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Heterotopias of Crisis and Deviance: Compounds and Pleeblands as Spaces of Biopolitical Governance in Margaret Atwood's *MaddAddam* Trilogy

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Abstract: This study argues that, through its speculative narrative, the *MaddAddam* trilogy by Margaret Atwood presents a vision of society governed by biopolitical mechanisms. Drawing on Michel Foucault's concepts of biopower and heterotopia, the paper analyses how the corporate powers in this science fiction seek to govern the population of the future world. This is achieved through interventions such as genetic experiments and systematic categorisation of populations and the manipulation of the planet's living beings aimed at reaping profit by the promise of improving life expectancy, mental acuity and physical development. The established urban plans detailed in the trilogy categorise people based on their biopolitical value and expected compliance. It subtly reinforces corporate dominance by controlling movement and communication. The sterile Compounds, the 'heterotopia of crisis' manage productivity and the pleeblands, the 'heterotopia of deviation' absorb disposability. The trilogy depicts a world in which corporate power is demonstrated by its capacity to admit or reject populations, and decide when and where the law is applicable.

Keywords: Margaret Atwood, *MaddAddam* trilogy, Biopolitics, Heterotopia

S herryl Vint in “Science Fiction and Biopolitics” illustrates how science fiction serves as a vital tool for examining the way life has increasingly become subject to political control: “Under biopolitics, life itself becomes the object of political governance, and political governance becomes the practice of steering the biological life of individuals and species. Technoscience, sf speculation and biopolitical practice converge in this context” (Vint 161).

Following this trajectory, this paper examines the *MaddAddam* trilogy by Margaret Atwood. Through its speculative narrative, the novels present a vision of society governed by biopolitical mechanisms which could be highlighted using Michel Foucault’s concepts of biopower and heterotopia. David Seed observes on the wave of feminist science fiction from the 1970s onwards: “It has been a recurring claim among SF writers that they are more and more occupying the position previously occupied by realist fiction and that their narratives are the most engaged, socially relevant, and responsive to the modern technological environment” (Seed 2). Margaret Atwood uses this genre of science fiction with her *MaddAddam* trilogy. It consists of *Oryx and Crake* (2003), *The Year of Flood* (2009) and *MaddAddam* (2013). The novels strive to explore several aspects of corporate governance, posthuman life, spirituality and multispecies coexistence, attempting to provide a comprehensive analysis of the future world through speculative narratives.

Existing scholarship on Margaret Atwood’s *MaddAddam* trilogy repeatedly returns to a shared premise of biopolitics. Lisa Keränen’s “Biopolitics, Contagion, and Digital Health Production: Pathways for the Rhetoric of Health and Medicine” is useful as a framing point because it treats Atwood’s trilogy as a text for thinking biopolitics in a post-genomic, bio-technologically saturated world shaped by contagion discourse, risk management and the economic valuation of bodily material(Keränen). A more text-centered biopolitical line is developed in Sara Catarina Melo dos Santos’s dissertation, “(Un)making the (Post)Human: Biopolitics and the Corporatisation of the Body in Margaret Atwood’s *Oryx And Crake*,” Santos reads the first novel as assembling a corporately mandated network of surveillance, discipline and control that integrates subjects into scientific and marketplace capitalism, producing the body as commodity and political agency as unequally distributed. Wael Mustafa's “Paradise in Hell: Mapping Out Utopian Cartographies in Margaret Atwood’s *MaddAddam* Trilogy” studies the relationship between utopia and cartography in the trilogy. This paper joins this discussion by adding the dimension of Foucault’s concept of heterotopias of crisis and deviation to an apparent division in the postapocalyptic society described in the trilogy, the Compounds and pleeblands.

The notion of biopolitics was known primarily to a small number of specialists, but it is now applied in many varied sectors and discourses. It is “an interdisciplinary critical theory, bordering on politics, law, and biosciences, including medicine, biology, and genetics” (Wilmer and Žukauskaitė 1). The concept of biopolitics is derived from Michel Foucault’s examination of biopower and his analysis

of the growing shift in governance towards the physical bodies of individuals, dating back to the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. The first discussion of biopolitics of the modern time appeared in *The History of Sexuality Volume 1: An Introduction* and in his lectures at the Collège de France between 1975 and 1976, later published under the title *Society Must Be Defended*. Foucault highlights ‘state-racism’ and the theme of death power associated with the mechanisms for strengthening, sanitising and securing living populations (Villadsen and Wahlberg 5). In Foucault’s writings, biopolitics denotes a shift in the hierarchy of politics: “the entry of phenomena peculiar to the life of the human species into the order of knowledge and power, into the sphere of political techniques” (Foucault 181). According to Foucault, biopolitics measures and aggregates biological traits at the population level, rather than focusing on individuals and as a result, “life” has emerged as a distinct, objective, and quantifiable element (Lemke 5).

