

## **Survival In A Post-Apocalyptic World: Adaptation And Resilience In Margaret Atwood's Maddaddam**

**Dr. S. S. Soundarya (1) and Dr. P. Sasikumar (2)**

(1) Assistant Professor of English

RVS College of Arts and Science, Coimbatore

(2) Assistant Professor (English)

Dept. of Social Sciences, SRM College of Agricultural Sciences (SRMIST)

Baburayanpetti, Chengalpattu

### **Abstract**

An epidemic of a disease that spreads throughout nations or continents is called a pandemic. It has a greater impact and claims more lives than an epidemic, which occurs when an infectious disease spreads faster than medical professionals had predicted. The pandemic's aftermath profoundly changes human society and how people interact with technology and the natural world. Typically, it has a wider impact than an outbreak. A worldwide pandemic's aftermath may have significant and long-lasting effects on many facets of society. But the precise results can change depending on the pandemic's characteristics and the reactions. This paper examines how people both human and non-human adjust to their new surroundings while concentrating on the survival of individuals and communities in a destroyed planet. Three essential survival strategies are community, resilience, and adaptation.

**Keywords:** pandemic, survivors, post-apocalyptic, COVID-19

### **Introduction**

A pandemic's economic downturn could lead to conversations and legislative adjustments on sustainable practices and environmental preservation. The majority of people's lives, jobs, educational paths, and access to healthcare have all been significantly disrupted by the pandemic. The fear of contracting an infection or of having loved ones contract it, combined with these changes and their socioeconomic ramifications, has a significant effect on the general public's mental health. Public health systems are frequently reassessed and strengthened after a worldwide pandemic. To better prepare for upcoming health crises, nations may choose to increase their investments in infrastructure, research, and surveillance. Mental Health Challenges

like Stress, Anxiety, and Bereavement may be more prevalent in both individuals and communities. There may be a greater awareness of the importance of mental health services and assistance for general well-being. The survivors we meet in *MaddAddam* are having a hard time adjusting to the post-apocalyptic world that the “waterless flood” left behind after wiping out the majority of humanity. Cities lie in ruins, society has disintegrated, and the wild world is recovering land that was previously under human dominance. The extent of loss and horror experienced has traumatised the individuals who are still alive. Societies might find it difficult to handle the pandemic’s psychological effects. Economic activity would decrease if there was a significant reduction in the workforce. Travel, tourism, hospitality, and entertainment sectors could be particularly hard hit. It may be difficult for governments to keep the peace as they address the situation. Perceived shortcomings in managing the epidemic could give rise to public discontent and disturbances. Public opinion on crisis management may subject political leaders to criticism and, in certain situations, lead to leadership changes. A pandemic may cause long-lasting alterations in social behaviour, such as a sustained emphasis on social separation and heightened awareness of hygiene precautions.

### **Survival in a Post-Apocalyptic World**

The novel *MaddAddam* explores what happened after a horrific worldwide epidemic brought on by a virus that was bioengineered. The pandemic eliminates a sizable section of the human race. The survivors must navigate a transformed environment, deal with the fallout from genetic engineering, and come across a variety of genetically altered species. The plot centres on the experiences and relationships of survivor communities, who are made up of the remaining human population. Together, characters from the earlier volumes help to negotiate the post-pandemic environment. The trilogy investigates how genetic engineering affects a variety of organisms in addition to humans. In the post-pandemic environment, genetically modified organisms are prevalent and present both opportunities and hazards.

The loss of social norms and institutions affects the survivors. The novel explores the ways in which societies change and adapt after a major world disaster. *MaddAddam* incorporates backstories and flashbacks that offer further background information and context to the pre-pandemic events. This advances our comprehension of the setting and the characters. The trilogy, which features *MaddAddam* makes viewers consider the moral ramifications of corporate interests, the effects of unbridled technology development, and the ethical implications of scientific experimentation. Zeb and Toby are two of the survivors surviving the post-pandemic world in this novel.

In *MaddAddam*, the plot revolves around what happens when a worldwide pandemic wipes off a large portion of humankind. A global epidemic that annihilates a significant section of humanity would have far-reaching effects on many facets of society. Beyond the current health crises, social, economic, political and cultural aspects would all be impacted. The immediate effect would put pressure on healthcare systems around the globe, possibly resulting in a scarcity of medical supplies, hospital beds, and medical staff. There would be a large loss of

life that would impact people of all ages and backgrounds. There would be widespread sadness and emotional pain following the death of friends, family or co-workers.

