. Unfortunately, from Snowman's anthropocentric perspective, he only considers humans as relatable others, which would preclude the Crakers even though they are his only companions throughout

his lucid moments[273] in the post-cataclysm. For all his time spent with the Crakers, he fails to recognise that he is as much affected by their care for him (whether by presenting him with fish, chanting for his safe return, or purring over his wounds to heal them) as they have been impacted by his mythmaking and teachings about the environment.

In fact, the Crakers – in their inclusion of Snowman in *Oryx and Crake* as a sort of honorary member of their community – already exemplify the qualities of a posthuman cosmopolitan community. Snowman does not appear to recognise or acknowledge his communal ties with the Crakers in *Oryx and Crake*, though the MaddAddamites, by the end of the trilogy, come closer to regarding the Crakers (and the Pigoons) beyond the hierarchies exerted by speciesism and anthropocentrism. The MaddAddamites may not as yet have acquired Braidotti's recommended way of "see[ing] the inter-*relation* human/animal as constitutive of the identity of *each*"[274] for posthuman relations, but with the interspecies alliance they have set up, it is a step in the right direction at the very least.

Nonetheless, the co-constitutive relations between the MaddAddamites and the Crakers commence in a most alarming manner when the Craker men rape two MaddAddamite women during a melee at the start of *MaddAddam*. Toby and Ren had been staking out the Painballers to rescue Amanda, Ren's childhood friend and a fellow ex-Gardener, from their clutches. When the two women finally overcome the Painballers, the Crakers appear and free the tied up Painballers because their inbuilt instinct is to help those in need. Meanwhile, some of the Craker men detect the

[273] By the end of *Oryx and Crake*, when Snowman/Jimmy confronts the Painballers and is found by Toby and Ren, he has become delirious from sickness. For most of the narrative present of *MaddAddam* up to his death, he drifts in and out of a semi-conscious state and is not in full possession of his senses.
[274] Braidotti, *The Posthuman*, 79, emphasis in original.

pheromones from first Amanda, and then Ren, and carry out their mating ritual as they have been genetically programmed to do, oblivious to the women's violent protests.

Perhaps Atwood intends to show the failure of Crake's design when he is supposed to have removed all the unwanted complications of sex for the Crakers so that there were "[n]o more *No means yes*…. No more prostitution, no sexual abuse of children, no haggling over the price, no pimps, no sex slaves," and most glaringly, in the context of what happens to the MaddAddamite women, "[n]o more rape" (*Oryx*, 194). Attributing the assault to a "major cultural misunderstanding" (*MaddAddam*, 22) as Toby does undercuts the seriousness of the situation, and while there may not have been any intention on the part of the Craker men to take the women against their will, not having a cultural concept of rape is not the same as "no more rape."

It is disturbing that the first human-Craker hybrids who should represent the optimistic union of the human and the posthuman are born out of rape, which brings to mind the sexual violence that colonisers perpetuate against indigenous women. Nonetheless, the circumstances surrounding these events trouble this familiar colonial trope because neither the MaddAddamites nor the Crakers can claim indigeneity in this post-apocalyptic world. There is no way to downplay the violent inception of this interspecies relationship: the assault on the MaddAddamite women is evidence that establishing a utopian post-Anthropocene community is rife with challenges, that it is an uneven process, and that, like its would-be posthuman members, it is a "becoming" and a work-in-progress.

While Crake had not anticipated the intrusion of the original humans in his posthuman Paradice, the MaddAddamites, in some ways, live up to the model of the 'improved' human in Crake's anticipated "reboot" (*MaddAddam*, 408) for the world

with their prelapsarian lifestyle. By living at subsistence level with the environment, the MaddAddamites' return to innocence also fulfils, in a strange way, the God's Gardeners' aspirations for a return to an idyllic Eden, which is itself a controversial concept. However, it is arguable if we could call this post-Anthropocene a 'neo'-prelapsarian paradise if there was no previous golden age in the first place. When Snowman goes back to Paradice to scavenge for supplies in *Oryx and Crake*, he hallucinates Oryx's voice telling him: "*Paradice is lost, but you have a Paradice within you, happier far*" (*Oryx*, 308, italics in original). Even in Snowman's head, this line adapted from Milton's *Paradise Lost* is delivered mockingly with a "silvery laugh" (*Oryx*, 308), which, as Katherine V. Snyder observes, is ironic on two counts: first, "because of the patent absurdity of its suggestion that Atwood's bereft last man may now enjoy a post-apocalyptic paradise within," and second, "because of the attendant assumption that he had ever enjoyed a prelapsarian paradise without."[275] There is no pre-apocalyptic paradise for Snowman to return to in his mind to seek comfort because his world (when he was still Jimmy) was already a ravaged place and at the brink of total annihilation. In effect, Atwood disrupts what Gerry Canavan calls the "typical affective coordinates of post-apocalyptic fiction" in *Oryx and Crake*, so that instead of looking to "the pre-apocalyptic landscape [as] the longed-for object of nostalgia… [it] turns out to be much worse than the post-apocalyptic."[276]

The idealised golden past, however, is often culled from the perspective of a privileged minority and not nearly a semblance of what is remembered by the

[275] Katherine V. Snyder, "'Time to go': The Post-apocalyptic and the Post-traumatic in Margaret Atwood's *Oryx and Crake*," *Studies in the Novel* 43, no. 4 (Winter 2011): 478, https:///doi.org/10.1353/sdn.2011.0057.
[276] Gerry Canavan, "Hope, But Not for Us: Ecological Science Fiction and the End of the World in Margaret Atwood's *Oryx and Crake* and *The Year of the Flood*," *Lit: Literature Interpretation Theory* 23, no. 2 (April–June 2012): 141, https://doi.org/10.1080/10436928.2012.676914.

majority of the population.[277] The tendency to look back on a fantasised past or a golden age because things seemed better and humans had a more harmonious relationship with their environment, moreover, may have a contrary effect: drawing on the past may offer solutions to present-day problems, but as a coping mechanism against harsh or bleak present realities, it also has the potential to divert attention and energies away from urgent remedial action.

Instead of a return to a golden past that did not in fact exist, we may regard the MaddAddamite community as a progression to a post-technological age that is truly "post"-human in character, with the eradication of human exceptionalism or speciesism. As one of the main sources of power that humans harness to exert dominance over human and nonhuman others, especially in the period of late capitalism, the absence of technology in the MaddAddamite community removes one of the major frameworks for enforcing the hierarchical binary opposition between humans and nonhumans and promises to alleviate inequalities between those who can harness technological power and those who cannot. However, it is important not to oversimplify the argument and blame technology for directly causing inequality. By itself, technology is neither a destructive nor an empowering entity, but as exemplified by the trilogy's high-tech capitalist society in the pre-apocalyptic days, it is the irresponsible and unethical application of innovative technology to satiate the demands of the greedy and affluent consumers that leads to extreme class inequality and irreversible environmental damage.[278]

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[277] See Raymond Williams's discussion on the culturally constructed views of nature in *The Country and the City* [1973] (London: Hogarth Press, 1993), and Stephen Hawking's views on how the privileged minority romanticised the past in *Black Holes and Baby Universes and Other Essays* (New York: Bantam Books, 1994).

[278] Interestingly, as we will see in the next chapter, Mitchell also positions a post-technological age as an important inflection point within the millennia-spanning *Cloud Atlas* that illustrates the notion of transtemporal cosmopolitanism.

Despite the rocky start, the seeds of interspecies collaboration are sown by the MaddAddamites' treaty with the Pigoons and the interspecies progeny conceived by the MaddAddamite women with the Craker men. These relationships are not unidirectional but mutual and symbiotic. Just as the Crakers (starting with Blackbeard) have begun to adopt human traits like writing, perhaps there is a possibility that the humans may learn to cultivate the Crakers' eco-friendly ways to help further sustain if not to repair the ravaged environment.

The narrative movement of the trilogy also mirrors the shift towards this eventual interspecies collaboration. The trilogy starts with the male focaliser, Snowman/Jimmy in *Oryx and Crake* who has less than an equitable relationship with the other posthumans. He regards the Crakers as the strange Other to be tolerated rather than a co-species, and the Pigoons as his nemeses. In *The Year of the Flood*, the alternating female perspectives of Toby and Ren take over. This instalment does not feature the Crakers, but the Pigoons continue to be adversarial figures to the humans, specifically Toby, whom they compete with for survival. Toby continues her third-person perspective in *MaddAddam* and though it is intermingled with Zeb's consciousness, the narrative eventually gives way to Blackbeard's first-person perspective in his journal at the end of *MaddAddam*. In other words, this progression from a monologic male voice to the duophonic female voices, then to the intermingled male and female voices, and finally to a posthuman voice that rounds off the trilogy, signals the provision of a narrative space for polyphonic human and posthuman voices in the post-Anthropocene and is a promising start to the creation of a new cultural legacy in this evolving multi-species community. That the posthuman world order has already been set in place is further gestured by Blackbeard's first-person narrative, the only one of the two in the entire trilogy (the

other is Ren's in *The Year of the Flood*), as he speaks in an unmediated post-anthropocentric voice.

It is important to qualify that kindness and generosity are important ingredients to facilitate this transition from a human to a posthuman narrative. Just as Toby took over from Snowman as storyteller to the Crakers because she could see they needed her, Blackbeard's narrative would not have been possible if Toby had not felt compelled to teach Blackbeard, with whom she develops an almost parent-child relationship, how to read and write. By passing on these skills across generation and species, she eradicates any assumed boundaries between the human and posthuman and affirms her own break with human exceptionalism, putting to rest any preconceived notions of symbolic thinking, language, and creativity as human prerogatives.

The transition in narrative voice is gradual as Blackbeard begins by narrating parts of the later sections, before fully taking over the narrative in the last chapter of the novel and filling in Toby's shoes as storyteller and historian. At the end of the trilogy, Blackbeard instructs the other Crakers how to read and write and how to fashion writing implements out of natural materials (*MaddAddam*, 468), while ensuring that the human-Craker records would be protected from water or "the Words would melt away and would be heard no longer" (*MaddAddam,* 469). He also leaves instructions for the replication of what has been written, "[s]o it would always be there for us to read" (*MaddAddam*, 469). Perhaps the most symbolic and promising sign that the story of this post-Anthropocene community will persist is Blackbeard's assurance that pages would be added to the end of the Book to record

> the things that might happen after Toby was gone, so that we might know all of the Words about Crake, and Oryx, and our Defender, Zeb, and his brother, Adam, and Toby, and Pilar, and the three Beloved Oryx Mothers. And about

> ourselves also, and about the Egg, and where we came from in the beginning (*MaddAddam*, 469).

Blackbeard's records do not just retain Craker history, but also meld the Anthropocene and post-Anthropocene history together. In this way, the past, present, and future of humans and Crakers are conjoined in a symbiotic embrace, or as Deleuze and Guattari might say, become rhizomatically interconnected, as well as imbricated, to form a new and richer (and still evolving) cosmogony. The history-making at the end of the trilogy affirms that the subject of history is more than the human,[279] which is reinforced by Atwood's casting of the posthuman as historian and scribe.

Notably, Ren and Toby keep journals when they are each in separate isolation after the pandemic strikes. For Toby especially, journalling is ostensibly a way to preserve her sanity when she is exiled in the AnooYoo Spa at the start of the Flood. The two women's efforts to record their experiences, even though each thinks she is the sole survivor of the apocalyptic event, signals an inherent faith in the endurance of the human narrative and the hope for a future reader (in whatever form). Snowman, too, toys with the idea of writing down his experiences as "a castaway of sorts…. [to] give his life some structure," but unlike the two women, he discounts the possibility of a "future reader, because the Crakers can't read. Any reader he can possibly imagine is in the past" (*Oryx*, 45). Where Toby succeeds in overcoming speciesism, Snowman is too crippled by his anthropocentrism to consider other readers (and writers) besides those he regards as fellow humans, so he never does entertain the thought of teaching the Crakers.

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[279] The notion of history and who or what its subject should be would become more significant in the next chapter when we discuss Mitchell's novels.

Toby does struggle with the purpose of writing without an assured readership in *MaddAddam* and wonders about the point of keeping a daily journal as she had done in *The Year of the Flood*: “If there is anyone in the future, that is; and if they’ll be able to read; which, come to think of it, are two big *if*s” (*MaddAddam*, 165). It is significant that Toby overcomes these doubts to record her experiences, but what is even more striking is that, where previously she had thought of her narrative in terms of human history, her incorporation of human-Craker history and mythology and the enlistment of Blackbeard as her successor are clear indicators that she is working to conquer those doubts and put her faith in the persistence of (post)human life and history.

Toby reckons that what she learned with the Gardeners offers her a glimmer of hope: “Maybe acting as if she believes in such a future will help to create it” (*MaddAddam*, 165). This disposition recalls Adam One’s assurance when Toby worries about the hypocrisy of accepting an appointment as a “full-fledged Eve” (*Year*, 200) in *The Year of the Flood* when she is not a true believer:

> In some religions, faith precedes action…. In ours, action precedes faith. You’ve been acting as if you believe, dear Toby. *As if* – those words are very important to us. Continue to live according to them, and belief will follow in time” (*Year*, 200, emphasis in original).

Despite the heretical and garbled theology of this eco-religious group, their teaching on the importance of action before faith could be the key to survival in the post-Anthropocene. As the ending of the trilogy shows, the recording of the joint MaddAddamite and Craker history and the co-creation of their mythology, as well as the MaddAddamite-Pigoon treaty, are acts of faith that look towards making the future of the post-Anthropocene cosmopolitan community (and eventually society) a

reality. Humans need more than empirical facts about the world to make sense of their radically changed and still changing environment and to figure out who they are (and are becoming) and where they are headed. With her storytelling, Atwood enables her readers to imagine the danger and hope implicit in their future and impel them to enact change in their own society if they wish to avoid the total ecological ruin she describes in the trilogy. As a vehicle for posthumanist thought, therefore, Atwood's own mythmaking and her trilogy as a whole gesture to one of the most important ingredients for a sustainable post-Anthropocene future, which is to act as if we believe.