Michael Foucault explains how political power is transformed from something that is merely repressive or legitimate, to one that is both the rule and the control of life. He describes biopolitics as a modern form of power that operates not through the sovereign’s killing power, but rather through a more powerful discursive strategy that regulates life itself. While biopower “does not exclude disciplinary technology . . . it does dovetail into it, integrate it, modify it to some extent, and above all, use it by sort of infiltrating it, embedding itself in existing disciplinary techniques” (Foucault, *Society Must Be Defended* 242). It is, he says, “a power to *foster* life or *disallow* it to the point of death” (Foucault, *The History of Sexuality* 138). In contrast to traditional governmental power, which governs through death and display (public execution, war, etc.), biopolitical power governs populations through numbers, healthcare, sanitation, pregnancy, and sexuality. These technologies, as Foucault explains, are “applied not to man-as-body but to the living man, to man-as-living-being; ultimately, if you like, to man-as-species” (Foucault, *Society Must Be Defended* 242). In other words, life is no longer natural or pre-political. It is embedded, monitored, normalised and functionalised for economic and political ends.

Atwood calls her work, ‘ustopia’: “Ustopia is a word I made up by combining utopia and dystopia—the imagined perfect society and its opposite—because, in my view, each contains a latent version of the other” (Atwood, *In Other Worlds* 66). The space in the trilogy could be called what Foucault termed ‘heterotopia’ (Foucault, “Different Spaces” 178). Mustafa writes on this connection: “The relevance of Atwood’s ‘Ustopia’ to Foucault’s ‘heterotopia’ is significant...ustopia, like heterotopia, is a space of resistance where utopia and dystopia are co-existing, but both are ‘outside of all places’ or ‘placeless places’” (Mustafa). Foucault defines it as space between real and unreal, while distinguishing between two types of emplacements, utopia and heterotopia: “I shall call these places “heterotopias,” as opposed to utopias; and I think that between utopias and these utterly different emplacements, these heterotopias, there must be a kind of mixed, intermediate experience, that would

be the mirror... The mirror functions as a heterotopia in the sense that it makes this place I occupy at the moment I look at myself in the glass both utterly real, connected with the entire space surrounding it, and utterly unreal”(Foucault, “Different Spaces” 178–79). During the pre-apocalyptic period in the trilogy, by the technocratic powers “world was divided into the Compounds – fortified Corporations containing the technocrat elite that controlled society through their collective security arm, the CorpSeCorps – and the pleeblands outside Compound walls, where the rest of society lived, shopped, and scammed, in their slums, their suburbs, and their malls” (Atwood, *MaddAddam* 12). The emplacement of Compounds and pleeblands are read here as the formation of heterotopias. Sheryl Vint argues that “outlines of an emergent dispositif of the human can be found in speculative fiction that addresses how our ideas about life are transformed by new institutional spaces of commodified biology” (Vint 10). Throughout the trilogy, Atwood uses spatial arrangements as technologies of governance that shape behaviour and create obedient and visible subjects. It is controlled according to the needs of power. Each space serves a different repressive purpose, carrying its own mode of control.

In *The Year of the Flood*, much of the place of action is the pleeblands. In contrast, *Oryx and Crake* is set primarily in elite Compounds. Corporate Compounds such as RejoovenEsense and Helthwyser featured in the trilogy operate as totalising systems that encompass all aspects of life, from education to housing to healthcare. Here, life itself becomes technologically controlled and regulated through genetic engineering, medical protocols and widespread environmental interventions (Rabinow and Rose). Biopower thus influences all aspects of daily life, such as urban planning, public health policies and the normalization of behaviour. All these are brought under protocols designed to improve the productivity and longevity of bodies and populations (Arnason).

