

Faculté de philosophie, arts et lettres

Laughter as a Weapon against Climate Change

Climate fiction, Satire and Emotions in Margaret Atwood's
MaddAddam trilogy.

Auteur : Chiara Fort
Promoteur(s) : Professor Ben De Bruyn
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Introduction

As global warming is progressing and its associated problems rising, a new genre of fiction has emerged in the twenty-first century. Climate fiction, often abbreviated to cli-fi, has developed from earlier forms of nature writing and contains literature that focuses on climate change and the age of the Anthropocene. Long-term shifts in temperature and weather patterns are referred to as climate change. In the twenty-first century, these changes are the results of human activity. The Anthropocene refers to the geological time period when human activities began having a substantial impact on the climate and ecosystems of the world. Climate fiction reflects the common anxieties about global warming and tries to influence the way people think about climate change. The genre often encourages the readers to change their behavior and to fight global warming. Margaret Atwood is one of many cli-fi writers, and she uses her voice to raise awareness about the problems of climate change and related socio-economic problems. However, she is not only a well-known environmental-activist, but is also Canada's best-known writer and an internationally-famous critic and novelist. Atwood discusses a variety of themes in her works such as religion and myth, gender and identity, or the power of language and politics.

This master's thesis analyses three well-known novels written by Margaret Atwood that form a trilogy called the *MaddAddam* trilogy. She published the first one, *Oryx and Crake* in 2003, the second one, *The Year of the Flood* in 2008, and the last part of the trilogy, *MaddAddam*, in 2013. The novels are all set in a dystopian future, in which climate change has decisively altered the world as we know it. To deal with the problems of overpopulation, a mad scientist, Crake, released a deadly virus in the world that killed almost every human being. The first novel introduces the character Jimmy, who was once friends with Crake before the pandemic. Jimmy lives on a beach with the Crakers, genetically engineered humanlike creatures. At the end of the first novel, Jimmy meets Toby and Ren. Before the pandemic, the two girls were part of a sect called God's Gardener's. The second novel is about their lives before and after the pandemic. In the third novel, the three characters meet other survivors, like Zeb, another former God's Gardener member. Together, they try to navigate their lives in a world where humankind has almost become extinct. The dystopian trilogy could also be classified as climate fiction. While sexuality, gender issues, or the supremacy of corporate culture are crucial themes in these novels, this thesis concentrates on the use of satire in the trilogy as cli-fi novels.

The *MaddAddam* trilogy employs Atwood's trademark satire: In her works, she frequently uses humor to address political, gender-related, or environmental concerns. In satire, characters, situations, or events are mocked to critique them. Therefore, this art form is also very fitting for climate fiction since it allows the author to criticize humans, their treatment of the planet, and all the connected social, political, or economic problems. In satires, in addition to expressing his or her criticism, the author can also evoke positive feelings in the audience by creating laughter. Climate fiction is a space where Anthropocene concerns can be addressed, which is what Atwood does with humor in the trilogy. Climate fiction, satire, and the emotional response produced through humorous texts such as the *MaddAddam* trilogy are all important themes worth a deeper analysis, especially considering the importance of climate change in the twenty-first century.

The literary research on climate fiction and the one on the *MaddAddam* trilogy are already extensive. Many critics have analysed themes like posthumanism, the animal-human relationship, or gender in Atwood's cli-fi novels. The cultural-political work of cli-fi, and hence the *MaddAddam* trilogy, has also already been researched. One prominent goal is to influence the reader's opinion about climate change, to convince them of the urgency of the crisis, and to move them to act to save the planet (Whiteley 29). However, negative emotional responses can hinder a change of attitude towards climate change, and thus the promotion of climate activism (Kaltenbacher and Drews 717). Traditional climate fiction often evokes dark, pessimistic images about global warming. It is a well-established fact that, not only in the literature about climate change but also in the media and general discussions, the outlooks on global warming are often painted as rather grim and hopeless (Schneider-Mayerson 489-490). In addition, environmentalism holds a bad reputation for being-too difficult, self-righteous, and didactic, as the critic Nicole Seymour points out (4).

These patterns can also be seen in climate fiction. For example, the cli-fi movie *The Day After Tomorrow* (2004) is a dark, depressing movie. Apocalyptic weather events destroy almost the entire Earth. Kim Stanley Robinson's cli-fi novel *The Ministry for the Future* (2020) is also serious, didactic and maybe sometimes too difficult. The novel often describes solutions to climate change complexly. Seymour addresses environmentalism's bad reputation in her book *Bad Environmentalism: Irony and Irreverence in the Ecological Age*. "Bad Environmentalism" is a term she uses for Western work that "evinces environmental concern," but "demonstrate none of the classic hallmarks of environmentalism" (4). "Bad

Environmentalism” works reject the negative feelings often associated with climate change. Instead, they use, for example, irony to enter a critical discussion with themselves (Seymour 4). Seymour also focuses on lowbrow forms in “Bad Environmentalism” texts and the importance of queer perspectives in those works. However, this thesis mostly pays attention to Seymour’s arguments about the role of humor and irony in “Bad Environmentalism” works.

Thus, humor and satire can help in climate fiction to discuss global warming differently. By using humor, cli-fi texts can evoke positive feelings toward climate change (Branch 386). Those feelings help the overall goal of climate fiction to teach people about climate change and to encourage them to act on global warming. This use of humor, and its effect on the audience, has not yet been analysed thoroughly in Atwood’s *MaddAddam* trilogy. Since humor can help engage people in the climate crisis, a closer analysis of Atwood’s humor in her popular cli-fi satire and how she reaches her readers is worth more attention. Two questions regarding satire and climate fiction have not yet been addressed. Firstly, what type of cli-fi satire addresses Anthropocene concerns without evoking negative feelings like anxiety or hopelessness? Secondly, in what manner does Atwood target themes in relation to global warming in the *MaddAddam* trilogy?

To fill this gap in the existing research, this thesis analyses the use of satire in the *MaddAddam* trilogy. To answer the first question, the thesis establishes how satire as an art form that creates laughter and expresses criticism at the same time addresses Anthropocene concerns. Humor can produce positive emotions. However, some climate-fiction satires might still evoke negative responses in the audience. To create positive feelings, an inward-directed satire is needed. This thesis marks the difference between an inward-directed satire and an outward-directed satire. An outward-directed cli-fi satire only employs corrective irony towards the audience. Environmentalists, scientists, or the authors themselves take the moral high ground. The audience feels targeted, excluded, and told-off for their behavior. A prominent example of the first type of satire is the Netflix movie *Don’t look up* from 2021. This thesis argues that such a satire rather evokes a negative emotional response in the audience than a positive one, as the negative reviews of the movie indicate. An inward-directed satire, on the other hand, employs irony in all directions. Such a climate-fiction satire criticizes everyone, even climate activists or scientists.

An inward-directed-cli-fi satire refrains from a didactic viewpoint, and no one takes the moral high ground. This thesis classifies the *MaddAddam* trilogy as the latter type of cli-fi satire

Such a cli-fi satire can evoke positive emotional responses from the audience because it refrains from producing feelings typically related to traditional cli-fi, like guilt, anxiety, or hopelessness. An inward-directed cli-fi satire is thus everything a “Bad Environmentalism” text is after Seymour’s definition, while an outward cli-fi satire includes Seymour’s points of criticism she detects in environmental texts. An inward-directed satire also responds to the critic Branch’s demand to use self-reflexive humor in environmental texts. He says, “if we refuse to laugh at ourselves, we reinforce the unhappy stereotype of the environmentalist as solemn, didactic, or smug” (289).

The thesis analyses three of Atwood’s satirical targets in the *MaddAddam* trilogy to answer the second research question. It addresses what Atwood satirizes, what discussions she wants to spark, and how she makes fun of everyone and everything in her novels. The thesis analyses linguistic and stylistic aspects of her satire in order to answer how she mocks things. In the novels, Atwood speculates on what will happen to humans and their planet if no actions against climate change are taken. The thesis addresses three of Atwood’s satirical targets that are related to the future of our planet and society in relation to global warming and have not yet been discussed broadly in the existing literature. First, it elaborates on how the trilogy mocks and criticizes developments Atwood sees and fears that are connected to global warming, such as the worship of fossil fuels and the mainstream violence in our contemporary society. Second, the trilogy satirizes particular environmental movements and philosophies, such as deep ecology and radical and shallow environmentalism. Last but not least, another target of Atwood’s satire concerns food production and consumption in the twenty-first century, especially regarding veganism. With her satire about the plant-based diet, she raises questions about the role of meat and animals in our society. Finally, this thesis also addresses how satire and humor can be found within the novel between the characters, and outside of it between the author and the reader. Laughter is used as a weapon in times of crisis by the characters in the *MaddAddam* trilogy, and by the readers and authors of climate fiction who use humor to fight global warming.

In conclusion, the purpose of this master’s thesis is to analyse satire in Margaret Atwood’s novels *Oryx and Crake*, *The Year of the Flood*, and *MaddAddam* concerning climate change and the new genre of climate fiction. One of the bigger issues in the twenty-first century is climate change. Climate fiction mirrors the preoccupation with global warming, and it is crucial to analyse the new genre. This thesis establishes the advantages of cli-fi satire in order to move

people to act against climate change. The dominant approach to climate change includes pessimistic and serious images. While those can certainly also raise awareness, they also evoke negative feelings like anxiety or hopelessness. I want to find out how humor can be a method to raise awareness of climate change in cli-fi. The goal of this thesis is to find out how cli-fi satire can create positive reactions towards climate change and to define how Atwood's satire could affect her readers.

The first chapter introduces the Anthropocene, cli-fi, the *MaddAddam* trilogy, and Margaret Atwood. In the second chapter, the thesis analyses satire, humor, and emotions in climate fiction and the trilogy. It explains satire and the role of humor in the climate change discussion. The chapter also addresses the emotions evoked by humor in cli-fi and how inward-directed and outward-directed cli-fi satires might produce different emotional responses in the audience. The movie *Don't look up* is as an example of an outward-directed cli-fi satire and the *MaddAddam* trilogy is an example of inward-directed cli-fi satire.

Several critics support the second chapter. Matthew Schneider-Mayerson's "The Influence of Climate Fiction. An Empirical Survey of Readers" (2018) proves that many traditional cli-fi novels trigger negative feelings. Nicole Seymour and Michael P. Branch argue for the use of humor and irony in environmental texts and climate fiction. Branch's article "Are You Serious? A Modest Proposal for Environmental Humor" from 2014 advocates for the many benefits of using satire in cli-fi. Other critics, like Maxwell Boykoff and Beth Osnes, or Miriam Kaltenbacher and Stefan Drews also demand humor in climate change communication. Kaltenbacher and Drews published "An inconvenient joke? A Review of Humor in Climate Change Communication" in 2020. "A Laughing Matter? Confronting climate change through humor" (2019) was written by Boykoff and Osnes. The use of satire in the climate change discourse also has its downsides. The critics Inger-Lise Kalviknes Bore and Grace Reid analyse in their article "Laughing in the Face of Climate Change? Satire as a Device for Engaging Audiences in Public Debate" (2014) the challenges of climate fiction satire.

In the third chapter, the thesis discusses the satirical targets of the *MaddAddam* trilogy. It analyses how and what Atwood satirizes, and what types of questions and discussion points are brought to one's mind by her satire. This chapter discusses the satire of contemporary developments like the future fossil fuel mania and the mainstream of violence. Then, it analyses the satire of environmental movements, and lastly, the satire of veganism. It also examines the use of humor and satire in the novels and outside the novels. The contributions of the critics

Dvorak, Traub, and Seymour help to establish the forms of Atwood's humor and satire. Marta Dvorak's essay "Margaret Atwood's Humor" (2006), published in *The Cambridge Companion to Margaret Atwood*, analyses Atwood's Canadian humor in the *MaddAddam* trilogy and other works. The critic Courtney Traub's essay "From the Grotesque to Nuclear-Age Precedents: The Modes and Meanings of Cli-fi Humor" from 2018 also explores how humor functions in Margaret Atwood's climate fiction.

This thesis also responds to theories and observations from the critics J. Brooks Bouson, Jovian Parry, and Tatiana Prorokova-Konrad to analyse Atwood's satirical targets. The critic Bouson wrote the articles "A 'joke-filled romp' through end times: Radical environmentalism, deep ecology, and human extinction in Margaret Atwood's eco-apocalyptic *MaddAddam* trilogy" (2016) and " 'It's Game Over Forever': Atwood's Satiric Vision of a Bioengineered Posthuman Future in *Oryx and Crake*" (2004). In those articles, she discusses, among others, the importance of fossil fuels in the *MaddAddam* trilogy and Atwood's satire of environmental movements. Parry's essay "*Oryx and Crake* and the New Nostalgia for Meat" from 2009 and Prorokova-Konrad's essay "Veganism, ecoethics, and climate change in Margaret Atwood's 'MaddAddam' trilogy" from 2021 discuss Atwood's vegan satire and the role of meat in the novels.

Chapter 1: Climate Change, Climate Fiction and Margaret Atwood's *MaddAddam* Trilogy

Extreme weather conditions have become more and more frequent in the past years. Climate change is the reason for that. Humans are causing the global temperature to rise faster than before. The Earth is changing, and the changes in the environment will transform the way people live. As the global threat is coming closer and closer, climate fiction has emerged. This new literary genre imagines the origin, results, and feelings of climate change. The literary works attached to the genre raise awareness of the upcoming crisis and attempt to move people to act and save the planet. Climate fiction addresses different themes, such as survival, the future generation, or the importance of biodiversity. Many authors have contributed to this new genre, including Margaret Atwood, who wrote the climate change novels *Oryx and Crake* (2003), *The Year of the Flood* (2009), and *MaddAddam* (2013). Altogether, these books are known as the *MaddAddam* trilogy. The novels tell the story of a world changed by global warming, and where a scientist named Crake released a virus to deal with the problem of overpopulation. This chapter introduces the new genre called climate fiction and how Margaret Atwood's novels fit into this genre. Several salient issues pertain to this topic. First, this chapter explains the concept of climate change and the Anthropocene. Then, it illustrates the emergence and history of climate fiction and how the genre is defined. An explanation about the different types of cli-fi, the recurring themes, and literary styles follows. Next, this chapter reviews Margaret Atwood's response to global warming and the place of her trilogy in the discussion. There is a summary of the *MaddAddam* trilogy and a review about the themes related to climate change in the novels.

This dissertation consults several articles and books to define the term climate fiction. Adam Trexler's book *Anthropocene Fictions: The Novel in a Time of Climate Change* from 2015 is one of the first systematic examinations of novels written about climate change. The author Trexler explains the notion of the Anthropocene and the literary response to climate change. For him, a novel can take climate science out of the lab and into the real world, transforming abstract predictions into subjectively concrete sensations of place, identity, and culture. Adeline Johns-Putra also defines the term climate fiction in her novel *Climate and Literature* from 2019. She studies climate fiction in order to understand how this type of literature can help deal with climate change. In *Climate and Literature*, Johns-Putra analyses the origin and development of the new genre. Last but not least, Caren Irr's essay "Climate

Fiction in English” has also proven helpful for this chapter. Written in 2017, the article discusses the emergence of cli-fi, its characteristics, and its future. Irr also addresses connecting themes like satire in connection to cli-fi and ecocriticism, a field that examines “the significance of nature in literary culture from ancient to contemporary times and in many linguistic traditions and genres” (Irr 2). In summary, the critics Irr, Johns-Putra, and Trexler provide introductory insights into climate change literature.

To understand climate fiction, the term climate change has to be explained first. BBC News explains in the article “What is climate change? A really simple guide” from 2021 that the Earth is in a state where the climate, meaning the average weather conditions over many years in one particular place, is changing. The rise in global temperature changes the way people live. For example, climate change causes water shortage, a rising sea level that makes some places uninhabitable, and extreme weather events like floods. Developing countries suffer the most since they lack the money to adapt sufficiently to those changes. Global warming also affects nature and animals. For instance, as weather conditions are alternating and polar ice is melting, animals lose their habitat, and whole species disappear. Humans are responsible for these changes by adding greenhouse gases to the atmosphere that trap the sun’s energy. These gases could be removed by nature, but humans are destroying the oceans, forests, and soils. Hence, the rise in global temperature (“What is Climate Change?”).

In conclusion, in the past years, human activity has had a consequential impact on the Earth’s climate. It has become necessary to assert a new geological epoch to imply this impact: the Anthropocene. Before the Anthropocene, there was the epoch of the Holocene, the period after the Ice Age. Scientists have offered their future predictions about the outcomes of climate change, saying that the global temperature is likely to rise between three to five degrees by the end of the century. Therefore, something needs to be done to prevent the Earth as we know it from falling apart (Trexler 1-2). Literature reflects the spirit of a society. It mirrors what a generation cares about, its problems, and its passions. In the twenty-first century, one of the biggest problems is climate change, and the preoccupation with global warming and its effects can be seen in contemporary literature. The analysis of climate fiction is important. A close reading of cli-fi novels, like the *Maddaddam* trilogy, can help to find out what concerns people about global warming, what the future could look like, and how cli-fi can help engage people in climate activism.

Climate change affects non-humans and humans alike. There is naturally an occupation with not only the physical but also the possible political and social effects. The critic Johns-Putra states in the introduction to the novel *Climate and Literature* that “with these effects have come the need for a collective emotional, ethical, and psychological response, including literary engagements with climate and climate science” (7). Climate-change literature emerged as a response to global warming. The authors use the genre to put climate change into context by imagining, for instance, the consequences, feelings, or effects of global warming (Irr 1). The cultural and political work of this genre includes reflecting on the common anxieties about climate change. Cli-fi is also supposed to take an active role in molding the way people think about the climate crisis. The genre hopes to encourage action against global warming (Whiteley 29). Climate fiction attempts to elucidate the ethical and social repercussions of environmental crisis. It considers the existing political situation, which is impeding climate-change action, and also investigates how risk manifests and influences society (Schneider-Mayerson 474). Climate fiction is a fluid genre, various text forms can all be classified as cli-fi as long as climate change is a topic found in these works (Johns-Putra *Climate* 2). Climate change can be a theme in thrillers, romantic novels, poetry, drama, music, and even movies. Well-known examples of climate fiction are Kim Stanley Robinson’s novels *the Ministry for the Future* (2020) and *New York 2140* (2017), Cormac McCarthy’s *The Road* (2006) or Barbara Kingsolver’s *Flight Behaviour* (2012), and the movie *The Day After Tomorrow* (2004). They all display stories in which climate change acts either as a background or as a central motive.

At the beginning of the twenty-first century, as the attention towards climate change rose, more and more novels about anthropogenic global warming appeared. Trexler points out they even covered this development in the news when several news outlets reported that climate change spurred the creation of a new genre of fiction. The journalist Dan Bloom coined the term cli-fi in 2011 to describe the literary works. However, Climate fiction has a long history before the media covered its growing range and Dan Bloom invented the term. Trexler claims that before greenhouse gas emissions sparked widespread scientific interest, authors have already been concerned about human-altered climate. Terraforming - the deliberate alteration of a planet’s environment to make it more habitable to humanity- first appeared in science fiction in 1951. Nuclear winter was the subject of a slew of other books. Trexler labels Ursula Le Guin’s novel *The Lathe of Heaven* as the first novel directly dealing with the anthropogenic greenhouse effect. The novel was published in 1971, and several more followed in the late

1970s. However, it was not until the late 1980s that climate change novels became more prominent. In the 1990s, many authors published science fiction novels and dystopian future novels. Climate fiction grew in popularity during the first decade of the twenty-first century. Around 2008, there was a surge in publications, owing in part to George W. Bush's re-election in late 2004, when it seemed as if the American leadership on environmental concerns was fading. Since then, a regular stream of novels addressing anthropogenic global warming has appeared (Trexler 8-9).