Chapter 4. Making the Future Present in David Mitchell's Novels

In the previous chapter, we discussed how the ending of Atwood's *MaddAddam* trilogy signals the co-evolving of posthuman identities with the setting up of a multispecies community, which is further heralded by the birth of human-Craker hybrids. The fact that the Pigoons are not fully integrated and their alliance with the humans and Crakers has to be regulated by a treaty, however, intimates that this new community is not perfect. Nonetheless, instead of assuming these details point to this community's shortcomings, one could argue that teething problems as such are to be expected of any budding community. Moreover, as Lyman Tower Sargent insists, the concept of perfection that scholars use to define utopias is flawed when in fact, "[p]erfection is the exception not the norm," and we need to be mindful of how it could be deployed "as a political weapon" to justify the use of force to achieve it.[280] Considering Crake's sinister intentions and the trilogy's comparatively dystopian pre-apocalyptic world (extrapolated from the readers' own), this unexpected haven in the post-pandemic can be said to exemplify Atwood's concept of ustopia: There continues to be miscommunication among the members and minor contractual breaches between the MaddAddamites and the Pigoons. However, the community is a better place for *all* parties than when they were separate, reminding readers to consider the perspectival aspects of utopia as they work towards a post-Anthropocene future that offers hope not just for themselves, but also other species that share this place.

[280] Sargent, "The Three Faces of Utopianism Revisited," 9.

As a posthuman race genetically conditioned to respect and preserve the earth's resources, the Crakers are inclined to remain in a circumscribed place and restrict their own movements. The MaddAddamites likewise confine their movements within the physical region of the parkette and the nearby beach where the Crakers live. While it is uncertain if the MaddAddamites are the only human survivors on the entire planet, we are told that other bioengineered hybrid creatures, such as the wolvogs, rakunks, and liobams populate this new post-apocalyptic world, and it is uncertain what roles these creatures would play as co-sharers of the environment and if they were to transgress the boundaries of their allocated spaces. Restriction of movement, while not necessarily a contravention of cosmopolitanism outright, does seem to go against the spirit and intent of cosmopolitan qualities like openness and mobility and is strangely incompatible with the borderless world portrayed at the end of the trilogy. National boundaries are no longer relevant in the post-Anthropocene, and the concept of citizenship should be dismantled and reconfigured to account for new affiliations and redefined communal identities or even extended loyalties, but the relative isolation of the MaddAddam community does not lend itself *fully* to the cultivation of a post-Anthropocene cosmopolitanism.

A more robustly realised post-Anthropocene cosmopolitanism is, meanwhile, foregrounded in different ways in the three novels by David Mitchell analysed in this chapter, which will also investigate Mitchell's re-conceptualisation of humanity as one element within a wider ecology of interdependent beings sharing the planet.

David Mitchell has to date written seven novels and one novella, ranging from the surrealistic techno-thriller, *Number9Dream* (2001); the coming-of-age teenage semi-biographical memoir, *Black Swan Green* (2006); and the historical novel, *The Thousand Autumns of Jacob de Zoet* (2010). A number of critics, such as Berthold

Schoene, Kristian Shaw, and Paul A. Harris[281] have singled out Mitchell's debut, *Ghostwritten* (1999); his arguably most widely acclaimed novel, *Cloud Atlas* (2004); and *The Bone Clocks* (2014) for discussion within the context of cosmopolitanism. Schoene's study, for example, is notable for examining how Mitchell decentres the individual in *Ghostwritten* and *Cloud Atlas* in order to pioneer the new (British) cosmopolitan novel that embraces community beyond the nation state in the twenty-first century. Shaw also examines these two novels and is interested in how Mitchell conveys the urgency of communal ties and social-cultural engagement in an increasingly interdependent planet by foregrounding the transnational connections not just between humans, but between humans and posthuman 'others.' Harris (who includes *The Bone Clocks* in his study) and Shaw both observe Mitchell's experimental mix of genres and the temporal dynamism in his works, and Harris, in particular, examines Mitchell's use of linear and cyclical time to form a kind of labyrinthine narrative timescale across his novels, constituting an 'uberbook' or a 'fractal' without a definitive origin or ending.[282] Harris's analysis is illuminating for the way it fashions Mitchell's evolving oeuvre as a community of novels whose relations change whenever a new work is added: while he does not explicitly say so, Harris's reading suggests an interesting parallel to the structure of 'cosmopolitan' relationships themselves.

These critical perspectives alert us to the fact that while Mitchell's novels and Atwood's trilogy look beyond the human species in (fictional) worlds where the

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[281] Schoene, "The World Begins Its Turn with You or How David Mitchell's Novels Think," in *The Cosmopolitan Novel* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009), 97–124; Shaw, "Building Cosmopolitan Futures," *English Academy Review* 32, no. 1 (2015): 109–123, https://doi.org/10.1080/10131752.2015.1034949; and Harris, "Introduction: David Mitchell in the Labyrinth of Time," *SubStance* 44, no. 1 (2015): 3–7, https://doi.org/10.1353/sub.2015.0012, and "David Mitchell's Fractal Imagination: *The Bone Clocks*," *SubStance* 44, no. 1 (2015): 148–53, https://doi.org/10.1353/sub.2015.0006.

[282] Harris, "David Mitchell's Fractal Imagination," 153.

centrality of humanity is no longer a given, Mitchell's novels explore more keenly the process and consequences of this decentring on a planetary scale. This is evident in the way his cast of posthuman characters interface with human communities across expansive spatiotemporal zones. For instance, *Ghostwritten*, for which Pico Iyer credits Mitchell with the invention of the "planetary novel,"[283] features nine intertwined stories across eight different countries that are linked by lead characters who infiltrate one another's narratives. Two of these characters are posthuman: an incorporeal spirit that inhabits the mind of some of these characters by transmigrating from one human body to the next, and a disembodied sentient AI that safeguards the planet and its humans. *Cloud Atlas* and *The Bone Clocks* also feature posthuman characters, such as fabricants (or human clones) and immortal souls, in geographically expansive narratives that are on par with the planetary scope of *Ghostwritten*, while their transtemporal design further complicates the concept of cosmopolitanism. The temporal scope of *Cloud Atlas* and *The Bone Clocks* spans not just the timeline of human existence but also draws attention to the embeddedness of human history in the history of planet earth through the imbrication of different temporal scales: the nested narratives of *Cloud Atlas* and the convergence of the plotlines about the millennia-spanning Atemporal characters and human beings in *The Bone Clocks* lend them the feel of what Harris calls Anthropocene novels.[284]

Nonetheless, despite the macro-level concerns of these novels, they emphasise the importance of developing grassroots structures to support a world-communal sense of belonging and accountability. In other words, Mitchell is as

[283] Pico Iyer, "Books: Thirteen Ways to Be 13," *Time*, April 16, 2006, accessed September 28, 2020, http://content.time.com/time/subscriber/article/0,33009,1184057,00.html.
[284] Harris, "David Mitchell's Fractal Imagination," 151.

interested in the individual connections that are integral to the formation of communal ties at local levels – that is, the more specific notion of a 'localised' or 'rooted' cosmopolitanism – as he is in the transnational connections at the global level. The novels in question also inspire and provoke post-Anthropocene cosmopolitan thinking by focusing on different levels of connection between human and posthuman characters in both bodied and disembodied forms and show how the future can be reframed by a rethinking of the past to include the more-than-human as the subject of history.

It is important to acknowledge that while, in this chapter (and in the rest of this thesis), cosmopolitan theory is applied to works of fiction, the creative space afforded by these fictional contexts allows us to envision possibilities for the future. It is also interesting to note that, in practical terms, imagination is a requisite for what Beck calls a "cosmopolitan outlook," especially in the context of sharing a "collective future" with others in a globalised world.[285] We may not be able to know all of humanity individually, and "the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them," as Benedict Anderson argued in relation to the nation, "yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion."[286] To Anderson, the most suitable media for "'re-presenting' the *kind* of imagined community that is the nation"[287] are the novel and the newspaper, with the novel especially, providing a *tour d' horizon*, or a survey of the concerns of a nation, and playing an important role in nation-building. As such, Anderson's configuration of the novel is consistent with the conventional view of the traditional novel as a literary form demarcated by its local or provincial concerns and

[285] Ulrich Beck, "The Cosmopolitan Society and its Enemies," *Theory, Culture & Society* 19 no. 1–2 (April 2002): 27, https://doi.org/10.1177%2F026327640201900101.
[286] Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 6.
[287] Ibid., 25, italics in original.

corresponding territorially circumscribed space.[288] However, as we have seen, the novels discussed in this thesis, as well as many literary works produced in the first two decades of the third millennium, break out of these models by expanding their scope to address the fate of humanity on a global level. The novelistic turn from the local and/or national to the global is hardly surprising, considering the climate of global uncertainty in the late twentieth and early twenty-first century, triggered in no small part by the increasingly powerful forces of globalisation, technological disruptions, and the dominance of neoliberalism dictating how humans should organise their lives. In actuality, this broadening of the novel's focus to the global, as well as the speculative slant of many of these novels, like the ones in our study, is very much consistent with Beck's linking of imagination with a cosmopolitan outlook.

In response to these cultural-historical changes, Schoene highlights how novels have broadened and continue to need to broaden their imaginary scope beyond the territorial constraints of the nation to encompass the world, expanding the "collective imagining" outlined by Anderson. Arguing in favour of a more plausible representation of the globalised world, Schoene identifies *Ghostwritten* and *Cloud Atlas* as texts which "pioneer the novel as opening upon a world-creative *tour du monde* that imagines community beyond the bounds of the nation."[289] Like the *MaddAddam* Trilogy, various portions of Mitchell's three novels are concerned with environmental devastation, post-apocalyptic futures, and the recognition of trans-global interdependence. However, Mitchell's experimental narrative temporality and concern with the plurality of identities dynamically complicate the concept of cosmopolitanism, showing that beyond the socio-political, cultural, and spatial

[288] This is a generally accepted view, though critics like Frank Kermode have debated this characterisation of the novel. See Kermode, *Essays on Fiction: 1972-82* (52-71).
[289] Schoene, *The Cosmopolitan Novel*, 123.

paradigms, there is also a need to navigate temporal differences and mutable identities in the forging of ethical ties. Above all, Mitchell is interested in the creative potential for political and social change through literary world-building within a complex but interconnected biblioverse in his oeuvre. This work-in-progress uber-novel is not just concerned with characters that traverse across the textual universe of Mitchell's novels,[290] but also functions as an ongoing documentation of the evolving global community that is formed by cross-temporal and cross-cultural connections spanning continents and eras, transcending even geological time to depict the historical trajectories of the human and the posthuman. As we will see, the composite narrative trajectory across the three novels spans from more than seven millennia in the past when one of the immortal characters, Esther Little from *The Bone Clocks*, was born or first came into being in a human form, to the post-apocalyptic times several centuries into the future in the sixth narrative of *Cloud Atlas*. Such an expansive timescale links the past and future, reinforcing the cross-temporal cosmopolitan relations through recurring characters who form connections with other characters across the novels,[291] enriching the intra- and extra-textual connections within the novel and also between the novels. Mitchell's expansive global and transtemporal envisioning is also evident within the individual novels themselves so they can be considered "macronovels" in their own right, albeit on a miniature scale.

[290] David Mitchell has written many short stories (uncollected) and two libretti, but for the purpose of this chapter that focuses on three of his novels, it makes sense to restrict the discussion to his novelistic oeuvre.

[291] The many crossover characters in Mitchell's biblioverse are too extensive to be covered in this chapter, but there are at least two who play important roles in the fate of humans that pique our interest. One of them is Mo Muntervary, who appears in *Ghostwritten* and *The Bone Clocks*, and the other is Marinus, who in *The Bone Clocks* refers obliquely to one of his former lives in *The Thousand Autumns of Jacob De Zoet* and who continues his Atemporal role in Mitchell's latest novel, *Utopia Avenue* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 2020).

In *Cloud Atlas*, for instance, each of the six nested stories in the novel is situated within its own specific narrative timeframe and is akin to a separate novella. When read together, these stories make up a collective history of human and posthuman life, and the connections between the stories become more obvious, bearing echoes and shadows of one another. The novel proceeds in a broadly chronological historical sequence, beginning with the first half of San Francisco lawyer Adam Ewing's narrative in the mid-nineteenth century in the South Pacific, and is interrupted midway by British musician and conman Robert Frobisher's narrative, which is set in a Belgian chateau near Bruges in the 1920s. Next, the novel turns to female investigative reporter Luisa Rey's narrative in 1970s South California, and then to the London-based vanity press publisher Timothy Cavendish's account in the late 1990s/early 2000s. The fifth and sixth innermost-nested narratives, "An Orison of Sonmi~451" and "Sloosha's Crossin' an' Evrythin' After," project into the future, and are the portions of the novel most relevant to our study. Sonmi~451's narrative, especially, is of interest in this chapter because it is narrated from the perspective of a fabricant,[292] or a genomed human clone, from the twenty-second century in a techno-corporatised Korea called Nea So Copros. The sixth narrative is set about a hundred years from Sonmi~451's time, after the fall of human civilisation, and features a 'Valleysman' goat herder Zachry in a postlapsarian world. Each of the first five narratives tapers off partway as the next one takes over, up to Zachry's narrative, which is the only one that is complete in itself without interruption by other narratives. The second part of the preceding narratives resume

[292] The term "fabricant" resonates with the "replicant" in Ripley Scott's *Blade Runner* (1982), and both terms refer to copies of the original, signifying artifice and replication. The term "replicant" originated from the "android" in Philip K. Dick's novel *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* [1968] (London: Gollancz, 2010, Kindle).

in reverse chronological order, until we arrive back at the remaining portion of Adam Ewing's narrative that concludes the novel.

This Russian or matryoshka doll structure[293] of *Cloud Atlas* complicates narrative time, though there are competing critical interpretations of how it does that. How we interpret the narrative structure has bearings on what we make of Mitchell's engagement with the temporal aspect of cosmopolitanism. A more conventional reading is to take the Russian doll description in a literal manner and impose an encasing of the narratives chronologically from Ewing's in the 1800s to Zachry's in the far future. However, as a proponent of this reading Will McMorran admits, it assumes "a bleakly deterministic model."[294] This manner of reading also implies a process of framing or "mothering" where "each narrative [is] extradiegetic to the one that followed it" which, he concedes, "is the opposite of what actually happens" in the novel.[295] Instead of Ewing's narrative being the "mother" of Frobisher's, and so on in the sequence of narratives, the extradiegetic relationship is inverted by what McMorran calls the "reverse matryoshka effect" with "Sloosha's Crossin'" becoming the "outermost shell, or ultimate mother."[296] The fact that a counter-structure needs to be factored into this reading suggests that the proposed hierarchical relationship between the encapsulating and encapsulated narratives cannot quite adequately accommodate the temporalities of the different narratives and explain how they relate to one another in the novel.