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The pandemic may hasten the use of digital technologies and remote work as people and businesses adjust to new operational paradigms. The surviving survivors fight to survive in the new global order, overcoming obstacles from the environment and the genetically altered animals from previous volumes. Characters from the first two volumes are reunited in this work, which also offers more details on the causes and effects of the disastrous events. Cultural norms, values and traditions may change if a sizable percentage of the population disappears. Resilience, camaraderie, and readiness might be more valued by society. Public perceptions of community, health, and the interdependence of cultures around the world may change as a result of a pandemic.

The novel *MaddAddam* explores what happened after a horrific worldwide epidemic brought on by a virus that was bioengineered. The pandemic eliminates a sizable section of the human race. The survivors must navigate a transformed environment, deal with the fallout from genetic engineering, and come across a variety of genetically altered species. The plot centres on the experiences and relationships of survivor communities, which are made up of the remaining human population. In the new post-apocalyptic order, hybridity may or may not result in altered power dynamics. It is also unclear if the awareness of this innate ability to hybridise calls into question long-held beliefs about human exceptionalism. A group of survivors made up of both human and non-human beings is established in the novel. The interactions among the different species that make up this community, gender roles in the new society, and the extent to which the post-apocalyptic routine might be interpreted as a satirical replication of pre-apocalyptic predicaments are all. Even though human survivors of the virus face a precarious existence, Atwood certainly embraces the idea of a post-apocalyptic new start for the non-human in the *MaddAddam* Trilogy. Birds and plants are depicted as prospering in a post-apocalyptic world populated by a variety of spliced animal species, following the absence of the majority of humanity.

As a result, the remainder of this chapter concentrates on the novel's apocalyptic vision of environmentalism. Two depictions of 'new natures' in *MaddAddam* the post-apocalyptic spread of the exotic kudzu vine and the desperate pre-pandemic attempts to safeguard the polar

bear population in a world with an altered climate are used to illustrate the problem hybridity provides for environmentalism. Although it is a major theme in all three novels, the novel places much more emphasis on storytelling. Similar to the first two novels, *MaddAddam* has several interrelated narratives. The quest for Adam One and any remaining Gardeners, the pursuit for the Painballers, and the creation of a tentative new community are all ongoing in the post-apocalyptic present. Much of this story takes place in the post-apocalyptic present, although *MaddAddam* has memories of the pre-pandemic age, mostly in the form of stories Zeb tells Toby, who then relates them to the Crakers. Toby teaches Blackbeard how to read and write in addition to keeping a diary where she captures local happenings. These summaries' fairytale-like tone differs significantly from that of the first two volumes, as evidenced by the table of contents, which also reveals that the titles of numerous of the brief chapters begin with "The Story of". Despite having a very different tone and subject matter, *MaddAddam* is very much a work of fiction about storytelling as it is about anything else, and in this way, it is similar to Atwood's previous meta fictional novels like *Alias Grace* and *The Blind Assassin*. The last section of this chapter focuses on *MaddAddam's* use of imagination and narrative. The trilogy demonstrates that the catastrophic imagination is not a clear-cut environmental instrument by both relying on and undermining environmental apocalypticism.

Furthermore, it's been claimed that some parts of life after the apocalypse are distinctly regressive. One such aspect is an incomplete return to typical roles based on gender, in which women's primary responsibilities include childrearing. However, *MaddAddam* also places a strong emphasis on reproduction and fertility. By the novel's finale, Ren, Amanda and Swift Fox, one of the MaddAddamites, have given birth to offspring that are half human and half Craker. The novel's oddly serene (but open) conclusion seems to validate apocalypticism as a realistic approach to ecology.

### **Adaptation and Resilience**

*MaddAddam* concept centres on themes of survival, the fallout from unbridled scientific progress, and humanity's ability to persevere in the face of insurmountable obstacles. As she continues to investigate speculative fiction, Atwood poses moral dilemmas pertaining to corporate power and scientific research. Global pandemics are a common topic in both Margaret Atwood's *MaddAddam* trilogy and the real-world COVID-19 pandemic, which is brought on by a novel coronavirus, "*MaddAddam*" is a trilogy of science fiction that examines a dystopian future defined by genetic engineering, corporate avarice, and environmental catastrophe. Nevertheless, several themes and observations about how society reacts to pandemics are shared by the two.

