

The Origin and Development of Religion in Margaret Atwood's MaddAddam Trilogy

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ABSTRAKT

Tato práce zkoumá vývoj náboženství ve skupině geneticky vytvořeného humanoidního druhu v dystopické trilogii *MaddAddam* od Margaret Atwood. První část popisuje autorku samotnou, její literární zaměření a jsou zde definovány dva základní pojmy - dystopie a náboženství, o které se celá práce opírá. Dále je v této práci analyzován vznik a vývoj náboženství humanoidního druhu s názvem Crakers. Jsou zde popsány hlavní rysy tohoto náboženství, které jsou pak přirovnány k rysům známých náboženství rozvíjejících se v dávných i současných společnostech. Toto srovnání odhalí, zda má náboženství mezi Crakers náboženské rysy a může být považováno za náboženství rovné těm, se kterými je srovnáváno.

Klíčová slova: Náboženství, dystopie, Margaret Atwood, Crakers, Oryx nad Crake, MaddAddam.

ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the development of religion among the group of genetically engineered humanoid species in the *MaddAddam* trilogy by Margaret Atwood. The first part describes an author, her literary focus and there are two basic terms defined - dystopia and religion, on which this thesis is based. Furthermore this work analyse the origin and development of religion among the humanoid species called the Crakers. The main features of this religion are described there and compared with features of well known religions developing in the ancient and also contemporary societies. This comparison should reveal whether the religion of the Crakers has religious features and can be considered to be an equal to these religions.

Keywords: Religion, dystopia, Margaret Atwood, the Crakers, Oryx and Crake, MaddAddam.

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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	9
1 MARGARET ATWOOD AND HER LITERARY FOCUS.....	11
1.1 MaddAddam Trilogy	14
1.2 Dystopia in Literature	17
1.3 Religion	21
2 ORYX AND CRAKE.....	24
2.1 The Crakers.....	24
2.2 Religion among the Crakers	25
3 MADDADDAM.....	31
CONCLUSION	37
BIBLIOGRAPHY	39

INTRODUCTION

“Science without religion is lame, religion without science is blind.”¹ This quote by Albert Einstein shows the importance of equilibrium between religion and science. In Margaret Atwood’s *MaddAddam* trilogy science and religion are constantly fighting and the questions what is more important can arise.

Nowadays many people believe that a belief in God is more and more useless in this world where the technologies and science help the humans grasp and understand this world better and better. This belief seems to be just some kind a leftover from the times when humans did not understand the nature, elements and the entire world around them. But today it looks like the humans need the religion and God less and less. As Kimberley Watson claims the number of believers in the world is declining on the other hand the numbers of people, who tell that they have no God, is rising. Among the countries with the higher rate of atheist belong the China, Japan and Czech Republic.²

However this high-tech world brings also many new problems and worries into the lives of people and they are trying to find something what helps them to run away from this. So for example many meditative techniques from eastern religions are very popular nowadays. It seems that the religion in various forms is somehow important for people all the time and is very tightly connected to human society and to culture. The way how the humans see the world and how they behave to each other have basic in the religion. Religion gives basics for the human’s relationship to the equality among humans, to the human rights, the problems of life and death or euthanasia and abortion.³ Religion interferes into the human’s lives more than people know.

This thesis will be dealing with religion among the Crakers, the man-made new humanoid species created by geneticist in Margaret Atwood’s trilogy *MaddAddam* and it should reveal if the religion among the Crakers can be considered to be a religion despite

¹ James Randerson, “Childish superstition: Einstein's letter makes view of religion relatively clear,” *The Guardian*, last modified May 13, 2008, accessed April 28, 2014, <http://www.theguardian.com/science/2008/may/12/peopleinscience.religion>.

² See Kimberly Winston, “Atheism Rises, Religiosity Declines In America,” *The Huffington Post*, last modified August 15, 2012, accessed April 20, 2014, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/08/14/atheism-rise-religiosity-decline-in-america_n_1777031.html.

³ See Dalibor Hejna, *Náboženství a společnost: věda o náboženství a její historické kořeny* (Praha: Grada, 2010), 39.

the fact that the Crakers were created in laboratory and genetically designed not to worship any higher power thus not to create a religion.

To determine this, the features of their religion will be described and analyzed and compared with the already existing religions which have been developing among humans for centuries and have similar features as the religion developing among the Crakers. This should reveal whether the religion among the Crakers has some religious features and thus can be considered to be an equal religion.

1 MARGARET ATWOOD AND HER LITERARY FOCUS

In the interview with Branko Gorjup Margaret Atwood said that writing is like when “you put a message into a bottle and throw it into the sea, hoping that it will float to shore, and that someone will perhaps find it and read your message.”⁴ Sometimes it is possible that messages do not find its readers but that is not the case of Margaret Atwood’s messages. Many people read her works and she received many national and international literary awards and many honorary doctoral degrees during her writing career.

Born in 1939 in Ottawa, Canada as the second of the three children, Margaret Atwood spent her childhood mostly in the bush of Ontario and Quebec because of her father who worked there as an entomologist. She began attending school regularly at age twelve, when her family moved to Toronto, where her father became a university professor. At school she started to write for school newspapers and at age 16 realized that she wants to write professionally. In 1961 Margaret Atwood graduated from Victoria College in the University of Toronto with a Bachelor of Arts in English. In the same year she published her privately printed collection of poems *Double Persephone*. She gained her MA at Radcliffe College and after that started her doctoral studies at Harvard University, which she did not finish. In the 1970s Margaret Atwood was very productive and became a full-time writer. Her first novel, *The Edible Woman*, was published in 1969 and after this novel Margaret Atwood started to be apperceived as a feminist writer, although she did not consider herself to be one. Maybe one of the main reasons for receiving this label after the appearance of *The Edible Woman* was the feminist movement in New York which took place at the same time when the novel was published and was automatically connected to it. Margaret Atwood herself denies any connection between the movement and her book: “there was no women’s movement in sight when I was composing the book in 1965, and I am not gifted with clairvoyance...”⁵

But in the works, especially in the early novels, of Margaret Atwood can be found feministic issues as a prominent theme. In *The Edible Woman* the theme of gender equality and identity loss is examined. Marian, the main protagonist of the novel, submits to her

⁴ Branko Gorjup, ed., *Margaret Atwood: Essays on Her Works* (Toronto: Guernica Editions, 2008), 239.

⁵ Coral Ann Howells, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Margaret Atwood* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 17.

fiancé Peter; she gives up her desires and plans to fulfil his and at the same time Marian is also losing her own personality. She fears that after marriage the strong personality of her new husband overwhelms her. That is why she bakes a cake in the shape of woman which represents weak Marian who does not know who she is and after the cake is eaten she again feel as a strong, independent women. Even the book is divided into three parts where the first part and third part are written in the first-person but the second part is in the third-person. This represents how Marian sees herself, how she lost her identity to someone else and how she finally become independent.