The roots of cli-fi are varied, but three works have particularly influenced the genre, according to Irr. Henry David Thoreau's *Walden* inspired a new genre of non-fictional nature writing. Originally published in 1854, the novel tells the story of the author's life alone in the woods. The natural aspects and the fascination with subjective human responses seen in a hero who is physically or mentally damaged are also present in twenty-first-century climate fiction. Other features of cli-fi can also be traced back to the novel *Silent Spring* by Rachel Carson. The book was published in 1962 and reported on the negative environmental effects caused by pesticides. Carson's didactic attitude and her forecast of a possible future whose origins are in the present are also typical of climate fiction. Finally, James Graham Ballard's *The Drowned World* (1962), a novel claimed to be the first cli-fi novel, also features many climate change elements. The plot of the novel occurs in a post-apocalyptic future in which increased solar radiation has caused global warming, rendering much of the Earth's surface uninhabitable. A group of scientists is investigating environmental changes in a flooded, deserted London. The novel depicts the apocalyptic sensibility of climate change. Cities are flooded because of global warming. The protagonists experience a crisis of confidence in the scientists who are supposed to solve the problem. Together, the novels *Walden*, *Silent Spring*, and *The Drowned World* have inspired and influenced the beginning and development of the genre climate fiction (Irr 4-6). Today, climate fiction has evolved, and given its popularity and potential for communicating climate-related problems, the genre of cli-fi seems likely to grow even more in the future. Authors will probably develop new moods, locations, styles, and temporalities in climate fiction. This new diversity will help to expand the genre and help its viability. As long as the climate crisis continues to be an issue, the genre, and the global recognition of it will continue to grow (Irr 13-14).

Climate fiction is characterized by the attempt to imagine the consequences of climate change on the Earth and humans. There are different types of climate fiction, and recurring

themes appear in these works. Climate fiction can be set in the present or the future, according to Johns-Putra. Present climate fiction novels describe climate change as a problem that needs each individual's engagement. It is a moral, political, or even psychological issue. The future generation, what will become of them, and how to deal with them is also a frequent theme (Johns-Putra *Climate change* 269). Barbara Kingsolver's novel *Flight Behaviour* is an example of a cli-fi novel set in the present or near future. The protagonist Dellarobia Turnbow lives with her family on a farm in poverty. One day, she discovers monarch butterflies in a forest behind her home. They migrated there because of global warming. The novel shows that the individual effort to save the planet is important. Johns-Putra claims the novel also portrays the parental concern in Dellarobia, who worries about the future of her family. Other climate change novels are often set in the future. Climate change is part of a post-apocalyptic setting or a dystopian world. Here, climate change is not only depicted as an individual concern but as an external problem and there is frequently an overall collapse of our society. Technological overreliance, a growth in the social division, and the rising economic instability lead to this collapse. These novels highlight the physical drama, and how to survive becomes a recurring theme (Johns-Putra *Climate change* 269). An example is the in 2006 published novel *The Road* by Cormac McCarthy. The setting is a post-apocalyptic world where society as we know it has collapsed. A father and his son travel through this world, trying to survive.

Many climate-fiction works include similar motifs, regardless of whether the plot takes place in the future or the present. The importance of nature and biodiversity is emphasized. Humans are taking over the world, and this has become a problem. Climate fiction addresses the problem of extinction and how the destruction of nature affects not only humans but every living being on Earth (Haq 42). Other climate-related problems, like climate migration and capitalism, are also often explored (Whiteley 33). In climate fiction, the setting is of importance too. Endangered cities and islands are frequent locations. Often, a dramatic event changes the setting, for example, extreme weather events such as floods (Irr 2). The characters often have different understandings and opinions about climate change. For example, some are uncertain about the reality of global warming (Whiteley 31). A prototypical character is a scientist whose understanding of climate change deviates from popular ideas. All these elements create an apocalyptic sensibility. Questions of guilt, how to deal with a crisis, and how we can save the world are addressed in these novels (Irr 2). However, even if most motives draw a pessimistic view of the future, many novels display hope at the ending of the story (Haq 42).

This master's thesis analyses three climate fiction novels. The *MaddAddam* trilogy comprises three novels written by Margaret Atwood. The first novel, *Oryx and Crake*, was published in 2003, *The Year of the Flood* followed in 2008 and the last part of the trilogy, *MaddAddam*, was published in 2013. These books tell the story of a world changed by global warming where a scientist named Crake released a deadly virus to deal with overpopulation. In the first novel, *Oryx and Crake*, the reader meets Snowman, also known as Jimmy. He survived the deadly pandemic and now lives on a beach with the Crakers, humanoids created by Crake. The scientist Crake wanted to erase humans and replace them with the Crakers, who are more sustainable and less violent. Throughout the novel, Jimmy speaks about his past and the world before the pandemic destroyed humankind. It was a violent world, ruled by consumerism and divided between scientists, who were in control of everything, and the average population. The rich scientists lived comfortably in Compounds, isolated from the other humans who lived in the run-down areas called Pleeblands. Jimmy lived in the Compounds, where he met Crake. The two of them became friends, and Crake made Jimmy immune to the virus, about which Jimmy knew nothing. After the pandemic broke out, Jimmy killed Crake and went to the beach with the Crakers. At the end of the first novel, he meets Ren and Toby, the protagonists of *The Year of The Flood*. In the second book of the trilogy, the reader learns more about the world before the pandemic.

While the first book is told from Jimmy's perspective, who was rich and well-protected from the already-destroyed world by climate change, the second novel follows the point of view of the other part of the population who was poor and lived in the Pleeblands. The protagonists are Ren and Toby. They were part of the group called God's Gardeners before the pandemic. The God's Gardeners form a religious sect that combines biblical and scientific practices to honor the Earth. They had predicted the end of humanity but some of them survived the virus, like Ren and Toby. A girl in Ren's age named Amanda also survived, she is Ren's best friend. After the pandemic hit, Amanda, Ren, and Toby hide in a spa. Eventually, "Painballers", the worst kind of criminals who participated in a television game to kill each other, find them. Unfortunately, these criminals survived the virus too, and they kidnap Amanda. In search for her, Ren and Toby meet Jimmy on the beach. Here, the story of the first book and second meet. Together they can capture the Painballers and save Amanda.

The last novel, *MaddAddam*, continues with Jimmy's, Ren's, and Toby's story. They reunite with other survivors. Some were part of Crake's project and worked unwillingly for

him. They did not know what they were working on when they developed with Crake the virus and the Crakers. Others were part of the God's Gardeners. Like Zeb, who once dated Ren's mother and now falls in love with Toby. He is the brother of Adam One, the former leader of the God's Gardeners. The survivors live together with the Crakers and try to protect each other from the Painballers, who managed to escape again, and the Pigoons, a highly intelligent animal hybrid. The Painballers become dangerous for the Pigoons too, and the survivors, the Crakers and the Pigoons form an alliance. Together they fight against the Painballers, a battle when Adam One dies, as does Jimmy. Throughout the last novel, the survivors try to rebuild their old lives. They teach the Crakers to write and start growing vegetables to eat. Some women get pregnant, and it seems like there is hope for a new generation where Crakers, humans, and even hybrid animals can live together. However, Zeb dies, and Toby kills herself, leaving the ending on a sad note.

The author of the *MaddAddam* trilogy, Margaret Atwood, has published many novels, short stories, and poems and won numerous awards for her work, including the Franz Kafka Prize and the Booker Prize. In addition, some of her work has been adapted on television and in movies. Margaret Atwood was born in 1939, in the capital of Canada, Ottawa. She received her undergraduate degree at the University of Toronto from Victoria College and her postgraduate degree from Radcliffe College ("Atwood Biography"). Today, she is Canada's best-known writer and an internationally famous critic and novelist. Margaret Atwood stands up for her beliefs on women's rights and environmental and political issues. As an activist and author, she discusses a variety of themes like religion and legends, gender and identity, the power of language and diplomacy, and also global warming (Yu and Li 302). Margaret Atwood is an environmentalist, and she uses her voice to raise awareness of the problems of climate change and related socio-economic problems. In her essay "It's not climate change, it's everything change" from 2015, she explains her insights on the impact of global warming on people and our society. The temperature rise will not only change the weather, but life as we know it. She claims everything is connected and will change through climate change. For example, rising sea level does not only lead to flooding, but it leads to families being forced out of their homes. It causes farmland to be destroyed, putting the food supply at danger, and creating unemployment. In summary, climate change is everything change (Atwood). Margaret Atwood inserts her concerns about the future of the planet in her work, resulting in climate fiction poems and novels, such as the *MaddAddam* trilogy.

The *MaddAddam* trilogy is part of the climate fiction genre because it fits the definition and genre's description. The three novels try to imagine a world where global warming has already altered the environment and society. Many themes and motives known from other cli-fi novels are present in the trilogy. Such as the typical dystopian world in a future when global warming has destroyed the Earth. In Margaret Atwood's novels, the environment has already changed years before the plot. Floods have destroyed cities, forests have disappeared, the sun has become more and more harmful to humans, and many animals have become extinct. Hand in hand with global warming goes the subdivision of society. The novels portray a violent world where society is divided into the rich and the poor. The already-problematic world collapses completely with the outbreak of the virus. The cause of this dystopian world is climate change and humans. Like many other climate fiction authors, Atwood references human and society's faults that have led to climate change and could lead to such a dystopian scenario in real life. She also criticizes the system of capitalism. In the novels, everything can be bought, and money is the driving factor for the population. There is a social division between the rich scientists who live enclosed in the Compounds, and the rest of the population who live in financial insecurity. Climate fiction set in the future often not only blames the economic instability but also the technical overreliance in the twenty-first century for the subsidence of the environment and society. In the trilogy, humans have relied on technology and science to do everything for them and to solve every problem. However, after the pandemic, their technological advantages are gone, and Atwood hints that relying on technology is not the solution to all our problems

Overall, Atwood describes a dark scenario. Her world in the *MaddAddam* trilogy is doomed from the beginning. The pandemic turns it into a truly dystopian realm. Survival is a typical theme often found in cli-fi. We can find it here. The characters who find themselves in this post-pandemic and climate-change-altered world need to evaluate what they are going to eat, where they are going to sleep, and how they are going to rebuild society. Another recurring cli-fi theme is the stress on the importance of nature and biodiversity. In the trilogy, humans have taken over the natural world. They use animals in genetic engineering for their own purpose, and they have destroyed the environment. The God's Gardeners stress the importance of respecting animals and nature and praising it. They point out that the use of nature and animals for humans needs to cease. A common climate fiction character is also present in the *MaddAddam* trilogy: the scientist who seems to understand the state of the world better than anyone else. In a way, this character is Crake, who realizes that humanity has become a burden to the planet and wants to change this. The last novel ends with the obligatory note of hope that

can be seen in many cli-fi novels. Even if Toby dies, some humans have survived and are forming a new society at the end, where they live in harmony with the Earth. To sum up, the *MaddAddam* trilogy fits into the genre of climate fiction since the novels include the recurring themes and motives of the genre, and they illustrate a world changed by global warming. However, the novels are different from traditional climate fiction. While most cli-fi novels are dark, foreboding and pessimistic, Atwood's novels remain light and funny. She uses satire to talk about Anthropocene issues, an approach that differs from regular climate fiction.

In conclusion, this chapter introduces climate fiction and explains how Margaret Atwood's novels *Oryx and Crake*, *The Year of the Flood*, and *MaddAddam* fit into this new genre. Human activity alters the temperature of the globe which is getting warmer, and a new epoch has begun: the Anthropocene. The change in the climate will have devastating results on the Earth and humanity. As this global threat is approaching, a new genre of fiction has emerged, climate fiction. It is difficult to define the genre. A general explanation is that climate change is part of the narrative of this type of literature. The first novels related to climate change, or the environment, were already published in the twentieth century. In the last years, the genre has kept growing, and it is now extensive. This chapter also highlights the different types of cli-fi and recurring themes. Climate fiction novels often take place in the present or the future. There are recurring events, like weather catastrophes, or specific types of characters (a scientist) that can be frequently found in cli-fi. Many authors have contributed to the genre, including Margaret Atwood. The successful author cares deeply about the environment and describes climate change as everything change. She addresses her concerns about the future of our planet and the upcoming problems related to global warming in her cli-fi literature. She wrote, among others, the *MaddAddam* trilogy, novels that tell the story of a world changed by climate change. This trilogy is set in the future. A pandemic has destroyed most of humanity, and a few survivors try to get around in this post-apocalyptic world. These novels are climate fiction novels. Climate change serves as a background to the primary storyline. In addition, many cli-fi themes and tropes can be found in the trilogy.

Chapter 2: Climate Fiction and Emotions: Satire and Humor to Address the Climate Crisis

2.1 Satire and climate fiction

The genre of climate fiction has grown in the twenty-first century, and there are recurring themes and tropes in those novels like the idea of extinction, the apocalypse, and survival. The conventions of climate fiction are often pessimistic, the doom of humanity seems inevitable, and the stories are dark and often provoke fear of the future in the reader (Schneider-Mayerson 489-490). Shocking the audience with pictures of the worst outcome of climate change is a popular way of trying to raise awareness of the problems. However, fearful and shocking messages do not always help to engage people in environmental matters, as Miriam Kaltenbacher and Stefan Drews argue in their in 2020 written article “An inconvenient joke? A Review of Humor in Climate Change Communication.” They argue that a pessimistic and dark description of climate change can “lead to negative effects, such as apathy, helplessness and dismissal.” Another approach could be to use humor to communicate environmental issues since it shows positive effects on the perception of the message (Kaltenbacher and Drews 717). Other scholars agree with this statement. Humor can help to engage people in the climate change discussion, especially when employed in climate fiction. The frequency of humor and satire in climate fiction is constantly rising. The reason for this is the need for a lighter approach to climate change to evoke positive feelings towards global warming and climate activism. Simultaneously to creating laughter at anthropocentric issues, one should also be able to criticize in order to draw attention to the origins and results of those problems. Therefore, the form of satire where the authors ridicules and criticize at the same time offers a new way to address the climate crisis while producing positive emotions in its audience.

This chapter first defines the term satire and its origin. It discusses the three different types of satire: the Juvenalian, the Horatian and the Menippean satire. This chapter also establishes the purpose of satire and what motives drive an author to write a satirical text. It also considers how Margaret Atwood and her *MaddAddam* trilogy adhere to the conventions of satire. The book *A Companion to Satire: Ancient and Modern* from 2007 proved to be helpful in defining the term satire. It contains a collection of twenty-nine essays on satire, from its emergence to the present, and was written by Quintero, Ruben et al. In addition, the 1962-published book *The Anatomy of Satire* by Gilbert Highet has also helped to define the term.

After having established the genre of satire, this chapter explores how one can use humor and satire to discuss climate change. It addresses the emotional responses evoked by the traditional climate discussions and climate fiction. Then, it establishes why a new approach could be better in order to evoke positive feelings and thus more engagement with the climate crisis. The positive effects of humor and satire in climate fiction are addressed, while possible disadvantages of the use of humor in the climate change discussion are also pointed out. Several critics support this chapter, among others Nicole Seymour, who discusses the disadvantages of traditional environmental texts and praises the use of humor and irony in her in 2018 published book *Bad Environmentalism: Irony and Irreverence in the Ecological Age*. The critic Michael P. Branch also advocates for the benefits of humor and satire in climate fiction in his article “Are You Serious? A Modest Proposal for Environmental Humor” from 2014. The discussion of humor and the climate crisis in the article “A Laughing Matter? Confronting climate change through humor” from 2019 by Maxwell Boykoff and Beth Osnes has also proven helpful for this chapter.

This thesis states that Margaret Atwood uses satire to talk about problems related to climate change. Atwood is known for her comic vein. She uses humor and satire in several of her pieces (Dvorak 114). The three novels building the *MaddAddam* trilogy are her first satirical climate fiction novels in which she points out problems related to global warming. Defining the term satire and establishing its origin are not easy tasks. Satire is often described as a genre or broad category in which “a poem or (in later use) a novel, film, or other work of art [...] uses humour, irony, exaggeration, or ridicule to expose and criticize prevailing immorality or foolishness, esp. as a form of social or political commentary.”, as the Oxford dictionary describes it (“satire”).

The author Highet describes the origin of the term in *The Anatomy of Satire* and explains that the name comes from the Latin word *sature*. The expression’s original meaning was primarily “full,” and then came to mean “a mixture full of different things” (231). Highet explains the essence of the name was variety, a certain coarseness, a down-to-earth naturalness, and also unsophisticated heartiness. The origin of satire might be dated back to Ancient Rome, when the Romans enjoyed variety shows on the stage they called *saturae*. These plays had no sustained plot and were not like the dramaturgy that would later arrive in Italy from Greece. These were shows with improvised verse dialogue, dancing, and imitation of situations known from the Romans’ day-to-day life. The actors were competing in producing comic abuse and

subtlety. They mimicked real persons and joked about local mannerisms. The first person who named his poem *saturea* was Ennius. His satire stood in the tradition of the plays he knew from Rome, that made fun of people and their ways through singing and telling stories. These elements have remained up to today typical to satire: it is about “variety, down-to-earth unsophistication, coarseness, an improvisatory tone, humor, mimicry, echoes of the speaking voice, abusive gibbing, and a general feeling, real or assumed, of devil-may-care nonchalance,” according to Highet (231-233). It has to be noted here that while most scholars agree that the origin of satire is in Ancient Rome, many other theories about the roots of satire prevail as well.

Establishing different types of satire is almost as complex as defining the genre. Nevertheless, literary critics have agreed on distinguishing three types of satirical literature: the Juvenalian, the Horatian and the Menippean satire. The critics Holbert, R. Lance, et al. explain Horatian satire is named after the Roman poet and satirist Quintus Horatius Flaccus. This type of satire attempts to anchor its arguments in everyday life. It is frequently presented as self-satire, but it is ultimately used to comment on the ruling elite or norms of social behavior (Holbert 192). A well-known example of Horatian Satire is the eighteenth-century poem *The Rape of the Lock* by Alexander Pope (Sultana 155). The poem was an attempt to reconcile two real-life families who were in a feud by humorously exaggerating the reason for their argument. Nowadays, one example of Horatian satire could be the animated sitcom *The Simpsons*, where the Simpsons family satirically depicts the American life. The show parodies American culture, its politics, and society. *The Simpson’s* humor seeks to please its audience while simultaneously emphasizing human follies (Holbert 192). The goal of Horatian satire is to create a wry smile on its audience while commenting on society’s problems and encouraging moral improvements (Holbert 192). As Highet points out, a satirist aiming this type of satire seeks to “tell the truth with a smile, so that he will not repel” audience members (235).

The second type of satire is called Juvenalian, named after Decimus Junius Juvenalias, a satirist from Ancient Rome who produced sixteen satires on the corruption of his home. Juvenalian satire is the strongest, most bitter, and darkest type of satire. It attacks its targets in a savage and vicious way. While Horatian satire aims to convey social commentary with a wry smile, Juvenalian satire seeks to laugh with disgust at society and its pretensions, discordances, and vile hypocrisies. Juvenalian laughing is meant to wound rather than heal (Holbert 192). One well-known example of this type of satire is Jonathan’s Swifts *Gulliver’s Travels* from 1726. Swift is a master of Juvenalian satire, and his famous work satirizes the human as a

species, the eighteenth-century English, and pride. The story is full of ironic criticism of contemporary persons and institutions (Sultana 150). The American animated sitcom *South Park* also uses crude humor to address current political topics. One could argue that the TV show is an example of Juvenile satire today.

Last but not least, Menippean satire is the third type of satire. It is named after the Greek philosopher Menippus. This form of satire is often a mixture of prose and verse (Greenberg 9-10). The critic Northrop Frye revived the notion in his work *Anatomy of Criticism* (1957). For him, Menippean satire differs from the other two forms because it “deals less with people as such than with mental attitudes.” It seeks to ridicule “pedants, bigots, cranks, parvenus, virtuosi, enthusiasts” (309). Frye argues one known example is Lewis Carroll’s *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* from 1865 (310). The protagonist Alice falls into a rabbit hole towards a fantasy world. Lewis pokes fun at Alice’s mental attitude and her never-ending curiosity, which causes all her problems in the novel.