Life within the Compounds is tightly controlled. Education, health, food and sex are all controlled by corporate policies and bio-surveillance systems. Foucault gives a type of heterotopia: “There is a certain form of heterotopias that I would call ‘crisis heterotopias’; that is, there are privileged or sacred or forbidden places reserved for individuals who are in a state of crisis with respect to society and the human milieu in which they live” (Foucault, “Different Spaces” 179). The Compounds could be called a ‘crisis heterotopia’. In *Oryx and Crake*, Jimmy’s first impression of RejoovenEsense, one of the Compounds in the novel, is given:

Everything was sparkling clean, landscaped, ecologically pristine, and very expensive. The air was articulate-free, due to the many solar whirlpool purifying towers, discreetly placed and disguised as modern art. Rockulators took care of the microclimate, butterflies as big as plates drifted among the vividly coloured shrubs. It made all the other Compounds Jimmy had ever been in, Watson-Crick included, look shabby and retro. (Atwood, *Oryx and Crake* 343–44)

The elite of the Compounds remain the producers and the people of the pleeblands serve as consumers and experimental subjects, a place where governmentality and biopower come together. Corporate interests control bodies by turning citizens into data points and optimization targets while the pleeblands become playgrounds for biopolitical and economic experiments. In Foucault's terms, pleeblands could be called, in contrast to the heterotopia of crisis, "heterotopias of deviation: those in which individuals are put whose behavior is deviant with respect to the mean or the required norm" (Foucault, "Different Spaces" 180).

Oryx and Crake describes the life of Jimmy's family inside the OrganInc Farms Compound, one of the several corporate enclaves that have replaced traditional cities. Here, Atwood quietly establishes the social geography of her future world:

The house, the pool, the furniture – all belonged to the OrganInc Compound, where the top people lived. Increasingly, the middle-range execs and the junior scientists lived there too. Jimmy's father said it was better that way, because nobody had to commute to work from the Modules. Despite the sterile transport corridors and the high-speed bullet trains, there was always a risk when you went through the city. (Atwood, *Oryx and Crake* 30–31)

The Compound could be read as a biopolitical enclave because it is a space that both protects and confines. It embodies the 'crisis heterotopia'. In the Compounds, safety is used as the moral justification for segregation, just as in the gated communities and sanitized workplaces in modern urban biopolitics. The line 'all belonged to the Compound' suggests a fusion of life and labour, one's domestic existence is inseparable from the corporate control. Cities are spaces of contagion. They are the biological other of the Compound's sterile system. The risk is more ideological than physical because exposure to pleeblands threatens the controlled purity of the Compound's social body. The quoted passage also suggests that biopower functions through dividing practices, securing one population by excluding another, "the observations and measures relative to man's life and survival" (Foucault, *The History of Sexuality* 141). Jimmy's family is disciplined not through punishments but through amenities and safety. Thus, Compounds are both panopticon and incubator that produce loyalty and biological order.

Jimmy's father likens the Compounds to medieval castles:

Long ago, in the days of knights and dragons, the kings and dukes had lived in castles, with high walls and drawbridges and slots on the ramparts so you could pour hot pitch on your enemies, and Jimmy's father, and the Compounds were the same idea. Castles were for keeping you and your buddies nice and safe inside, and for keeping everybody else outside. (Atwood, *Oryx and Crake* 32)

This comparison points to the logic of biopolitical protection. Enclosure and defensive force combine to secure the corporate body. Safety becomes indistinguishable from control and the policing of populations becomes a continuous, normalised activity. This situation illustrates Foucault's fifth principle of heterotopia: "A fifth principle. Heterotopias always presuppose a system of opening and closing that isolates them and makes them penetrable at the same time" (Foucault, "Different Spaces" 183).

This paradoxical system of opening and closing is realised in the mechanism of surveillance. Surveillance in the Compounds does not operate only through guards or cameras; it works through the ordinary objects of daily life. Ren learns that even phones must be registered and they are easily traceable. "Any phone inside the Compound had to be registered," (Atwood, *The Year of the Flood* 248). Lucerne warns her, because unmonitored communication is treated as a threat to corporate security. This small detail suggests a wider logic that information is policed as tightly as bodies and communication becomes a technology of control. The threat of being tracked ensures compliance. Here, surveillance is no longer an external force but a condition of living in the Compound. Atwood makes clear that in the world of corporate biopower, privacy is illegal because unregulated speech disrupts a system that depends on visibility and predictability.

Zeb's remark that the CorpSeCorps "read all the postcards" (Atwood, *The Year of the Flood* 248) shows how deeply surveillance penetrates everyday life. Even the most mundane communication, such as an ordinary postcard, must be routed through covert networks like the Truffle cell because the official mail system functions as an open monitoring grid.