The global impact of both the real-world COVID-19 pandemic and the fictional pandemic depicted in *MaddAddam* is immense. They have an impact on many facets of society, including daily living, cultural norms, public health, and the economy. As we saw the commonplace circumstances in real life brought on by COVID-19, a global pandemic struck.

Due to its high contagiousness, COVID-19 is spreading rapidly over the world. The pandemic caused a significant economic downturn that had an impact on the travel, tourist, hospitality, and retail sectors. Lockdowns, limitations, and economic upheavals resulted in employment losses and financial hardship for both people and companies. Governments enforced policies including mask laws, social distancing, and lockdowns in an effort to stop the virus's spread. The shift to online learning and remote labour was widespread, changing both the employment and educational landscapes. Travel, both domestically and internationally, was severely restricted, which affected the tourism sector and related businesses. The decline in travel demand hurt airlines, lodging facilities, and associated companies. Supply chains were impacted by manufacturing and transportation disruptions, which resulted in shortages of some products and production delays. The pandemic hastened trends in digital transformation, including a greater reliance on telehealth services, remote collaboration tools, and e-commerce. Many people experienced mental health issues as a result of the pandemic's related uncertainty, fear and social isolation. Temporary closures of numerous schools and educational facilities caused difficulties for teachers, parents, and students as well as disturbances to the learning process. The remarkable velocity with which vaccinations were created and approved constituted a noteworthy accomplishment in the worldwide reaction to the pandemic. Worldwide vaccination campaigns encountered logistical obstacles due to vaccine reluctance, accessibility issues, and distribution. The pandemic made clear how crucial it is for nations to work together to share resources, knowledge, and vaccines in order to combat health emergencies.

Survivors in both cases had to adjust to a transformed environment. In the wake, one must overcome obstacles, reconstruct communities, and come to terms with the dissolution of social institutions. When responding to pandemics, science and technology are frequently given a lot of attention. Genetic engineering is a major plot point in *MaddAddam* although real-world initiatives are more concentrated on vaccine development, medical research, and public health initiatives. Significant alterations to social and economic structures are shown in both situations. There could be closures of businesses, an increase in unemployment rates, and changes in the industries and priorities of the economy. The real-world response to COVID-19 has sparked conversations about environmental effects, changes in travel habits, and the interconnection of human activity with the natural world. *MaddAddam* delves into environmental topics. In all cases, survivors build relationships and groups and work through the difficulties of the aftermath. The research delves into the concepts of adaptability, solidarity, and human resilience. It is imperative to underscore that, despite these overarching similarities, the particulars of the pandemics, their causes, and the aftermaths vary depending on the setting. While the COVID-19 epidemic is a real-world occurrence with its own intricacies and nuances, *MaddAddam* is a work of speculative fiction that allows for the creative exploration of dystopian themes.

## Conclusion

Atwood repositions the human plotline in *MaddAddam*, the third novel, to emphasise the Crakers experience's hidden undertones. The character of Toby, who assumes the role of a spirit



guide and plot teller from the old-world following Jimmy the Snowman's illness and death, has a profound effect on Blackbeard, the little Craker, through her demeanour and speech, shaping his identity as a community historian and spiritual leader. The protagonists Toby and Zeb, as well as a few other humans among the survivors, are first observed by *MaddAddam*'s narrator, Blackbeard. He is an astute and driven young man who enjoys learning practical skills from others in order to pass them on to the next generation of Crakers, or members of the new race. There, Blackbeard remarks: "Writing the narrative has to be harder than telling it. Oh, Toby, I'll write the plot the next time you're too exhausted to do it. I'll be here to assist you (MD p. 375). As a result, in the third novel of The *MaddAddam* Trilogy, one of the expertly made Crakers assumes the role of the originator of a new religion and the post-apocalyptic myth, saying, "I am donning the red hat of Snowman-the-Jimmy. See? I have it on my head. And I've pulled the fish out of my mouth and put it back in. I'll give you a passage from the Plot of Toby that I wrote down at the end of the novel now that it's time to listen" (MD, 388).