In conclusion, there are three different classifications of satire. However, they are not strictly separated from each other. For example, one could argue that *Gulliver’s Travels* is also a Menippean satire, and that *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* has Horatian elements. The different types can be blended, their definitions are fluid and open to interpretation. The critic Marta Dvorak discusses in her essay “Margaret Atwood’s Humor” that Atwood’s work is known for generating the “benevolent irony of Horatian satire,” the “corrective derision of militant Juvenalian satire” and “the indirect Menippean mode favored by so many contemporary authors” (115, 124). In the *MaddAddam* trilogy, Atwood uses a blend of the three different forms of satire to discuss climate-change-related problems.

For an activist like Atwood, satire is a welcomed form to express criticism while creating a piece of art. She uses her humor to address various topics, and in her cli-fi novels, she uses satire to address the climate crisis. The critic Quintero argues that satirists from ancient Rome to today are all motivated by creating something that is aesthetic. They want to produce an art form where they can express their disagreement and denounce ideas or people, all while aiding their readers to form their own opinion and provoking change. Some satirists give advice and set an ideal example to copy. Therefore, the purpose of the satirist’s work is not only to entertain, but also to arouse the reader’s energy to action, to make him or her think about ideas and people. To reach this goal, both the reader and the author need one standard or utopian version they agree on, a standard against which the audience can compare the satire’s subject.

The satirist tries to sway the readers toward an ideal alternative, either implicitly or explicitly. He or she seeks improvement and wants change while also trying to have the readers' best interest at heart. However, it is not important whether or not that standard is right: as long as the reader and the author share the same perception of that idea, satire works (Quintero 3). Atwood is a satirist who shares those goals. She seeks change in our society and hopes to spark improvements with her humor.

There are four reasons an author wants to write satire, according to Highet. The first motive is "personal hatred, scorn, or condescending amusement" (238). A satirist focuses his amusement and hate either on one person, one type, one social class or group, or one national structure. The second motive is avowed by almost all satirists. They hope to condemn crime or ridicule foolishness and, therefore, to help remove it. Aesthetic is the third impulse. The joy in creating their own special piece of art motivates the satirists. The fourth motive is not necessarily operative for all satirists, however, many of them are protreptic. Satirists warn their readers, they denounce ideas and give positive advice. They state an ideal, an utopian idea for the reader to copy or be inspired by (Highet 238-243). In conclusion, the satirist writes "with a sense of moral vocation and with a concern for the public interest" (Quintero 1). He or she expresses his or her concern with what has happened, what is happening, and what may happen in the future. Therefore, the satirist may also "serve [...] as a cautionary prophet or an idealistic visionary," as Quintero expresses in his book (1). Margaret Atwood is known for her humor. She fits into Quintero's and Highet's description of a satirist. In the *MaddAddam* trilogy, she takes the role of the "cautionary prophet" to reach the goal of cli-fi writers, to engage its readers with the climate crisis.

The critic Whiteley argues in "Climate Change Imaginaries? Examining Expectation Narratives in Cli-Fi Novels" (2016) one of the main purposes of climate fiction is to lead humanity to a greater understanding of climate change which could lead to the creation of more progressive environmental laws and politics (29). The critic Matthew Schneider-Mayerson conducted a survey with 161 American-climate-fiction readers for his article "The Influence of Climate Fiction. An Empirical Survey of Readers", published in 2018. He wanted to determine the social work of climate fiction and whether the goal of cli-fi had been reached or not. He concludes that climate fiction has some positive impacts, like raising awareness of environmental problems the media rarely focuses on or illustrating the temporal distance of climate change. However, he also claims that the readers in his survey had a negative emotional

response to climate fiction novels. Schneider-Mayerson states that in describing the novels, the candidates used terms like “doomsday scenario”, “bleak” and “foreboding.” After finishing the books, they felt guilty, helpless, and depressed (Schneider-Mayerson 489-490). Not only in climate fiction but also in the media are talks about global warming often depicted within a disaster frame. Schneider-Mayerson references a study that found out that in six different countries, namely Australia, India, France, Norway, the United Kingdom, and the United States, 80 percent of climate change stories in big newspapers used a doomsday scenario frame (Schneider-Mayerson 485). In conclusion, his study observed what many other literary critics suspect: Traditional climate fiction narratives often evoke negative emotions like anxiety, fear, or hopelessness.

Among literary critics, it is an established fact that climate fiction often deploys dark and pessimistic images. The critics Kaltenbacher and Drews argue that changing the attitude and behavior of people is a complex and slow process. The shocking and fearful messages about environmental issues hinder this process even more. They lead to negative effects, like dismissal, helplessness, and a lack of interest in the subject matter (717). The critic Nicole Seymour examines the problem of environmentalist works further. She agrees with other critics on the repeating negative images drawn on climate change and the resulting feeling of hopelessness and powerlessness. The information overload on the negative aspects of global warming leads to emotional paralysis. Seymour argues that “in many cases, the more one knows about climate change, the less likely one is to act” (2-3). In addition, many negative stereotypes are pinned on environmentalism. Among the sensibilities associated with environmentalism are gloom and doom, “guilt, shame, didacticism, prescriptiveness, sentimentality, reverence, seriousness, sincerity, earnestness, sanctimony, self-righteousness, and wonder—as well as the heteronormativity and whiteness of the movement” (4-5).

These patterns can also be seen in climate fiction. Schneider-Mayerson’s survey observed that many readers felt guilty or depressed after reading pessimistic cli-fi novels. The respondents used terms like “bleak” to describe Erik M. Conway and Naomi Oreskes’ cli-fi novel *The Collapse of Western Civilization* (2014) and Paolo Bacigalupi’s *Windup Girl* (2009) (489). Many cli-fi novels or movies are also serious, sentimental, or didactic. The movie *The Day After Tomorrow* displays extreme weather events and countless deaths because of climate change. It is a serious, dark movie. Kim Stanley Robinson’s cli-fi novel *The Ministry for the Future* (2020) reads like a manual for action against climate change. This novel could be

described as serious, didactic, and too difficult. Even the slightly more optimistic novel *Flight Behaviour* by Barbara Kingsolver displays hallmarks of environmental texts. For example, Kingsolver's novel describes sentimental images of dying butterflies. In addition, the scientist Ovid sometimes conveys the stereotypical self-righteous attitude of environmentalists. He is the only person in the novel who knows about global warming, and he teaches Dellarobia about climate change. He knows better than everyone else and is frustrated because not everyone believes in climate change, or acts on it. Climate fiction displays negative stereotypes associated with environmental texts. The negative emotional responses because of the disaster frame hinder climate fiction's goal of heightening environmental consciousness.

In order to move away from a negative perception of climate change, a new approach is needed to bring the message of environmental literature across. Many critics argue here for the use of humor, especially satire. Using humor to address the climate crisis has many benefits. Michael P. Branch discusses the advantages of humor and satire in the climate change discourse, especially in environmental writing like climate fiction. He argues that the whole enterprise of global warming and environmental movements "struck me as humorless [...] we've left little room for humor in environmental writing in part because the genre has evolved as a vehicle for the expression of pity and reverence" (Branch 380). Environmental writers should deploy the use of comics in the fight against the destruction of the Earth. The dominant use of jeremiad and elegy is overused. It is time for something new to "surprise the reader or provoke change in the reader's assumption or attitudes" (Branch 386). Seymour's "Bad Environmentalism" texts answer to the hallmarks of environmentalism with humor, lowbrow forms or queerness. The critic advocates the use of irony, one common technique of satire that can evoke laughter. She points out in her book "Bad Environmentalism" works that identify and responds to the absurdities and ironies of environmental texts, the negative feelings those texts provoke, and the associated negative stereotypes. The "Bad Environmentalism" texts answer to those absurdities often with stylistic methods like irony, glee or perversity (4-5). In other words, they ridicule the classic hallmarks of environmentalist works while displaying environmental concerns. In sum, Branch and Seymour, like other critics, argue for humor as a method to create positive feelings in the audience which could promote climate activism.

The critics Boykoff and Osnes describe how exactly humor can be useful in the climate change discussion. For them, the comedic approach to global warming can make the issue more approachable and solvable. Instead of sending readers of climate fiction into an emotional

paralysis, they can feel hopeful because they believe they can still change something about the situation. Moreover, satirical climate fiction offers the possibility to inform an audience about environmental issues that would otherwise be discouraged from talking or getting information about such issues because of the scientific and pessimistic aspects related to it. Instead of seeing it as a problem for scientists, we get to see climate change entering the private sphere and become more relatable (Boykoff and Osnes 2-3). The critic Branch argues that humor can also function as a coping mechanism and help humans to be resilient. Furthermore, the comedic approach can bind people together. Laughing together can connect people and make it easier to stay hopeful and change their behavior as a group. Finally, humor engages people in a process of self-reflection, since it allows a form of detachment and enables them to admit and correct their faults (Branch 389).

However, humor alone is not enough to help climate fiction fulfil its goal of raising awareness of global warming and encouraging climate activism. An approach in which something is ridiculed, but also criticized at the same time is needed. Satire offers a solution. Branch claims it can open the reader's mind to potential environmental effects while being funny at the same time, thus creating a positive emotional response to climate change in the audience. Satire can also strike many cultural targets and has the power to reveal contemporary vice and folly. It is, as Branch argues, funny, but also forceful and effective. He argues for the use of satire in discussions about climate change and states that the satirist "effectively challenges established power structures, exposing their absurdity or violence, forcing villains to account for themselves" (386).

This chapter argues for the use of humor and satire in the climate change discussion. However, some critics also denounce the use of humor to address the climate crisis. The critics Inger-Lise Kalviknes Bore and Grace Reid analyse in their article "Laughing in the Face of Climate Change? Satire as a Device for Engaging Audiences in Public Debate" from 2014, the challenges of climate fiction satire. The two critics agree that fearful and shocking messages are not always likely to engage individuals in climate change. They also argue that satire might help to communicate climate change issues. But they also identify two key issues: First, Climate change issues are in danger of not being taken seriously in a satire. This issue is a common argument against the use of humor while discussing climate change related problems. Secondly, satirists might fall into the trap of using humor as an end goal of their work, and not as a tool to discuss problems (456). The fear of humor decreasing credibility is widespread, as the critics

Christofer Skurka, Jeff Niederdeppe et al. point out in their article “Pathways of Influence in Emotional Appeals: Benefits and Tradeoffs of Using Fear or Humor to Promote Climate Change-Related Intentions and Risk Perceptions” from 2018. They also argue that humor might decrease the credibility of climate change. In addition, while humor is effective in reaching a younger adult population, the satirical approach might not persuade the older audience. Skurka, Niederdeppe, et al. also analyse the emotion of fear as a response to climate change content and concluded that both fear and humor can be effective in promoting environmental activism. Nevertheless, fear might have the advantage of promoting a greater risk perception of climate change issues, while humor might decrease the sense of urgency about global warming (17, 20).

The opinions of literary critics are divided. Some argue that humor and fear -positive and negative emotions- can both be persuasive in the climate change discussion. Some may disapprove of the decision to use humor, while other critics also condemn the Dooms Day scenarios. This master’s thesis analyses the advantages of using humor and satire in climate fiction. It argues for the use of laughter in order to address climate change related problems. However, the authors of climate-fiction satire are not to dismiss the criticism on the use of humor in climate fiction. One should be careful not to forget the goal of satire, meaning to poke fun and utter criticism at the same time. Raising awareness of the issues of climate change is important, and a climate fiction author has to be aware of the dangers of expanding the joke in a way that leads to the reader or viewer overlooking the core message about global warming. In addition, in order to create a climate change satire that evokes positive feelings instead of anxiety and fear, several other criteria demand attention. For example, satire should ridicule everyone, including environmentalists, and be able to take different perspectives about global warming into account. Climate fiction satire should avoid displaying the hallmarks of climate fiction that could evoke negative feelings emerging from the audience. How to write such a cli-fi satire that succeeds in creating laughter and hope in times of the Anthropocene is discussed in the next chapter.

In conclusion, humor and satire can be helpful tools in the climate change discussion to create positive emotions in the audience. Using satire in climate fiction to convey environmental problems is an approach that could aid in raising awareness and prompting readers to think about the current state of the Earth. This chapter of the master’s thesis discusses the use of satire in climate fiction. First, the dissertation defines the notion of satire and its origin. The genre,

which comes from ancient Rome, describes an art form that uses humor to criticize a person or an idea. There are three types of satire: Horatian satire gently ridicules and is tolerant and witty. Juvenalian, on the other hand, is bitter and criticizes more harshly. The last form of satire is Menippean, a form that casts moral judgment on an idea. The *MaddAddam* trilogy uses a mixture of all three forms. Next, the purpose of satire and its goal are explained. The author, and thus also Margaret Atwood, is motivated by the urge to create something aesthetic and express his or her disagreement. Satirists want to advise their readers and set an example for a better world. Atwood, who is known for her humor and climate activism, hopes to spark change in our society with her climate fiction satire.

This chapter also raises awareness of the emotional responses from the reader or viewers of traditional climate fiction. The frequent use of a disaster narrative might lead to anxiety, fear, or hopelessness, as Matthew Schneider-Mayerson also concludes in his survey on cli-fi readers. These negative emotions hinder the social function of cli-fi. A solution for this could be the use of humor and satire. The use of humor can evoke positive emotions. It binds people together and helps to reach an audience that would otherwise be thrown off by traditional conversations about global warming. Climate-fiction satire is helpful since it allows the author to create laughter while also criticizing the origins and results of climate-change-related issues. Margaret Atwood uses humor to address those issues in the *MaddAddam* trilogy. Nevertheless, this chapter also points out the disadvantages of the use of humor. A satirist should be aware of the downsides of using humor to address climate change. Making jokes alone is also not enough to create a cli-fi satire that evokes positive emotions while also pointing out climate change problems sufficiently. The next chapter discusses different forms of cli-fi satire that address their audience differently and hence also create different emotional responses.

2.2 Emotions evoked by humor in climate fiction: inward and outward directed satire with *Don't look up* and the *MaddAddam* trilogy

As this dissertation has already established, positive emotions are desirable tools to engage the readers and viewers of climate fiction in a discussion about global warming. Authors can use satire to create such reactions. However, not every type of cli-fi satire necessarily produces positive emotions. This chapter introduces the terms “inward-directed cli-fi satire” and “outward-directed cli-fi satire” in order to define two types of narrations in climate-fiction satire that address and affect their audience differently. The characteristics of an inward-directed climate fiction satire correspond to the ones of a “Bad environmentalism” work, after

Nicole Seymour's definition. In other words, it is an all-inclusive satire that pokes fun in all directions, which could create a positive emotional response. An outward-directed cli-fi satire, on the other hand, includes many points of criticism listed by Seymour. Even if such works include humor, the risks are high of promoting a negative emotional response from the audience.

First, this chapter elaborates on the two different types of cli-fi satire. Then, the movie *Don't look up*, and the *MaddAddam* trilogy exemplify the characteristics of inward and outward-directed cli-fi satire. *Don't look up* is an American apocalyptic satire film written, produced, and directed by Adam McKay. The comedy movie was published in December 2021 on the streaming website Netflix. It tells the story of two scientists and their quest to warn humanity about a comet that will destroy the Earth. The apocalyptic event is an allegory for climate change. This thesis argues that the movie is an outward-directed cli-fi satire while the *MaddAddam* trilogy is an inward-directed cli-fi satire. Last but not least, this chapter also addresses how the different forms of media, thus, movies and novels, also differ in the way they address and influence their audience.

This part of the dissertation introduces the notions of inward-directed cli-fi satire and outward-directed cli-fi satire to describe satire with different rhetorical choices that could lead to either negative or positive emotions in the audience. An inward-directed cli-fi satire ridicules and criticizes everyone and everything. The narration is inclusive and open to different perspectives about climate-change-related issues. In addition, an inward-directed cli-fi satire conforms to the qualities of a "Bad Environmentalism" text after Seymour's definition. In order to abstain from provoking negative feelings in the audience towards environmentalism, this type of cli-fi satire deploys irony directed towards its reader or viewers, and also towards the author, environmentalists, climate activists, and scientists. Not just Seymour, but also the critic Branch argues for satires in which the writers direct their humor towards themselves. Branch advocates for the use of satire to discuss environmental concerns. He also demands humor to be self-reflective. "For environmental writers and activists, an inability or unwillingness to engage in this kind of self-reflexive humor is potentially debilitating. If we refuse to laugh at ourselves, we reinforce the unhappy stereotype of the environmentalist as solemn, didactic, or smug" (289). In addition, not being able to take a step back and laugh at oneself deprives the writers of seeing themselves as the readers see them. Being self-reflexive allows the writers to gain a new perspective (289-290). The narration of an outward-directed cli-fi satire is exclusive

and not open-minded for an inclusive discussion about environmental problems. This type of satire displays the hallmarks of environmental texts that, according to Seymour, lead to negative perceptions of environmentalism. An outward-directed cli-fi satire is everything a “Bad Environmentalism text” is not. While an inward-directed cli-fi satire can create foremost positive emotions, an outward-directed cli-fi satire does not necessarily succeed in doing so.

The first research question asks what type of cli-fi satire does not evoke negative feelings while talking about Anthropocene concern? The answer is an inward-directed cli-fi satire. To illustrate the difference between an inward-directed and an outward-directed cli-fi satire, two art pieces are to be analysed: the cli-fi Netflix movie *Don't look up* from 2021 exemplifies outward-directed cli-fi satire, while Margaret Atwood's *MaddAddam* trilogy is characteristic of inward-directed cli-fi satire. Both satires are well-known climate fiction in the twenty-first century. While the *MaddAddam* trilogy received, for the major part, highly positive feedback, *Don't look up*, received mixed reviews from the audience, including a striking amount of negative ratings. The difference in popularity of the two satires, and their contemporary and recent status make them interesting examples for this analysis.

The climate fiction movie *Don't look up* tells the story of the two astronomers Kate Dibisasky and Dr. Randall Mindy, who discover an approaching comet - allegory for climate change- that will destroy the world in six months. They express their concerns to the media and the president, but no one believes them, and they fail to inform the public about the upcoming danger. To cover up a sex scandal, the president addresses the comet after all, and she announces that a spaceship will hit the comet to destroy it. However, when the tech billionaire Peter Isherwell discovers that the comet has valuable resources, they change their plan. The White House now plans to crush the comet into small pieces to use the rare material. The world becomes divided between those who do not even believe in the comet's existence, those who do not see a reason to worry, and the small group of people who want it to be destroyed. The plan to use the comet's resources fails, the wealthy flee in a spaceship, and the comet kills everyone on Earth. *Don't look up* satirizes the media and people's indifference to the climate crisis, current politics, government structures, and the worship of celebrities.

Don't look up and the *MaddAddam* trilogy both use humor to address the climate crisis, a new approach to avoid negative emotions from the viewers or readers towards global warming. However, *Don't look up*'s narrative strategies might not evoke positive emotions towards environmentalism and climate change, even if the satire uses comedic devices.

Seymour argues that many environmental texts evoke negative sentiments towards environmentalism and climate change. She identifies “Bad Environmentalism” works that use “irony, along with absurdity, irreverence, playfulness, and so forth” as a different approach to talking about climate change (14). *Don’t look up* is a satire that includes many points of criticism Seymour detects in environmental texts. The movie is everything a “Bad Environmentalism” text is not. Seymour defines it as crucial that a “Bad Environmentalism” text’s humor is directed inwards, not just outwards. Irony deployed by environmentalists is often directed outwards, “claiming the moral high ground.” Such a position “has earned the environmentalist a reputation for self-righteousness and sanctimony,” as Seymour argues (14). *Don’t look up* is an outward-directed cli-fi satire that uses corrective irony towards its viewers and not towards, for example, scientists and environmentalists too. Approaching the audience with a narrative this exclusive is problematic. The rhetorical choices made by such an outward-directed cli-fi satire might not lead to positive emotions. Instead of feeling hopeful in sight of the climate crisis, the viewers might feel rebuked and discouraged. The movie takes the moral high ground. It indicates a lack of self-awareness and self-reflexivity that lead to mostly negative emotions coming from its audience.