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[293] This description of the novel's structure is one that is alluded to by many critics and also invoked by the novel's own characters, such as nuclear engineer Isaac Sachs from Luisa Rey's narrative: he ponders on the temporal relativity of the past, present, and future, and proposes a "*model of time: an infinite matrioshka doll of painted moments*" (*Cloud*, 409, italics in original).
[294] Will McMorran, "*Cloud Atlas* and *If on a winter's night a traveller*: Fragmentation and Integrity in the Postmodern Novel," in *David Mitchell: Critical Essays*, ed. Sarah Dillon (Canterbury: Glyphi, 2011), 163, Kindle.
[295] Ibid.
[296] Ibid.

Instead, if we were to ascribe a less deterministic and more asymmetrical temporal structure to the novel, we would be better able to account for the contingent sense of connection (as opposed to a chronologically extradiegetic one) between the stories and their characters and the multi-directional transtemporal relationalities the narratives gesture to. Such a reading can also be said to be more 'cosmopolitan' because it does not single out any one story or character as being more central or pivotal and by which other narratives are subordinated or encased. Patrick O'Donnell too, cautions against imposing "an encapsulating architectural design"[297] on the narrative structure of the novel as the narratives are not neatly "divided by halves,"[298] but recommends that readers consider the movement of "multiple, local, *seemingly* disconnected 'pasts' and 'presents'… toward a future-in-process that is ad hoc in prospect and only fatal or determined in retrospect."[299] O'Donnell's reading not only unsettles the notion of causality, but it also resists the imposition of a teleological and systematic structure which, as will become clear later, is consistent with Mitchell's non-teleological ethics in his evolving body of work.

The transtemporal cosmopolitan connections between the different narratives and their characters that are afforded by this asymmetric temporal structure is best exemplified by Zachry's epiphany during his escape from his troubled homeland on his kayak. The "atlas o' the clouds" (*Cloud*, 324) he uses to navigate the tides sparks his reflections on the mutability of human souls and their migration through time and space, and their ultimate connectedness with all humanity:

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[297] Patrick O'Donnell, *A Temporary Future: The Fiction of David Mitchell* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2015), 77.
[298] Ibid., 76.
[299] Ibid., 194n9, emphasis in original.

> Souls cross ages like clouds cross skies, an' tho' a cloud's shape nor hue nor size don't stay the same, it's still a cloud an' so is a soul. Who can say where the cloud's blowed from or who the soul'll be 'morrow? (*Cloud*, 324).

Zachry's musings on (Mitchell's 'cosmopolitan') souls crossing time and space create a connection with temporal relativity. Just as the amorphous and constantly changing clouds are nonetheless conceived together as part of an atlas, so too, can the human species transcend its limitless diversity as a "multitude of drops" (*Cloud*, 529)[300] and be connected to form a global community. At a microcosmic level, the characters of the six narratives can be said to enact this transtemporal dimension of global connectivity implied by Zachry. Even though they are temporally (and geographically) distant from one another, some kind of metaphysical connection binds them together: the novel suggests that a comet-shaped birthmark[301] which five of them share is a sign that their "souls cross ages" and are imprinted on one another. This idea of reincarnation evokes the Buddhist ethical philosophy of karma, or the belief that the actions of today will have consequences in a person's next life and whether she is reborn as a 'higher' lifeform. This trope of reincarnation illuminates the transtemporal aspects of cosmopolitanism in that the prospect of being present in the future (as a reincarnated being) to bear the consequences of actions taken today could motivate ethical behaviour and accountability. The idea of rebirth and reincarnation is particularly prominent in the 2012 Wachowskis and Tom

[300] The notion of many drops of water forming an ocean will be significant when we look later at the value of deceptively small individual ethical and moral actions.

[301] The connection between the main focalisers is broken because only Frobisher, Luisa Rey, Cavendish, and Sonmi~451 (the four focalisers from the second to the fifth narratives) share the birthmark, while neither Adam Ewing nor Zachry (the focalisers of the first and sixth narratives) has it. The character in Zachry's narrative bearing this birthmark is Meronym, who is not the main focaliser. (As Ewing is chronologically the first and last focaliser, it could be argued that he does not bear the birthmark because he the originator in this line of reincarnation. In the film adaptation, however, he is shown bearing it, which hints at a more cyclical concept of reincarnation).

Tykwer film adaptation,[302] which casts the same actor in multiple roles across the different narratives, emphasising not just the connectivity between characters, but suggesting that various individuals could be iterations of the same persons in different temporal zones, while also underscoring how identity can be a tussle between singularity and multiplicity. The novel, on the other hand, is less resolute in implying such a complete 'rebirthing' but uses the shared birthmark among the focalisers to denote a recurring essence that is layered like a palimpsest on each subsequent character's current self, while they each remain as unique individuals with distinct identities.[303] For example, in the novel, Luisa Rey has a memory-like experience when she reads Frobisher's letter, which suggests that only aspects of Frobisher's identity appear in Rey's consciousness, and not his complete entity.[304] As such, the novel suggests a more indeterminate future that is always in the process of being charted by each of these focalisers. They share the 'ghostings' of memories and experiences of their predecessors,[305] but are independent individuals who are neither constrained nor thwarted by them to act in a singular fashion or to head in a predetermined trajectory.

Despite the independent trajectories of these individual characters' narratives, there is a sense that history repeats itself, or of "Time's arrow be[coming] Time's

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[302] *Cloud Atlas*, directed by Tom Tykwer, Lana Wachowski, and Lilly (as Andy) Wachowski, featuring Tom Hanks, Halle Berry, and Jim Sturgess (Warner Bros. Pictures, 2012), DVD. The film also imaginatively reframes the matryoshka doll structure of the novel by showing visual fragments of each narrative in sequence (instead of focusing on one narrative at a time) to deliver a more simultaneous enactment of all the narratives in a parallel trajectory till they each reach the climax at about the same time.

[303] By maintaining that these characters share somewhat metaphysical links but do not share the same identity, the novel makes a stronger case for the negotiating of differences in these transtemporal cosmopolitan relationships.

[304] There are other examples of these crossovers and embedded memories which, however, are not included here as they require too much elaboration for the purposes of this chapter.

[305] Besides embedded memories, the characters are connected by artifacts in various forms of media: Frobisher locates the first part of Ewing's journal, Luisa Rey finds Frobisher's letters, Cavendish appraises Luisa's own narrative as a draft of a mystery novel, Sonmi~451 watches Cavendish in a movie, and finally Zachry views Sonmi~451 as a holographic projection.

Boomerang" (*Cloud*, 149),[306] which is especially evident in the larger systemic recurrences in the different narratives. In both the future and far-distant narratives of Sonmi~451 and Zachry, the threat of slavery (and colonisation for Zachry's Valleysmen) is still a firm reality in their lives, as much as it was for the Moriori people in nineteenth century New Zealand in Ewing's account. The only difference lies in the identity of their enslavers: Sonmi~451 and her fellow fabricants are genetic posthuman slaves to the humans or "purebloods" of the normative Nea So Copros society (twenty-second century Korea), and Zachry's Valleysmen's are enslaved by the cannibalistic Kona tribe. The cyclical temporality of the novel signals, however, that the cataclysmic conditions of Zachry's post-fall narrative need not be the final outcome. At the end of the novel, Ewing appeals for humans to resist the pattern of predacity and "the entropy written within our nature" (*Cloud*, 528) and harness the potential for ethical and political agency to generate change for greater egalitarianism, whether at the individual or societal level:

> If we *believe* that humanity may transcend tooth & claw, if we *believe* divers races and creeds can share this world as peaceably… if we *believe* leaders must be just, violence muzzled, power accountable & the riches of the Earth & its Oceans shared equitably, such a world would come to pass (*Cloud*, 528, emphasis in original).

Even though Ewing's hopeful assertion for a radically different future comes at the end of the novel which did not materialise in the preceding narratives, the boomeranging arc of "Time's arrow" holds out the promise of new possibilities in

[306] The publisher Cavendish makes this statement when he downs rounds of cocktails at a press party until he loses track of how many he has had. In a later part of his narrative, he revises this assessment to "Time, no arrow, no boomerang, but a concertina" (*Cloud*, 370) when he wakes up from a stroke to signify the rapid passing of time, as if compressed like the folds of the musical instrument, without him having been aware of it.

other iterations of events. When Ewing “pledge[s himself] to the Abolitionist cause” (*Cloud*, 528), he gestures to an alternative future that could still be triggered by this action.

While the transtemporality in the novel’s narrative structure can only remain within the domain of fiction, the possibilities afforded by Mitchell’s imaginative rendering of time as a boomerang as well as his use of the motif of reincarnation elicit critical thought about the far-reaching impact of individual actions or deeds: if a certain action had been performed or omitted in the past, our present might be different, which reframes our perspective of the future and provokes a recalibration of how we should act today. Mitchell also makes clear his intent to encourage readers to resist the impulses of domination and predation and to act on faith through Ewing’s imploring repetition of “if we *believe*.”

Ewing’s optimism for “the riches of the Earth & its Oceans [to be] shared equitably” (*Cloud*, 528), while aimed at the fair distribution of natural resources, also applies to better stewardship of the environment to break the pattern of unsustainable consumption of resources and avert the anthropogenic ecological catastrophes of Sonmi~451’s Nea So Copros and Zachry’s Ha-Why in the as yet indeterminate and changeable future. This reading ties up even more closely with the “future-in-process” interpretation of the novel’s structure because, in resisting a teleological encasing of the narratives, it shows that human history is changeable and that the same holds true for earth history in which human history is embedded. This becomes an even more prominent idea when we discuss the other two novels.

The narrative structure of *Ghostwritten* also suggests the rejection of a teleological view of events that postulates a singular future. As a collection of disparate human and posthuman biographies that form a composite document in

deep history, the structure of the novel draws attention to the fact that what we configure as ‘human’ history is made up of improvised moments that are given significance because they are organised into narratable patterns. Certain events only gain prominence because of the selection of material, while others are sifted out of the narrative because they are decentred, signalling further the potential for ‘new’ histories and historical futures to be written when human experience is no longer of central significance and the subject of history is more than human.

Like *Cloud Atlas*, the characters in *Ghostwritten* are just as seemingly dissociated from one another, and they are separated by geographic locations as diverse as Okinawa, Hong Kong, Mongolia, St. Petersburg, and London, which are also the titles of some sections in the novel. However, contrary to the transtemporal connections in *Cloud Atlas*, most of *Ghostwritten*’s characters are more or less contemporaneous with one another in the late twentieth century to the first few decades of the twenty-first century. Nonetheless, in keeping with the non-teleological design of the novel, the interrelated stories do not adhere to a linear sequence: there are portions of the “Holy Mountain” section, for example, which delve into an old Chinese woman’s past, while the “Night Train” section featuring the spectral AI, Zookeeper, projects into the future. The connectivity between characters and places across national boundaries and spatiotemporal zones is a major feature *Ghostwritten* shares with the other two novels, and which is representative of the cosmopolitan concerns of Mitchell’s fiction. That the connections in *Ghostwritten* appear to occur at serendipitous points of convergence in the characters’ nomadic wanderings make the portrayal all the more realistic for its accurate depiction of the random trajectories of life journeys. The characters appear in one another’s narratives in a more material fashion than in *Cloud Atlas* and are either in direct physical contact with one another

or figure as peripheral characters of another character's story, giving a more tangible sense of the interconnections and shared experiences of Mitchell's imaginary communities, no matter how accidental they appear to be.

However, while the novel gives the impression of a lack of predetermined design in the course of events, the readers recognise the impact of an action or event from one story on another narrative. There are many instances like this, but the fortuitous escape of Mo Muntervary,[307] the protagonist of "Clear Island," from serious injury or even death in the "London" section, is of particular importance, because she might not have lived to invent Zookeeper[308] otherwise. The stranger who saves her from being hit by a cab is Marco, a ghostwriter, who had by chance been in the vicinity after being booted out of the home of his one-night stand. As he reflects on the fortuitous turn of events: "Weird. If that chair hadn't arrived when it did, and Katy hadn't flipped out and asked me to leave, then I wouldn't have been at that precise spot to stop that woman being flattened."[309] He also gives Mo's pursuers wrong directions, securing Mo's escape to Clear Island, Ireland. However, even though Marco wonders about the interconnectedness of fate and chance as he looks back at the chain of events that led to his providential rescue of Mo, he still could not have anticipated the butterfly effect of his singular action, such that the entire planet's fate would rest in the hands of Zookeeper in the not-too-distant future. This incident gestures to the "future-in-process" framing of not just the narrative structure of *Ghostwritten* (and *Cloud Atlas*), but also the inexplicable connections between the

[307] Mo is a United States-based Irish physicist who also appears in the last section of *The Bone Clocks* as Holly's neighbour in Sheep's Head.
[308] It is appropriate at this juncture to reveal that Mo chooses this name for her AI as an acknowledgement of the "sick zoo we've turned the world into" (*Ghost*, 324) and her hope that her invention would arrest the destruction and "keep" order in this zoo.
[309] David Mitchell, *Ghostwritten* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1999), 275, Kindle. Subsequent page references in text and cited as *Ghost*.

characters and events within the novel. The enormous impact of a deceptively small action makes good Mo's conviction that "nowhere does the microscopic world stop and the macroscopic world begin" (*Ghost*, 373).