In another novel called *Surfacing* (1972), Atwood returns to the theme of identity and also questions social and sexual status of women. Story is narrated by an unnamed female protagonist who returns to her hometown to search for her lost father. Through the story she feels alienated from her lover as well as from her best friend and also partially politically dispossessed as English - speaking person in French Quebec. This partially stems from her loss of identity which Atwood express by keeping the protagonist unnamed. Relationship between Anna, narrator's best friend, and David portray the women's role in marriage. Anna is very submissive to her husband and always has to wear make-up to please him. Also through the main protagonist, men are displayed as somebody who controls women through sex, religion, marriage or birth control. This leads to narrator's madness. When she gains sanity again she is not powerless as before and she is prepared to start anew.

In *Surfacing* can be also seen another theme which is portrayed and explored in many of Atwood's novels and that is environmentalism. As she said in an interview for *The Progressive* magazine she was born into this issue as her father was a forest entomologist and was against spraying forest for spruce budworms, because it killed everything else but these insect.⁶ In *Surfacing* are described wild, Canadian nature and the connection of the main protagonist with this nature. Firstly she is shocked when she sees all changes in her birthplace and the pollution of surroundings which she believes is caused by Americans. Also the technology which is around is unbearable to her. Unnamed protagonist sympathizes with the nature, she even can not kill a fish her friend caught and she is hostile

⁶ See Matthew Rothschild, "A Progressive Interview With Margaret Atwood," *The Progressive*, accessed March 19, 2014, <https://www.progressive.org/rothschild1210.html>.

to the tourists who are damaging the nature. Her own tragedy is reflected in the nature around her and both, the nature and main protagonist, are portrayed to be dominated by a world around.

Environmental issues are also explored in Atwood's *MaddAddam* trilogy. For example in the second novel *The Year of the Flood* there is religious group called God's Gardeners. They are back to nature cult which is living simply and organically. They do not eat meat and they fight against fast-food chains in which meat is served. Through this group an effort to connect with nature again and to preserve this nature is expressed. The condition of the nature in this trilogy is also portrayed peripherally through the character Amanda who is a bioartist. She is creating her pictures from the organic materials and as her canvas she is using destroyed nature such as deserts at places where rainforests used to be. Also in *Oryx and Crake*, the first book of the trilogy, a game called EXTINCTATHON is presented and in this game players have to guess the extinct animal according to description. It is shown through this game that animals such as rhino, fox, polar bear, tiger and much more are extinct because of pollution, destruction of their natural habitat or for example hunting. There are presented just a few examples of many environmental issues which can be found in this trilogy and the topic of environmental issues in dystopian novels will be mentioned again in the subchapter Dystopia in Literature.

MaddAddam trilogy explores also other themes than environmentalism such as biotechnology, immortality or what it means to be a human. *MaddAddam* is a dystopian trilogy which is another prominent genre Margaret Atwood explored during her writing career. Her first dystopian novel is *The Handmaid's Tale* which was published in 1985. The plot is set in the future in the Republic of Gilead which is situated where the United States of America were. The movement called Sons of Jacobs overthrew the President and the Congress of the United States and they established new order. The new regime is ultra-conservative, highly puritanical, militaristic and the society is divided into castes. Members of other religious groups are killed as well as homosexuals or abortionist. Other people are resettled to colonies. All women's rights are taken away; they can not have property, job or education and some of them are treated as slaves. This story is narrated from the viewpoint of Offred - woman who is a handmaid. Handmaids are fertile women whose main duty is to bear a child of their commander because commanders' wives can not have children.

In *The Handmaid's Tale* the totalitarian regime of Gilead was supposed to improve the lives of people, but completely failed considering the live of women. Offred - main

protagonist - is captured in the situation in which she is denied any possibility to influence or change her conditions which is one of the features of the dystopia genre. With this genre is often connected misuse of technology which serves, for example as in *The Handmaid's Tale*, as a tool for controlling the society. Women lose all their funds because rulers of the new regime are able to freeze women's accounts thanks to the fact that all money is electronic and bank accounts are labelled according to gender. Here in connection with *The Handmaid's Tale* some of the features of dystopia genre were mentioned. Other characteristics of this genre will also be mentioned in the following chapters.

Atwood also portrayed the genre of dystopia in her novel *Oryx and Crake* which was published in 2003. This was her second dystopian novel and firstly she had no plans to write a sequel but later she changed her mind, wrote *The Year of the Flood* and in 2013 the third book *MaddAddam* and made a trilogy named after the last book, the *MaddAddam* trilogy.⁷

1.1 MaddAddam Trilogy

The designed plague has wiped out almost all of the humanity. Instead of people, the genetically modified pigs, sheep and dogs can be seen all around. And now the Earth should be home not for people but for the Crakers, which is a new bioengineered humanoid species. This is reality in Margaret Atwood's dystopian trilogy *MaddAddam*, which begins with novel published in 2003 *Oryx and Crake*.

The main protagonist Snowman lives at the tree near the seashore. He believes that after the plague, he is the last living human in the world. He lives there with Children of Crake - the Crakers and he takes care about them. They are gentle, nude, free from jealousy and other negative emotions of human nature such as greed, hate or selfishness. When he saw them for the first time, his thoughts were: "...they were so beautiful. Black, yellow, white, brown, all available colours. Each individual was exquisite."⁸ This was in Paradise

⁷ See Isabel Slone, "Who survives, who doesn't? An Interview with Margaret Atwood," Random House of Canada, August 30, 2013, accessed April 25, 2014, <http://www.randomhouse.ca/hazlitt/feature/%E2%80%9Cwho-survives-who-doesn%E2%80%99%E2%80%9D-interview-margaret-atwood>.

⁸ Margaret Atwood, *Oryx and Crake* (New York: Anchor Books, 2004), 302.

dome which is a highly guarded part of RejoovenEsence, a corporation where the Crakers were created by Crake, once Snowman's best friend.

But once Crake's name was Glenn and Snowman's Jimmy and they were two boys living in a world which was divided into Compounds - secure areas where privileged people lived and there they were working for corporations developing medicaments, cosmetic products or producing genetically modified animals - and the pleeblands, dirty and dangerous areas where the rest of the people lived, controlled by police called CorpSeCorps.

They met each other at the school and became best friends. Later they both fell in love with the same girl called Oryx. Crake and Jimmy saw Oryx for the first time at the website with pornography content and later she was working in the Paradise dome with Crake. In the laboratory of Paradise dome, Crake was working on the two projects. First of them were the BlyssPluss pills which promised great libido, protection against sexually transmitted diseases and against pregnancy. Second project were the Crakers. Both projects were supposed to offer new goods for customers. But Crake had his own plan. He designed a plague which he hid in Blysspluss pills. When this plague broke out and killed almost whole humanity, Jimmy stayed alone with the Crakers, because Oryx was killed by Crake who was jealous of her relationship with Jimmy and when Jimmy saw that, he shot Crake.