Firstly, the movie gives the impression that the writer-producer Adam McKay lacks self-awareness of clichés and problems associated with environmentalism. He builds a binary opposition between the climate activists, including scientists who try to convince people of the urgency of climate change, and everyone else. The scientists Dr. Randall and Kate are guests on the morning talk show *Daily Rip*. Even before their appearance on live television, the scientists feel out of place and not taken seriously. Kate asks, “they know what we’re here to talk about, right?” One member of the *Daily Rip* team answers, “of course, Jack and Brie love doing science segments. Just remember, keep it light, fun. Jack and Brie love having a good time.” Kate sighs, “that is not promising” (*Don’t look up* 33:50-34:15). Her fears turn out to be true. The hosts do not take them seriously. Kate eventually loses her patience. She screams, “I’m sorry, are we not being clear? We are trying to tell you that the entire planet is about to be destroyed [...] we are all one hundred percent for sure gonna fucking die.” No-one listens and the host Brie makes fun of Kate, asking “is she always like that?” (*Don’t look up* 39:00-40:45). Not just the television team, but the entire world does not care about the comet. Instead, everyone talks about the events happening before Kate and Dr. Randall’s interview. The celebrity DJ Chello proposes to the singer Riley Bina on the morning show *Daily Rip*. Everyone on social media is talking about them. The only engagement with the scientists’ story is memes

about Kate and posts about Dr. Randall's looks that say, "Astronomer I'd liked to fuck" (*Don't look up* 41:50-43:00)

This division between the scientists and everyone else might throw off an audience that already feels excluded from the climate change discussion because of apparent elitism coming from environmentalists and scientists. In *Don't look up*, there is a clear division between the good guys, the scientists, who try to warn everyone, and the bad guys, the non-active politics and people who do not listen to them, like the talk shows hosts. It seems as if everyone is corrupt apart from the scientist Kate and Dr. Randall. They are intelligent and do not care about social media or celebrities, and the movie emphasizes they are not like the others. In contrast to the two scientists are the politicians, the journalists, and the average population that care more about other things than the comet, like the engagement of two celebrities. The two groups are clear opposites, and no character that believes and is scared of the comet is given screen time. The Netflix movie has a self-righteous attitude that claims that one of the biggest problems with climate change is that people do not listen to scientists who know better. One could argue that the writer-producer Adam McKay puts himself and environmentalists on a pedestal and points fingers at everyone else, who does not believe or act against climate change. The audience might feel attacked by the exclusion directed at them through satire, while the environmentalists are spared by the corrective irony.

The movie, like many typical cli-fi movies, prioritizes expert knowledge and claims that convincing everyone to listen solves the problem of climate change, or in the case of *Don't look up*, saves everyone from a crash with a comet. Seymour argues that many environmentalists believe a lack of information about climate change is the problem of missing action against it. However, often, the more one knows about global warming, the less likely he or she is to act. Hearing about the dangers of climate change can transfer people into a state of emotional paralysis. They feel guilty and helpless (45). In *Don't look up*, the biggest problem is to convince people that the comet is real and needs to be destroyed. Dr. Randall sees the comet for the first time. "That's it. That's the comet. Look! It's right there." He steps outside his car and other people follow his lead. Now, everyone sees the comet, and people act by, for example, spreading the hashtag "Just look up" on social media to draw attention to the comet (*Don't look up* 1:36:10- 1:39:10). The countermovement "Don't look up" urges people to keep their heads down. The president still claims the comet is not a threat. However, during one of her speeches, the people look up and see the comet and the truth. Even the last sceptic is convinced after

looking up at the sky (*Don't look up* 1:47:40- 1:48:00). The biggest problem is to convince people the comet exists. Once they see the comet, everyone believes in it and tries to do something. However, in reality, action is not always prone to follow knowledge during a crisis. In addition, the consequences of climate change are not as easily illustrated to people as a comet. In *Don't look up*, all that has to happen is for people to see the comet at the end of the movie in order to believe in it. However, the result of climate change is slow violence. There won't be one extinction event. Explaining and illustrating climate change is much more complex. Screaming at people's faces "we are all gonna die," as Dr. Randall did in *Don't look up*, will not move people to actively fight climate change. The problem is not getting people to listen but finding a way to communicate about climate change successfully, a point *Don't look up* misses.

Moreover, *Don't look up* provokes a feeling of guilt and shame in its viewers. The rhetorical choices of this didactic film function as a guideline for its viewer on what to do and not to do in times of the Anthropocene. The movie also contains the hallmarks of environmentalism such as sentimentality and the feeling of reverence. Seymour argues those feelings are sensibilities associated with environmentalism, and they are what leads to a negative attitude towards it (45). The movie shames its viewers for using social media and liking celebrities and the gossip surrounding them. It seems as if a sensible person, like the scientists Dr. Randall and Kate, should not care about those things. *Don't look up* also contains a prescriptive attitude. One should abstain from the media and listen to scientists because they know better. The viewers feel like they are being told off because of their use of social media and their lack of activism for climate change.

In addition, the comical movie is full of sentimental images. Throughout the film, pictures of nature, animals, and people are blended in. It starts after 30 minutes with scenes of waves, a lizard, a bird, and trash that are accompanied by a soft soundtrack (*Don't look up* 30:00-30:30). The frequency of those images rises when the comet hits the planet. Dr. Randall, Kate, and their loved ones have one last meal. The movie shows scenes of them eating, then an image of the comet, a laughing baby, a Buddhist statue, the Earth, an ice bear, a flying bee, whales, etc. A piece of soft, sad music accompanies the images. Dr. Randall and his loved ones pray, and they hold hands while the house is shaking. Dr. Randall says, "thing of it is, we really, really did have everything, didn't we? I mean when you think about it." The house collapses around them in slow motion, an explosion follows, and the viewer sees the destroyed planet.

The movie finishes here (*Don't look up* 2:01:15-2:07:00). These images and the ending provoke the feelings Seymour criticized. It is pessimistic, and sentimental and leaves the viewers with a negative feeling about climate change. Instead of taking different perspectives towards environmental problems into consideration or taking an inclusive look at the faults of environmentalists and non-environmentalists alike, the movie stays critical of its audience and their faults alone. It is an outward-directed cli-fi satire that might leave most of the viewers with negative emotional responses toward environmentalism and climate change.

Film critics are mitigated about the qualities of McKay's satire; some found it clever, while the majority attacked it as condescending and heavy-handed. The reviews with the movie agree with the argument of *Don't look up* being an outward-directed cli-fi satire that evokes negative feelings toward the climate crisis and connected issues. Negative reviews describe the movie as self-righteous and lacking nuance. The critic Peter Debruge from *Variety* stresses the movie is "shrill and self-righteous" (Debruge). He criticizes *Don't look up's* message that the problem of the climate crisis is simply that no one listens, no-one wants to believe in it. He states sarcastically that "humans are stupid and can't be expected to agree on anything, even if their existence depends on it. That's the 'hilarious' insight Adam McKay wants to impart with 'Don't Look Up' " (Debruge). The journalists David Rooney from *The Hollywood Reporter* and Charles Bramesco from *The Guardian* also criticize the writer-director, Adam McKay. Rooney claims he is specialized in movies "far too pleased with themselves" (Rooney). Bramesco says his script "states the obvious as if everyone else is too stupid to realize it and does so from a position of lofty superiority that would drive away any partisans who still need to be won over" (Bramesco).

The movie received some good reviews too, especially from scientists. George Monbiot wrote in *The Guardian* that the movie points out "the hostility to new ideas and aversion to complexity" and "the absence of moral seriousness." *Don't look up* shows what is wrong with this world, being "the endless promotion of the views of the most selfish and antisocial people, and the exclusion of those who are trying to defend us from catastrophe." For an environmental activist, the film is, according to him, humorous and "seemed all the real" (Monbiot). George Monbiot supports the argument that the movie is an outward-directed cli-fi satire by adopting the attitude of an environmentalist who likes the movie because it shows his moral high ground. Listening to the experts solves the problem in his view, and the movie is a satire of everyone and everything but himself and environmentalism. *Don't look up* is everything Seymour

criticizes about environmental works; it is an outward-directed cli-fi satire that might evoke more negative than positive feelings in the audience.

Don't look up goes a step in the right direction with its humorous approach. The *MaddAddam* trilogy, on the other hand, is just a few steps ahead. Atwood's cli-fi novels are inward-directed cli-fi satires, they are "Bad Environmentalism" texts according to Seymour's definition. The trilogy makes fun of environmentalism, society, and science. It is concerned with environmental issues while also poking fun at environmental and cli-fi stereotypes. A "Bad Environmentalism" work is "capable of articulating complex and contradictory sensibilities" and being "self-aware and open to critique," according to Seymore (13). The *MaddAddam* trilogy illustrates the complex and sometimes contradictory nature of environmentalism. The trilogy is a satire that is self-aware, which is also important for the critic Branch. The novels poke fun in all directions, inwards and outwards.

For example, Atwood satirizes the God's Gardeners, who are environmentalists. She makes fun of many of their traits, including the environmental philosophy of deep ecology. The environmentalists in her novels take their philosophy a step too far. Their behavior towards nature and animals is ridiculous. For instance, the God's Gardeners apologize whenever they use figures of speech that compare humans to animals. The council of the Gardeners meets to discuss an attack on them. The member Rebecca says, "that man is mean as a snake, no disrespect to Snakes, and he was after Toby." Adam One adds, "the young people provoked him. And Zeb. We should have let sleeping dogs lie." Rebecca interjects "No disrespect to dogs" (Atwood, *YOF* 305).

Apart from environmental movements and philosophies, Atwood also pokes fun at the scientists with the character Crake, who believes he can save the world thanks to his innovations and knowledge. He creates the Crakers, funny humanoids whose existence reads like a joke on Crake's ideas and arrogant attitude. In *Oryx and Crake*, Crake explains to Jimmy the benefits of the Crakers. Their skin protects them from the sun. They are never violent, and they only reproduce at regular intervals. They also only eat leaves, and Jimmy thinks, "Oh good, your baby can double as a lawn mower" (Atwood 359). Jimmy already starts making jokes about the Crakers. He notices their features are ridiculous. In *MaddAddam*, Atwood ridicules the Crakers even more. For instance, Jimmy once slurs in front of the humanoids. "Oh Fuck," he says. "Who is this *Fuck*?" asks one Craker. Several questions follow: "Fuck is a friend of Crake's?" Toby answers with yes. "This Fuck is helping him?" asks a Craker woman, and eventually, the

Crakers conclude Fuck is a person in the sky: “‘Fuck is in the sky!’ says Blackbeard triumphantly. ‘With Crake!’” (179).

While the movie *Don't look up* valorises scientists and environmentalists, the *MaddAddam* trilogy satirizes them. Atwood mocks environmentalism and environmentalists, like the Gardeners. She ridicules scientists, like Crake, and his ideas, like the Crakers. They are funny creatures who believe “Fuck” is a person. Atwood is self-aware of the elitist reputation of environmentalist and scientists. She ridicules the environmental stereotypes Seymour points out. Atwood is open to critique, and she emphasizes the complex nature of climate change. This open critique of not only the average population, but also the environmentalists and scientists might leads to an inclusive, positive emotional response from the reader. Tackling an issue as “our problem” and “our faults” can cause more motivation and willingness to solve the problem together.

Moreover, while mocking in all directions, Atwood refrains from taking the moral high ground or letting any of her characters take it. In her novels, the scientists and environmentalists are flawed too, and no one plays the all-knowing saviour of the planet, such as Kate and Dr. Rendall would be in *Don't look up* if someone had listened to them. The *MaddAddam* trilogy also does not want to take a didactic position. The novels are not a guide on what to do to fight climate change. Instead, the trilogy makes its readers think without being instructive. Atwood's satire is supposed to spark discussions and critical thinking about Anthropocene concerns. Refraining from a chiding narrative possibly leaves the reader with positive emotions and a can-do attitude toward climate change.

In addition, in the *MaddAddam* trilogy, Atwood emphasizes that knowledge is not necessarily the solution to the climate crisis and socio-ecological problems. Climate change has already altered the world in the trilogy. However, people do not care about the environmental catastrophes and related consequences, even after knowing about them, as Atwood satirically points out in her novels. For instance, the protagonist Jimmy is indifferent to environmental problems in the novel *Oryx and Crake*. He remembers the pre-pandemic times and how boring the news was, discussing the same things again and again: “more plagues, more famines, more floods, more insect or microbe or small-mammal outbreaks, more droughts, more chickenshit boy-soldier wars in distant countries. Why was everything so much like itself?” (Atwood OC 298). Jimmy is annoyed by the news. He knows about the environmental problems, but he does not act on it. Finally, Atwood avoids depicting climate change as one big, apocalyptic event.

The dystopian world she depicts results from slow developments over years, not like the all-destroying comet in *Don't look up*.

The *MaddAddam* trilogy is an inward-directed cli-fi satire, while *Don't look up* is an outward-directed one. Their different rhetorical choices lead to different results regarding the audience's feelings. However, one should also consider that the *MaddAddam* trilogy and *Don't look up* are two different media. The critic Bao Bo addresses the similarities and differences in her article "The Differences Between Novels and Films—Enhance Literature Teaching by Using Films" from 2008. Cinema and literature have much in common, such as the overall goal to tell a story to its audience or reader. The way they tell the story is different, and this needs to be considered for this analysis. The movie uses visual images, while the novel uses verbal images. The visual images of a film create a more direct and immediate relationship with the audience. Verbal images, on the other hand, have the benefit of being able to describe abstract things, like the inner world of a character with words (Bo 58-59). Having only words at their disposal also puts more pressure on the reader's mind and imagination. Because of this, and also of their general growing popularity, films are more accessible and easily understandable for the average population, exactly those who might still need convincing that climate change is real.

The visual aspects help illustrate climate change in an easy and accessible way. Bo argues the addition of sound might even aid more. In contrast to the literature, movies are often underlined by music, which can enhance the audience's comprehension of the character's emotions. The sound helps make the audience feel what they are ought to feel (Bo 59). Considering that *Don't look up* is a movie, it has great potential to reach a wide audience; first, because it is a movie, and second, because the film is streamed and advertised through the widely known and used platform Netflix. In addition, *Don't look up* is accessible because of its uncomplicated narrative strategies thanks to visual images and sound. Those are also helpful in creating emotional responses, be they negative or positive. One could argue that the feelings evoked by movies are stronger or easier accessible than in a novel. In this regard, *Don't look up* has possibly reached a wider audience than the *MaddAddam* trilogy, and if one is to take the goal of cli-fi into account -convincing an audience of the reality and urgency of global warming-, the movie might be more successful than the *MaddAddam* trilogy, even as an outward-directed cli-fi satire.

In conclusion, this chapter defines inward-directed cli-fi satire with the example of the *MaddAddam* trilogy and outward-directed cli-fi satire with the example of the Netflix movie *Don't look up*. The comparison between the two illustrates how an inward-directed cli-fi satire is the type of satire needed to talk about Anthropocene concerns without evoking negative emotions. The comical film *Don't look up* takes the moral high ground on behalf of environmentalists, scientists, and climate activists. The corrective irony deployed is exclusively directed toward the audience. Moreover, the movie prioritizes expert knowledge and conveys the message that the biggest challenge with climate change is that no one wants to believe in it, which is, according to Seymour, a false convention. In addition, *Don't look up* displays sentimental images, is didactic and plays on its viewers' emotions of guilt and shame. Thus, the movie is an outward-directed cli-fi satire that might produce more negative than positive emotional responses in its audience. The negative reviews also support this argument. Inward-directed cli-fi satire includes characteristics of a "Bad environmentalism" text. As Seymour points out, such a text uses irony directed in all directions, including scientists, environmentalists, or even the authors themselves. The *MaddAddam* trilogy does not take the moral high ground, it is not didactic, and it refrains from valorising expert knowledge. This type of cli-fi satire has great potential to create positive emotional responses. However, even if *Don't look up* is an outward-directed satire, it still has one advance to the *MaddAddam* trilogy. The medium of a movie is thanks to the audio-visual elements more accessible and emotional responses might be more easily produced in films than in books. Thus, the goal of convincing people to believe and act on climate change and promoting activism might rather have been reached by the satirical movie *Don't look up*, since it reached a wider audience as a Netflix movie.

Chapter 3: The *MaddAddam* Trilogy and Satire: Atwood's Satirical Targets

3.1 Margaret Atwood's stylistic and linguistic choices to create laughter

In the *MaddAddam* trilogy, Margaret Atwood uses humor and satirizes climate fiction tropes, like the pessimistic vision of the future and the masculine hero who will save the world from its doom. She also uses satire to criticize trends in our society, environmental movements, and issues related to food production and consumption in the twenty-first century. This chapter discusses Atwood's humorous approach in her climate fiction novels. It analyses the way Atwood ridicules her targets, her humor, and satire. This analysis establishes her methods of humor by observing the linguistic and stylistic aspects of her satire, such as the use of the grotesque body, irony or exaggerations, and understatements. The next chapter analyses excerpts from the books, and the methods of Atwood's humor described here are illustrated.

The *MaddAddam* trilogy can create positive emotions within the readers, thanks to the comical approach. We now discover how exactly Atwood evokes these emotions. Marta Dvorak's essay "Margaret Atwood's Humor", from 2006, and published in *The Cambridge Companion to Margaret Atwood*, offers valuable insight into the subject matter. In her work, Dvorak analyses Atwood's Canadian humor with quotes from her short stories and novels and offers in-depth rhetorical analyses of excerpts of Atwood's humor to demonstrate how she skilfully balances literature's dual purposes of amusement and instruction. The critic Courtney Traub's essay "From the Grotesque to Nuclear-Age Precedents: The Modes and Meanings of Cli-fi Humor" from 2018 is also a helpful contribution to this chapter. Her article explores how humor functions in Margaret Atwood's and Ian McEwan's climate fiction. It examines the unique ways that various comic forms, such as black humor and slapstick comedy, call attention to the moral and intellectual conundra created by the environmental risk and climate change.

A satirist uses different literary devices and methods to blend his critical attitude with humor. Margaret Atwood also uses humor to raise laughter and to simultaneously call out the issues related to climate change. In the *MaddAddam* trilogy, she uses different methods to ridicule the characters, or ideas. The critic Traub argues Atwood uses incongruity as a comic mode in the *MaddAddam* trilogy. The incongruity theory is one of the three theories of humor found in contemporary academic literature. The relief theory and superiority theory are the two other approaches to explain why humans laugh. According to the relief theory, laughter emerges

in order to reduce physiological tension. It results from a release of nervous energy. From the perspective of the superiority theory, people's laughter comes from a triumphal feeling over others, which helps the humourist build confidence (Buijzen and Valkenburg 147-148).

The incongruity theory includes "laughter as a response to the gap between expectation and reality, between what it seems should happen and what is actually happening" (Branch 387). People laugh at things that are surprising and unexpected. For example, readers expect Atwood to describe environmental catastrophes as life-changing, traumatic events in climate fiction. However, in the *MaddAddam* trilogy, the protagonists speak of past natural disasters with indifference and disinterest. The severe matter is not presented as seriously as the reader expected. Traub argues that the incongruity form forcefully shatters and betrays commonplace expectations. The discrepancy between the gravity of the topic and the method in which the author represents it creates a gap that makes the reader uncomfortable. It promotes a reflexive mode of textual interaction with environmental risks and concerns. The comic incongruity is a technique for ethical persuasion or a catalyst for some type of ethical or political self-reflection (Traub 86-91). Atwood's humor in the *MaddAddam* trilogy creates unexpected events the reader finds amusing. The jokes conform to the incongruity theory, where Atwood invites laughter and reflexive thoughts about the joke at the same time. Many examples of the incongruity theory in the trilogy can be found in the next chapter.