The quantum entanglements of these seemingly disparate characters and their actions are best summed up in Mo's assertion that "[p]henomena are interconnected regardless of distance, in a holistic ocean more voodoo than Newton" (*Ghost*, 375). Despite being a scientist, Mo acknowledges that something more metaphysical ("voodoo") than hard science ("Newton") governs the inexplicable connectivity of the universe ("holistic ocean"), which renders meaningless the distinction between proximity and distance. Mo's reflections on the forces of interconnectivity aptly illustrate the novel's engagement with the spatiotemporal dimensions of cosmopolitanism, which extends beyond each narrative and even the novel. As we have seen, despite the different characters inhabiting their respective narrative frames, the 'interference' of one character in another's narrative affects the trajectory of that narrative. However, more than that, these chance meetings, as Sarah Dillon observes, are like the collision of "molecules in a gas,"[310] and they also create turning points in the 'interfering' character's own narrative, disproving linear causality. Together, Mitchell acknowledges, these entanglements in *Ghostwritten* disclose the "macro plot between the covers, over and above the micro plot between the beginnings and endings of the chapters."[311] Mitchell's description is especially fitting in the way the final section or coda of the novel, "Underground," loops back to

[310] Sarah Dillon, "Chaotic Narrative: Complexity, Causality, Time, and Autopoiesis in David Mitchell's *Ghostwritten*," *Critique: Studies in Contemporary Fiction* 52, no. 2 (2011): 138, https://doi.org/10.1080/00111610903380170.
[311] David Mitchell, "Secret Architectures: A Conversation with David Mitchell," Interview by Nazalee Raja, *The Agony Column*, May 16, 2005, accessed June 20, 2021, http://trashotron.com/agony/columns/2005/05-16-05.htm.

the start of the novel and also opens the possibility for a rewriting of the past to reset the future beyond the confines of the book.

Temporal 'anomalies' are not just peculiar to *Ghostwritten* and *Cloud Atlas*; they are also present in the narrative structure of *The Bone Clocks*. However, unlike the anachronic narratives of the other two books, *The Bone Clocks*' central narrative about the protagonist Holly Sykes proceeds in a linear fashion with six sections marked out chronologically from "A Hot Spell: 1984" to "Sheep's Head: 2043." Each section is further divided into subsections indicated by progressive dates of that year. A second storyline features the immortal Atemporals, whose name tells us that they exist outside of chronological time, but, even though they are in a different dimension, their narrative merges with the mortal humans' story through Holly.[312] The timescales of the two narratives are also different: the plotline on the mortal plane is restricted to Holly's lifetime, while the narrative concerned with the Atemporals stretches for a few millennia, of which only a section of that longer timeline crosses with Holly's story.

During her lifetime, Holly witnesses the global environmental, economic, and socio-ecological collapse referred to in the novel as "the Endarkenment." Paul A. Harris notes that the Endarkenment is long enough to document "a turning in the Anthropocene," and the novel "makes us feel viscerally that we live and act not only in human history but earth history."[313] While we have noted that Mitchell's other two novels in this study also invoke the sense of human activity and existence being embedded in the larger geological timescale, *The Bone Clocks* is unique in showing

[312] At first glance, the trajectory of Holly's narrative resembles a bildungsroman that is chronologically sequenced in accordance with the span of her life. However, her quotidian world intersects with the supernatural and fantastical world of the Atemporals when her psychosoteric powers attracts the attention of the Atemporals: The Anchorites want to use her as a pawn against the Horologists in their millennia-spanning, cosmological war, and the Horologists want to save her from them.
[313] Harris, "David Mitchell's Fractal Imagination," 152.

the speed with which these global environmental changes happen by making them visible within the lifetime of a single character. This observation invokes Chakrabarty's pronouncements on the inseparability of natural history from human history: while we may regard the environment as a "timeless backdrop" to human history such that it is not a "subject of historiography at all,"[314] the environment's rate of change is more rapid than we allow. Holly's experience in the novel illustrates that "the climate, and hence the overall environment… transforms itself with a speed that can only spell disaster for human beings,"[315] but which also alerts us to re-evaluate the place of human beings on the planet and their relationships with other beings.

We saw how the pliable configuration of temporality in *Ghostwritten* and *Cloud Atlas* signals that, despite the threats of anthropogenic ecological disasters and economic collapse, planetary survival is possible but will depend on remedial actions and the cultivation of transnational and transtemporal cosmopolitan relationships (and as will become apparent, not just amongst humans, but also other beings). *The Bone Clocks*, however, arguably sparks the most explicit connection between the transtemporal and posthuman aspects of cosmopolitanism among the three novels, and in the process, conveys, in a more urgent manner, the need for a cosmopolitan outlook on a planetary scale with its conjoined narratives of humans and posthumans occurring on two temporal dimensions. The prospect of restitution from global ecological collapse that all the novels gesture to, stokes imaginative thought about possibilities beyond the eco-apocalypse and inspires the exploration of preventive and/or corrective measures that can be employed beyond the confines of Mitchell's fictional world(s).

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[314] Dipesh Chakrabarty, "The Climate of History: Four Theses," *Critical Inquiry* 35, no. 2 (Winter 2009): 204, https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1086/596640.
[315] Ibid., 205.

Within the novels' transtemporal narratives, Mitchell's cast of posthuman protagonists both promote and trouble the concept of cosmopolitanism. As I briefly alluded to earlier, these posthumans include *Ghostwritten*'s noncorpum, a disembodied spirit that subsists by transmigrating from human character to character; and Zookeeper, an AI computer programme that mirrors the noncorpum's mode of human inhabitation by transmigrating from satellite to satellite as a technologised spirit.[316] Similarly disembodied like the noncorpum and Zookeeper are the immortal Atemporals in *The Bone Clocks*, who are separated into two warring camps comprising the Horologists, who seek "asylum" in the minds of their hosts without harming them, and their enemies, the Anchorites who devour the souls of humans to prolong their own mortality. In *Cloud Atlas*, the fabricants or human replicas share some commonalities with Ishiguro's clones, but their physical uniformity betrays bioengineered features like the anthropomorphic posthuman Crakers in the *MaddAddam* trilogy. Even so, the fabricants' organic and synthetic composition distinguish them from the fully organic Crakers.

We will first examine the noncorpum in *Ghostwritten* and the Atemporals in *The Bone Clocks* to see how they directly engage with the issues of materiality and (dis)embodiment of posthuman discourse as well as the issues of origins and belonging that complicate the concept of cosmopolitanism.

The noncorpum attaches itself[317] to the respective human hosts' bodies and control their thoughts and actions when it wants to, though it does not take over the

[316] A ghost of a young girl appears briefly in one of the sections, and even though her presence arguably invokes the title of the novel, she plays a relatively minor role, and does not add to the discussion.

[317] The pronouns for the noncorpum and Zookeeper are contentious because gender does not figure as part of their identities. When Zookeeper is asked if it was "a man or a woman," it proclaims: "I've never considered myself in those terms" (*Ghostwritten*, 409). The noncorpum does eventually find its origins as a boy, but it also ends its spectral existence by incorporating itself entirely into a baby girl eventually. In its interim existence as a disembodied being, it does not identify with a particular gender.

personalities of their hosts. Oftentimes, the hosts do not sense the noncorpum's presence but are puzzled by their own actions, such as at the start of the "Mongolia" section, where the Danish backpacker Caspar whom the noncorpum inhabits, cannot understand why his itinerary is derailed by an "impulse" he "couldn't fight" to reroute from Laos to Mongolia, even though he felt "there was nothing [t]here" (*Ghost*, 156).

The Atemporal Horologists operate in much the same way as the noncorpum: although they are immortal, they can only survive in the titular "bone clocks" or mortal human bodies, so they must transmigrate into new ones and be reborn when their hosts' bodies expire. The Horologists infuse or "ingress"[318] a person's mind with a memory of past lives but do not take over or erase the souls and memories of the bodies they inhabit. Instead, they conjoin the memories of the bodies they leave behind with the souls of these new bodies, and through this layering of consciousness, the Horologists are keepers of cumulative multiple personal histories across time and space, creating an assemblage of plural identities.

The other group of Atemporals, the predacious Anchorites, "fuel their Atemporality by feeding on souls…. of the engifted" (*Bone*, 435) or psychic children to preserve their longevity and stave off bodily decay. In a narcissistic manner, these Anchorites erase human identities and their histories to ascertain their own immortality. Through an allegorical contrast between the Horologists and the Anchorites, Mitchell examines the poetics of survival. The Anchorites are only interested in the short-term preservation of their singular individual identities and have no qualms cannibalising others to achieve immortality. On a more macro-scale, the Anchorites' strategy for prolonging their lives mirrors the predacious practices of

[318] David Mitchell, *The Bone Clocks* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 2014), 473, Kindle. Subsequent page references in text and cited as *Bone*.

invasion, colonisation, abuse, oppression, and enslavement of others that nations or empires deploy to assert their dominance over others. The Horologists' mode of accumulating human subjectivities and identities, on the other hand, reflects an ethical cosmopolitan commitment to secure the survival of the collective beyond their own singular identities, and even beyond their own kind.

The Horologists' immortality extends their existence and perspective beyond human mortal life spans and the reach of recorded history to encompass the 'deep time' of earth history. Most of them have 'lived' through deep time, such as one of the key Horologists, Marinus, who is able to contemplate "the remnants of the old forest that covered Ontario for most of the Holocene Era" and bewail how "the trees' war against subdivisions, agroforestry, six-lane highways and golf courses is more or less lost" (*Bone*, 393). Like the noncorpum and Zookeeper in *Ghostwritten*, the Horologists provide simultaneously embodied and disembodied, and in this case, transhistorical narrative viewpoints of the human species which legitimise the alternative histories of posthuman others within the timeline of the geological epoch.

Nonetheless, these immortal Horologists converge with Holly's mortal lifetime, which locates them within the Anthropocene. As such, they can be configured with physical ages adhering to the linear Anthropocenic timeframe. Many of them are at least thousands of years old, having lived out their "metali[ves]" (*Bone*, 414) across several millennia. They incorporate within each successive body the traces of previous lives and, as an aggregate identity, the Horologist-inhabited human body contains the collective history of many other past lives. This sense of collectivity within one body resembles a living record of the *Anthropos* (on the level of humanity) that approximates human history beyond the personal biography of just one individual. As such, the Horologists, like the noncorpum in *Ghostwritten*, can be seen

to ‘embody’ an extreme form of cosmopolitanism because they literally put themselves in the shoes of their hosts who are from different cultures, genders, and ages, empathising and identifying themselves with others, and embracing their differences, while keeping their own distinct identities. Even though the Horologists exist on a different timescale from the humans, their war with the Anchorites is waged to protect humankind from being devoured by them and to “cure these Carnivores of their predatory habits” (*Bone*, 462), which exemplifies their transtemporal and posthuman cosmopolitan ethics.

The noncorpum may also transmigrate freely from body to body as the Horologists do, but it does not regard itself as a particularly cosmopolitan spirit. In fact, it likens itself and the casual tourist to “parasites” (*Ghost*, 160) who operate in different modes:

> I live in my hosts’ minds, and sift through his or her memories to understand the world. Caspar’s breed live in a host country that is never their own, and use its culture and landscape to learn, or stave off boredom. (*Ghost*, 160).

The noncorpum’s description of “Caspar’s breed” inevitably indicts the generally superficial and often exploitative form of ‘cosmopolitanism’ practised by the casual tourist because it precludes meaningful engagement with the locals of the “host country” or others from a different cultural background. Unlike the cosmopolite, Caspar does not engage in cosmopolitan cultural consumption, but is content to enjoy the “culture and landscape” of impoverished and remote locales in a detached and voyeuristic manner as a member of the Western elite. In fact, Caspar displays the callous (or tourist’s) disengagement with the locals and self-satisfaction with his own privilege of mobility when he attributes the hostility of a native server Gunga at a “crumbling” hotel to her being “stuck [t]here” whereas “[he] can get out whenever [he]

want[s]" (*Ghost*, 161). In presenting this juxtaposition between Caspar's freedom of movement and Gunga's restricted mobility, Mitchell clearly gestures to the inequalities engendered by the forces of globalisation. However, Mitchell also undermines the assumed superiority of Caspar's privilege when the noncorpum transmigrates into Gunga and clearly prefers to be in the latter's position.

When the noncorpum leaves Caspar's body, it confesses that "[i]t was good to transmigrate out of a westernized head" (*Ghost*,166) because it had been overwhelmed by Caspar's "non-stop highways of mind" (*Ghost*,166) that obsessed about "the euro's exchange rate one minute, a film he he'd once seen about art thieves in Petersburg the next, a memory of fishing with his uncle between islets the next, some pop song or a friend's internet home page the next" (*Ghost*,166). The disparate scenes and information flitting through Caspar's head are not unlike the tangential search results of an aimless web browsing session, and what seems to be crucially missing from Caspar's myriad memories is any personal connection with others. Save for his fleeting memory of fishing with his uncle and an indirect reference to a friend by way of a virtual home page, the other images running through his head are of information and artifacts.

In comparison, the mind of the noncorpum's new host, Gunga, not only "patrols a more intimate neighbourhood" (*Ghost*,166), but her thoughts are also centred around others that she is close to, such as "her daughter and ailing relatives" (*Ghost*, 166). Even the noncorpum, who has no prior connection to others of its kind, is keen to "seek out other noncorpa, the company of immortals" (*Ghost*, 201), which seems to imply that the desire for close connection with others is something innate in the noncorpum. As such, it is all the more striking that Caspar, who may have travelled to many geographical locations both urban and rural, implying contact with

several cultures in different localities, lacks and does not appear to desire any deep and meaningful connection with others. Gunga may not have travelled far and wide, but her symbiotic relationship with her immediate environment and close-knit local interpersonal connections have enriched her in intangible ways that the noncorpum finds satisfying and rewarding: the attraction Gunga holds for the noncorpum attests to a cosmopolitan perspective that values the quality of close relational bonds over the number of connections in vast and distant places.

It is interesting that in comparing the cosmopolitan reach of the two types of Horologists in *The Bone Clocks*, Mitchell also conveys the importance of close local connections. For what is known as the 'Returnees,' "each resurrection is a lottery of longitudes, latitudes and demography [because when they] die, [they] wake up as children forty-nine days later, often on another land mass" (*Bone*, 413), which means there are no boundaries to where they would next be reborn. The 'Sojourners' though, are circumscribed within a smaller space which is less deterritorialised than the Returnees, because they each live out "an entire metalife in one place… migrating out of one old or dying body into a young and healthy one, but never severing one's ties to a clan and its territory" (*Bone*, 413). Despite being able to transcend the limits of time and space as a transmigrating immortal being, the Returnee Marinus envies his fellow Horologist Esther Little, a Sojourner, for the fact that her reincarnation is not left up to chance, and that the condition for her rebirth allows her to remain in one place. Marinus's preference for close ties to "clan" and "territory" is in accord with the noncorpum's affinity for Gunga's close knit community.