In *Oryx and Crake* Margaret Atwood explores the power of science and its negative sides. She grew up among scientists as her father was one and maybe thanks to that, she is interested in science and as she is saying, pop science books creates her recreational reading.⁹ Probably influenced by all this she sent out a message about a world where biotechnology corporations somehow substituted government authority and now control people - their customers - and work with technologies which are not some fantasies but exist and are used today. As she herself is saying "Every novel begins with a what if [...]. The what if of *Oryx and Crake* is simply, What if we continue down the road we're already on?"¹⁰ By this Atwood wants to warn her readers to watch out what are the humans doing

⁹ See Margaret Atwood, "Perfect Storms: Writing *Oryx and Crake*," *Margaret Atwood Oryx and Crake*, accessed January 26, 2014, <http://www.oryxandcrake.co.uk/perfectstorm.asp?p=4>.

¹⁰ Margaret Atwood, "Perfect Storms: Writing *Oryx and Crake*," *Margaret Atwood Oryx and Crake*, accessed January 26, 2014, <http://www.oryxandcrake.co.uk/perfectstorm.asp?p=4>.

and how they are living. She wants them to think about it and about a possibility that the society needs the change.

The sequel *The Year of the Flood*, which was published in 2009, presents a different view of the same world. The end of *Oryx and Crake* is also the end of *The Year of the Flood* and in this sequel Margaret Atwood re-told the story through other characters, members of the group called God's Gardeners.

God's Gardeners believe in nature, live simply, sing their hymns and deny the life full of shopping and cosmetics surgeries. The waterless flood has been predicted by their founder Adam One long ago.¹¹ Two main characters and members of God's Gardeners Toby and Ren tell the story from their point of view; both survived the waterless flood - the plague. Ren locked up in the decontamination room in the sex club she was working for and Toby hid herself in the former spa. Jimmy, Crake and Oryx are mentioned through Toby's and Ren's memoirs but neither Ren nor Toby knew that these characters were responsible for the plague.

Margaret Atwood is focusing on different details in *The Year of the Flood* than in *Oryx and Crake* and through them is showing to readers new pieces of Crake's complicated personality and life which stands behind the end of the humanity. This book also portrays the society from the other perspective. While in *Oryx and Crake* the readers saw mainly the life in secure compounds, in *The Year of the Flood* life in dangerous pleeblands is pictured. As a connection between these two worlds in this book can be considered Ren as she came from compounds but lived in pleeblands too.

Third and the last book of this trilogy *MaddAddam* appeared in 2013 and brought together characters from two previous books. The Crakers and Jimmy are brought together with Ren and Toby when rescuing Ren's friend Amanda and later wounded Jimmy is carried to the cobb-house where Ren and Toby are living with others survivors. Many of these survivors were biologists and geneticists and they were members of a group called MaddAddam which fought against the corporations but they were tracked down by Crake who forced them to help him with creation of the Crakers. These survivors are living in the post-apocalyptic world in the wilderness under the constant threat of possible attack of wild genetically modified animals or merciless Painballers who were prisoners before the plague

¹¹ See Margaret Atwood, *The Year of the Flood* (New York: Nan A. Talese, 2009), 117.

and their punishment was fight for life in the Painball arena with other prisoners. They hunt the survivors and they want to kill them as they know nothing else from an arena. Paiballers also want revenge, because Ren and Toby rescued Amanda, who was captured by them.

The final book is mainly concentrated around another main character - Zeb. He is Toby's lover, former God's Gardener and also leader of MaddAddamites. His story brings new details about Crake's life, childhood and his plan and about the world before the plague. Zeb's story is punctuated by parts about the Crakers and stories, told by Toby, about their creation and things they are curious about.

This dystopian trilogy is focused on the power of science and also on the religion which clash with the science very often. Two new religions were created in *MaddAddam* trilogy, but what these books really brought is a lot of questions. Questions mainly about human society and who controls it, questions about human nature and what it means to be a human. But as it can be expected there are more questions than answers. Margaret Atwood sends out a warning but with a glimpse of hope and she herself is saying about technology and humans "People are going to play with the toys. On the other hand, we've made a huge number of nuclear devices and we haven't yet blown up the world."¹² She is warning the humanity not to play with new technologies and make continuous experiments with them as one of them can once end badly. On the other hand she is not so pessimistic and puts some faith into humanity and into the fact that humans hopefully do not blow up their home.

1.2 Dystopia in Literature

Thrill, despair, destroyed environment, war, dictatorship, oppression, death. Dystopian novels have it all. Yet, despite these dark sides, this literature genre has grown more and more popular in recent years. Except Margaret Atwood's *MaddAddam* (2013) trilogy this genre is demonstrated for example in Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451* (1953), *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949) by George Orwell, Jack London's *The Iron Heel* (1908) or Margaret Atwood's novel *The Handmaid's Tale* (1985) which was already mentioned before. Lately

¹² AnneW, "On the Red Couch with Author Margaret Atwood," Inside Flipboard, last modified September 19, 2013, accessed January 31, 2014, <http://inside.flipboard.com/2013/09/19/on-the-red-couch-with-author-margaret-atwood/>.

two dystopian trilogies, primarily for teenagers, *The Hunger Games* (2008) and *The Divergent* (2011) became very popular. In dictionary dystopia is defined as “A modern term invented as the opposite of utopia, and applied to any alarmingly unpleasant imaginary world,”¹³ Also the word dystopia itself is derived from the Ancient Greek and means bad place.¹⁴

Why are readers so attracted to this genre? Maybe one of the main reasons is that people are simply fascinated by alternative realities which are far worse than our own. And it is always better to read about bad stuff than to live through one, despite the fact that this bad stuff is mostly just an exaggeration of our current world and its problems. People know that politicians, army, police or corporations are capable of doing awful things, so dystopian novels seem to be very honest and they can be interpreted as warnings against those awful things. This can be seen in novels which mainly reflect the political situation in a country or world. Such a novel is for example Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* which was published in 1948, just three years after the end of the Second World War and at the beginning of the Cold War and was reacting on this political situation and on the threat of totalitarian governments from the east. Apart from this, dystopian literature has a few characteristics, which are typical for this literature.

In dystopian novels the main character can be found, through whose eyes the society which is almost perfect for the first sight is portrayed. But this character feels that something is wrong underneath and questions the existing system or regime. In many of these novels reader can recognize the negative aspect of the dystopian world through the perspective of this character. And very often it is this character who starts to rebel. One of the examples can be Winston in already mentioned Orwell's novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, who starts to rebel against the system, which controls the whole society and he is constantly putting his hopes into the lowest cast of the society - the proles, which is not controlled by a state. He believes that the proles will upraise and overthrow the system: “if only they could somehow become conscious of their own strength [...] If they chose, they could blow the Party to pieces tomorrow morning.”¹⁵ These characteristics of the main

¹³ Chris Baldick, *The Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms* (1990; repr., New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 100.

¹⁴ See John Joseph Adams, “Dystopian Fiction: An Introduction,” TOR.com, last modified April 11, 2011, accessed January 31, 2014, <http://www.tor.com/blogs/2011/04/dystopian-fiction-an-introduction>.

¹⁵ George Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (New York City: Signet Classic, 1950), 63, epub eBook.

protagonist are typical for heroes of many dystopian novels and maybe it is one of the most important feature of these novels.