Atwood uses several techniques to create laughter. One of them is the use of irony, which means the "simultaneous expression of two layers of meaning, whereas one is expressed while the other one is intended", so Kaltenbach and Drews (722). There are three types of irony. In verbal irony, the speaker's utterances deviate from the actual meaning. Situational irony describes the discrepancy between what the reader or a character expects will occur and what actually happens (Colston and Gibbs 4). Atwood extensively uses the last type, dramatic irony, according to the critic Allison Carruth and her article "Wily Ecologies: Comic Futures for American Environmentalism" from 2018. In dramatic irony, the reader grasps the second layer of meaning of words, but the character does not (113).

Next to irony, Atwood also uses different types of humor to provoke laughter. The critic Traub claims that the *MaddAddam* trilogy "is an apocalyptic tale brimming with comical jubilation and gallows humor" (93). The trilogy includes gallows humor, a mode of comic the Cambridge Dictionary describes as "humorous remarks that are made about unpleasant or worrying subjects such as death and illness" ("gallows humor"). The critic Bousoon wrote the

articles “A ‘joke-filled romp’ through end times: Radical environmentalism, deep ecology, and human extinction in Margaret Atwood’s eco-apocalyptic *MaddAddam* trilogy” (2016) and “‘It’s Game Over Forever’: Atwood’s Satiric Vision of a Bioengineered Posthuman Future in *Oryx and Crake*” (2004) about Atwood’s use of humor in her *MaddAddam* trilogy. She also mentions the use of deadpan humor in the novel *Oryx and Crake*. Atwood employs this dry-wit humor, for example, when naming violent websites on which Jimmy and Crake are watching people commit suicide or are being executed (*It’s Game Over* 143). The names “hedsoff.com” and “brainfrizz.com” for example, show deliberately emotional neutrality (Atwood OC 94-95). Those names are neologism, newly coined expressions or words, and bizarre names in the trilogy are other satirical traditions Atwood uses to create a humorous tone, as Traub argues. The funny names clash incongruously with the serious, grim events. The tradition of using names for satire rose in popularity in the eighteenth century with the satirists Swift and Voltaire. For instance, in *Gulliver’s Travels*, the violent and morally corrupted human-like creatures are named “Yahoos”, a silly name for such a vicious group. Satirists in the past and today use new names to emphasize the corruption, absurdity, and moral decay that exist in fictional or historically based cultures (Traub 96).

Marta Dvorak also refers to the forms of incongruity derived from textual dynamics like low burlesque and the use of low comedy, such as the carnivalesque. Atwood employs laughter of the grotesque. She deploys images of grotesque realism to create carnivalesque laughter by “undermining elevated subjects through the low or trivial, notably the life of the belly (copulation, gestation, ingestion, digestion, elimination)” (Dvorak 115). In the *MaddAddam* trilogy, for example, Atwood describes serious topics like suicidal behavior or fatal diseases as humorous with grotesque images (Dvorak 117). For instance, Crake describes the side effects of the BlyssPluss pill: “A couple of the test subjects had literally fucked themselves to death, several had assaulted old ladies and household pets, and there had been a few unfortunate cases of priapism and split dicks” (Atwood OC 348). In addition, low burlesque is also a style often found in Atwood’s work. She uses a low and undignified style to describe elevated topics. Low burlesque creates a disparity between the serious subject matter and the light or undignified manner of imitation (Dvorak 126). Exaggeration and excess characterize the grotesque style. Atwood uses a combination of hyperbolic expressions and understatements for her satire. Dvorak argues that the author moves from the “domain of the plausible to the domain of the wildly exaggerated and hilariously incredible” (126). She adds implausible details to ordinary or sometimes grotesque events to the point of comical exaggeration. This is apparent in

Atwood's descriptions of assault on the innocent or fatal diseases. To create this effect, she uses Bathos, the rhetoric of anti-climax, where she creates a gap between the language and the experience by changing from serious to silly descriptions. Besides using exaggeration, she also makes use of understatements (Dvorak 117-119).

Since this thesis argues that the *MaddAddam* trilogy includes various characteristics of a "Bad Environmentalism text", the stylistic and linguistic choices Seymour identifies in the works in her novel should also be addressed shortly. Seymour analyses environmental movies that "employ affective modes such as thoroughgoing irony, awkwardness, and the deadpan to counter the dominant tendencies of ecocinema in general, and climate change documentary in particular" (35). Those affective modes create laughter and possibly positive emotions. They counter common tendencies in environmental films and texts such as "didacticism, seriousness and the and the prioritization of expert knowledge" (35). Seymour also discusses works that counter typical effects like awe and wonder in nature and wildlife programming by taking "perverse delight in the queerness and most repulsive animals, including the human animal, behaviors" (35). The "Bad Environmentalism" texts Seymour identifies also display "camp, gaiety, and frivolity." The function of queer environmental performances disrupts "the heteronormativity encoded in dominant descriptions of nature" (Seymour 36). Thus, the gap between the descriptions the reader expects, and the actual queer or perverse realities, creates an incongruity effect that could lead to laughter. As has already been established, the *MaddAddam* trilogy uses irony and deadpan humor. In addition, the novels include instances of the awkward and perverse description of human nature in order to create a humorous effect. Thus, the trilogy includes comic modes used in "Bad Environmentalism" texts.

In conclusion, this chapter discusses how Atwood can produce laughter and positive emotions with her satire. After observing the linguistic and stylistic aspects of her work, one can conclude that Atwood uses incongruity as a comic mode. In the *MaddAddam* trilogy, the reader laughs because of the gap between what they expect to read, and what Atwood actually wrote. Atwood also uses several different techniques to create laughter, such as irony, wit, or types of humor like gallows humor or deadpan humor. The satirical tradition of funny neologism also appears in her work. All those forms of humor are apparent in the *MaddAddam* trilogy. In addition, Atwood uses the grotesque style and low burlesque to create laughter in her work. She uses a combination of hyperbolic exaggeration and understatement for her satire, all while making use of the effect of Bathos. Moreover, just like a "Bad Environmentalism" text,

the trilogy uses irony, deadpan humor, and awkward and perverse descriptions to counter traditional environmental texts. All those different comic modes contribute to her climate fiction satire. They make the reader laugh and lead to an emergence of positive emotions.

3.2 Margaret Atwood's satirical targets and discussion points she raises with her humor and criticism

The *MaddAddam* trilogy describes the biggest fear of every environmentalist: that the plundering of the natural resources and use of fossil fuels will lead to a dystopian future. Humans in her books have to live with the horrors of environmental catastrophes, the collapse of society, and its economy (Bouson *joke-filled romp* 345). In the *MaddAddam* trilogy, the planet has become inhabitable for many animals, and eventually, for the human species. Margaret Atwood explains her novels invents nothing humans have not “already invented or started inventing. Every novel begins with a what if, and then sets forth its axioms. The what if of *Oryx and Crake* is simply, What if we continue down the road we're already on? How slippery is the slope?” (Atwood *Writing* 323). Atwood uses humor in the form of satire to address those questions and to raise awareness of the problems of global warming. Satire is a tool to cause ethical or political self-reflection. It encourages its reader to think about the critic, to change their way of thinking or even living. With her inward-directed climate fiction satire, Atwood does not mean to instruct her readers. Instead, she wants to explore different worldviews and invite critical thinking about her satire targets.

After having previously established how Atwood produces satire and how she creates laughter and possibly positive emotions within the reader, this next chapter elaborates on what she satirizes. This thesis discusses Atwood's targets of satire that are related to the future of our planet and society in relation to global warming. The first subchapter elaborates on how the trilogy ridicules and criticizes developments Atwood sees and fears in our contemporary society that contribute, are results, or are connected to the climate crisis. Second, this thesis addresses the satire about environmental movements and philosophies. Another discussed target of Atwood's satire is food production and consumption in the twenty-first century, especially regarding eating habits like carnivorousism or veganism. Those three targets were selected for this thesis because of their connection to climate change and because the existing research about Margaret Atwood's satire in the *MaddAddam* trilogy is not yet extensive, especially regarding the satirical targets addressed in this chapter. Other targets that are also related to global

warming such as the trends of consumerism, bioengineering, and science have already been discussed extensively in the existing literature.

As the critics Traub, Bouson, and several others have argued, the *MaddAddam* trilogy criticizes the capitalist society we live in and its possible development and consequences on Earth and humans. Atwood foresees a consumption-driven world with a corrupted democracy where violence and greed rule our everyday life (Traub 89). Money and greed rule the world in the *MaddAddam* trilogy. Everything has to be profitable, from the beauty industry to environmental protection. They divided society between the poor in the Pleeblands and the rich in the Compounds. Examples of the consumption-driven world are the products from the pharmaceutical company HelthWyzer. The company provides vitamins and medicine. However, they promote medicine that makes people ill, so they need more medicine and spend more money. In *The Year of the Flood*, the Gardener Lucerne has a headache. Toby thinks “if Lucerne’s headaches were real and not just a bid for attention, an over-the-counter double-strength painkiller/soporific from HelthWyzer could have handled the problem, either by curing her or killing her” (Atwood *YOF* 134). Toby’s remark about the HelthWyzer product is funny, but it also points out how corrupt the company is. Throughout the novels, Atwood describes this new world with a humorous approach, while also pointing out the faults of the current development of capitalism in the twenty-first century.

Secondly, Atwood also satirizes genetic engineering and scientists, and in particular their idyllic vision to be able to save the world through new innovations, as both Traub and Bouson argue. Atwood asks herself what if humans misuse biotechnology, and what impacts could the abuse of these technologies have on the Earth and its inhabitants. She also fears scientists who are guided by money instead of a moral compass. In the *MaddAddam* trilogy, she ridicules the results of bioengineering and Crake as the mad scientist figure (Traub 94). Through Crake, she satirizes scientists and their “God complex” by making his and the other scientists’ results of their research ridiculous. The scientists and Crake invented the Crakers and the genetically engineered animals. The humanoids and the animals serve as a joke to remind the readers of the faults of genetic engineering. The Crakers eat their excrements. They do not understand social conventions and are bizarre creatures, as Bouson describes them (349-350). The animal hybrids also comically indicate how scientists have gone too far. The novels include butterflies the size of pancakes and sheep with colorful human hair, for instance. Some scientific

inventions go to extremes and the animals remind us of that with their ridiculous appearance and behaviors.

3.2.1 Developments in our contemporary society in relation to global warming: the mainstream violence and the worship of fossil fuels

Margaret Atwood imagines the downfall of our society as we know it because of current trends she observes, such as the mainstream of violence and the worship of fossil fuels. This subchapter elaborates on these satirical targets with examples from the three novels. The excerpts' comical modes are analysed, and there is a discussion about the role of violence and the fossil fuel mania in the climate crisis. Questions such as why Atwood might have selected these targets for her satire, what discussion she might have wanted to spark, and what the effects on the readers might be are addressed.

In the *MaddAddam* trilogy, Atwood uses satire to criticize the mainstream of violence in our society today and in the possible future. She denounces the disrespectful attitude humans have towards each other, animals, and the environment. The protagonists of the novels survive Crake's virus and they try to find their place in the post-pandemic world. The novels include narratives of the world before the pandemic, the so-called Waterless Flood. Violence has become part of everyday life. Rape, cannibalism, torture, and death are all normal things the characters encounter on a regular basis.

In the second novel, *The Year of the Flood*, Ren remembers her childhood with the God's Gardeners and how she and her friends once found a dead girl behind the sex club *Scales and Tails*: "She didn't have any hair or clothes: she only had a few green scales left clinging on her. *Pasted on*, I thought. *Or something. Anyway, not growing, so I was right.*" (Atwood YOF 91). The girls who worked in the club had green scales on their skin. Ren and her friends always wondered if they were glued on or real. In *Oryx and Crake*, Jimmy also remembers how he and Crake would visit violent websites together as children. They would watch "animal snuff sites, Felicia's Frog Squash and the like, though these quickly grew repetitious: one stomped frog, one cat being torn apart by hand, was much like another." They would also watch live coverages of executions on *hedsoff.com*, or streams on the website *alibooboo.com* of supposed thieves having their hands separated and adulterers being lapidated. "Shortcircuit.com, brainfrizz.com, and deathrowlive.com were the best; they showed electrocutions and lethal injections.", Jimmy recalls (Atwood OC 93-95).

The three novels repeatedly paint an image of a brutal, sadistic world. Ren's encounter with the dead girl is a comical reminder that violence is a part of her life. She is neither sad, disgusted, nor shocked. Ren is indifferent to the mutilated corpse. She cares more about herself being right about the scales. Atwood makes use of understatements and deadpan humor to create incongruity. The reader expects Ren to react differently than she does. Her emotional neutrality, in contrast to the absurd and horrible situation of finding a dead girl in a corner, serves as comedic delivery. This gap between expectation and reality produces laughter and simultaneously encourages the reader's reflection on the mainstream of violence in this world which could be humanity's future. Jimmy and Crake also display no concern towards the sadistic procedures seen on the Internet, on animals or humans. Here, Atwood uses again deadpan humor, understatements, and also neologisms for her satire. Jimmy is emotionally neutral when he describes watching the torture of animals and humans. His narrative reads like a big understatement of what is actually happening. The "neologisms and absurd proper names set a humorous tone that clashes incongruously with grim diegetic events", as Traub argues about Atwood's use of neologisms (96).

In the *MaddAddam* trilogy, Atwood expresses her worries about the future of our society in a darkly satirical way. She imagines a world full of violence. The three novels are climate fictions, they discuss themes related to climate change, and the mainstream of violence is one of them. The climate crisis is connected to violence, as the Laureen Fagan points out in an article called "Book on climate, human behavior calls for focus on people" on the website *Sustainability Times* (2022), an online website for news on sustainability. He introduces the authors Andreas Miles-Novelo and Craig A. Anderson and their book *Climate Change and Human Behavior: Impacts of a Rapidly Changing Climate on Human Aggression and Violence* from 2022. According to their research, climate change can, directly and indirectly, alter the way people behave. It can lead to more aggression and violence in our society. For example, people all around the world could experience famine and malnutrition, economic instability, and poverty as the climate crisis can increasingly produce harsh and frequent droughts, wildfires, floods, and hurricanes. This could cause widespread migration to locations with more resources, resulting in violent competition for those. In addition, the stress caused by the crisis, poverty, malnutrition, and/or family separation also makes humans more prone to violence (Fagan).

Atwood uses satire to point out that violence could become part of our everyday life. It is a trend she already observes in our contemporary society, and she fears the tendency to violence might become even worse. Discussion of the outlook of such a grim future often discourages people from engaging. More open attitudes can come from the use of humor to address the concern. The readers are made aware of the mainstream of violence without being scared away from the topic. Satire about violence might create a feeling of shock and fear within the reader, but at the same time, it can create a wry laugh that sets him or her enough at ease to think about Atwood's concerns and not fall into panic at the same time.

In addition to the mainstream of violence in our society, and its potential rise with the climate crisis, Atwood also criticizes the contemporary trend of the fossil fuel mania. In the *MaddAddam* trilogy, the worship of fossil fuels, and connected to it in the novels, the dangers of the misuse of religion, are satirized. Zeb tells Toby about his past and his father, the Rev. The Rev founded his own church, PetrOleum, with the goal in mind to make a lot of profit. When oil became scarce and the prices rose, the Church of PetrOleum gained popularity. The Rev reinterpreted the bible, he claimed that the word "Peter" in the verse "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church." actually referred to rock, and the true meaning of Peter is thus petroleum and oil coming from the rocks (Atwood MA 136-137). And so, the church worshipped oil, and Zeb remembers how they would pray to it:

Every time we said grace before meals the Rev would point out that it was oil that put the food on the table because it ran the tractors that plowed the fields and fuelled the trucks that delivered the food to the stores, and also the car our devoted mother, Trudy, drove to the store in to buy the food, and the power that made the heat that cooked the food. We might as well be eating and drinking oil – which was true in a way – so fall on your knees! (Atwood MA 138-139)

In addition, the Rev, his church, and all their political friends were against any kind of environmentalism. The church would publish ads with "a cute little blond girl next to some particularly repellent threatened species, such as the Surinam toad or the great white shark, with a slogan saying: This? or This? Implying that all cute little blond girls were in danger of having their throats slit so the Surinam toads might prosper." For the church members, everyone who liked "smelling the daisies, and having daisies to smell, and eating mercury-free fish" or objected "to giving birth to three-eyed infants via the toxic sludge in their drinking water was a demon-possessed Satanic minion of darkness, hell-bent on sabotaging the American Way and God's Holy Oil" (Atwood MA 223).

The church of PetrOleum reads like one big satirical joke. Instead of praying for the natural resources a God created for them to eat, they pray for oil and how they are destroying the planet. The scene is ridiculous and ironic: Zeb, who narrates the story, and the reader both know that the very things they said grace for are destroying the planet. The peak of humor in the excerpt about prayer can be found in the phrase “so fall on your knees.” The hyperbole highlights the absurd nature of the church. Furthermore, the name PetrOleum is one of many neologisms Atwood created for her satire. Before knowing what the church is about, the name already ridicules it. The anti-environmentalist stance of the Rev and his church is also as funny as it is absurd. The irony continues here, and Atwood uses gallows humor and grotesque images by describing the idea of giving birth to three-eyed babies. The statement of “satanic minion of darkness” is also a hyperbole, emphasizing the ridiculousness of the PetrOleum’s members’ stance on environmentalism.

Atwood addresses religion, but also the worship of fossil fuels in our society. The critic Traub argues that she satirizes through the PetrOleum church America’s political right wing and its members who “view climate change not as a fact but as a left-wing conspiracy to decimate the fossil fuel industry” (93). Bouson argues Atwood raises an alarm on our dependency on fossil fuels and the contemporary “corporation-driven oil-based global economy” (*joke-filled romp* 345). She expresses her deep indignation at our contemporary cult-like worship of oil (Bouson *joke-filled romp* 345). Atwood utters hers and many environmentalists’ greatest fear: that “capitalism’s plundering of natural resources and its accelerating use of greenhouse-gas-emitting fossil fuels to meet the ever-increasing material demands of a growing human population will lead humanity not to a progressive utopian future but instead to the dystopian horrors” (Bouson *joke-filled romp* 345). The *MaddAddam* trilogy also satirically exposes the dangers of the misuse of religion with the church of PetrOleum. In the twenty-first century (Traub 95-96). It has become the norm for the bible to be interpreted to fit the ideals and to comfort one’s individual wishes. One can use religion to justify almost everything, which is a dangerous trend in our society. Atwood’s satire of the PetrOleum church points out the faults of religion, but also far and foremost, to the fossil fuel mania she sees in our society. While the passages about the church of PetrOleum are undeniably funny, they also remind the reader of how bad fossil fuels are for the environment, how we all depend on them, and how we value them more than our planet. The reader feels addressed by her satire, he or she recognizes their own dependence on fossil fuels.

In conclusion, Margaret Atwood targets the mainstream of violence and the dependency on fossil fuels in our society of today and their developments in the future. The world in the *MaddAddam* trilogy, especially before the pandemic, is full of violence, as the protagonists of the novels remember. Atwood uses her humor to point out how violence has become part of their lives. While the reader laughs at her jokes, he or she is also invited to think about the possibility of this narrative becoming reality in the future, especially considering that global warming and violence are connected issues. The worship of fossil fuels and the climate crisis are also intertwined. The *MaddAddam* trilogy introduces a new church, the PetrOleum church, that reads like an extended joke on the misuse of religion, and even more apparently on the fossil fuel mania of the twenty-first century. Here again, the reader laughs at Atwood's jokes while also reflecting on their own reliance on fossil fuels, and what consequences this dependency has on the planet and its future.

3.2.2 Environmental movements

As has been previously mentioned, the *MaddAddam* trilogy is an inward-directed cli-fi satire. Atwood does not shy away from satirizing environmental movements and philosophies. In the trilogy, she ridicules the indifference she sees in people nowadays regarding climate change, and in the future. She also satirizes shallow environmentalism. Bouson explains that this type of environmentalism act in accordance with the socio-ecological system. The people following this lifestyle want to protect their quality of living rather than embracing change in favor of the preservation of Earth (*joke-filled romp* 346). Atwood's novels also ridicule and criticize the philosophy of deep ecology. The main idea of deep ecology is that every living thing should have inherent value, regardless of its utility to humanity, according to Bouson. In addition, humans are part of nature and so must protect it (*joke-filled romp* 343). Radical environment groups are the third target of satire in regard to environmental movements in the *MaddAddam* trilogy. Such groups "include organizations such as Earth First!" and "developed in response to growing dissatisfaction with mainstream environmental action in the western world from the 1970-80s" (Almqvist and Bagozzi 2). Atwood satirizes radical ideas and actions taken to preserve nature, such as the group Earth First did. These three environmental targets are intertwined, and this subchapter analyses their role in the novels. Based on some excerpts, this dissertation analyses the environmental satire, its comical modes, and the discussion points Atwood might have wanted to raise by choosing to mock those themes.