The attraction Gunga has for the noncorpum goes beyond the modest reach of her mind – she is somewhat close to the 'keeper' of the noncorpum's original

identity from which it has been separated.[319] Although the noncorpum likens its own wanderings to those of backpackers who "drift, often on a whim, searching for something to search for" (*Ghost*, 160), its own journey has in fact been a purposeful quest to locate its origin, though it may not have been fully conscious of it. At some level, it must have known that Ulan Bator was its birthplace, which explains why it directs Caspar's travel to Mongolia.

Lest it be thought that only Mitchell's (incorporeal) posthumans are subjected to the lure of one's origins, Mo Muntervary, who has returned to her birthplace, Clear Island in Ireland,[320] also professes a similar sentiment:

> Without where I am from and who I am from, I am nothing…. All those wideworlders in transit, all those misplaced, throw-away people who know as little as they care about their roots – how do they do it? How do they know who they are? (*Ghost*, 356).

Mo's reflection drives home the point that one's connection with her origins can be important to the formation of identity. The nostalgia or longing for one's roots that the noncorpum and Mo (and also Marinus) express may seem to be at odds with a more cosmopolitan affiliation to the world, but as Mo implies, these "wideworlders" and "throw-away people" like Caspar are not true cosmopolites and lack a true sense of self.

The fact that Mo's heightened sense of identity is triggered by her return to her local community when she is under threat and the noncorpum's search for its identity and origins awakens its desire for close ties with the local community show

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[319] As we will see, although Gunga is not directly related to the old woman who holds the noncorpum's archived memories, the old woman also resides in Ulan Bator, and it will take the noncorpum just a few more transmigrations to reach her.

[320] The readers find out that Mo, who had been rescued earlier in London by Marco, was pursued by the authorities who are keen to channel her quantum cognition research into the development of weapons for warfare.

that one's membership in a community is an important component of one's identity. We also recall Snowman's sense that he has lost his identity in the post-pandemic world of *Oryx and Crake* when he thinks he has no one left to relate to. As Kwame Anthony Appiah opines, one's identity is shaped in part by one's membership in a community that is "narrower than the human horizon"[321] and comprises "certain others" one has "special responsibilities"[322] towards. Such ethical partiality to the local community forms the backbone of Appiah's concept of 'rooted cosmopolitanism.'

Arguably, thinking in cosmopolitan terms compels one to favour a universalistic orientation, but universality is often associated with totalising forces that impose uniformity and homogeneity, and which could obliterate differences by excluding them. Dominant powers, in fact, may easily co-opt ostensibly universal values and turn them into ideologies of domination.[323] However, to Appiah, cosmopolitanism is "universality plus difference,"[324] and rooted cosmopolitanism, far from being a paradox, reminds us that without a deep sense of commitment to the local and one's origins, there can be no genuine sense of obligation to a broader collective made up of people from diverse origins. To Appiah, collective identities – whether they are national, ethnic, or familial – shape our response to the claims of our ties and loyalty and the claims of universalism, because "[w[ho we are, as any viable cosmopolitanism must acknowledge, helps determine what we care about."[325]

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[321] Kwame Anthony Appiah, "Rooted Cosmopolitanism," in *The Ethics of Identity* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005), 246, https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt7t9f0.9.
[322] Ibid., 236.
[323] Turning to the novels discussed not just in this chapter, we witness how easily this can happen: even though they are not under a central world government per se, the pre-apocalyptic society of Atwood's trilogy and, as we will see later, the citizens of the corpocracy-run Nea So Copros of *Cloud Atlas* are under the totalising control of hyperconsumerist culture and subjected to exclusion, domination, and exploitation.
[324] Appiah, *Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in a World of Strangers* [2006] (London: Penguin Books, 2007), 151.
[325] Ibid., 242.

Melding place-based and global consciousness, in other words, Appiah maintains that we should not neglect the multiple affiliations or plural loyalties demanded of us when negotiating the contemporary 'global village.'

Even so, the communal sense of the term 'village' fails to live up to its name and reduce the distance or foster greater understanding between different cultures. As philosopher Jean-Luc Nancy observes, globalisation in the late twentieth century has disabled community across the globe rather than enhanced it, which brings to mind the noncorpum's experience in Caspar's mind. In Nancy's view, the market forces of neoliberal technocapitalism that drive this late phase of globalisation have merely pushed different cultures together into an agglomeration without encouraging conviviality but promoting enmity between the different communities. To counter what he calls the "unworld"[326] created by this sort of planetary "piling up"[327] of people and things, he proposes the concept of "mondialisation" or "world forming" that prioritises local cultures and considers them integral to the development of a future world community.[328] Nancy's "mondialisation" not only shares with Appiah's rooted cosmopolitanism a belief in the importance of local communal relations, but it also conveys a strong sense that cosmopolitanism is contingent on the cultural differences and uniqueness of each local community. Appiah's rooted cosmopolitanism may be focused only on human beings, but through Mo and the noncorpum, as well as the horologist Marinus, Mitchell shows us that the desire not just for one's origins but also for close ties with the local community are motivating factors for both the human and posthuman characters.

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[326] Jean-Luc Nancy, *The Creation of the World or Globalization*, trans. F. Raffoul and D. Pettigrew (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2007), 34
[327] Ibid., 33.
[328] Ibid., 109.

After wandering in isolation without meeting any of its kind, the noncorpum craves to be fully integrated with embodied humans and not just to inhabit their minds, because it is no longer content to "experience… second-hand" (*Ghost*, 193) the kinship they enjoy. It is even prepared to give up its spatiotemporal freedom and immortality to become rooted in time and space. It is significant that the noncorpum sees the ability to commune with others as an intrinsic quality that humans possess and enjoy and surmises that materiality would enable this connection. It reflects wistfully: "How I envy these humans their sense of belonging" (*Ghost*, 185), when it witnesses the familial setting around an uncle-niece pair it had transmigrated into briefly. What stokes its envy are the sight of children swimming and women washing clothes in the river, an old man summoning his goats, the smell of cooking, and the sound of the lute (all of which are related to sensory experiences of a human body).

Interestingly, there are signs that the noncorpum possesses at least a form of the materiality that it so desires to have. While the noncorpum seems free of geographical bonds, it can only transmigrate from one host to another when there is a physical encounter between the hosts, and it muses that if "touch is a requisite," then it could signal "that [it] exist[s] on some physical plane, however sub-cellular or bio-electrical" (*Ghost*, 165). Besides suggesting that the noncorpum is not as immaterial as it seems, the requirement of "touch" for its transference between hosts further explains its perception that materiality is a condition for communion with others on more equitable terms and thus a requisite to exercise cosmopolitanism.

The noncorpum is also cognisant that its identity is shaped in part by its communal relationships with other humans, which further fuels its desire to be fully incorporated into a human body, even as it confesses to being a "non-human humanist" (*Ghost*, 169). Mitchell gestures to his noncorpum's commitment to rooted

cosmopolitanism when the noncorpum terminates its “immaterial and invisible” (*Ghost*, 160) existence by choosing to be reborn as a fully embodied human. By resituating the noncorpum in a material human form, Mitchell’s configuration of his posthuman subject arguably departs from one that is unconstrained and fluid.

However, Mitchell’s termination of the noncorpum’s incorporeal state is not a rejection of the nomadic vision of the posthuman subject, but rather it signals his engagement with posthumanist concerns about what constitutes (human) subjectivity. The baby that the noncorpum chooses to be reborn in is the granddaughter of the old woman in whose mind it recovers its archived memories of its bodily origin. The fact that the noncorpum’s memories could exist apart from itself and be retained in another being’s consciousness resonates with roboticist Hans Moravec’s prediction that human consciousness could in future be downloaded onto a computer, which suggests a disembodiment (not unlike the noncorpum’s), and that information, rather than identity and subjectivity, is the essence of the human.[329] To N. Katherine Hayles, this postulation signifies not only the “privileg[ing of] information pattern over material instantiation,”[330] but also the hegemony of liberal humanism in its claim on immortality through technology.[331] Her contention is that when this privileging of information over material forms becomes a cultural mindset, humans take on “the condition of virtuality.”[332] Mitchell echoes Hayles’s concerns about subjectivity and embodiment through his noncorpum’s feelings of estrangement as a “virtual” spirit and its anxiety to reintegrate with a human body to form/restore its identity.

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[329] Moravec is known for his research on the implications of evolving robot intelligence. See Moravec, *Mind Children: The Future of Robot and Human Intelligence* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988).
[330] Hayles, *How We Became Posthuman*, 2.
[331] Ibid., 287.
[332] Ibid., 19.

Nonetheless, even though Mitchell terminates this particular noncorpum's immaterial existence, it cannot be determined that he imposes a corporeal and temporal limitation on all his spectral posthumans. Becoming an embodied human is only one of many possible trajectories the noncorpum could have taken and in some ways, the noncorpum could even be said to prefigure Zookeeper (or 'Zooey') for the latter's melding of the technological with the (organically) spectral and as a 'post'-noncorpum (in the sense that it comes *after* the noncorpum). The supposition that the technologised spirit is an evolution from, if not creation of, a noncorpum, though not explicitly addressed in the novel, is not without basis. The reader finds out in a following section of the novel that another noncorpum, Arupadhatu,[333] had inhabited Mo Muntervary's mind and "knew the inside of her head." Arupadhatu also 'shared' Mo's knowledge about "[q]uantum cognition theory" (*Ghost*, 421) just prior to her invention of Zookeeper, a fact that strongly suggests Arupadhatu's involvement in the creation process. This would signal that a spectral noncorpum can create an enhanced (technological) version of itself to become a 'trans-noncorpum.' Furthermore, the "Mongolia" section noncorpum, Arupadhatu, and the artificial spirit Zookeeper all share the same ability to transmigrate, though Zookeeper's path of movement goes beyond the planet, which is a technological advancement that showcases its techno-spirit hybridity. In other words, the Zookeeper AI can be seen as a science-fictional instantiation of a post-biological posthuman, that is, a kind of cyborg, for its incorporation of spectral and technological qualities. The progression of the spectral noncorpum to the techno-spectral hybrid figure of Zookeeper attests to the evolving nature of the posthuman that hints at its unstable existence; if there is

[333] The use of this Sanskrit term for "formless space" which Buddhists use to connote existence in a higher realm is another instance of Mitchell's engagement with Buddhist spirituality in these texts.

a posthuman, there is possibility that a ‘post’-posthuman will succeed the posthuman. In a sense, the transitional nature of these posthuman figures are also optimistic projections of the persistence of humanity in the post-Anthropocene: just as these noncorporeals ‘transfigure’ into technologised spirits, the human could also persevere, though in new and yet-to-be determined forms of (post)humanity that would likely continue to evolve.

The desire of the “Mongolia” section’s noncorpum to be reinstated as fully human marks it as a ‘human-directed’ posthuman. In fact, the noncorpum and the other posthumans in these novels can be said to be focused on the human in the way they exercise posthuman cosmopolitanism towards them. This is evident in Mitchell’s mobilisation of his posthumans to ensure that the humans endure in the post-Anthropocene. He accomplishes this in a variety of ways, some of which may be as subtle as simply provoking a rethinking of the humans’ place on the planet and their relationship with human and nonhuman others through their non-anthropocentric narratives.

Just as the transtemporality in Mitchell’s narratives enables cosmopolitan connectivity across the spatiotemporal zones, the non-anthropocentric perspectives of Mitchell’s posthumans, such as the Horologists from *The Bone Clocks*, reject a teleological explanation of humanity’s place in history but proffer imaginative modes of thinking beyond the temporal and species limits of the *Anthropos* and hints at the kind of cosmopolitan relations that should be developed for the post-Anthropocene. The fact that these posthuman narratives are imaginative works of fiction should not make them any less relevant, and in fact, a parallel can be made with the imaginative aspects of (extinction) theory that Claire Colebrook outlines. To Colebrook, even though theory is largely based on conjecture and goes beyond the

realm of lived experience, it is precisely theory's "distance from the real…. that provokes both knowledge and practice."[334] As such, Mitchell's narratives can be said to meet posthuman theory's purpose of helping us understand "our finitude as a world-forming and world destroying species, *and*… that whatever we do or think cannot be confined or dictated by our finitude."[335]

Mitchell's posthumans also exercise posthuman cosmopolitanism in more overt ways, which at times involve tussling with ethics in global politics. In the extrapolated near future of the "Night Train" section in *Ghostwritten*, the world is able celebrate "Brink Day" anniversaries to commemorate the near miss of World War III because Zookeeper had intercepted a nuclear missile strike that fateful day. Mo had endowed Zooey with a conscience to act as the caretaker of the planet, which Zooey understands as being "responsible for preserving order in the zoo" (*Ghost*, 409) and "visitors' lives" (*Ghost*, 427). This arrangement effectively decentres humans as guests whom Zooey extends cosmopolitan hospitality to on the planet's behalf.

However, Zooey finds it increasingly difficult to fulfil both roles because, as it tells Bat Segundo on the latter's New York radio show, "[t]he visitors I safeguard are wrecking my zoo" (*Ghost*, 428) and, not to mention, one another. When a militia troop attacks a defenceless Eritrean village, Zooey resolves its own ethical dilemma by sacrificing the soldiers to save the villagers and suffers "extreme pain and guilt" (*Ghost*, 427) for the choice it had to make. As for the bigger task of earth preservation, according to Zooey's pre-programmed obligations, it should expunge and destroy the humans: their relentless assault on the environment contravenes the rules of hospitality and makes them more like plundering aliens. When a comet

[334] Claire Colebrook, *Death of the PostHuman: Essays on Extinction, Vol.1* (Ann Arbor: Open Humanities Press, 2014), 32, emphasis in original, PDF e-book.
[335] Ibid., 32.

hurtles earthwards, Zooey has the option to “lie back and let events take their course” (*Ghost*, 428) or divert its path, and it appears to choose the former when it claims to “understand what to do” (*Ghost*, 428) in response to Bat’s advice to “[lock] out your ‘visitors’ [if it] brings you peace of mind” (*Ghost*, 428).