Another feature dystopian novels often have is an exploration of technology. It could be said that they very often react on quickly evolving technologies in the world and shows possible misuse of these technologies. It was already mentioned above in the connection with *The Handmaid's Tale* but there are other dystopian novels which explore this theme. For example in Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* (1932) can be seen mass line production of people which uses assembly line famed by Henry Ford. Beside this technological intervention into human reproduction there are also medical interventions which portray misuse of medical technologies especially for dividing people into five castes even before they are actually born. In the novel technology serves as a tool for controlling a society and creation of happiness without any worries or problems but that, on the other hand, leads to loss of emotions, moral values and dignity or, it can be said, in loss of humanity itself.

In dystopian novels often appears a society controlled by some higher power such as government or police but it can also be big corporations. And these institutions use various tools to maintain the control over the society. It does not have to be always just technological devices but frequently it is also propaganda, fear and media. In *Nineteen Eighty-Four* by Orwell a society is portrayed, where every individual is watched by government through telescreens and other technological devices so the actions and behaviour are monitored but also the minds of citizens are controlled through propaganda which is made through media and serves as a tool for brainwashing people. The government makes people think what they want them to think or for example hate individuals who threaten the regime. Similar problem is also explored in Atwood's *Oryx and Crake* where the society is controlled by big corporations which are using media for massive advertisement of their products such as cosmetics, medicaments, plastic surgeries or vitamin pills in which hidden diseases are. As Crake said to Jimmy: "Ideally - that is for maximum profit - the patient should either get well or die just before his or her money runs out."¹⁶ These corporations make sure that people will need their products and that they will

¹⁶ Margaret Atwood, *Oryx and Crake* (New York: Anchor Books, 2004), 211.

want their products. This is leading the society to the never ending consumption from which the corporations are making profit.

Also in one of the recent dystopian trilogies, *The Hunger Games*, society controlled by president and his government is portrayed. The main tool, which is used in this trilogy, is fear. Every year, one boy and one girl are chosen from each of the twelve district and these children must fight for life in the arena. These Hunger Games were created after the uprising against the government and regime to show people how strong and powerful the state is. The Games are evoking mainly fear in people; fear about their lives and about their children and this prevents them from any kind of rebellion.

These dystopian features can be found mainly in dystopias which can be labelled as political whereas another feature, the environmental disaster and destroyed nature, is found in environmental dystopias. Such a dystopia is for example *The Road (2006)* by Cormac McCarthy in which ashes covered everything and the reader actually does not know what exactly happened, maybe it was nuclear war or some catastrophe, but the result is that the whole nature is completely destroyed including flora and fauna on the land and in the seas. Also it can be said that human nature was almost destroyed as most of the survivors became cannibals and just a few are still carrying humanity in themselves, which is in the novel referred as a fire¹⁷. Considering *MaddAddam* trilogy there can be seen similarities with *The Road*, as a whole nature was also partially destroyed and changed. Animals known today are in the novel extinct and are replaced by new human – made animals, the weather conditions have changed as the global warming became reality, glaciers melted and the seas rose which lead to inundation of northern countries. These sides of these two novels are very similar and *Oryx and Crake* can be included among environmental dystopias.

The division between political and environmental dystopias is not clear in many cases and almost every dystopian novel combines many features and deals with a lot of problems. These problems are mainly reflection of today's world and the style how the civilization is behaving. Dystopian novels can be considered as warnings which are showing humans where their actions can lead.

¹⁷ See Cormac McCarthy, *The Road* (New York: Vintage Books, 2007), 105, epub, Ebook.

1.3 Religion

In later parts this thesis will be dealing mainly with a problem of religion in dystopian world of *MaddAddam* trilogy so on following few pages this topic will be briefly explored in general context.

When the topic of religion is discussed, the basic question what is religion may arise very often. In the interview with Branko Gorjup, Margaret Atwood talked about this topic. She spoke about the meaning of the words religion and religious. She said that usually religious means that somebody adopted some set of beliefs and practice and by religion is usually meant theology and ritual.¹⁸

A question what is religion is not as clear-cut as it seems. There are many believers who consider their religion as the right one and they despise others religions. Also another problem is how to delimit the religion because nowadays is clear that not all religions are based on the relationship to God or Gods. For example after the Second World War there was a discussion whether Buddhism is religion or not. This discussion arose because Buddhism is more about morality and life values than about worshipping God.¹⁹ Even if the religion was defined as a relationship to something sacred, with rituals connected to it and with social groups which are considered to be religious, still it would be hard to embrace everything the various people consider as a religion.

One of the general characteristic of religion stated Dalibor Hejna in his book *Náboženství a společnost*. He argues that religion can be understood as a one of the forms how humans relate themselves to the whole world. Apart from religion it is also philosophy and art. According to Hejna religion tries to describe the world and the status of humans in this world and is strongly connected with human existence.²⁰ Nowadays the religion is losing its important role in society, mainly in western societies and people are used to it and it seems normal but the truth is that it is very exceptional and rare as in the all known past societies was religion in the centre of the whole public life until the arrival of today's civilisations.²¹

¹⁸ See Branko Gorjup, ed., *Margaret Atwood: Essays on Her Works* (Toronto: Guernica Editions, 2008), 242.

¹⁹ See Zdeněk R. Nešpor and Dušan Lužný, *Sociologie náboženství* (Praha: Portál, 2007), 14.

²⁰ See Dalibor Hejna, *Náboženství a společnost: věda o náboženství a její historické kořeny* (Praha: Grada, 2010), 9.

²¹ See Jan Sokol, *Člověk a náboženství: proměny vztahu člověka k posvátnému* (Praha: Portál, 2004), 27.

When the past is explored, the traces of worshipping some higher power or religious rituals can be seen very often. Moreover Hejna argues that in the history there can not be found any society without religious elements and he claims that the Homo sapiens can be also called Homo religiosus.²² Various religions started to appear at the same time as the first work of art and similarly it tried to find some meaning and values in the life. During the history the religions were developing, distinguishing and modifying. They can be labelled as one of the humans phenomenon connected strongly to cultural context and it can be said that every religion is related to something what goes beyond the human life and human society.

According to the book *Světové mytologie* religion can be defined as a belief in the supernatural. Ancient Romans used a word religion for a belief in the supernatural and for ceremonials connected to this supernatural.²³ This book also connects religion with mythology. The word myth comes from the Greek word mythos which means a word, information or fairytale.²⁴ Myth denotes some tales about mythical characters or lands, which are not supported by historical facts, very often spread among the people orally. In connection with religion, myths tell the stories about gods, their lives and their actions. According to the book *Světové mytologie* mythology is a part of practically all religions and also basic of some religions.²⁵

The desire to answer the question what is religion and how to characterize it led to development of the science about religion which is in English called Science of religion. This science explores the history of religion, development and eventual disappearance of concrete religion. Also it looks at connections between different religions or connection between religion and other forms of human manifestation such as art, music or philosophy. It looks at a religion as on the feature and aspect of human culture. This science tries to state some basic characteristics of religion and finds forms and symbols in which the religion is presented. This scientific field is quite young, it appeared around 150 years ago,

²² See Dalibor Hejna, *Náboženství a společnost: věda o náboženství a její historické kořeny* (Praha: Grada, 2010),9.

²³ See Ján Komorovský, "Úvod," in *Světové mytologie* (Praha: Orbis, 1973), 15.