The *MaddAddam* trilogy satirizes environmental movements, one of which is shallow environmentalism. This form of environmentalism compromises to the ruling socio-ecological order. Instead of welcoming radical change, shallow environmentalists want to maintain their standard of living, as Bouson points out (*joke-filled romp* 346). In the *MaddAddam* trilogy, the world answered to the climate crisis by adapting with technology and inventing new methods to temporarily deal with global warming. The world depicted does not care about climate change, it only cares about making money, and if possible, even on the crisis. One example of a shallow environmentalist satire in the novels is the organization Bearlift. Before the pandemic, Zeb worked for the organization. He describes his experiences with the Bearlift scam in the third novel, *MaddAddam*:

It lived off the good intentions of city types with disposable emotions who liked to think they were saving something – some rag from their primordial authentic ancestral past, a tiny shred of their collective soul dressed up in a cute bear suit. The concept was simple: the polar bears are starving because the ice is almost gone and they can't catch seals any more, so let's feed them our leftovers until they learn to adapt, [...] "I remember adapt," says Toby. "It was another way of saying tough luck. To people you weren't going to help out." (Atwood MA 74)

The Corps didn't like Bearlift, but they didn't try to shut it down either, though they could have done that with one finger. It served a function for them, sounded a note of hope, distracted folks from the real action, which was bulldozing the planet flat and grabbing anything of value. They had no objection to the standard Bearlift ad, with a smiling green furfucker telling everyone what a sterling lot of good Bearlift was doing, and please send more cash or you'll be guilty of bearicide. (Atwood MA 85)

Atwood's novel embodies the problems of shallow environmentalism in the satirical description of Bearlift. Bearlift is an environmental organization that profits from the climate crisis and uses people's guilty conscience for money. Atwood depicts the depressing truth about the environmental movement as funny. Firstly, she uses gallows humor to satirize shallow environmentalism. In addition, she creates another neologism, Bearlift, to create humor. Her low burlesque style also becomes apparent in the excerpt. While Zeb's utterances are of low and undignified style, the subject matter is actually a worrisome problem of high status. Moreover, Zeb is cynical and ironic, and Atwood uses irony to ridicule Bearlift. Zeb talks about people's wishes to save their souls, and the planet, but in reality, Bearlift has no positive impact on the environment. The organization prides itself on its mission to help the bears "adapt", another ironic statement since, as Toby points out, it actually means it is over for the ice bears. Bearlift's goal is to make money. They accuse their target audience of "bearicide", which is also ironic since they themselves are not helping the bears. They actually worsen the situation.

While talking about the Corps, Atwood uses hyperboles like they could have “done that with one finger” or they were actually “bulldozing the planet and grabbing anything of value.” She highlights here, in a comic vein, that rich companies do not care about the planet, but only about money. Last but not least, Zeb uses grotesque and obscene images to describe Bearlift, such as “smiling green furfuckers.” The invective shocks the reader, and grotesque, perverse, and/or obscene descriptions are often types of device for humor in satire.

Atwood criticizes environmental movements in the *MaddAddam* trilogy. Shallow environmentalism is a common issue in the twenty-first century. The novels emphasize how operations such as Bearlift are non-sustainable and, in the end, scams. Shallow environmentalism does not help solve the climate crisis. It capitalizes on people’s desire to rescue the planet and sparks false hope that what has been done so far to save the planet is enough. Atwood also criticizes the power of corporations. The Corps know the planet is in a critical state, but in order to keep their power and money, they support this state. Atwood reminds the reader that in real life, politics and corporations also turn a blind eye on the climate crisis. People in power of politics and big corporations also use shallow environmentalist philosophies and organizations to keep up hope and simultaneously remain powerful and rich. Atwood’s satire makes the reader laugh, and at the same time reminds him or her of the need for change in order to save the planet. It is a cautionary joke that warns of shallow environmental ideas and of organizations that exploits its members and the planet. Accounts of such superficial climate activism and corporations’ reaction to it should sound familiar to the reader. They recognize their world in the satire, which might makes them think about the right and wrong sides of environmentalism. Moreover, the comical approach also makes the warning light-hearted, and the reader does not feel chided or called out by Atwood, which creates a positive feeling about the cautionary tale.

Directly connected to shallow environmentalism is the indifferent attitude of people depicted in the *MaddAddam* trilogy. While some people mind the climate crisis enough to take part in shallow environmentalism, some have a nonchalant attitude toward nature, animals, and climate change. Apart from the extreme environmentalists like Crake and the Gardeners, no one seems to worry about the future of the planet. The critic Bouson points out that Atwood’s protagonist Jimmy “takes for granted aspects of his twenty-first century world that are meant to appal us as readers.” Global warming has changed the world. Jimmy grows up in this changed world and he accepts it (*It’s Game over* 142). In the trilogy, the protagonists recall the pre-

pandemic times and how most people have accepted the new altered-by-climate-change world. The younger generation does not seem to even care about the changes since they cannot remember another world. Jimmy remembers his mother complaining about

how everything was being ruined and would never be the same again, like the beach house her family had owned when she was little, the one that got washed away with the rest of the beaches and quite a few of the eastern coastal cities when the sea-level rose so quickly, and then there was that huge tidal wave, from the Canary Islands volcano. (They'd taken it in school, in the Geolonomics unit. Jimmy had found the video simulation pretty exciting.) [...] But everyone's parents moaned on about stuff like that. *Remember when you could drive anywhere? Remember when everyone lived in the pleeblands? Remember when you could fly anywhere in the world, without fear? Remember hamburger chains, always real beef, remember hot-dog stands? Remember before New York was New New York? Remember when voting mattered?* (Atwood OC 71-72)

The destruction of a family home, the vanishment of coastal cities, and natural catastrophes are all elevated, serious topics. Jimmy's description, on the other hand, is first neutral, making the deadpan humor omnipresent. He then calls the video simulation exciting, which is ironic since the disastrous events were far from it. His indifferent attitude and his mother's mourning of a past world are in juxtaposition, which also adds touches of humor to the scene. Atwood uses gallows humor, she jokes about the unpleasant topic of environmental destruction. The reader takes voting, easy transportation, or a never-ending food supply for granted. He or she might be shocked that those things are not present in the *MaddAddam* world. Everything that makes life comfortable and is part of a functioning society vanishes in a future where climate change has altered the world.

Atwood targets the disregard people have for the climate crisis. Jimmy thinks the new, climate-altered world is normal. He does not care about natural disasters nor about animal extinction. Instead of worrying about dying species, this new society normalizes their extinction and even creates a game, Extinctathon, that fetishizes it. Extinctathon creates excitement about the dead instead of care for the living animals. Atwood wants to raise attention to the need for climate activism. She wants her readers to be aware of the potential developments of a society in which no one cares about the environment. With her satire about indifference to climate change and shallow environmentalism, she points out the need for change. She reminds the reader of the faults present in our society, and what those same faults might look like in the future, and she does so without creating fear. Jimmy's description makes the reader laugh because of the incongruity created by the gap between the horrors of such a future and Jimmy's

attitude towards it. While the satire creates a smile on the face of the reader, it also encourages a critical reflection on environmental movements.

Margaret Atwood satirizes environmental movements in the *MaddAddam* trilogy. The critics Allison Carruth and J. Brooks Bouson both agree that the philosophy of deep ecology is especially ridiculed and criticized in the novels. The deep ecology philosophy promotes a paradigm shift that rejects anthropocentrism. “Deep ecologists believe that all nature – human and nonhuman- has intrinsic worth; that nature has the right to exist and to flourish independent of human interference; and that in order for nature to flourish, there must be a long-term reduction in the global human population” (Bouson *joke-filled romp* 343). In other words, this ecological philosophy argues that nature and animals are better than humans and should come first. The God’s Gardeners share this view and are an example of Atwood’s satire of deep ecology. The Crakers also become a mouthpiece for Atwood to express her criticism. She uses every chance she gets to ridicule the animal features Crake gave them, features he thinks would make them a superior species to mankind. The Crakers are far from being improved human beings, and they read, as Bouson points out, “as an extended joke” (*joke-filled romp* 349).

Like rabbits, the Crakers only eat leaves and their own feces. Men mark their territory by urinating in a dog-like manner. Moreover, Crake also equipped the Crakers with the ability to heal themselves by purring like cats. Jimmy remembers how Crake found out about this feature. “Once he’d discovered that the cat family purred at the same frequency as the ultrasound used on bone fractures and skin lesions and were thus equipped with their own self-healing mechanism, he’d turned himself inside out in the attempt to install that feature.” However, installing this feature has not been easy, as Jimmy recalls: “One of the trial batch of kids had manifested a tendency to sprout long whiskers and scramble up the curtains; a couple of the others had vocal-expression impediments; one of them had been limited to nouns, verbs, and roaring” (Atwood OC 184-185). Crake also reinvented the Crakers’ reproduction system. The females only come into heat every three years and the males react to this with “their bright blue and unnaturally large penises that were wagging from side to side like the tails of friendly dogs,” as Toby observes on her first encounter with the Crakers in *MaddAddam* (Atwood 20).

Bouson argues that the “Crakers can be read as a literal embodiment of deep ecology’s belief in the interconnection between earlier humans and the natural world” (*joke-filled romp* 349). According to deep ecology, humans should respect and maybe even valorise animals and

learn from their features. Crake took this literary and integrated animal features in the Crakers. However, as Bouson argues, they read like a joke. Their portrayal in the three novels is ridiculous (Bouson *joke-filled romp* 349-350). Atwood uses satirical devices to mock deep ecology. She emphasizes, through the Crakers, that this philosophy should not be taken too seriously. This is illustrated in the paragraph about the Crakers' ability to purr. The description of the malfunctions reads like a big understatement. The whole scene is situational irony. Imagining the new supposedly majestic humanoids with whiskers and roaring creates an incongruity effect leading to laughter. Jimmy's description of the botched experiment shows again Atwood's deadpan humor, and she also makes use of Bathos. First, she describes Crake's genius, how he discovered the marvellous ability of cats to heal themselves. His discoveries were scientific and serious, and the language used for the first part of the excerpt elevated. Then, the scene changes to Jimmy's silly and absurd descriptions of the failed experiments. Overall, the purring feature is being ridiculed, as are the other animal features. One more example of a humorous description of the Crakers is Toby's remark about their penises. The simile in the excerpt creates incongruity, the reader does not expect such a perverse comparison. The hyperbolic description of the grotesque bodies creates laughter. As a result, the illustration of the Crakers is once again, hilarious. They are thoroughly silly creatures, as this close reading of the satire shows.

Not only do the Crakers serve as a comical side blow to deep ecology, but so do the God's Gardeners who also live by this philosophy, and which are humorously depicted in the novels. Toby remembers her life with the God's Gardeners and their doctrines in *The Year of the Flood*. The God's Gardeners' doctrine demands its members to worship animals and nature. For example, they talk to the bees to ask them how they are, tell them the news, and apologize for taking their honey. Before the pandemic, Toby took care of the bees. She was friends with them and told them: " 'I'll miss you, bees,' [...] As if in answer, one of them started crawling up her nostril." (Atwood *YOF* 307). The God's Gardeners are respectful to all living beings, even the insects are treated with great care and worship. Shortly after the outbreak of the pandemic, Toby hides and grows her own vegetables to survive. She has not yet disposed of her old Gardener habits. Toby once kills a green beetle, and feels "remorseful, she makes a thumbprint grave for them and says the words for the freeing of the soul and the asking of pardon" (Atwood *YOF* 18). However, after some time has passed and Toby and the other surviving Gardeners have tried to rebuild a normal life, the God's Gardeners dismiss their doctrines since they aggravate their survival. Toby starts killing slugs that are on lettuce the

survivors grew. “It’s an act that would once have made her feel guilty – *For are not Slugs God’s creatures too.*” But now, she even “finds herself editorializing. *Die, evil slug!*” She drops the snails in a bucket with wood and ash, she knows there are kinder ways to kill them, but in the end “she’s not in the mood to weigh the relative kindness of slug execution methods” (Atwood MA 195).

Atwood satirizes deep ecology by ridiculing the Gardener’s worship of animals and nature. Toby’s behavior toward animals could be described as ridiculous. There is a dramatic irony between her talking to the bees and the reader knowing they do not understand or care about her. The reader knows that the bee crawling into her nose is not it answering her. The whole encounter between Toby and the bee is funny. Toby’s care about the dead green beetle also serves as a comical instance. The gap between the serious subject of a funeral, and the affecting dead being the one of an insect produces laughter. Carruth explains that the deep ecology fantasy is about a world returning to wilderness, a world without modern-day societies, and where a selected group of environmentalists live with nature (114). Atwood points out with her satire that even after a social and economic collapse, the deep ecology philosophy is not sustainable. The Gardeners forget quickly about the old rules, Toby ends up willingly killing snails to keep them from eating her own food. Toby’s aggression toward snails is funny, as it is an exaggerated reaction considering the size and innocence of such animal. She is not in the mood to consider killing them another way. Calling the procedure an execution is a hyperbole, and the sentence is a reminder of the absurd old Gardeners rules she used to follow.

The close readings of the excerpts about the Crakers and Toby’s Gardener habits demonstrate how Atwood satirizes deep ecology. Her critique addresses how the deep ecology philosophy might not be the solution to environmental problems. Atwood wants to spark a discussion on the deep philosophy movement, by possibly pointing out that worshipping nature over anything else might go a step too far. Not everything about humans is bad. Carruth argues that the goal of deep ecology, namely to reconnect with nature like in pre-industrial times, is overruled in the *MaddAddam* trilogy. Atwood demonstrates that even if all humans were removed from the planet, what would be left would not be “pristine wildness or low-impact agrarian society.” Instead, it would be “a place full of human stuff but devoid of living, breathing communities” (Carruth 113-114). The *MaddAddam* trilogy ridicules environmentalist movements and reminds the reader that environmentalist ideas do not always have to be taken literally. Atwood points out in a light-hearted and funny way that solutions for global warming

have to be found, but returning to a pastoral, pre-industrial state might not be the way. In her novels, she invites the reader to question different worldviews, and also different environmental movements. Atwood shows that even environmental ideas and movements can and should be inspected and criticized.

The third target of environmental satire is radical environmentalism and eco-terrorism. Deep ecology goes hand in hand with one particular radical environmentalist movement, namely the Earth First movement. Bouson claims Atwood criticizes the Earth First group, founded in 1980, group which argues that the Earth should come before human welfare. The group advocated for a reduction of the human population, so nature and animals could thrive. Bouson states that the Earth First movement was known for its self-righteousness. They believed their social role was to save the planet and that, in case of an apocalypse, they were the chosen group to create a new sustainable world (*joke-filled romp* 343, 347-348). In the *MaddAddam* trilogy, Atwood expresses her criticism of radical environmentalism and Earth First by mocking the former God's Gardener's eco-warriors, called MaddAddamites. This group also worked with Crake before the pandemic. They survived the pandemic and join Toby, Ren, and Amanda in the course of the story. In addition, the failure of Crake's plan to purge the Earth of humanity with the BlyssPluss pills as a solution to overpopulation also indicates how ridiculous Earth First ideas are, and how radical environmentalist ideas are dangerous and not the solution for global warming.

Crake, as the mad scientist figure, is an extreme environmentalist who decides the best solution to save the planet is to get rid of humans. His deep ecology beliefs are ridiculed in the outcome of the Crakers, and his radical views are mirrored in the God's Gardeners who, like himself, believe in the extreme idea that a mass extinction is necessary in order to heal the Earth. Toby remembers her first weeks with the Gardeners, who believed "a massive die-off of the human race was impending, due to overpopulation and wickedness, but the Gardeners exempted themselves." They believed their stashed food would be their flotation devices for what they called the Waterless Flood. "They themselves would be their own Arks, stored with their own collections of inner animals, or at least the names of those animals. Thus, they would survive to replenish the Earth. Or something like that.," Toby recalls (Atwood *YOF* 56).

The Gardeners deem eco-terrorism an effective method to fight for a better world. Some formed the MaddAddamites group. The Gardener Oates, Shackie, and Croze were part of this group, they survived the pandemic and join Toby, Ren and Jimmy. They explain that they did

bioform resistance. Shackie says “Some of those suckers were really cool [...] The microbes that ate the asphalt, the mice that attacked cars. [...] Though some of those mice got out of control. They got confused. Attacked shoes. There were foot injuries” (Atwood *YOF* 399). Before the pandemic, the MaddAddamites group was also responsible for an attack against the Happicuppa Corp. The company used bio-engineered beans to produce coffee. Those threw farmers out of business, which led them to starvation-level poverty. However, the MaddAddamites’ motive was not to fight for the human rights of the workers. The Gardener’s leader Adam praised their bioterrorism in one of his sermons: Happicuppa’s “sun-grown, pesticide-sprayed, rainforest-habitat-destroying coffee products were the biggest threat to God’s feathered Creatures in our times. [...] Some of our more radical former members joined the militant campaign against Happicuppa. Other groups were protesting against its treatment of indigenous workers, but those ex-Gardeners were protesting against its anti-Bird policies.” He encouraged his followers to imagine “God’s sorrow as he viewed the distress of His most exquisite and tuneful feathered Creations!” (Atwood *YOF* 444-45).

Atwood represents the Gardeners as silly and arrogant. Simultaneously, their attacks as eco-warriors are worrisome and ridiculous, as the excerpts show. Her satire addresses radical environmental movements like Earth First by equipping the Gardeners with the same philosophies and immediately ridiculing those. For example, the Gardeners see themselves as the chosen people. They will survive while others won’t, “or something like that” (Atwood *YOF* 56). Toby’s last sentence undercuts the credibility of the statement. She talks their self-righteous behavior down in a dry manner, which makes it apparent that she does not believe in this doctrine. The reader adopts her viewpoint, interpreting the God’s Gardener’s beliefs as ridiculous.

The MaddAddamites’ account of their ecoterrorism embellishes the satire on radical environmentalism even further. Shadie’s account of their deeds produces an effect of incongruity between the serious topic of bioterrorism and the funny delivery of the reality of their invention: that the mice became out of control. The short sentences highlight the comic aspect, as does the low burlesque style. Bioterrorism is an elevated, serious topic. However, the MaddAddamites use a low style, describing their inventions as “some of those suckers were really cool.” The paragraph once again displays Atwood’s deadpan humor. The whole endeavour about the crazy mice seems ridiculous. The delivery, however, stays dry.

Last but not least, Adam's praise of the Happicuppa attack also shows the hypocrisy of eco-terrorism, the Earth First movement, and thus deep ecology. As Carruth points out, the Gardeners care about the Earth, but not about humans and social justice. They fight Happicuppa for the birds, not for human life. In addition, the self-proclaimed pacifist group does not seem to care about the fact that their predecessors now use violence for their common goal. Instead, they even celebrate this (114). Atwood uses gallows humor to describe the Gardener's attitude. Adam's statement about the birds being God's "most exquisite" creatures is especially ironic. God seems to care about animals, but not about humans. In sum, the accounts of the God's Gardener's belief of themselves being the chosen ones, and the MaddAddamites' group eco-terrorism are funny and show that radical environmentalist actions and ideas do not work like quick fixes for climate change.