Biotech companies and "wellness" products like BlyssPluss all represent a form of governmentality. Here, the individuals are controlled, programmed and marketed. Jimmy asks and Crake responds:

"What pays for all this?" he asked Crake, as they passed the state-of-the-art Luxuries Mall – marble everywhere, colonnades, cafés, ferns, takeout booths, roller-skating path, juice bars, a self-energizing gym where running on the treadmill kept the light bulbs going, Roman-look fountains with nymphs and sea-gods. "Grief in the face of inevitable death," said Crake. "The wish to stop time. The human condition." Which was not very informative. (Atwood, *Oryx and Crake* 344)

The question is about the way the Compound finds finance. Crake answers that the profit comes from people's fear of death. This is an example of how life processes are used as commodities in the logic of the economisation of life. Health industries feed on insecurity, and as fear becomes a revenue source, Governmentality itself becomes a mechanism of fear through care. Atwood exposes how care becomes an economic discipline. Compounds are the most regulated, enclosed areas, with

access restricted to elite biotech workers. They are hygienic, safe and constantly monitored spaces. Here, the security and genetic optimisation coexist. Access is strictly monitored, and basic services such as healthcare, housing and education are privatised.

Meanwhile, the pleeblands, heterotopia of deviation, appear to be informal, unregulated spaces, with little formal control by formal institutions, except for raids and exploitative pharmaceutical experiments. The society in pleebland is engulfed by constant crises like poverty, environmental destruction, and constant dangers that threaten its very existence. The mass drug trials, the broken security measures and the constant surveillance are extraordinary measures justified in the name of these emergencies. CorpSeCorps subject people to unbridled violence and exercises power beyond the normal rules. The detailing of pleeblands appears early in the novel. As part of Atwood's description of Jimmy's world, the pleeblands are introduced as:

Compound people didn't go to the cities unless they had to, and then never alone. They called the cities the pleeblands. Despite the fingerprint identity cards now carried by everyone, public security in the pleeblands was leaky: there were people cruising around in those places who could forge anything and who might be anybody, not to mention the loose change – the addicts, the muggers, the paupers, the crazies. (Atwood, *Oryx and Crake* 31)

The passage shows that the pleeblands are criminalised and overpopulated. It is indeed a dumping ground for the socio-economically and biologically expendable. Atwood anticipates a future world in which mobility and identity are controlled, yet paranoia persists. In pleeblands, life is unregulated, unproductive and thus left to its own disorder. In Compounds, body is protected, optimised and commodified, while in pleeblands, body is abandoned, exposed and expendable. Jimmy reflects on what he observed about pleebland:

Everything in the pleeblands seemed so boundless, so porous, so penetrable, so wide-open. So subject to chance. Accepted wisdom in the Compounds said that nothing of interest went on in the pleeblands, apart from buying and selling: there was no life of the mind. Buying and selling, plus a lot of criminal activity; but to Jimmy it looked mysterious and exciting, over there on the other side of the safety barriers. Also dangerous. (Atwood, *Oryx and Crake* 231)

Snowman remembers the chaotic, wide-open pleebland as the antithesis of Compounds. 'Porous', 'penetrable' suggest exposure without the protective layers of institutional care that define life in Compounds. Bodies in pleeblands are exposed to violence, diseases and exploitation. The lives are outside the calculations, but they function as their disposability sustains the illusion of safety in Compounds. Every system of normalisation perhaps requires an exterior to define itself. In the Compound, life is sealed because it is enclosed and monitored. In pleeblands, life is leaking because it is open and unprotected. Both are effects of the same system. Despite lawlessness, informal control

exists through underground economies and criminal gangs. This spatial separation establishes a biopolitical boundary that separates beings that are considered optimised and beings that are shown to be inessential but are exploitable. This dichotomy, while seemingly contradictory, reveals a complex trajectory. The chaos of the pleeblands operates in the shadow of corporate takeover and exploitation. At the same time, the freedom found in the Compounds is limited by strict surveillance. Just before a visit to pleebland, Crake injects a medicine shot, a self made vaccine to Jimmy. He explains:

The pleeblands, he said, were a giant Petri dish: a lot of guck and contagious plasm got spread around there. If you grew up surrounded by it you were more or less immune, unless a new bioform came raging through; but if you were from the Compounds and you set foot in the pleeblands, you were a feast. It was like having a big sign on your forehead that said, Eat Me. (Atwood, *Oryx and Crake* 338)

The Compound body is seen as pure and in need of protection. Vaccination is not simply care, but control as well. It inscribes the logic of protection plus surveillance directly into the body. One of the key shifts in modern power, according to Foucault, is to govern and grow life at the level of populations. The biopower fosters life or disallows it to the point of death, whereas the sovereign power takes life or lets live (Foucault, *Society Must Be Defended* 242). The vaccine shot changes Jimmy's body into a miniature version of the Compound. The immunity becomes both a moral and medical marker of superiority.