*MaddAddam* keeps examining and illustrating the different facets of surviving in a post-apocalyptic society. It is amazing how well the characters in *MaddAddam* adjust to the challenging circumstances in their surroundings. They must learn to exist in a world drastically changed by the bioengineered inventions of the corporately run civilization shown in the previous novels. When navigating the difficulties posed by the artificially created organisms and the changing climate, the survivors frequently exhibit fortitude and intelligence. The significance for community and interdependence is encompassed within the issue of survival. The characters depend on each other for guidance and security in an environment where trust is hard to come by and danger lurks around every corner. The formation of The God's Gardener and the links that remained between the participants of this eco-religious society demonstrate the value of social bonds in the face of hardship. The consequences of genetic modification and the emergence of hybrid animals must be faced by the survivors. The issue of survival is strongly related to the difficulties presented by changing organisms and the repercussions of messing with nature's order. The consequences of genetic manipulation and the emergence of hybrid animals must be faced by the survivors. The issue of survival is strongly related to the difficulties presented by changing ecosystems and the repercussions of messing with nature's order. For the characters in *MaddAddam* memory and storytelling are essential to their survival—the characters' pre- and post-apocalyptic memories of the past influence the story. Storytelling becomes an important tool for ensuring the persistence of identity and knowledge since it helps to preserve culture, history, and the insights that may be gained from the past. It examines the complex issue of surviving in a world where human activity has changed. In the face of drastic change, it takes into account not just the survival of the body but also the survival of morals, interpersonal bonds, and the core of humanity. This is how the characters in the third novel of Atwood also portrays the theme of survival after the pandemic.

Similarly, in real life, after pandemic, people suffered in the global epidemic and lost their health, wealth and family members suffered and survived. Surviving and prospering in the

wake of a pandemic entails constructing resilience and adjusting to a modified environment in addition to conquering the immediate obstacles. After a pandemic, surviving and prospering require a comprehensive strategy that takes into account one's physical and emotional well-being, financial security, involvement in the community, and personal development. A resilient and happy life after the pandemic relies on accepting change, remaining flexible, and making meaningful contributions to both the community and the wider world. Atwood mentioned in the novel the characters who adjust to a significantly altered world, especially the God's Gardeners band along with others who survived the terrible events of the earlier novels. They pick up skills to deal with the threats presented by changing environments and genetically engineered species. The survivors are aware of how crucial collaboration and community are to their survival. They unite and cooperate to overcome the obstacles that the post-apocalyptic world presents. In particular, The God's Gardeners represent a close-knit society that helps its members. The individuals use their unique abilities and backgrounds to help ensure the survival of the gang. While some characters are experts in science, others have useful abilities that are useful in the new environment.

A crucial component of their ability to survive strategy is the sharing of knowledge. The characters understand the value of keeping information from the pre-apocalyptic world alive. It becomes crucial to share stories and impart knowledge about science, history, and culture in order to keep people connected to their heritage and preserve particular abilities. The ramifications of unrestricted biotechnology experimentation are the central theme of the trilogy. The planet the characters live in has changed ecosystems and produced hybrid species as a result of genetic engineering. Comprehending and addressing the fallout from these bioengineering projects is essential to their survival. In the face of difficulty, the characters show resiliency and resourcefulness. They adjust to the difficulties posed by the altered surroundings, dangerous animals, and ruins of the former world. Their capacity for adaptation and innovative thought is essential to their existence.

Apart from surviving physically, the protagonists struggle with issues of identity and purpose in an ecosystem that has experienced such drastic changes. In light of the changing reality, they must contend with, they attempt to clarify their goals and core principles. Thus, the last novel depicts a difficult and multidimensional process that entails navigating moral conundrums, maintaining knowledge, and creating an entirely fresh community in a world that has been irrevocably changed by human acts in addition to conquering physical obstacles. Examining the connection between human activity, environmental deterioration, and the rise of infectious diseases is often necessary when addressing the underlying causes of pandemics. Using sustainable methods can help keep pandemics from happening again. The process of surviving a pandemic is intricate and varied, requiring cooperation on all fronts individual, social, and international. It includes taking care of urgent health issues, reviving economies, encouraging social support, and getting ready for new challenges.

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