In the coda following this section, however, the narrative circles back to an iteration of the opening section of the novel to indicate that the annihilation of the human race seems not to have carried out. At the start of the novel, the bioterrorist Keisuke had released a gas bomb attack in the Tokyo subway and fled. However, in this new version of events at the end of the novel, Keisuke has just started the timer in the gas bomb and panics as he fights to get out of the crowded train. After he stumbles out onto the platform, he wonders if it had all been a hallucination as he sees the train disappearing into the darkness of the tunnel. Although it is unclear if Keisuke’s attack is successful this time round, from the alternative sequence of events afforded by this cyclical return, Mitchell seems to signal that Zooey did not passively allow the planet to be destroyed. By implying that Zooey saved the planet, the important point Mitchell seems to make is that his posthuman AI would not be the one to put an end to humanity whether by omission or commission, despite its power and omniscience as the “New Earth’s computer” (*Ghost*, 372), but that if the humans are indeed destroyed, it would be by their own hands.

In comparison, the fabricant Sonmi~451 in *Cloud Atlas* may not play such an overt role in the salvation of humanity in the post-Anthropocene, but her narrative, which foregrounds the purebloods’ categorical abuse of the fabricants and the instrumentalisation of their lives, alerts the readers to how far humans are from achieving the ideal of a post-Anthropocene cosmopolitan world. Her account is a transcript of her interrogation by an “Archivist” after her arrest for participating in

(what would be revealed to be) a false resistance movement against the ruling corpocracy of Neo So Copros. Like the clones in *Never Let Me Go*, the fabricants have artificial origins and are enslaved and commodified. While Ishiguro's clones are bred for their organs to be harvested, Mitchell's fabricants are genetically modified or "genomed" to perform particular menial tasks. Some of the fabricants seem more transhuman than human, such as the preternaturally large "disastermen" (*Cloud*, 214) who are genetically endowed with immunity against toxic substances in nuclear waste sites called "deadlands" (*Cloud*, 215)[336] that the purebloods are not able to survive in. Other fabricants fill the roles of nannies, chauffeurs, and maintenance workers in relatively less treacherous environments but in just as servile positions, and together they make up the disposable subhuman working class of Nea So Corpros.

Through the interview with her Archivist, the readers find out that the 'deviant' Sonmi~451 is a server at a fast-food chain called Papa Song's and that she belongs to one of four different stem-types[337] assigned to this job. Her individuality is suppressed by the physical uniformity of the stem-type she belongs to, though Sonmi~451 asserts that they are in fact "as singular as snowflakes" (*Cloud*, 190), even if these intricate differences are not discernible to "[p]ureblood naked eyes" (*Cloud*, 190). The purebloods not only justify and regulate the fabricants' enslavement by configuring them as an unindividuated group, but they also maintain that the fabricants are different from them when, ironically, the purebloods are only distinguished from the fabricants by their status as consumers and are themselves subjects serving the corpocracy. The purebloods' othering practices recall the

[336] These humanly uninhabitable wastelands are ecologically destroyed areas outside the borders of Nea So Copros' opulent metropolises.
[337] Sonmi~451 mentions the other stem-types and their respective characteristics: "Ma-Leu-Das tend to awe freshfaceds; Hwa-Soons boss us; Yoonas seem aloof and sullen" (*Cloud*, 190).

ideological manipulation of Kathy's society in *Never Let Me Go*, except that, unlike Ishiguro's clones, the fabricants are recognisable as a group simply because they are very similar, though not identical, as Sonmi~451 reminds us, to those from the same stem type.

As such, the fabricants belong to a category that is both 'same' and 'other' simultaneously, or "almost the same, *but not quite*,"[338] as Homi Bhabha would say of the colonised subject. Sonmi~451's experience with an unexpected case of mistaken identity underscores what Bhabha calls "the *menace* of mimicry."[339] She arouses the attention of a "media fashion scout" in a shopping galleria[340] who assumes that Sonmi~451 is a pureblood who had undergone "facescap[ing]" (*Cloud*, 237) or plastic surgery to look like a fabricant as a fashion statement when in fact, she had indeed been under the procedure to pass for a pureblood. The confusion that Sonmi~451's facescaping causes, therefore, mocks the purebloods' claim to authenticity as the fashion scout's mistake reveals a fissure in the purebloods' dominance over the fabricants. Sonmi~451's mimicry turns out to be unintentionally subversive, or as Bhabha says, becomes the "*double* vision which in disclosing the ambivalence of colonial discourse also disrupts its authority."[341]

Similarly, when Sonmi~451's colleague and friend, Yoona~939, is killed in a botched escape attempt from her enslavement in Papa Song's, viewers of the televised footage find it inconceivable that she is a "*genuine* fabricant" (*Cloud*, 202, emphasis in original). What these incidents show is that the "purebloods strive so hard to convince themselves" (*Cloud*, 190) that the fabricants are unindividuated

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[338] Homi Bhabha, "Of Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse." *October* 28 (Spring, 1984): 127, https://doi.org/10.2307/778467.
[339] Ibid., 129.
[340] This incident happens on one of her outings with Hae-Joo Im, the activist postgraduate who rescues her from Papa Song's for a scientific study on fabricants and becomes her friend.
[341] Bhabha, "Mimicry," 129, emphasis in original.

slaves that they refuse to accept that their "minds differ greatly" (*Cloud*, 190) and that they could think or act independently. Instead, the purebloods attribute Yoona~939's and Sonmi~451's 'uncharacteristic' acts of rebellion to a process called "ascension," or an awakening that enables fabricants to gain independence of thought and knowledge of the world around them, elevating them to the status of a pureblood. The purebloods believe that an experimental additive in the fabricants' food, "Soap," enables this process, but Sonmi~451 reveals that what was originally in Soap, in fact, had kept the fabricants in an insouciant state: "ascension only frees what was suppressed by Soap. Ascension doesn't implant traits that were never present" (*Cloud*, 190). In other words, it was not a chemical additive that gave the fabricants consciousness but the removal of it that freed their innate capacities.[342]

Sonmi~451's supposed ascension and what she had been led to believe was her rescue from Papa Song's turn out to be part of the false narrative spun by the ruling regime "Unanimity"[343] to complement the fake rebel abolitionist union movement that they engineered. The purpose of this corpocracy-led conspiracy was to "make every last pureblood in Nea So Copros mistrustful of every last fabricant" (*Cloud*, 364) and further the case for a "Fabricant Containment Act." However, in trying to show that the fabricants posed a threat to them, the purebloods also confirm these fabricants were 'too' human and individualised, disproving the purebloods' basis for their exploitation.

Sonmi~451 may have been a pawn in the false rebellion and is slated for execution, and the fabricants do not become recognised as legitimate agential

[342] In a sense, the adding of brainwashing agents to the fabricants' Soap is comparable to the guardians' feeding of Ishiguro's clones with incomplete information; both are insidious acts of suppression.
[343] The ruling regime is named as such as if to signal the singularity of its vision to unite all purebloods against the fabricants.

subjects in Nea So Copros, but this does not imply a total defeat. Sonmi~451 becomes the face of the emancipation of all fabricants, and in writing the outlawed *Declarations* of independence for fabricants, she fulfils Disasterman Wing~027's advice for her to "create Catechisms[344] of [her] own" (*Cloud*, 215). Sonmi~451's manifesto also signals the fabricants' potential to rewrite the rules and claim a rightful place in Wing~027's hoped-for "day of the fabricants" in the post-Anthropocene "when all Nea So Copros is deadlanded" (*Cloud*, 215) and uninhabitable for the purebloods. This is not an unimaginable future because there will come a day when the metropolis is no longer able to hold off the encroaching deadlands with its relentless assault on the environment.

Wing~027's desired post-Anthropocene is decidedly anti-anthropocentric and resembles Crake's apocalyptic vision for humanity, but it is difficult for Wing~027 to imagine any alternative when the only society he has known is one that produces fabricants like him to be exploited. A future society where purebloods and fabricants could co-exist equitably seems out of reach for Wing~027 when the fabricants have not experienced any hospitality from the purebloods. Wing~027's convictions provoke the readers' reflection on who has the right to decide on the composition of the post-Anthropocentric cosmopolitan society, which is also an inherent question in Beck's discussion of cosmopolitan societies. While the "pluralization of borders"[345] is a major impetus for arousing concerns about "[w]ho questions, or who decides, who justifies and who defines who 'who' is"[346] in the Anthropocene, discussions of the

[344] In the context of the novel, "Catechisms" are the rules and principles by which the fabricants abide, and as part of the terminology like "matins" and "sermons" to describe portions of their strictly regulated workday, also recall the language of Karl Marx in describing the life of millworkers in *Capital* (1867).
[345] Ulrich Beck, "The Cosmopolitan Society and Its Enemies," *Theory, Culture & Society* 19, no. 1–2 (2002): 19, https://doi.org/10.1177%2F026327640201900101.
[346] Ibid., 20.

"exclusion crisis"[347] in the post-Anthropocene should extend beyond territorial considerations to account for the more important issue of the humans' relationship with other species. As we have seen in the previous chapters, "the posthuman condition introduces a qualitative shift in our thinking about what exactly defines the basic unit of common reference for our species, our polity, and our relationship to the other inhabitants of this planet."[348]

Such a reconfiguration of human subjectivity demands posthumanist thinking, which may not be easy for us, because we cannot assume the position of the "post"-human, except speculatively. Perhaps in acknowledgement of this limitation, Cary Wolfe offers a perspective of posthumanism that is not so much about the posthuman "in the sense of being 'after' our embodiment has been transcended… but…posthuman*ist*, in the sense that it considers the place of the human in a universe now populated by… nonhuman subjects."[349] Wolfe's configuration of posthumanism emphasises an attitudinal shift that not only acknowledges present human limitations, but emphasises, like Braidotti, the relational aspects of posthuman subjectivity.

More importantly, the decentring of humans in the post-Anthropocene does not signify their eradication, at least not in Mitchell's biblioverse. In Zachry's post-lapsarian society that follows centuries after Sonmi~451's, it is evident that the Valleysmen are humans and not fabricants, signalling the persistence of humans in post-apocalyptic Ha-Why (Hawaii). However, in what can be seen as just one iteration of the still evolving 'post'-posthuman society in Mitchell's cyclical temporal narratives, Sonmi~451's legacy lives on through her immortalisation as a revered

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[347] Ibid.
[348] Braidotti, *The Posthuman*, 1–2.
[349] Wolfe, *What is Posthumanism?*, 47.

deity: this reflects a change in the relationship between humans and fabricants, if in an unanticipated manner.

Not only that, but Mitchell's posthumans actively 'deliver' the humans in these novels into the post-Anthropocene. In *The Bone Clocks*, for instance, even though Holly acts as a human cipher for the Horologists, it is clear Mitchell's main attention is on the storyline involving the mortal humans because, when the climactic war between the Horologists and the Anchorites in the fantastic realm ends, the narrative resumes with a firm focus back on Holly who has lost most of her family[350] to the planetary environmental collapse and global crises in the Endarkenment. Against these bleak circumstances, Iceland is the last humanly inhabitable location that is equipped with regulated geothermal energy to shelter humans against the oncoming global fallout. Despite having won the cosmological war in another temporal dimension, Mitchell intimates that a more important task awaits Marinus when he summons the Horologist back into the mortal realm in the body of an Icelandic presidential advisor to transport Holly's grandchildren, Lorelei and Rafiq, to this new oasis.

Marinus makes use of his new identity to convince the president that Lorelei's repatriation is "a matter of national importance" (*Bone*, 586), but the rescue mission excludes Rafiq, Holly's adopted grandson and former refugee, because it is restricted to Icelandic nationals. The ethnocentrism and exclusionary ethics connoted by the "immigration quota" (*Bone*, 586), while devastating on a personal level for Holly and her grandchildren, also casts a pall on this supposed post-apocalyptic utopia. Mitchell arguably removes these nationalistic constraints when he

[350] Holly's war correspondent husband was killed on an assignment in Iraqi, and she lost her daughter and son-in-law to a global-warming-induced "Gigastorm" that brought down their plane and "two hundred other airliners crossing the Pacific" (*Bone*, 523).

stages an intervention through Marinus, who manages to get Rafiq onboard the vessel by “suasion” or the altering of his crew members’ thoughts telepathically. Rafiq’s rescue is significant on two counts: as a stateless refugee, his inclusion in this insulated community imposes (albeit deceitfully) a ‘cosmopolitan’ character on it, and Holly’s desire to secure a future for him (that she cannot share), even though they are not related by blood, testifies to her “cosmopolitan hospitality.”[351]

Marinus is the only one on the rescue mission who consciously allows Rafiq onboard the vessel to Iceland, but the Horologist’s act of unconditional ‘welcome’ to Rafiq both engages with and troubles the idea of cosmopolitan hospitality for a few reasons. As we have seen, the relationship between the Horologists and humans makes them mutual hosts (and guests): the Horologists inhabit corporeal bodies, which is predicated on a kind of hospitality from their human hosts, but they also preserve the individual memories of each successive human they transmigrate from, which makes the Horologists keepers of these personal human histories.

However, when it comes to inhabiting the planet, neither Marinus nor the humans can claim to be hosts. As a transmigratory and incorporeal entity, Marinus cannot be considered a ‘citizen’ of the (material) world, much less a ‘host’ of the Icelandic retreat. The humans in *The Bone Clocks* are like the “visitors” that “wreck” Zookeeper’s “zoo” in *Ghostwritten*, and they too, as visitors or “foreigners” to the planet, have broken the pact or the contract of hospitality by inflicting irreparable anthropogenic damage, as evidenced by the global ecological collapse of the Endarkenment.

[351] Jacques Derrida, *Of Hospitality: Anne Dufourmantelle Invites Jacques Derrida to Respond*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000, 83.