²⁴ See *Ibid.*, 14.

²⁵ See *Ibid.* 23, 15-16.

but maybe in the near future it will bring some complete answer on the already asked question about religion but only if it is possible to answer this.²⁶

In further parts of this thesis, the theories about the religion will be applied on the man-made humanoid species the Crakers in Margaret Atwood's trilogy. Mainly it will be Dalibor Hejna's concept put together with the myths as the religion based on myths is appearing among the Crakers.

²⁶See Dalibor Hejna, *Náboženství a společnost: věda o náboženství a její historické kořeny* (Praha: Grada, 2010), 11.

2 ORYX AND CRAKE

The second chapter will deal with the first book of *MaddAddam* trilogy *Oryx and Crake*. As was mentioned in the *MaddAddam* trilogy subchapter, *Oryx and Crake* mainly deal with pre-apocalyptic and post-apocalyptic life of Snowman and his responsibility to take care about the Crakers. Firstly the Crakers will be described here in more detail, their life, behaviour and mainly Crake's intentions with them. Second subchapter will be describing the start and development of religion among the Crakers.

2.1 The Crakers

Children of Crake or the Crakers are a humanoid species created by genius geneticist Crake. Some of their characteristics were already described in the *MaddAddam* subchapter but they will be described more here, mainly the aspects connected to religion.

The Crakers live at the seashore with Snowman who led them out of the Paradise dome, the laboratory where they were created. The Crakes, at the start, were a project of RejoovenEsence corporation and Crake was in charge of this project. The small group of the Crakers in Paradise dome was just a first sample, but later RejoovenEsence wanted to go public with this project and offered the possibility to create the perfect, customized baby for their customers. But Crake had his own secret plan. Disgusted by the consumer society, destroyed environment and wars he came up with an absurd plan to wipe out the whole humanity and replace it by the Crakers. He created them in a way they could survive in a world alone and he deleted all the aspects of the human nature he thought were responsible for the conditions the society was in. Crake and his team simply altered the primate brain and eliminated the parts of it which were responsible for "the world's current illnesses"²⁷ as Crake explained it to Jimmy. This contains for example the racism - the parts of brain which registered the skin colour were eliminated. Then it is the hierarchy, which is according to Crake problem so the neural complexes responsible for creation of leaders were removed. The Crakers are programmed to eat leaves, grass, roots and berries so they do not need hunting and weapons. Also nobody taught them to build houses or farming so they do not need land, which eliminate territoriality. Considering sexual reproduction, the women came into heat at regular time periods and chose four men who would be fathers of

²⁷ Margaret Atwood, *Oryx and Crake* (New York: Anchor Books, 2004), 305.

a child. There is no desire or jealousy among them and also no rape. Moreover Crake designed them not to worship any higher power. He eliminated the parts of a brain, which were responsible for curiosity about their origins or origins of the world thus the Crakers have no need to ask questions about it. And this should also eliminate the need to create Gods and to worship them. By these characteristics Crake wanted to achieve the fact that the Crakers “would have no need to invent any harmful symbolism, such as kingdoms, icons, gods, or money.”²⁸ He believed that these things, the humans invented, destroyed them and wanted to create better species, better humans who would not make the same mistakes. But as readers can see in the whole trilogy, his plan failed as the innocent and curious Crakers started to ask questions and developed among themselves some of the things Crake wanted to get rid of. The most visible is the development of religion which will be discussed in the next subchapter.

2.2 Religion among the Crakers

Despite the fact that Crake edited out the parts of the human brain which are, according to him, responsible for creating religion, myths or worshipping any higher power the Crakers started to ask questions about their origin, about the world around them and its origin. The first sign of this can be already seen in the Paradise dome, when Snowman is talking about the Crakers with Oryx and Crake. “Today they asked who made them.”²⁹ This question the Crakers asked Oryx when she was with them. “I told them the truth. I said it was Crake.”³⁰ Here can be seen that they are interested in their origin and for the first time they get to know the Crake as their creator.

Further basic of a religion were laid down by Snowman himself because he stayed alone with them and had to deal with their curiosity. After the plague he showed himself to the Crakers and on the question where did he come from he answered “I come from the place of Oryx and Crake”³¹ which immediately started a series of questions from the Crakers. Snowman explained them that Oryx and Crake wanted them to go to a new better place and he led them out from the Paradise dome to the woods behind the city. Here can be seen a parallel with Moses, a biblical character who was sent by a God to lead the

²⁸ Margaret Atwood, *Oryx and Crake* (New York: Anchor Books, 2004), 305.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 311.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ *Ibid.* 28, 349.

Israelites out of the slavery in Egypt and then to a better place, to a new home.³² Similar to Moses, Snowman was entrusted by Crake to take care of the Crakers and he led them to their new home.

After settling down, the Crakers started to discover the world around them. Logically they started to ask Snowman about a world as he is the one who knew Crake and Oryx and who led them to their new home. Snowman came up with the story about the creation of the Crakers. He told them that Crake made their bones from the coral on the beach and their flesh from the mango. Animals or Children of Oryx hatched out from an egg which was laid by Oryx herself. There was also another egg full of words and when this egg hatched, the Children of Crake, the Crakers, ate up all the words so there were no words left for animals and that is the reason why animals can not talk.³³ This story is a first myth Snowman creates around Crake and Oryx and at the same time he puts them into the role of Gods in an arising religion of the Crakers, Crake as a God creator and Oryx as a Goddess of nature and animals. The Crakers never saw Crake but Oryx was their teacher back in Paradise dome. She taught them about animals, what to eat, how to behave in nature or how to set a fire so the Crakes have connected Oryx with the nature already.

Another thing the Crakers longed to hear is a story about beginning of their world. “In the beginning, there was chaos.”³⁴ This is how Snowman started the story the Crakers wanted to hear. There can be found religions or mythologies according to which the world starts in chaos. Maybe one of the most famous is mythology of the ancient Greeks, because according to them there was chaos at the beginning from Erós which was born, the first god who later gave life to Gaia, the mother of earth and to Uranus, the god of the sky.³⁵ In the chaos, in Snowman’s story, everything was mixed together, many people and dirt. These people were bad, full of chaos and they were killing and eating Children of Oryx. But Oryx wanted to stop this so she asked Crake to do something about it. Crake then took the chaos and poured it away and created the Great Emptiness and cleared the room for Children of Crake.³⁶ This is a second myth Snowman created for the Crakers, because he wanted to explain the world around them.

³² See Ex. 2:10-17.

³³ See Margaret Atwood, *Oryx and Crake* (New York: Anchor Books, 2004), 96.

³⁴ Margaret Atwood, *Oryx and Crake* (New York: Anchor Books, 2004), 102.

³⁵ See Margit Waczulik, “Řekové, Etruskové a Římané,” in *Světové mytologie* (Praha: Orbis, 1973), 238.

³⁶ See *Ibid.* 33, 102-103.