The trilogy invites a reflection on contemporary environmentalism and on their ethical blind spots. Atwood satirizes radical environmentalism and their use of eco-terrorism. She ridicules the radical Earth First movement, that lives after the deep ecology philosophy. The issue with such environmental movements is that they are too extremist and elitist. To solve the climate crisis, feasible solutions are needed, solution which take into account both humans and nature. Causing a mass extinction or other quick and on violence-based fixes are not sustainable, long-term solutions. In addition, Atwood highlights that violence is never the answer. One cannot hurt other people in order to save the planet. After all, creating social justice is no less important than preserving nature. With her satire of radical environmentalism, Atwood points out that, instead of destroying our world, we should rethink our way of living to find a solution to the crisis. The comical descriptions of the Gardeners and MaddAddamites' activism are as funny as they are worrisome to the reader. The humorous approach can evoke positive feelings. However, the possibility of such radical environmentalist activities happening in a near future are high and the reader's concern is raised thanks to the novels. The trilogy sparks critical thinking about Earth First, ecoterrorism, and the likes all while producing laughter instead of fear.

In conclusion, Atwood satirizes environmental movements, such as shallow environmentalism and the connected indifference to climate change. The Bearlift organization and the nonchalant attitude of Jimmy toward environmental catastrophes exemplify what and how Atwood ridicules issues connected to environmentalism and climate change. The novels also satirize the deep ecology philosophy with the Craker's appearance and behavior and the

God's Gardener's philosophy. Atwood emphasizes here again the fact that environmental philosophies do have their flaws. Last but not least, the trilogy ridicules and criticizes radical environmentalism, eco-terrorism, and the related Earth First movement. The corrective irony directed not only towards the readers, but also towards environmentalism creates an inclusive feeling within the reader. Instead of an emotional response of discouragement, fear, or annoyance because of climate activists taking the moral high ground, the reader feels encouraged to engage in a critical discussion on environmentalism and climate change.

3.2.3 Food production and consumption – veganism and carnivorism

Climate fiction is a space for authors to address Anthropocene concerns, such as the problems of food consumption, food production, and the future of our eating habits. Margaret Atwood addresses these concerns in the *MaddAddam* trilogy. The novels satirize veganism by ridiculing the Crakers and the God's Gardeners' eating habits, who are strict vegans unless their survival is at stake. By mocking their eating habits, Atwood raises questions about our food consumption patterns in the Anthropocene. She does not mean to instruct a carnivore, omnivore or vegan diet, but she wants to invite critical thinking about her targets of satire. Atwood wants to explore different worldviews and encourages the reader to reflect on, in this case, the value of a vegan diet and the place of meat in our society. This chapter discusses her vegan satire and how the eating habits in the novel can be analysed differently: in favor of eating meat, or in favor of a vegan diet. The critics also agree that Atwood's novels speak against the production of meat with factory farming.

One could argue that the portrayal of veganism and meat in the novels emphasizes the fact that eating meat is not ethically wrong. It is part of human nature and is sometimes necessary to survive in times of crisis. In addition, the practice of eating meat can actually connect humans to nature. The novels reflect on the valorization of traditional meat production and the nostalgia evoked by eating meat in the *MaddAddam* world. Atwood ridicules fake meat. She depicts meat substitutes in the novels as undesirable and unethical. Eating real meat is better than eating genetically engineered animals that were solely created to fulfill human meat cravings. Jovian Parry is one of the critics who argue that veganism is ridiculed and eating meat is valorized in the first novel of the trilogy. He discusses the subject matter in his essay "*Oryx and Crake* and the New Nostalgia for Meat" from 2009. Some other critics argue that veganism, even if ridiculed, is still portrayed as a worthwhile diet in times of climate change. Atwood

draws attention to the fact that humans and animals are alike. The critic Tatiana Prorokova-Konrad argues in “Veganism, ecoethics, and climate change in Margaret Atwood’s ‘MaddAddam’ trilogy” from 2021 that veganism functions as a pro-environmental strategy in the novels. According to her, *Oryx and Crake* ridicules and undermines veganism, while the other novels valorize the diet as a tool for survival in times of crisis.

Before moving on to the analysis of Atwood’s vegan satire, this chapter shortly summarizes the food production and consumption in the trilogy. The characters in the *MaddAddam* trilogy have to fall back on fake food since the environmental collapse has led to a scarcity of natural food. They eat plant-based substances for meat, like soy or tofu, or genetically engineered meat from animals created for food production. The people living in the Compounds eat the remaining real food. They only eat fake food which highly resembles natural food. The people in the Compounds are also within reach of restricted foods from endangered animals, animals that have become scarce because of climate change. The population in the Compounds does not know hunger. They are also the ones producing and controlling food production. In the Pleeblands, on the other hand, the problem of food scarcity is much more apparent. The inhabitants do not eat real food. They feed on inexpensive fast-food chains and fake meat. However, they do not know what the fake meat contains. Everything is possible, from human flesh to plastic or genetically engineered animals. The Gardeners abstain from eating any animal product. Crake creates the BlyssPluss pill to eliminate humanity. He sees humans as flawed, and since resources like food are dwindling, the best solution is to dispose of humans altogether. His humanoids, the Crakers, are vegans. After the pandemic, the Crakers find food everywhere in nature. The survivors have to re-evaluate their food production and consumption in the post-pandemic world. They return to eating natural food and producing it via agriculture. They also eat real meat again. The Gardeners turn their back on veganism, and they all return to a traditional eating style.

Atwood ridicules the dietary restrictions called veganism, which excludes eating and using animal products. In the novel, there are two groups of people who are vegan: the Crakers and the God’s Gardeners. The narration of their beliefs and eating habits is funny, as even the characters mock the vegan diet throughout the novels. The Crakers, as this dissertation has already established, read like one big joke. Everything about them is funny, including their diet which involves eating leaves and dung. The Gardeners also reject any animal products, at least in the times before the pandemics, and they pride themselves for their vegan diet. Before the

Waterless Flood, Ren and her mother leave the Gardeners and return to the Compounds, where Ren is being made fun of because she belonged to the vegan sect. Jimmy asks her, “Did you worship cabbages? [...] Oh Great Cabbage, I kiss your cabbagey cabbageness!” He then grabs Ren’s skirt and says “ ‘Nice leaves, do they come off?’ ‘Don’t be such a meat-breath,’” Ren responds to his jokes. She continues to explain the harsh names vegans call people who eat meat: “Like pig-eater. Like slug-face. This made Jimmy laugh more” (Atwood *YOF* 258). Not just Jimmy, but everyone else also mocks the Gardeners because of the way they value non-humans. For example, even the news ridicules them. The virus breaks out, and the Gardeners liberate the bio-engineered animals: “What we’ve just seen is a crazed mob of the God’s Gardeners, liberating a ChickieNobs production facility. Brad, this is hilarious, those ChickieNob things can’t even walk!” (Atwood *OC* 397). The Gardeners take their diet seriously. They even take “vegivows” to promise never to eat meat. They treat every living-being, be it a planet or an animal, with exaggerated care, as has already been established in the discussion about their deep ecology philosophy. However, once their survival is at stake, which is what happens after most of humanity has become extinct, they break their vows and eat animal products again.

Atwood uses her characters as mouthpiece for her satire, as she often does in the novels. Jimmy pokes fun at Ren, and all the other Gardeners, by exaggerating their beliefs. His wits produce laughter for him and the reader. Ren’s answers emphasize even more the ridiculousness of the Gardener’s vegan diet. Ren uses Gardener’s slurs, like “pig-eater” or “slug-face.” The term “meat-breath” very frequently occurs in the trilogy. The sect takes its beliefs very seriously. They are convinced of their superior status in society because of how they do not eat meat. This over-the-top seriousness connected to their diet adds to the comical description. The insults are ridiculous for the characters and the readers. Atwood uses neologisms to ridicule the Gardener’s self-righteous stance connected to veganism. The word “vegivows” also satirizes the vegan diet of the Gardeners. Vowing to something is a religious and serious action. Vowing never to eat meat again reads like a joke, and the seriousness of one’s diet is exaggerated. The Gardeners believe humans should treat animals with respect and care, but often, they go too far with their beliefs, which leads to comic instances for the readers and other characters. In the times of the outbreak of the pandemic, everyone panics, and the news covers the developments. While most humans are fighting for their survival, the Gardeners liberate ChickieNobs. This action is funny for the reader, and the news reporters laugh at the Gardeners too. In apocalyptic

times, the Gardeners still cling on to their beliefs and save a species that some would not even call animals anymore. The ChickieNobs are chickens without brains, feelings, nor even legs. But as proud vegans, the Gardeners see them as living beings and feel obligated to save them, an endeavour that is ultimately funny and describes the vegans as possibly mentally ill people.

Atwood wants to spark a reflection on veganism, and meat consumption and production in the twenty-first century. One could argue that she ridicules veganism in the novels, and the trilogy points out that eating meat is not ethically wrong. Eating meat is part of human nature. In times of crisis, when one's survival is at stake, eating meat is only a matter of natural necessity. *Oryx and Crake* satirizes veganism, as the critic Jovian Parry points out. Parry discusses the satire of the vegan diet of the Crakers and argues that the novel suggests that "one can't have the good without the bad- the human cruelties." For instance, eating meat is "a necessary price to pay to be truly human" (251). The Crakers are subhuman. They are not real humans, and their vegan diet contributes to their exclusion (Parry 251). The novels emphasize that killing and eating animals is cruel, but it is a part of being human. In times of survival, "eat or be eaten" is the directory. The Gardeners quickly forget their "vegivows" after the pandemic. For instance, Ren, who was formerly disgusted by meat, is, in times of survival, hungry for it: "We can smell the smokes from the fire, and another smell: charred meat. I realize how hungry I am: I can feel myself drooling" (Atwood *YOF* 499). The Gardeners eat meat to survive. It is part of their human nature to be hungry for it. However, one should not forget that even if eating meat diet is part of human nature, it is also human to have a moral consciousness. Humans decide on what to kill and eat after some ethical reflections. Humans and animals are alike, but they do not have to listen to their primal urges if their survival is not at stake. In conclusion, Atwood pokes fun at veganism, and one could argue that her satire points out that eating meat is part of human nature and is necessary to survive. In times of crisis, the Gardeners return to eating meat, and in the end, the only vegans are the subhuman creatures called the Crakers.

While Atwood ridicules the vegan diet in the novels, Parry argues that she portrays the consumption of real meat as desirable because of its link to nature (248). Meat is also desirable because of the nostalgic feelings it evokes. It is a reminder of an idyllic old-and-long-gone world where humans produced food, in particular meat, in traditional ways and lived in harmony with nature (Parry 243). Even Toby, who refrains from eating or using animal products, feels nostalgic when smelling meat. After staying with the God's Gardeners for a few months, Toby has to go undercover to escape Blanco, her former employer that raped her, who

is now looking for her. She hides in a spa, where she is confronted with meat again. Toby smells “something that came close to the aroma of the bone-stock soup her mother used to make. Though she was ashamed of herself, it made her hungry. Hungry, and also sad. Maybe sadness was a kind of hunger, she thought. Maybe the two went together” (Atwood *YOF* 312). Real meat reminds Toby of her past, simple life. It reminds her of a functional family unit and her childhood during which she felt protected and safe.

Parry argues that the desire for real meat is strong because of the nostalgia for a bygone world, or because of the policy of scarcity. In times of ecological crisis, real meat is complicated to come by. The younger generation cares for this type of food because it is a status symbol. The older generation desires meat because it reminds them of a time when humans were not living in the artificial world. It reminds them of a time when humans were connected to nature. They remember the good old days when animals were raised and slaughtered in traditional ways, on a farm in the countryside in preindustrial times. Eating real meat reconnects them to such times and reminds them of their connection to nature (Parry 244, 248, 249). Parry argues, “in this paradigm, veganism becomes nothing more than a sentimental urban malaise” (251). However, this “nostalgia fetishization of meat”, found in the novels and also in our society, obscures the reality of the exploitation of animals (Parry 243). The good old days when nature, animals, and humans had a close relationship, and farmers produced meat in compassionate ways are long gone. For years, humans have abused animals and slaughtered them in cruel ways in order to satisfy their food consumption. The days of pastoral farming are far away.

Last but not least, while the novels satirize a vegan diet, they oppose a diet including fake meat products. Esther Muñoz-González in “The Anthropocene, Cli-Fi, and Food: Margaret Atwood’s *MaddAddam*” from 2021 and Laura Wright in “Vegans, Zombies, and Eco-Apocalypse: McCarthy’s *The Road* and Atwood’s *Year of the Flood*” from 2014 both discuss eating habits in the *MaddAddam* trilogy. The two critics argue that Atwood emphasizes in her novels the fact that genetically engineered meat is ethically wrong and is not to be seen as miracle cure for the ecological damage caused by the meat industry. The trilogy displays fake meat as undesirable, wrong, and sometimes ridiculous. The neologism created for the meat substitutes satirizes fake meat. Jimmy recalls “Fish Fingers, 20% Real Fish,” in *Oryx and Crake* (Atwood 68). Zeb also remembers “PeaPod Good-as-Real Scallops,” or “NeverNetted Shrimps” (Atwood *MA* 278).

Creating and eating artificial animals is highly problematic, according to the trilogy. Firstly, the creation of genetically engineered animals of which purpose is to be eaten has its origins in experimenting with real animals. Wright points out that a general misunderstanding in our society, and the one in the *MaddAddam* trilogy, is that we believe fake meat does not affect real animals (12). In the trilogy, scientists created ChickieNobs because of convenience for the producer and the consumer. They are easy to create, easy to maintain, and one can cut off the meat needed without killing the ChickieNob, or even hurting it. The ChickieNobs thus address consumers' concerns for animals. The creature has no feelings, and no one has to kill it to produce food. However, it is an artificially-created animal that was once a real chicken, and that had to endure experiments to be changed in order to serve better human's need for meat. The ChickieNobs now cannot survive on their own, and their existence is a reminder of humans' domination over nature, which led to the Earth's climate crisis in the first place.

In addition, experiments with animals and general interference with nature also affect human health. For example, experiments on animals contribute to the creation of diseases. In *Oryx and Crake*, Jimmy recalls a bonfire in which cows, pigs, and other farm animals were burnt because of the danger of a virus infection (Atwood OC 22). Someone living in the twenty-first century is aware of the dangers of the cross-contamination and diseases brought by animals. Edward C. Holmes points out the dangers of zoonotic diseases in his article "COVID-19—lessons for zoonotic disease: Disease emergence is driven by human–animal contact in a global viral ecosystem." (2022). A zoonotic disease, such as the Covid 19 virus, describes a "virus jump from animals to infect humans" (Holmes 1114). The frequency of zoonotic diseases is rising in the twenty-first century. One of the reasons is the rise in human-animal contacts and climate change. Holmes argues the "human populations that rely on the animal world will [...] find subsistence increasingly difficult and so may exploit previously pristine areas or change farming practices, increasing the risk of exposure to animal pathogens. Unless these processes are limited now, with combating global climate change at the forefront, COVID-19 will only be an unsatisfying taste of what is to come" (Holmes 1114). In addition, Wright points out that the bonfire was actually a means for the meat corporations to raise real meat prices, which would create a greater need for fake meat. Once again, producing fake meat also affects real animals (Wright 12). Moreover, the fake meat in the Pleeblands includes human flesh, cadavers, and plastic. No one knows what is in the meat substitutes and what they might do to someone's health. All these negative connotations fake meat has make the substitutes undesirable in the

characters' opinions. In sum, Atwood emphasizes the downsides of bio-engineered food, and one could argue that she postulates a diet based on real meat with her vegan satire.

The *MaddAddam* trilogy ridicules veganism, and the novels thus spark questions about our eating habits in times of climate crisis. Even while the trilogy mocks veganism, some critics argue that Atwood advocates a plant-based diet in her novel, especially as a solution for problems related to climate change. The *MaddAddam* trilogy emphasizes the connections and similarities between the humans and the non-humans, especially with the Pigoons. Recognizing the connection between nature and humans, and acting in relation to this connection is the basis of many possible solutions to the ecological crisis, according to Hannes Bergthaller's article "Housebreaking the Human Animal: Humanism and the Problem of Sustainability in Margaret Atwood's *Oryx and Crake* and *The Year of the Flood*" from 2010. Considering this connection, a vegan diet, even if it is ridiculed in the novels, might be depicted as a solution to the climate crisis after all. The critic Tatiana Prorokova-Konrad argues that Atwood portrays veganism as a pro-environmentalist strategy in the *MaddAddam* trilogy. The novels point out the similarities between animals and humans, which speaks for a plant-based diet. In addition, Prorokova-Konrad claims that veganism becomes the way to survive in times of crisis. Her statement contrasts with the one made before in this chapter, and which claimed that one needs to eat meat when fighting for one's survival.

Prorokova-Konrad points out that even if veganism is a powerful tool in fighting climate change, it is often "misinterpreted, criticized and ridiculed by many" (77). She argues that a widespread misconception about a plant-based diet is that this diet has an elitist status. One common assumption about veganism is its availability for only selected individuals, namely the white, upper-middle class since they seem to have the financial means for a vegan diet. Moreover, the diet has a reputation of being unhealthy and causing constant deprivation. In addition, cultural values regarding meat are also of importance. For example, eating meat is part of America's culture, and the common idea is that strong American men eat meat, while veganism is reserved for the feminine world (78-79). Nonetheless, veganism is a powerful tool to fight environmental issues, and the common misconceptions about this diet should be debunked. Animal-based food is currently one of the number one causes of global warming, making a 57 percent contribution to global greenhouse emissions (Thompson, "Food Contributes to Climate Change").

The critic Prorokova-Konrad stresses the importance of veganism and argues that the diet also challenges the perceptions of what it means to be human (79). In the novels, questions about the differences between humans and animals, and about what one can eat arise. Atwood emphasizes the similarities between humans and animals in the *MaddAddam* trilogy, especially with the Pigoons, creatures who blend the human and animal boundaries. Prorokova-Konrad argues that the novel's displayed connection promotes veganism. Those similarities "raise questions of ethical consumption" and suggest "that a non-vegan diet is essentially similar to cannibalism, thus rejecting speciesism and stressing that animals should have rights just as humans do because both are living beings" (84).

The connection between the human and non-human becomes apparent in the figures of the Pigoons, lab animals with human genetics. The creatures make sounds like "the murmuring of a crowd" (Atwood *MA* 325). They have cultural traditions, like caring for their dead through what seems to be like "a funeral" (Atwood *MA* 327). Prorokova-Konrad also points out the linguistic references used by the characters to talk about the Pigoons (85). For example, instead of saying piglets, the characters call the offspring of the Pigoons pig babies. Toby once almost calls "their little one" the Pigoons' "child" (Atwood *MA* 329). The question of whether one should eat the Pigoons or not keeps returning throughout the entire trilogy. In the beginning, no one in the *MaddAddam* world wants to eat them, but as meat becomes scarce, they stop wondering whether it is okay or not. Jimmy's father explains to him that the "defunct Pigoons", the ones who do not have any use for humans anymore, can and should be eaten (Atwood *OC* 27). In pre-pandemic times, the characters eat the animals once they have no other use for them besides being food. After the Waterless Flood, the similarities between the Pigoons and humans become more and more apparent, to the point where they can communicate with each other thanks to the Crakers who serve as translators. At the end of the trilogy, the Pigoons and humans even work together, and so the idea of eating the creatures becomes taboo. The figure of the Pigoons points out that animals and humans have similarities, and one should not eat meat because of the likeness.

Humans should respect animals and favor a vegan diet over a diet including meat, as Prorokova-Konrad argues. The novels stress the similarities between the non-human and human with the Pigoons, and children in particular can see the connection between nature and humans. For example, Jimmy finds the idea of eating a Pigoon revolting as a child. He remembers adults making fun of his moral consciousness regarding meat-eating: " 'Pigoon pie again,' they would

say. ‘Pigeon pancakes, pigeon popcorn. Come on, Jimmy, eat up!’ This would upset Jimmy; he was confused about who should be allowed to eat what” (Atwood OC 27). When Jimmy feels bad about burning various farm animals like cows and sheep, his father assures him that “the animals were dead. They were like steaks and sausages, only they still had their skins on” (Atwood OC 20). While the adults see themselves as superior to animals, the children, like Jimmy, see the similarities and question their eating behavior. Growing up, Jimmy does not mind the possibility of eating Pigeons anymore. He also starts eating ChickieNobs whereas he found this practice revolting as a teenager too. Ethical questions that bothered him as a child do not concern him anymore. Like the other adults, he gives in to the convenience of eating meat and draws a line between himself and his food.