Looking beyond Mitchell's fictional world, disproving the human (and posthuman) as host of the earth could be a way of "staying with the trouble" in these "[m]ixed-up times,"[352] to use one of Haraway's expressions. If humans could understand that they are merely visitors to the planet and that their wellbeing depends on its hospitality, this reconfiguration in thinking could be the impetus for the human to "make kin in lines of inventive connection"[353] or "oddkin" with the posthuman/other-than-human because "[each] require[s]… [the] other in unexpected collaborations and combinations."[354] When humans acknowledge that they do not have any more right to the planet than other-than-humans, their reconfigured sense of belonging together with others, nonhumans and posthumans alike, could bind them together in cosmopolitan solidarity.

Nonetheless, Mitchell appears to acknowledge the plot contrivance of Marinus's timely machinations through Holly's neighbour Mo Muntervary (Zookeeper's inventor from *Ghostwritten*), who comments in a metafictional moment that "there must be a lot of Icelandic nationals around the globe… praying for a *deus ex machina* to sail up to the bottom of the garden" (Bone, 586). This implausibility possibly exposes a weakness in the plot, but it emphasises Mitchell's central concern with the endurance of humans in the post-Anthropocene and his posthumans' role in getting them there, even if it is one human at a time.

Despite Marinus's transmigrating and suasioning powers, he is not shown to employ them on a grander scale but only to save (as far as the novel tells us) Lorelei and Rafiq because of his ties with Holly, which positions his rescue mission on a personal and relational level. By foregrounding this individual act of compassion

[352] Haraway, *Staying with the Trouble*, 1.
[353] Ibid., 1.
[354] Ibid., 4.

against cosmic level events such as the Atemporals' war, Mitchell appears to intimate the importance of these relatively microcosmic but nonetheless cosmopolitan acts by specific individuals. This idea is consistent with Ewing's conviction at the close of *Cloud Atlas* that even if his "life amounted to nothing more than one drop in a limitless ocean," one should be mindful that "any ocean" is, in fact, "a multitude of drops" (*Cloud*, 529).

Mitchell's writing process also gives us an inkling of his partiality for the microlevel despite the expansive nature of his works. He professes:

> … if I feel a conflict of interest between a larger world and the smaller world of an individual novel, then my constitution of the uber-book says that the smaller state – the book – has the last say in what goes in it, and the kind of central government of the uber-novel… is less important than the state capitals, has less power.[355]

In his own words, Mitchell's prioritisation of the smaller literary unit in the construction of his uber-novel gives more "power" to the "smaller world," which is commensurate with his focus on the seemingly miniscule and individual acts in his compassionate world-building.

Rose Harris-Birtill, who uses the theoretical model of the Buddhist mandala[356] to map Mitchell's narratives within his fictional world, agrees that Mitchell's 'hierarchical' writing process indicates "the ethical prioritization of smaller units of cosmopolitan diversity and difference over large-scale homogenization in his

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[355] David Mitchell, "*The Bone Clocks* Author David Mitchell: Self Described 'Sucker for Punishment,'" interview by Claire Fallon, *Huffington Post*, September 18, 2014, accessed June 16, 2021, https://www.huffpost.com/entry/david-mitchell-bone-clocks-interview_n_5835800.

[356] The mandala (Sanskrit for 'circle') is a religious artform that maps an ethical worldview. See Rose Harris-Birtill, *David Mitchell's Post-Secular World: Buddhism, Belief, and the Urgency of Compassion* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2019) for her study of Mitchell's bibliography of fiction, including his short stories and libretti, using the comparative theoretical model of the Tibetan Buddhist mandala to map the ethical worldview of his fictional world.

works."[357] These "narrative islands"[358] map an "ethically structured world"[359] that, Harris-Birtill insists, uses a "compassionate cartography… in which compassionate acts and perspectives take on particular significance"[360] and which "deliberately foregrounds the value of both small-scale communal endeavours and individual compassionate action, however Sisyphean."[361] In the context of ecological despair, these individual actions foster hopeful belief which, I agree with Harris-Birtill, can be "agent[s] of change"[362] for a better world.

The acts of compassion Mitchell's posthumans carry out may even include elements of self-sacrifice. For instance, it is possible to attribute an altruistic intention to the noncorpum's transmigration into the ailing baby girl. The girl's grandmother tells[363] the noncorpum in no uncertain terms that the girl would die "within three hours" (*Ghost*, 202) unless the noncorpum "choose[s] to be shackled by [her] flesh and bone" (*Ghost*, 202). That the noncorpum knowingly settles for a short mortal existence, when the "[l]ife expectancy in Central Asia is forty-three, and falling" (*Ghost*, 202) and gives up the more attractive options of "transmigrat[ing] into presidents, astronauts, messiahs" (*Ghost*, 202), also support the assumption that its decision was an ethical one. If we interpret the noncorpum's act in this manner, its willingness to make sacrifices for the good of others who are not of its own incorporeal kind exemplifies, like Marinus's rescue of Holly's grandchildren, what can be called a posthuman cosmopolitan spirit.

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[357] Harris-Birtill, *Post-Secular*, loc. 1274 of 7768, Kindle.
[358] Ibid., loc 1084 of 7768. Harris-Birtill specifically uses this description on Mitchell's short stories, but the term is equally applicable to Mitchell's novels, which are likewise small narrative units that constitute his uber-novel. She also makes mention of Mitchell's own reference to his novels as islands in an interview with Edward Champion in 2004.
[359] Ibid., loc. 4139 of 7768.
[360] Ibid., loc. 4212 of 7768.
[361] Ibid., loc. 4165 of 7768.
[362] Ibid., loc. 580 of 7768.
[363] The old woman who holds the noncorpum's memories could recognise and speak directly to the noncorpum when it transmigrates into her.

As we have established, Sonmi~451 does not play as explicit a role as Mitchell's incorporeal posthumans in the humans' fate, but her narrative alerts humans to how far they are from achieving a cosmopolitan disposition. Therefore, it is remarkable that, despite her being a victim of humankind's predacity,[364] Sonmi~451 could identify the positive aspects of humanity in a most unexpected place and which could serve as a hopeful eco-cosmopolitan model for post-Anthropocene communal living. When she flees Nea So Copros after her escape from Papa Song's, she stumbles across a secret colony of "dispossessed purebloods" (*Cloud*, 346) in a disused mountain abbey.

This "microsociety" that welcomes Sonmi~451 is "without enforcers and hierarchy" (*Cloud*, 346) and is free from national or corporate rule, something that the Archivist, as a loyal subject of the corpocracy, finds unbelievable. Although Sonmi~451's stay lasts only two days, this is the first time she is accorded equal status with other humans, and the impact of this short stint arguably gives her a stronger conviction of her wrongful treatment as a subhuman. The members of this colony share Sonmi~451's condition as an outsider to the mainstream hyper-consumerist society, and these outcasts include the "Uyghur dissidents, dustbowled farmers from Ho Chi Minh delta; once respectable conurbdwellers[365] who had fallen foul of Corp politics; unemployable deviants; those undollared by mental illness" (*Cloud*, 346). As such, this unique cosmopolitan enclave is marked by the embrace of difference, and with the acceptance of Sonmi~451, proves that it looks beyond the categories of human and posthuman. It is not surprising that the colonists respect the connectivity of all forms of life and value ecological sustainability: "Their food

[364] Not only are the server fabricants enslaved, but they are also slaughtered and recycled at the end of their servitude to form part of the human food supply chain, supplementing the depleting natural food sources in an ecologically destroyed world that has been commodified and overconsumed.
[365] These are residents in a conurbation.

came from the forest and garden; water from the cataract" (*Cloud*, 346), and they fashioned tools out of plastic and metal scraps from landfills, and also generated electric power from water-turbines and used "solar nitelamps" (*Cloud*, 347). The colonists' respectful treatment of nature as part of their eco-cosmopolitan responsibility is a striking contrast to the corpocracy's manipulation of the environment just outside the city, where "blunted needles," "pollenless trees… genomed to repel bugs and birds," the smell of insecticide in the stagnant air, and the foul effluence from "salmon netponds" could be traced to the tell-tale "mighty corp logos" (*Cloud*, 344) displayed prominently on the hills, laying claim to the land.

Sonmi~451 admits that the colony is "no bucolic Utopia" (*Cloud*, 347), and that it has to contend with unstable and variable harvests of the crops, the invasion of vermin in their caves, their reduced lifespans in comparison with the "upstrata consumers" back in the metropolis, and the discontent and squabbles among the colonists. However, the distinguishing feature for Sonmi~451 that makes the colony a viable society for futurity is "they do it in a community" whereas "Nea So Copros has no communities; it only has a state" (*Cloud*, 347). The colonists are able to foster a sense of community that Neo So Copros could not achieve despite the corpocracy's rigorously regulated political and socio-economic infrastructure. This is because, unlike Nea So Copros that only welcomes one category of pureblood consumers, the colony embraces the diversity of humans (and posthumans) which, in the absence of a definitive and singular 'us,' would not warrant the exclusion of 'others.' This kind of inclusive eco-cosmopolitan community may not yet be achievable in contemporary society as we know it, but by the counterfactual history presented in the novel, it becomes not just a utopian possibility. It is all the more striking that Mitchell uses Sonmi~451-the-fabricant and not a human character to

elucidate the importance of these eco-ethical principles that have the potential to save humankind from complete environmental annihilation. It is as if humanity has fallen so far short of ethical standards that it needs one of its abused 'products,' the fabricant, to point out its misdemeanours and direct them down a viable alternative path away from the total destruction of self and environment.

Although Mitchell's posthumans may be allegorical figures, it is significant that they are not only imminent beings from the distant and not so distant future(s): the noncorpum and the Atemporals, for example, are also already "immanent,"[366] at least within Mitchell's fictional world. That Mitchell's posthumans exist within the same spatiotemporal zones as the humans also dispels the notion that the posthuman is merely 'post'-human and signals the urgency of cultivating an equalitarian cosmopolitanism in the present to foster these human-posthuman relationships. Although it may not be easy to enforce the ethical ideals of (posthuman) cosmopolitanism in global cultural and political systems that are fraught with inequality (such as that imaginatively portrayed in *Cloud Atlas*'s technologically advanced but exploitative and morally bankrupt Nea So Copros), we should take heart from Appiah's reminder that "cosmopolitanism is the name of not the solution but of the challenge"[367] and that it would do us well to "develop habits of coexistence"[368] now.

Mitchell's posthumans, therefore, should inspire us to envision these new cosmopolitan identities and modes of belonging that not only acknowledge the mutual interdependencies between the human and the posthuman, but also show a planetary and eco-cosmopolitan consciousness. Such a disposition means stepping

[366] Braidotti, "Posthuman Critical Theory (2016)," 26.
[367] Kwame Anthony Appiah, *Cosmopolitanism*, xiii.
[368] Ibid., xvii.

out of the exploitative ‘resources-for-human’ mode of thinking to welcome non-anthropocentric perspectives and enforce ethical responsibilities beyond national and geographical boundaries. We may not be able to overcome our temporal boundaries like Mitchell’s transtemporal characters, but the imaginative transcendence of time in his narratives has shown us how important it is for us to act ethically now rather than later.

Mitchell’s posthumans, one could argue, lead by example in showing us how to cultivate these (eco-)cosmopolitan dispositions. While the Crakers of the *MaddAddam* trilogy play mainly passive roles in the post-apocalypse and rely first on Jimmy and then on other human survivors to be their caretakers, and Ishiguro’s clones most troublingly do not resist their fate or inspire any change to the exploitative behaviour of the normative society up to the very end, Mitchell’s posthumans play vastly more active and revolutionary roles. Their strong connections with the human characters help us understand that posthumanism’s call for a de-prioritisation of humans and the rescission of human privilege does not mean that humanity should be eradicated from the planet. The re-conceptualisation of humanity as one element within the wider ecology of interdependent beings sharing the planet is exemplified in Mitchell’s novels where posthumans extend their help to humans (the noncorpum and Atemporals), stay their hand from destroying the humans by omission or commission (the Zookeeper), and rebel against the status quo to demand a more relational egalitarianism, and identify hidden pockets of (eco-)cosmopolitan humanity that signal that these positive traits may already be immanent (Sonmi~451). As such, Mitchell’s posthumans not only provide non-anthropocentric perspectives on the *Anthropos*, but they also play integral roles in making sure humans endure in the next epoch. In Mitchell’s figuration of the post-

Anthropocene, therefore, there is definitely a place for humans, but they need to develop and hone new eco-cosmopolitan dispositions and identities in the here-and-now in order to navigate and adapt to an evolving post-Anthropocene world.

Conclusion: Towards a New Cosmopolitanism

This study has focused primarily on the concept of the human and the relationship of this human subject with other-than-humans. In the climate of environmental crises and global uncertainty that mark the late twentieth to the early twenty-first century, it has become increasingly apparent that the Western liberal humanist subject and its assumption of human exceptionalism cannot remain unchallenged. The technologies of the post-millennium also trouble habitual thinking about the concept of the human, casting doubts about humanist values like autonomy and agency in the posthuman age. As such, the human entity needs to be reframed, and doing so demands a rethinking of the human-nonhuman relationship: the notion of the dominant human who rules over the nonhuman is no longer viable, and the assumed ontological differences and binary oppositions between the human and the nonhuman need to be deconstructed and reconfigured.

To examine these issues, I engaged with posthumanist reconstructions of the human that not only decentralise the human but also acknowledge its instability and recognise that it is a “nomadic assemblage” always in a state of becoming, neither singular nor unitary, but multiple and relational. I interrogated how a reconfigured human might relate to nonhuman others ethically in the Anthropocene and the anticipated post-Anthropocene through the novels of Atwood, Mitchell, and Ishiguro. As I have shown in the study of these novels, sf and texts that experiment with features of this genre prove to be particularly suitable for the examination of such issues, because the feature of cognitive estrangement can serve as aesthetic expressions of hospitality to and cosmopolitan respect for others.