Similarities with various religions or mythologies can be found in both stories. Firstly there can be seen a parallel between Crake as Creator of the world and of the Crakers and a Biblical God. Crake created the world for the Crakers and he also created them. God, according to Genesis, first Moses book, created the world in seven days; he created the sky and earth, day and night, nature and animals. And on the sixth day he created a man. Also Genesis, verse 27 exactly says, “So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.”³⁷ This part is very alike how Crake created the Crakers. He made them in a way he wanted them to be and in a way he thought they would be perfect. Also Snowman strengthens Crake’s deity by a story about his birth. “Crake was never born [...] he came down out of the sky, like thunder.”³⁸ Crake is portrayed here living in the sky as a God.

Considering Oryx she has a status of Goddess, mother of animals and also of the words. Here it is possible to compare Oryx with Gaia, the Greek goddess of Earth, the Earth itself, mother of all. She is a personification of Earth in Greek mythology, mother of nature and animals as Oryx was.³⁹ On the other hand Oryx also gave the Crakers the words and language according to the Snowman’s story and in Paradise dome she taught them various things about nature and animals so she can be considered as a goddess of wisdom for example as Athena in Greek mythology or as her analogue from a Roman mythology Minerva. Athena taught women how to spin and men how to build a ship. She also taught them various crafts.⁴⁰

Both stories Snowman told to the Crakers can be considered as a basics of their religion with Crake as their God. Also it can be seen that they are interested in their origins and curious as they are constantly asking Snowman the questions. And also the Dalibor Hejna’s concept, that religion is something what describes the world and human status in it, can be applied here. The Crakers are trying to find their place in the world which they do not know and are trying to understand it and Snowman’s myths help them in it. Snowman here has a status of a Crake’s prophet. He is the one who is able to speak with the Crake

³⁷ Gn. 1:27.

³⁸ Margaret Atwood, *Oryx and Crake* (New York: Anchor Books, 2004), 104.

³⁹ See Margit Waczulik, “Řekové, Etruskové a Římané,” in *Světové mytologie* (Praha: Orbis, 1973), 238.

⁴⁰ See *Ibid.*, 241.

and tells his words to the Crakers. These are not just the stories about their origin but also immediate Crake's wishes. "Just a minute, I'll ask Crake." This was Snowman's response to the small Crakers asking him, if they can have feathers. "He holds his watch up to the sky, turns it around his wrist, then puts it to his ear as if listening to it [...] No. Crake says you can't."⁴¹ This is how Snowman is communicating with Crake in front of the Crakers. And they obey all words of Crake. Snowman is appearing here as a Moses again. Moses was a prophet of a God, telling the words of God to the people of Israeli same as Snowman is telling the words of Crake to the Crakers.

In any religion rituals can be found. They are connected with worshipping God or any higher power; sacrifice to them animals or something from harvest. It could be also rituals welcoming seasons or on the other hand to force some bad power to leave. For example in Christianity, worships include praising God, reading from the Bible, singing religious music, praying and many more activities. Among the Crakes also appeared a ritual connected with Crake and Snowman. Once a week women call a fish from the water, than men kill it with the stones and sticks, they grill it and then bring it to Snowman who eats it. Then he tells them the words of Crake or a story about him.⁴² The Crakers do not eat fish nor they are killers but Snowman told them that this is the will of Crake and they accepted it. After Snowman finishes the fish, its bones are wrapped into the leaves and returned back to the sea, because Oryx wants them back so she can make from these bones another Children of Oryx. This ritual can be considered religious as the Crakers have to sacrifice an animal to hear the words of Crake and connect with him through Snowman. They also obey every wish of Crake as he was their God.

As Coral Ann Howells stated in her essay, Snowman is teaching the Crakers a symbolical thinking through his storytelling.⁴³ The religious development of the Crakers is shown at the end of the book. Snowman left them for a few days because he went to the city to find some supplies. As he was approaching the Crakers on his way back he heard them chanting. It sounded to him as Amen. They were also doing something similar to playing the instruments, sitting in the circle around some picture on the ground. When he

⁴¹ Margaret Atwood, *Oryx and Crake* (New York: Anchor Books, 2004), 9.

⁴² See Margaret Atwood, *Oryx and Crake* (New York: Anchor Books, 2004), 101.

⁴³ See Coral Ann Howells, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Margaret Atwood* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 171.

came closer he found out that these instruments were made from old things such as empty bottles or hubcap. And on the ground the Crakers made a picture of him from the jar lids and string mop. The Crakes explained to him that they were calling him, they were not saying Amen but Snowman and the picture should help them send their voice to him.⁴⁴ This huge shift in the Crakers' thinking is just a proof that Crake's experiment did not go as he wanted. "Watch out for art, Crake used to say. As soon as they start doing art, we're in trouble."⁴⁵ Crake saw a great danger in this. According to him this will lead to downfall. "Next they'd be inventing idols, and funerals, and grave goods, and the afterlife, and sin, and Liner B, and kings, and then slavery and war."⁴⁶ The picture of Snowman created by the Crakers showed that they started to think in representational terms which they learnt maybe from Snowman's storytelling or it was just natural development of theirs. But the traditions which are connected with making an effigy which represents something, exist in many mythologies. For example there is one tradition in Slavonic mythology; the welcoming of spring and with this a Slavonic goddess called Morena is connected. Morena is a goddess of death and winter and each spring in March the straw figure representing Morena is burned or drowned so the spring can start its reign. Here is also created an effigy which represents some character same as the effigy the Crakers created represents Snowman. Maybe this is just another step in the Crakers' view of the world and it shows that the impulse to find meaning in one's existence can not be erased genetically as well as the curiosity to ask and discover can not be erased. Also Hejna argues that except the religion also art is a way how humans are trying to describe the world and it is very strongly connected to religion.⁴⁷ So once the basics of a religion are laid, the beginning of art is just a natural development.

In this chapter were described some characteristics of the Crakers and their society which can be considered as a beginning of a religion among them. Despite the fact that these basic were laid down by Snowman and these things were made up by him, from the viewpoint of the Crakers they are believable and they have no reason not to believe in them. Moreover they need to develop something which helps them understand the world

⁴⁴ See Margaret Atwood, *Oryx and Crake* (New York: Anchor Books, 2004), 360-361.

⁴⁵ Margaret Atwood, *Oryx and Crake* (New York: Anchor Books, 2004), 361.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷ See Dalibor Hejna, *Náboženství a společnost: věda o náboženství a její historické kořeny* (Praha: Grada, 2010), 9.

they are in. There is also a strong relationship between the religion and identity and development of a religion gives to the Crakers a feeling that they belong somewhere and the feeling of security, because they know that Oryx and Crake will take care of them.⁴⁸

Further development of the Crakers' religion and their society will be described in the following chapter.

⁴⁸ Paola Karlsson, "How Human are the Crakers?: A study about human identity in Margaret Atwood's *Oryx and Crake*," (Linnaeus University, 2011) 18, ccessed October 28, 2013, <http://www.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:430888/FULLTEXT01.pdf>.

3 MADDADDAM

This chapter will be dealing with the last book of *MaddAddam* trilogy and with further development of religion among the Crakers and with development of the Crakers themselves. *The Year of the Flood* will not be explored in this thesis, because the topic of religion among the Crakers is not developed there as the book is dealing with other characters and the Crakers are not almost mentioned there.