According to Prorokova-Konrad, the novels portray veganism as a pro-environmentalist strategy because of Atwood’s emphasis on the similarities between animals and humans. In addition, the novels following *Oryx and Crake* do not satirize veganism anymore, but portray the diet as a tool for survival and a building block for a new post-pandemic world (84). Prorokova-Konrad supports her argument by referencing the God’s Gardener’s doctrine of veganism which claims that one can survive the Waterless Flood by refraining from anything coming from animals. In addition, the trilogy ends with a pact between Pigeons and humans that “celebrates the human-animal relationship that is allegedly made equal, for humans no longer consume animals” (85-86). However, the Gardeners are not vegans anymore after the pandemic. They cease eating the Pigeons after their agreement but never swear off using other animals for their benefit. Since the diet of the survivors is not strictly vegan in the end, the argument of promoting veganism as a tool for survival is questionable. Eating meat in times of crisis has saved the characters. Moreover, the vegan diet of the Crakers and Gardeners, as well as their relationship to nature and animals are satirized in all novels, not only in *Oryx and Crake*. In conclusion, one could argue the *MaddAddam* trilogy emphasizes the similarities between animals and humans and thus raises questions regarding the ethical implications of meat consumption. Even while the novels ridicule veganism, they also raise awareness of the connection between animals and humans, of the moral implication of eating meat, as well as of the benefits of a vegan diet. Nevertheless, some of Prorokova-Konrad’s points are contestable, such as the argument that only the first novel ridicules veganism. The argument that Atwood portrays veganism as a tool for survival is also disputable.

Jovian Parry argues the novels promote eating meat and ridicule veganism. Prorokova-Konrad argues the trilogy promotes veganism and denounces eating meat. Although opinions differ regarding the role of veganism, all critics agree that Atwood denounces the use of animals for human benefit. Especially producing meat with factory farming, where humans raise animals and use and slaughter them for their needs in animal products, is condemned. Darian M. Ibrahim explains factory farming as a system of agriculture in which animals are mistreated. They live in “large sheds known as ‘factory farms.’ Within these four walls, animals are subjected to overcrowding, disease, darkness, mutilation, and, little-to-no human contact (89). Atwood’s novels condemn using animals for the sole purpose of benefitting humans. The books represent experimenting on animals as unethical. Many characters denounce eating the fake meat coming from genetically engineered animals. The only way to kill and eat an animal is in traditional ways, ways in which humans treat animals well and kill them humanly. When one’s survival is at stake, eating meat also becomes acceptable, but this is the only instance.

In conclusion, the *MaddAddam* trilogy satirizes veganism with the Crakers and God’s Gardener. The Craker’s diet and behavior is funny. The characters ridicule the Gardeners’ beliefs, and the reader laughs at their expense. Specific phrasings like “meat-breath” and “vegivows” create laughter at the vegan diet of the sect. Ridiculing their eating habits and beliefs raises questions about the food consumption and production in the novels and in our contemporary society set in the Anthropocene. Atwood’s satire invites critical thinking about veganism and the role of meat. Some critics argue the novels ridicule veganism and promote the idea of eating meat with a moral consciousness. In the novels, a diet including meat seems to be part of human nature. The Gardeners turn to meat in order to survive after the pandemic. In addition, eating meat is not ethically wrong since it can connect humans to nature, as Parry argues. In the trilogy, real meat is desirable because it reminds the people in the *MaddAddam* world of a long-gone world where farmers raised animals benevolently, and killed them in traditional and human ways. The traditional way of meat production is valorized, while the trilogy denounces the new and common way of producing meat. Moreover, the novels also denounce the production of fake meat. Substitutes of meat are ridiculed and undesirable because their production still affects animals and human health. Creating animals for the sole purpose of fulfilling human meat cravings is represented as wrong.

However, one could also argue that the novels, even while satirizing veganism, promote a plant-based diet as Prorokova-Konrad argues. The trilogy points out the similarities between

animals and humans. Especially the Pigoons and the children emphasize the connection. The fact that human and animals are connected condemns eating meat since it resembles cannibalism. The critic Prorokova-Konrad also claims that the novels portray veganism as a strategy for survival through the Gardeners and the final pact between the Pigoons and humans. However, since the survivors of the pandemic never claim to refrain from meat altogether, and have eaten meat in times of fight for survival, this statement is questionable. Prorokova-Konrad's argument stating that only the first novel satirizes veganism is also contestable. Nevertheless, even if the opinions about the role of veganism in the novels differ, all critics seem to agree that using animals solely for human benefits as it is done in factory farming or with genetically engineered animals is ethically wrong.

3.3 Humor inside and outside of the *MaddAddam* trilogy

This chapter discusses how satire and humor are prevalent in the trilogy's narrative. They are as such between the characters, but also outside of the books between the author and the readers. In the three novels, the characters never lose their sense of humor. They use a comic approach to handle their trauma, to keep up hope and their will to survive. As Traub argues, humor "in the face of unthinkable risks and losses may be a key ingredient to survival, if not the solution" (99). In a similar vein, humor can help the readers handle trauma and stay hopeful about the prospects of the climate crisis. The *MaddAddam* trilogy is a satire that is inclusive and takes several perspectives into account. It is an inward-directed cli-fi satire. The novels are self-deprecating, involving "laugher, laugee and audience alike," as Dvorak points out about Atwood's humor (116).

The characters in the trilogy are often the mouthpiece of Atwood's satire. The protagonists use humor for their own benefit. As the critic Traub argues, Atwood's characters use humor to process their trauma of loss (98). Jimmy, Toby, Ren, and the other characters survived the pandemic and have to fight every day for their lives in the new apocalyptic state of the world. They use humor to deal with this difficult task and to keep their hope up that better days will come, that they can and will survive in this new world. Traub argues that Jimmy uses "silly verbal gymnastics, self-mockery or aggrandizement, and laborious memorial recall" to deal with his past and new life. The other survivors also use humor to avoid fear overtaking them. They use laughter as a weapon for survival (Traub 98). For example, in *The Year of the Flood*, Ren and Toby meet at the end of the novel, and one morning when Ren wakes up, she

says “ ‘Oh shit, oh shit, [...] I’m late! What time is it?’ ‘You’re not late for anything,’ says Toby, and for some reason, both of them laugh” (460). In the *MaddAddam* trilogy, the characters deal daily with questions of survival. They constantly lack something, be it food, medicine, or tools. Toby describes their struggles: “they’re running out of sugar, and there’s no honey. But there is Mo’Hair milk. [...] There have been some jokes about lamb stew, but no one wants to go there: somehow it would be hard to slaughter and eat an animal with human hair; especially human hair that so closely resembles, in its sheen and stylability, the shampoo ads of yore” (Atwood *MA* 251).

The characters keep joking, even after Jimmy and Adam die in the battle against the Painballers. After winning the battle, the characters return to their camp and to their initial task of rebuilding civilization. One day, Toby “made the mistake of announcing to the others that this was the God’s Gardener Festival of Gymnosperms. Several bad jokes about gymnasts and sperms and even male Crakers were made, one of them by Zeb, which is a good sign. Perhaps his time of mourning is coming to an end” (Atwood *MA* 259). The characters make jokes, even during their darkest times of despair. Ren and Toby make fun of the fact that their old lives and habits are gone. There is no need for time anymore. Every day is the same in this post-pandemic, apocalyptic world. Questions about survival and their everyday struggle govern their new life. Instead of falling into depression and despair, the characters make jokes about their struggle for survival. Not only does Toby narrate the jokes of the others about the Mo’Hair, but she also makes jokes herself. She describes the silly commercials she remembers from before the pandemic that advertise the “sheen and stylability” of the hair. She ridicules the ads; she uses irony to describe the silly sheep. The characters also return to making jokes quickly after the passing of some of their friends. They joke about the Gardener’s festival of Gymnosperm. The fact that such a festival existed ridicules the deep ecology philosophy of the Gardeners. The characters mock the Gardeners, and thus themselves. Toby notices that even Zeb makes jokes again. After a short period of grief, he joins the others in making fun of themselves and their new lives. He has to do this in order to stay hopeful and alive since making jokes keeps the group sane. It also connects the group and creates a sense of community. It protects them from falling into despair, and it keeps them going through grim times.

Using humor in the climate change discourse fulfils the same mission. It keeps us hopeful in sight of the upcoming crisis. In cli-fi satire, humor can protect the reader from falling into despair in the grim times of global warming. The jokes in the *MaddAddam* trilogy do not

only take part between the characters. The humor in the books also lies outside of the novels, between the reader and the author. Sometimes, the reader and the characters laugh together. For example, the jokes mentioned earlier are between the characters, but the reader takes part in it. The characters are funny, which makes them more relatable to the reader. In addition, laughing together connects the reader to the protagonists. On the other hand, jokes also happen between the author and the reader. Only the author and the reader can detect the funny aspects of the scene. Example of this are the jokes that make use of dramatic irony. The author and reader laugh for jokes the characters cannot sense. Atwood uses dramatic irony to ridicule, for instance, the hypocrisy of the Gardeners in terms of radical environmentalism. For the pacifist Gardeners, violence is okay if it helps to reach their goals. While the characters do not see this hypocrisy nor do mock it, Atwood and the reader detect the irony and laugh about it. The jokes in the novels can also be made about everyone: the characters, the reader, and even the author.

In conclusion, the novels mock everyone, and laughter serves as a tool for survival, for the characters in the novels, and for the readers who have to handle issues related to the climate crisis. Satire and humor are present in the narrative and outside of it. There are jokes between the characters, between the authors and the reader, and even between the three of them. Laughter goes in all directions. The reader of the *MaddAddam* trilogy deems the books funny. He or she thinks about the climate crisis, while keeping up hope about the situation.

Conclusion

The term Anthropocene refers to the most recent epoch in the Earth's history during which human activities have begun to have a considerable impact on the planet's climate and ecosystems. The change in global temperature will have many devastating effects on humans and non-humans alike. As a response to this threat, climate fiction, a literary genre in which global warming is part of the narrative, has emerged. Margaret Atwood is one of the many authors who have contributed to this genre. She wrote the *MaddAddam* trilogy, three novels that are climate fiction satire. This trilogy takes place in the future. A pandemic has wiped out most of humanity, and a few survivors attempt to navigate the post-apocalyptic world. In the novels, Atwood expresses her worries about the condition of our world and the impending issues caused by global warming. This dissertation discusses the genre of climate fiction, satire, and emotions in the *MaddAddam* trilogy. It tries to answer two questions not-yet-addressed by existing literature. Firstly, what type of cli-fi satire addresses Anthropocene concerns without evoking negative feelings like anxiety or hopelessness? Secondly, in what manner does Atwood target themes in relation to global warming in the *MaddAddam* trilogy?

To answer the first research question, this master's thesis takes a close look at satire and at the positive emotions evoked by humor in climate fiction. Satire is a genre that originated in ancient Rome, and it describes an art form that uses a humorous approach in order to criticize a person or an idea. Horatian satire ridicules its target in a tolerant and gentle way, Juvenalian satire criticizes harshly, and Menippean satire casts moral judgments on ideas. One could describe the *MaddAddam* trilogy as a mixture of the three forms of satire. Atwood, and other satirists, are motivated to create satire by the urge to express their criticism and to create something aesthetic. A satirist wants to set an example for a better world and spark discussion on different worldviews. Next, this thesis analyses the place of satire in the climate change discussion and in climate fiction. The traditional discourse on climate change, and generic climate fiction often evoke a negative emotional response in its audience. Frequently, people use disaster narratives that lead to fear, anxiety, or hopelessness. In addition, many people have a negative image of climate activism or environmentalism, as the critic Seymour points out in. All these negative responses can hinder one of climate fiction's social functions: To make people believe in and discuss global warming, and to encourage them to act against climate change.

In order to evoke a positive emotional response to the subject matter of climate change, humor and satire can be of help. This dissertation establishes that humor has many positive effects on the climate change discussion: it can bind people together, help reach an audience that rejects traditional environmentalist texts, and can avoid creating fear or discouragement in the audience. In climate fiction, satire can be helpful. It allows the author to evoke positive emotions, like laughter, while simultaneously criticizing the origins and results of climate change-related issues. The *MaddAddam* trilogy is a climate fiction satire. Atwood uses humor to address global warming issues. She creates laughter while inviting the reader to critically reflect on the climate crisis. Positive emotions can help to engage the reader in the discussion on climate change. However, this thesis also points out that using humor and satire to talk about climate change can have disadvantages.

Using humor in climate fiction in the form of satire does not always necessarily lead to positive emotions in the audience. This dissertation argues that an inward-directed-climate-fiction satire addresses the audience differently, and thus rather evokes a different emotional response than an outward-directed-climate-fiction satire. An example of inward-directed cli-fi satire is the *MaddAddam* trilogy. The Netflix movie *Don't look up* is an example of an outward-directed cli-fi satire. The satirical movie maintains the moral high ground in favor of climate activists, scientists, and environmentalists. In the film, the audience is the only target of a corrective irony. In addition, expert knowledge is prioritized, and the impression given is that the biggest problem with climate change is that no one believes in it. The movie also displays sentimental images. It is didactic and leaves the audience feeling guilt and shame. *Don't look up* is everything Seymour criticizes in environmental texts. It is an outward-directed cli-fi satire that possibly evokes more negative than positive emotional responses in its audience.

The *MaddAddam* trilogy, an inward-directed cli-fi satire, is a “Bad Environmentalism” text after Seymour’s definition. The novels ridicule and criticize everyone, including the author, scientists, or environmentalists. The trilogy does not take the moral high ground; the novels are not didactic, and the mediation of expert knowledge to save the Earth is not addressed. Such a type of cli-fi satire, an inward-directed satire, can create positive emotional responses. Nevertheless, the dissertation also points out that, since *Don't look up* is a movie and streams on the popular website Netflix, it has an advantage over the *MaddAddam* trilogy: It is more accessible and thus might move a wider audience to talk about and act on climate change. This dissertation establishes the advantages of cli-fi satire in order to engage people in climate

activism. Climate fiction satire can evoke positive feelings while also uttering criticism related to global warming. An inward-directed satire that ridicules everyone and everything as the *MaddAddam* trilogy does is an example of cli-fi satire that can create positive emotions towards climate change.

Thus, the answer to the question on what type of satire is needed to talk about Anthropocene concerns in climate fiction without evoking negative feelings like anxiety or hopelessness, would be an inward-directed climate fiction satire. To further expand the research regarding emotions and climate fiction, a greater focus on the effects of negative emotions could also interest literary critics. To gain a deeper understanding of the emotional response of the cli-fi audience, an analysis in the form of a survey could be the focus of further research. This thesis mostly speculates on the emotional response of Atwood's readers. However, a scientific study with the readers could confirm or disprove the benefits of humor in cli-fi.

To answer the second research question, this master's thesis inspects the targets of Atwood's satire, the way she pokes fun at them, and the discussion points she raises by satirizing climate change-related themes. Atwood uses a range of linguistic and stylistic devices to create laughter and thus a positive emotional response to her satire. She uses incongruity as a comic mode. She also uses other techniques such as irony, gallows humor or deadpan humor, wit, neologism, or perversity. Moreover, Atwood makes use of the grotesque style, low burlesque, Bathos, hyperbolic exaggerations, and understatement.

After establishing her comic modes, this thesis analyses three satirical targets. First, the current developments in our society that are connected to global warming are discussed. Atwood targets the mainstream of violence and the worship of fossil fuels. She uses humor to highlight how violence has crept into the daily lives of the protagonist of the *MaddAddam* world. While the reader enjoys her humor, he or she is also encouraged to examine the likelihood that this could come to pass in the future, particularly considering the connection between violence and global warming. Equally connected are the worship of fossil fuels and the climate crisis. The PetrOleum church reads like an elaborate joke on the misuse of religion and the fossil fuel mania of the twenty-first century. Once more, the reader enjoys Atwood's humor while simultaneously considering their own use of fossil fuels and the effects this dependence has on the environment and their own future.

In addition, environmental movements are discussed as satirical targets. Atwood ridicules shallow environmentalism and the connected nonchalant attitude to climate change. The Bearlift organization exemplifies the satire of shallow environmentalism. The novels also mock the deep ecology philosophy with the sect called God's Gardener and the group of the Crakers. They embody the deep ecology philosophy which is based on the belief that nature and animals have inherent value that can be considered more important than humans. Moreover, Atwood satires radical environmentalism, eco-terrorism, and the related Earth First movement. The trilogy mocks the eco-terrorists MaddAddamites and Crake while pointing out that violence is never the answer to problems. In sum, the *MaddAddam* trilogy ridicules environmental movements. It uses corrective irony directed everywhere, which results in the reader feeling positive emotions. The reader is possibly inspired to engage in a critical conversation about environmentalism, climate change, and potential changes for a better future while also laughing at Atwood's comedic trilogy rather than feeling discouraged, afraid, or irritated because of climate activists seizing the moral high ground.

The third satirical target is veganism with jokes about the Crakers and the God's Gardeners. Ridiculing the vegan-based diet of the two groups raises questions about food production and consumption in the twenty-first century, especially regarding meat and its place in the Anthropocene. While some critics argue that the novels ridicule veganism and promote eating meat, others argue that the trilogy emphasizes the importance of veganism to save the planet from climate change. The novel might represent eating meat as a part of human nature and a necessity in times of crisis. This could speak in favor of a meat-based diet. In addition, the critic Parry argues that eating real meat is not seen as ethically-wrong in the novels, since it connects humans to nature. Meat is desirable, it is scarce and reminds people of a pastoral past during which humans engaged in traditional farming and were connected to nature. Such traditional ways of meat production are praised, while the new and common way of producing meat in *MaddAddam* and our world is denounced. This thesis also points out that the production and consumption of meat substitutes in *MaddAddam* is frowned upon. They are portrayed as ridiculous, undesirable, and unhealthy. Furthermore, fake meat results from experiments on real animals.

Other critics, such as Prorokova-Konrad, argue that veganism is portrayed as a pro-environmentalist strategy in the trilogy, even if satirized. The novels point out the connection between animals and humans with the Pigoon creatures and the children. Such similarities

ultimately condemn eating meat. The critic Prorokova-Konrad also argues that veganism is a strategy for survival in the trilogy, a statement that is questionable since, at the end of the novels, the Gardeners eat meat again, despite their original plant-based diet. No matter what critics argue about the role of meat and veganism, they all agree that the novels denounce using animals for humans, as it is done in factory farming or with bioengineering.

The dissertation establishes Atwood's comical modes to answer how she satirizes her targets. Her satirical targets are also analysed. The thesis concludes that Atwood ridicules the current developments related to global warming in our society, environmental movements, and veganism in order to evoke a discussion about such themes in relation to the climate crisis. Her satire is able to produce positive feelings and the novels encourage the reader to think about Atwood's satirical targets. The reader feels hopeful about facing global warming issues, and laughter is used as a weapon against climate change. The characters in the trilogy also use humor to keep their hope up and will to live in their post-apocalyptic world. The last point this thesis raises is about the use of humor inside and outside the novels, as everyone and everything is ridiculed including the characters, the author, and the reader. Laughter goes in all directions and serves as a tool for everyone to fight future crises, such as climate change. For further research on the *MaddAddam* trilogy, I would suggest analysing the role of food in the novels in more depth. This thesis only scratches the surface. The symbolism of food in the trilogy, the role of cannibalism, and the implications of moral decay with the character's food choices are some of many points of interest in the food department in Atwood's novels.

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UNIVERSITÉ CATHOLIQUE DE LOUVAIN
Faculté de philosophie, arts et lettres

Place Blaise Pascal, 1 bte L3.03.11, 1348 Louvain-la-Neuve, Belgique | www.uclouvain.be/fial