Although cosmopolitanism is predominantly a subject examined within the domains of philosophy and social sciences, literature is very much suited to provoking an analysis of the term. The creatively imagined trajectories and outcomes for humanity in fiction invite mindful interrogation of our ethical connections and responsibilities, as well as the opportunity to radically reconfigure them. As Pheng Cheah reasons, "the cosmopolitan optic is… one… of the imagination"[369] because we cannot perceive all of humanity at once, and literature acts as "a type of world-making activity"[370] to help us imagine the world we cannot see. The novels examined in this thesis have proven that they are more than equal to this task: as a case in point, the transtemporal connections in Mitchell's narratives, for instance, introduce another dimension to the spatial sense of cosmopolitanism to provoke our reflection on the need to navigate mutable identities and temporal differences in the forging of ethical ties. The diversity of the postulated posthuman subjectivities and their interspecies relationships in the novels of this study further encapsulates cosmopolitanism's functional focus on heterogeneity and the value of difference. More importantly, the posthuman possibilities presented in these novels heighten the readers' sensibilities to the urgency of cultivating ethical cosmopolitan dispositions against the volatile contemporary political and cultural climate.

The prospect of the eco-apocalypse portrayed in Atwood's and Mitchell's novels, especially, stokes imaginative thought about what lies ahead for us in the post-Anthropocene and the preventive and/or corrective measures that can be employed beyond the confines of these fictional worlds. For example, the end of the *MaddAddam* trilogy shows that the humans endure in the post-Anthropocene, but

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[369] Pheng Cheah, "What is a World? On World Literature as World-Making Activity," *Daedalus* 137, no. 3 (Summer 2008): 26, doi.org/10.1162/daed.2008.137.3.26.
[370] Ibid.

their survival is contingent on interspecies collaboration, and their cross-species affiliations in the community extend to not just coexistence, but more intimate connections that culminates in, for instance, the birth of human-Craker hybrids. This fictional outcome signals that our future survival is, likewise, contingent on and closely intertwined with the survival of nonhuman others, and we need to recalibrate our relationships with them on more equitable and closer terms, which means to figuratively 'become-with' other species. In this sense, the hybridisation of the human species in *MaddAddam* is an imaginative enactment of the interwoven, non-hierarchical, and symbiotic relationship we need to cultivate with nonhuman others.

Fundamentally, in the novels under scrutiny here, it transpires that humans need to adopt Haraway's concept of "making kin" with nonhuman others in order to feel a sense of commitment and accountability towards them. As the behaviour and attitudes of the guardians and authority figures in *Never Let Me Go* prove, it is not enough to have a generalised sympathy for 'nonhuman' others without acknowledging them as kin. The chauvinistic benevolence of Miss Emily and Madame towards the clones, in particular, employs the same inequitable principle of anthropocentrism by configuring the clones as subhuman and passive others. Madame and Miss Emily may champion the clones' humane treatment, but they are incapable of recognising them as kin, or even equals, so they have imposed a mental limit to how much they can do for them. What is even more troubling is that the sympathy of someone as well-meaning as Miss Lucy does not translate to any attempt on her part to liberate the clones from their fates: not only does Miss Lucy share the same bias about the clones as Madame and Miss Emily, but she is also unwilling to give up the benefits and privileges she stands to enjoy from the donor system. As *Never Let Me Go* shows, therefore, making kin with nonhuman others

requires a rescission of human privileges we have been enjoying at their expense. This clearly reverberates with the climate crisis, where the professed desire to protect the environment for the sake of humankind only, without a real concern for nonhumans and a commitment to a true eco-egalitarianism, is both futile and unsustainable: a proper commitment to environmental sustainability, in fact, requires that humans change their patterns of consumption that might benefit them (in the short term) but harm the environment.

The species/entity divide between the humans and nonhumans/posthumans depicted in these novels also imaginatively foregrounds the gulf that we need to bridge to make kin with those who are different from us. The concepts of kinship and cosmopolitanism may seem to be at odds because the former connotes partiality and obligation to those with whom one shares familial ties, while the latter calls on an ethical responsibility to a wider universal community of strangers. However, as I have shown through the interconnections between humans and nonhumans/posthumans in the texts, the two concepts are not only complementary to each other, but the practice of cosmopolitanism is in fact contingent on our ability to see the other as kin. The relative successes and failures of cosmopolitan sympathy portrayed in *Never Let Me Go*, the *MaddAddam* trilogy, and Mitchell's novels highlight the difficulties of bridging these gulfs, but also point to the possibilities afforded by kindness and compassion.

Besides making kin, which focuses on treating 'others' like kin, acting with kindness also begets kinship, and the mutually affirming conditions are encapsulated in Haraway's motto that "to be kind is to be kin."[371]

[371] Haraway, "Making Kin Interview."

In some of the novels I have examined here, kindness, compassion, and generosity do beget kinship across species: a good example would be Toby's generosity in imparting reading and writing skills to the Craker boy, Blackbeard, which ensures that the recording of the joint human-Craker history will continue even after she is gone. Toby's kindness to Blackbeard is born out of parental feelings she develops for him over the course of the novel, and in the process of mentoring him, their mutual feelings of kinship are also strengthened. Notably, in Mitchell's novels, it is the posthumans who show kindness and compassion to the humans. In *The Bone Clocks*, the Horologist Marinus uses his powers as an Atemporal to secure the passage of Holly's grandchildren to the last inhabitable sanctuary on the planet, while the noncorpum in *Ghostwritten* gives up its freedom and immortality to save a human child's life. The Horologists' and the noncorpum's mode of existence could account for their strong bonds with humans and explain why these posthumans are so willing to save them and make sacrifices for them. By inhabiting the minds of their human hosts, these posthumans are fully immersed in the latter's personalities and cultures and have a "lived connection" with them, even if it is not entirely "mutually felt."[372]

In this thesis, I have argued for a forward-looking cosmopolitanism that upholds intra- and inter-species egalitarianism by incorporating the concerns of posthumanism, post-anthropocentrism, and ecocriticism. In the process, I have also dismantled the hierarchies of speciesism and anthropocentrism and showed the urgency of reframing of the Anthropocene as a time for us to reflect on our existence as one element in the ecosystem and to reorientate ourselves to the complexities

[372] Haraway, "Making Kin Interview." Haraway explains that while she never acquired a deep understanding of what her dog Cayenne was thinking, it was the "mutually felt, lived connection" they had that mattered in their interspecies relationship.

and messiness of our becoming-with-others to co-exist and flourish together in the post-Anthropocene.

However, as the examples in these novels demonstrate, humans *need* posthumans to show them how to be cosmopolitan, even though it is in their best interests. In fact, a new cosmopolitanism that situates them as only one element in the larger ecology of other interdependent beings is imperative for the survival of humanity *and* the planet. Even when some of these posthumans take on less 'instructional' roles, such as Sonmi~451 and Kathy, their narratives disclose in literal and figurative ways the propensity for humans to be 'uncosmopolitan' towards (dehumanised) others and alert us to the distance humans still need to bridge to achieve cosmopolitanism towards other humans and nonhumans/posthumans.

Acts of compassion by posthumans and nonhumans towards humans are less prominent in but not entirely absent from Atwood's trilogy. For example, the Crakers treat Snowman as a revered member of their community in *Oryx and Crake* and tend to his daily wellbeing, and when he becomes deliriously ill, try to nurse him in whatever way they could. Also, when Snowman and Adam One die in the battle against the Painballers, the Pigoons offer to carry their bodies on their backs to the burial site to symbolise, not their servitude, but their interspecies alliance and kinship with the MaddAddamites. Significantly, these may be small individual acts of compassion, but they foster hope for collaborative futures between the humans and nonhumans/posthumans against the bleak and uncertain circumstances within and beyond these fictional worlds.

The focus on these small-scale actions is consistent with the concerns of Atwood's and Mitchell's novels. While they interrogate what a new planetary 'citizenship' that transcends national and geographic (and also species) boundaries

entails, they also alert us that cosmopolitanism need not always be manifested on a large scale. For example, the central event in the *MaddAddam* trilogy may be a global pandemic that wipes out almost the entire human population, but the trilogy ends with the setting up of a relatively microcosmic cosmopolitan community, emphasising the importance of smaller-scale connections and communities. The posthuman characters in Mitchell's novels also seek out intimate, small-scale connections. The noncorpum in *Ghostwritten* prefers to inhabit the "more intimate neighbourhood" (*Ghost*,166) of Gunga's mind, because the latter's few but close connections with others appeal more to the noncorpum than the frenetic consciousness of Caspar, whose multiple but tenuous connections prove too exhausting and unfulfilling for it. Gunga's concern for others who are close to her and her strong sense of obligation to her community call on the same value of responsibility that a cosmopolitan disposition requires.

These plotlines emphasise that while it is not possible for one to be responsible for everyone within an imagined community, the desire to connect with a few proximal others within small and sometimes parochial communities is not necessarily 'uncosmopolitan.' In fact, partiality to a smaller community may be the most practicable way to establish close ties because it is impossible to have a face-to-face relationship with everyone in the world. Importantly, partiality to one's local community need not contradict cosmopolitanism but can, in fact, foster the feelings of responsibility to a larger community.

Nonetheless, the kinds of cosmopolitanism that these texts gesture to may be chaotic and rife with trouble. For example, the inception of the interspecies community in *MaddAddam* is marked by what the MaddAddamites experience as rape and violence when the Crakers and MaddAddamites come together because

they have different views on reproduction and sexual relations. After the Pigoons form an alliance with the MaddAddamites and join the community, there continues to be breaches in the agreement between the MaddAddamites and the Pigoons, such as the trespass and damage of property by young Pigoons on the commune grounds. Significantly, these problems do not detract from the fact that the new ways of coexistence enabled by the disordered coming together of these disparate individuals and groups can ultimately create better conditions for the community than when they were separate and apart: the interspecies community, for example, is able to ward off shared threats by banding together.

Similarly, in *Cloud Atlas,* the secret colony tucked away in the mountains provides shelter and communality for "dispossessed purebloods" (*Cloud*, 346) and posthumans like Sonmi~451. What is striking is that it takes a group of societal rejects to exercise a kind of grassroots eco-cosmopolitanism that is totally absent from the normative society of Nea So Copros: the equality the colonists practise with one another matches their ecological reverence for the ravaged environment. So, not only do these colonists find a better mode of existence together, but they are also able to make things better for the environment. Mitchell's secret colony, in other words, may not be a trouble-free enclave, but it is a fitting metaphor for the kind of future-oriented planetary citizenship that binds the human and the posthuman together with a shared responsibility towards environmental sustainability.

These novelistic presentations of posthuman cosmopolitan communities provoke our thoughts on the way we configure ourselves and our relation to others and the environment. In *Never Let Me Go*, where there are no real cosmopolitan communities predicated on kindness and "making kin," the normative society's configuration of the clones as less than human to justify their exploitation deploys

historical and (still existing) practices of discrimination or 'othering' on the basis of gender, ethnicity, and other distinct features. The *MaddAddam* trilogy and Mitchell's novels, instead, indicate that a de-prioritisation of humans is needed to establish a more egalitarian cosmopolitanism, but also show that the rescission of privileges does not imply that humans should be replaced in the post-Anthropocene.

Ishiguro's latest novel further deepens the conversation on these issues. In *Klara and the Sun* (2021), society's heavy reliance on technology makes it possible for privileged children to undergo "lifting," or genetic modification, in order to augment their intelligence. These 'lifted' children become a sort of AI, and in a sense, the synthesis of the human with AI in the novel seems to fulfil the melding of the human and the technological envisioned in Haraway's cyborg. Moreover, the humans in the novel not only substitute machines for human companionship by purchasing AFs or "artificial friends" for their children, but they also experiment with replacing their loved ones with them. Klara is one such AF who is ostensibly deployed as a mechanical companion for Josie, an ailing girl suffering from the side effects of the "lifting" procedure. What Josie's mother, Chrissie, really wants, however, is to synthesise Klara's artificial psyche with a synthetic replica of Josie to "continue her"[373] if she should die. Chrissie's plans[374] for Klara to become a sort of 'artificial' version of the human, and thus a kind of receptable to contain Josie's 'essence,' amount to a complete erasure and exploitation of the nonhuman, not unlike the erasure and exploitation of the (human) clones in *Never Let Me Go*. The intention for Klara to 'accommodate' Josie's essence, however, is not at all like the noncorpum's and the Horologists' inhabitation of human hosts in Mitchell's novels: it

[373] Ishiguro, *Klara and the Sun* (London: Faber and Faber, 2021), loc 3774 of 3787, Kindle.
[374] In the novel, Josie eventually recovers from her illness, so Klara never has to undergo the procedure to replace her.

is not cosmopolitanism in action or a kind of becoming-with, but a complete replacement of the host who, in an ironic reversal, is the nonhuman Klara. Pinpointing how unjust hierarchies, discrimination, and segregation can open a gulf between the “lifted” and the “unlifted” children, as well as between the humans and the AFs, *Klara and the Sun* shows us again how new technologies can exacerbate existing inequalities in society.

In Ishiguro’s new novel, however, he also seems to ask if the human and the machine are ultimately interchangeable or if there is something unique in every form of (human or nonhuman) life. The basic premise of the ‘human-to-AI transfers’ in the novel seems to be that human behaviour and personality traits can be mapped onto algorithms and copied onto AI to be replicated and/or reassembled, suggesting that humans might just be different permutations of (possibly a limited series of) codable personalities and traits. In a subtle reversal of the dominant hierarchical tropes of human-nonhuman relationships, therefore, Chrissie’s plans also mark the human as fully replaceable (and, in a way, disposable), and obliterate diversity.

Albeit in different ways, therefore, Ishiguro, Atwood, and Mitchell all seem to be concerned with showing how necessary it is to resist the tendencies to configure relationships using the all too familiar models of domination and subjugation. The key, instead, is to accept and embrace diversity and cultivate egalitarian cosmopolitan relationships whereby humans and nonhumans orientate themselves to adapt to the complexities and messiness of our becoming-with-others in order to co-exist and flourish together in the post-Anthropocene. The way forward may be wrought with difficulties and unresolved issues, and as humans continue to explore their identities as co-evolving posthuman subjects, they will inevitably uncover new findings that demand readjustment and recalibration of thinking. Hypothetical

deconstructions of the human, such as the one presented in *Klara and the Sun*, provoke further critical thought about the uniqueness and diversity of not just the human species, but every form of life, and is just one example of the critical insights and findings which will continue to challenge our engagement with and the implementation of cosmopolitanism in the Anthropocene and beyond.

NB: The spelling of all quotations from American sources has been reproduced exactly as originally published.

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