As was outlined in the subchapter about *MaddAddam* trilogy, in the last book *MaddAddam* all characters from previous two books are brought together so the Crakers are influenced not just by Snowman, but now by many other people. Moreover Snowman injured his foot and he fell unconscious because of a high fever so the other survivors had to take care of the Crakers who were very keen on to hear new stories and learn new things. Because Snowman could not tell them new stories, they chose Toby as their new storyteller, “But today you must tell them to us. [...] Snowman-the-Jimmy is the helper of Crake, and you are the helper of Snowman-the-Jimmy. That is why.”⁴⁹ Toby became their new prophet as she was telling them the words of Crake. She also had to keep all the things Snowman used to do. He had a red hat and old broken watch which, as he told to the Crakers, are for listening to Crake and the old sunglasses for seeing Crake. Toby has to put on the hat, the watch and the sunglasses as Snowman and also she has to eat the fish. The Crakers insist on this as this is their ritual and they believe that this is the will of Crake. Here the three things - hat, sunglasses and watch, are for the Crakers sacred things, made by Crake itself “See? says the man [...] Crake made this. He will help you.”⁵⁰ These things help the prophet to connect with Crake and the Crakers have a respect from them and are afraid of them. During telling one of these stories, Toby offered to Blackbeard, young Craker, the red hat and possibility to tell the story, but this terrified him. “No, the hat won’t hurt you. It won’t turn you into someone else. [...] It’s all right. You don’t have to put on the red hat. Please don’t cry.”⁵¹ The Crakers are afraid that these things will change them, for example make extra skin, like Toby has, which means the clothes, to grow on them. This whole storytelling is very important for the Crakers. Despite the fact that they know most of the stories, they want Toby to repeat them, with all the rituals and she has to try to

⁴⁹ Margaret Atwood, *MaddAddam* (New York: Nan A. Talese, 2013), 38.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹ *Ibid.* 50, 229.

be as perfect storyteller as Snowman was, because the Crakers compare them and correct every mistake Toby makes. This whole narration with sacred things and all the Crakers listening is like a liturgy, in *MaddAddam* with Toby or earlier in *Oryx and Crake* with Snowman as a prophet or priest leading it and telling the words and will of Crake. Also the Crakers sing during these liturgies almost all the time, when Crake, Oryx or some of their act they did for the Crackers are mentioned.

The Crakers are choosing the stories. Firstly they want to hear more about their origin, Oryx and Crake, chaos and the eggs, but later they start to be interested in Zeb, one of the survivors, former God Gardener and Toby's lover. They want Toby to tell them stories about him, which are actually parts of Zeb's life, but slightly adjusted. Zeb, as a character, is brave and a leader among survivors. The Crakers sometimes overhear survivors talking about Zeb and in the evening they want Toby to tell them story about the thing they overheard. This way the stories called "The Story of when Zeb was lost in the mountains and ate the Bear", "The story of Zeb and Thank You and Good Night" or for example "The story of Zeb and Fuck" were created. The Crakers develop a set of beliefs about Zeb, in their eyes he is like a hero, who can solve any problem. They understand that there are bad men, the painballers, who can hurt them, "But Zeb will make the bad men go away. And everything will be safe."⁵² The Crakers are fascinated by him and they add him to their religion as a new character. "You're their hero. They want your life story. Your miraculous origins, your supernatural deeds, your favourite recipes. [...] They're obsessed with you. You're their rock star."⁵³ Here it seems that Zeb is a God for them like Oryx and Crake but the Crakers know that he was born like them from the bone cave as they call it. "He grew in the bone cave, just like you, and came out through a bone tunnel, just like you."⁵⁴ The Crakers admire him, Zeb is a hero for them, they believe in his powers but at the same time they see him among them, he is not living at the sky like a God should be. Zeb's character, in the stories told to the Crakers, is similar to demigod. According to a Merriam-Webster dictionary a demigod is a person of high importance, who seems to be a god in some way and has powers similar to God.⁵⁵ This definition can be applied on Zeb as the Crakers see

⁵² Margaret Atwood, *MaddAddam* (New York: Nan A. Talese, 2013), 94.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 106.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.* 52, 107.

⁵⁵ *Merriam-Webster online*, s.v. "demigod," accessed April 29, 2014, <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/demigod>.

him as a very powerful man, who is able to do everything in their eyes. Also some similarities can be found between Zeb and a demigod from the Greek mythology Heracles. Heracles was a son of Zeus and mortal woman. It was believed that he had supernatural powers, was very strong, clever and could do almost anything. And he was at the same time mortal.⁵⁶ This description of Heracles is very similar to the description of Zeb by the Crakers. They see him as their hero, protector, model and sometimes they call him their Defender⁵⁷ because they believe that Zeb can finish Crake's work and pour away the bad men, Paiballers, who remained there from the chaos. Moreover the stories about him help to develop more complex mythology about the world the Crakers are living in.

During one of the days, thanks to Snowman, another character is created, which is by the Crakers considered to be somebody of a higher power like Crake or Oryx. This character is called Fuck and its creation was just a misunderstanding. When Snowman wakes up from his unconsciousness, he starts to talk confusedly about Oryx and Crake and how he shot Crake and his reaction on Toby's note that it was just a nightmare is: "No. I didn't. Not about that. Oh fuck."⁵⁸ The Crakers overhear this and because they are used to addressing the survivors like Oh Toby or Oh Snowman, they think that Oh fuck is a name. "Who is this Fuck? [...] Why is he talking to this Fuck? That is not the name of anyone here."⁵⁹ Toby has to come up with an explanation so she tells to the Crakers that Fuck is an invisible friend of Crake who can fly and lives with Crake in the sky. This Fuck helps to Snowman and also to Zeb. All they have to do is call Fuck by his name and he will fly and help. After this, Toby also had to come up with a new story about Zeb and Fuck and how he helped to Zeb. Despite the fact that Fuck was created by misunderstanding, it became a part of the religion of the Crakers where he is like some kind of a spirit. In Christianity there is the Holy Spirit who is a part of Holy Trinity: Father, Son and the Holy Spirit, each of them being a God itself. During the explanation, Toby said that Fuck is Crake's friend and is in the sky with him. So the Fuck can be a spirit similar to Holy Spirit, being it Crake himself in another form who helps and guards the Crakers and survivors. Or it can be compared to the good spirits which can be found in many religions. For example in

⁵⁶ See Margit Waczulik, "Řekové, Etruskové a Římané," in *Světové mytologie* (Praha: Orbis, 1973), 258.

⁵⁷ See Margaret Atwood, *MaddAddam* (New York: Nan A. Talese, 2013), 389.

⁵⁸ Margaret Atwood, *MaddAddam* (New York: Nan A. Talese, 2013), 146.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

Slavonic pagan religions across a Europe can be found many good spirits which took on themselves various forms. In Ukraine it was Domovik who looks like an old man, in Czech Republic it was Šotek, little man in the red clothes, and in Bulgaria Stopan who looks like a snake. All these spirits have in common that they helped to farmers and people against evil powers and they guarded their belongings.⁶⁰ This function of theirs is very similar to function of Fuck which was described by Toby. Another spirit is also mentioned in connection with the story about Fuck and Zeb - the spirit of Pilar. Pilar was a God Gardener, but she died because of a cancer. She was a good friend of Toby and her teacher. The Crakers wanted to know if Toby had also a spirit which helps her and she mentioned Pilar who died but now is living in the form of a plant with the bees. Toby promises to the Crakers that she would tell them the story of Pilar some other time. This story is not mentioned anymore but the Crakers themselves mentioned the spirit of Pilar in their Book they started to write.

The Crakers did not know how to write or what the writing is. They also did not know reading. But little Blackbeard, one of the Crackers, grew very fond of Toby and he followed her everywhere. So he saw her writing a diary, was interested in it and Toby had to explain it to him. "you have to draw the letters. Each letter means a sound. And when you put the letters together they make words. And the words stay where you've put them on the paper, and then other people can see them on the paper and hear the words."⁶¹ Firstly Blackbeard is amazed by this but he learns very quickly not just to write but to read too and later he shows this to others children. This progress scares Toby a little bit because she does not know what she can expect from them. "What comes next? Rules, dogmas, laws? The Testament of Crake?"⁶² And at the end Blackbeard really starts to write a book. He continues with the diary Toby started, after she is gone. All the stories the Crackes know from the beginning are in the diary. The story about Crake and Oryx, about chaos and the eggs. There are words of Crake and words of Zeb and Fuck and many more. The rebirth of oral tradition into written one can be seen here. The book is very similar to the Bible as there are all the stories, myths, which were created for the Crakers, all their Gods, spirits and their deeds. Toby also taught Blackbeard that another book has to be made with the

⁶⁰ See Ján Komorovský, "Slované," in *Světové mytologie* (Praha: Orbis, 1973), 402-404.

⁶¹ Margaret Atwood, *MaddAddam* (New York: Nan A. Talese, 2013), 202.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 204.

same writing in it, so all this knowledge would be here for other people. She simply taught him how to copy the book and Blackbeard taught it other children. And another change can be seen here. Blackbeard became teacher and also new prophet after Toby died. He tells to the Crakers the words of Crake, he keeps all the rituals despite the fact that he does not like the fish and he writes all the stories into a book. The Crakers are more and more independent. They create new stories and new myths all alone; they enlarge their own religion and have their liturgies without anybody from the world before. This is another proof that Crake's experiment failed when his biggest hope was to get rid of the symbolical thinking and now the Crakers are creating their holy book based on the stories about him as their deity.

The Crakers are also learning from the survivors other things than writing. They learn to distinguish between the good and evil which is very important for their survival. At the beginning of the *MaddAddam*, Toby and Ren caught two Painballers who kidnapped Amanda. But the Crakers, when they see two men tied up, they set them free because they do not know that somebody can be so evil. Moreover they do not know what evil is. Toby explains them this through a story about a bad men and the Crakers believe that Crake will send a thunder to stop them.

Another important thing the Crackers learned is what death is. "Dies is...it's what the fish do when they are caught and then cooked."⁶³ Toby explains this to the Crakers and also mentions that everyone will die once which is the moment where the Crakers discover that they are mortal and that they will die sometime. At the end of the *MaddAddam* the Crakers see a funeral, because some of the survivors are killed by Painballers and they create a set of believes about an afterlife. First of them is that Oryx will take care about everybody put into a ground and change them into a tree.⁶⁴ Then there are believes that the spirits of the dead will change into an animal or some another form. When Zeb and Toby died they were believed by the Crackers to change into the bears, and to be living somewhere together.⁶⁵

⁶³ Margaret Atwood, *MaddAddam* (New York: Nan A. Talese, 2013), 85.

⁶⁴ See Margaret Atwood, *MaddAddam* (New York: Nan A. Talese, 2013), 374.

⁶⁵ See *Ibid.*, 390.

In *MaddAddam* can be seen a further development of religion among the Crakers to the phase where they are creating new stories and believes themselves, without the help of the people. Their religion started on simple myths, which were created by Snowman, because the Crakers were asking the questions about their origins. But later, here in *MaddAddam*, this mythology became more complex as the Crakers were influenced not just by Snowman but also by other people who survived the plague. This mythology developed into a religion with its own Gods, spirits and written tradition, which developed from oral tradition. Moreover simple storytelling and rituals, similar to pagan ones, such as creating an effigy, developed into liturgies with rituals, serving for connection with Gods, singing and interpreting the words of Crake.

The religions which were used for comparison are the ones which have been developing within western civilization. This civilisation has been shaped by distinct traditions. Firstly it was a culture of Ancient Greece and its mythology and later western Christianity.⁶⁶ The Crakers are a small society in comparison with western civilisation but their development is influenced by these two traditions, because they live at the place where the western civilisation was and are also influenced by people who were part of this civilization as the plot of the trilogy is set in America. Thus their development and their religion is very similar to Christianity and Greek mythology and based on this it can also be assumed that the further development of the Crakers will be similar to the development of this civilisation.

⁶⁶ See James Kurth, "Western Civilization, our Tradition," *Intercollegiate Review* 39, no. 1 (Fall, 2004): 5-13, accessed April, 28, 2014, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/210683578?accountid=15518>.

CONCLUSION

In this thesis were marked out the features of religion which was developing among the Crakers and these features were compared to religions which are well known among the people of today's world. The used religions were mainly Ancient Greek religion and Christianity which were both religions developed in western culture. This comparison should have revealed if the religion of the Crakers has religious features similar to these religions which were or are professed.

Despite the fact, that the Crakers were genetically predisposed not to create and worship Gods, they started to ask about their origins and worship Crake as their God. In the analysis of *Oryx and Crake* were described the stories created by Snowman and compared with chosen religions. The analysis revealed that their religion is based on myths created by Snowman, which helped the Crakers understand their origins and the world around them. In the centre of this mythology are Crake as their God and Oryx as their Goddess. In *Oryx and Crake* was also shown that the Crakers developed symbolical thinking, which was also one of the characteristics they should not have, thus the failure of Crake's experiment started to appear.

Further development was shown in analysis of *MaddAddam* where the myths of the Crakers developed into a complex religion with its own customs and written tradition which developed from the oral tradition of storytelling. Also the simple rituals similar to pagan rituals slowly changed into more sophisticated form of liturgies with priest, reading from the Book and singing.

The comparison of these characteristics with existing religions revealed that religion among the Crakers has religious features and that it can be considered as equal to these religions. Moreover the religions which are used for comparison are the ones which have been developing within western civilisation thus it can be argued that the Crakers are developing similarly to this civilisation.

The development of the Crakers shows the failure of Crake's plan and it proves that the symbolical thinking or predisposition to create religion can not be genetically eliminated. Furthermore, based on the Dalibor Hejna's statement that Homo sapiens can be

also called Homo religious,⁶⁷ is possible to say that the Crakers became humans once they developed their own religion and they are not the invention anymore.

⁶⁷ See Dalibor Hejna, *Náboženství a společnost: věda o náboženství a její historické kořeny* (Praha: Grada, 2010),9.

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