In contrast, the sexworkers and the low-level workers in pleeblands are the disposable subjects used for pharmaceutical testing and as instruments of labour exploitation. In the trilogy, the powers of business and government are intertwined. Economic productivity determines one's worth and visibility. Those who do not work for a company, those who live in the pleeblands, for example, are portrayed as insignificant or disposable. These spaces of exclusion that are created, like the gateways, are examples of biopolitical exclusion. They act as mechanisms that subject economically unproductive individuals to experimentation and exploitation. When the waterless flood, a human-made apocalyptic event in the trilogy occurs, they are cannibalized through systemic neglect. pleeblands become areas where bodies are abandoned to die. Here, death is sanctioned not through formal murder but through marginalization. This reflects a biopolitical regime in which economic and social utility determine the value of life. Silent disappearances and normalised mass death challenge traditional war and tragedy narratives. In doing so, they expose the engineered exclusion and systemic neglect that instrumentalise human life.

At first glance, the pleeblands appear lively and abundant. Jimmy is struck by colour, movement, music and variety:

The pleebland inhabitants didn't look like the mental deficient the Compounders were fond of depicting, or most of them didn't. After a while Jimmy began to relax, enjoy the experience. There was so much to see – so much being hawked, so much being offered. Neon slogans, billboards, ads everywhere. And there were real tramps, real beggar women, just as in old DVD musicals: Jimmy kept expecting them to kick up their battered bootsoles, break into song. Real musicians on the street corners, real bands of street urchins. Asymmetries, deformities: the faces here were a far cry from the regularity of the Compounds. There were even bad teeth (Atwood, *Oryx and Crake* 339)

The people do not match the dehumanised image of pleeblands circulated within the Compounds. Foucault says: “The second principle of this description of heterotopias is that... a society can make a heterotopia that exists and has not ceased to exist operate in a very different way; ... and the same heterotopia can have one operation or another, depending on the synchrony of the culture in which it is found” (Foucault, “Different Spaces” 180). Pleebland is so different from what Jimmy imagined. This moment briefly disrupts the corporate fantasy that pleeblanders are deficient or subhuman. Bodies in the pleeblands are fully visible and unprotected. Unlike the regulated symmetry of Compound life, pleebland bodies display “asymmetries, deformities, bad teeth.” If Compounds are “heterotopia of time” where exists “the desire to contain all times, all ages, all forms, all tastes in one place, the idea of constituting a place of all times that is itself outside time and protected from its erosion,” pleeblands perhaps represents “heterotopias that are linked, rather, to time ... in the form of the festival. These are heterotopias that are not eternitary but absolutely chronic. Such are the fairs, those marvelous empty emplacements on the outskirts of cities that fill up once or twice a year with booths, stalls, unusual objects, wrestlers, snake ladies, fortune tellers” (Foucault, “Different Spaces” 182–83). Jimmy continues describing pleeblands:

Here we are – this is what they call the Street of Dreams.” The shops here were mid-to-high end, the displays elaborate. Blue Genes Day? Jimmy read. Try SnipNFix! Herediseases Removed. Why Be Short? Go Goliath! Dreamkidlets. Heal Your Helix. Cribfillers Ltd. Weenie Weenie? Longfellow's the Fellow! “So this is where our stuff turns to gold,” said Crake. “Our stuff?” “What we're turning out at Rejoov. Us, and the other body-oriented Compounds.” “Does all of it work?” Jimmy was impressed, not so much by the promises as by the slogans: minds like his had passed this way. (Atwood, *Oryx and Crake* 339)

The Street of Dreams underlines this paradoxical image. The genetic clinics and biotech shops turn vulnerability into profit. The pleeblands function as a marketplace where biological lack is monetised. Disease, shortness, infertility and genetic “error” become commercial opportunities. Crake's line “this is where our stuff turns to gold” demonstrates the structure clearly. The Compounds

produce biotechnological interventions; the pleeblands absorb them as consumers, test subjects and experimental bodies.

The lack of institutional care and police authority exposes inhabitants to exploitation and violence while continuing to be monitored biopolitically. This is arguably a feature of heterotopia of deviance, where pleeblanders are not officially exiled but are denied citizenship or access to justice. Atwood demonstrates how late capitalist dispossession shapes these communities, who are frequently subjected to economic and environmental violence while being used as test subjects for corporate experiments. The pleeblands are not just slums. They are urban areas where law is used as a weapon rather than a shield. Instead of providing protection, the combined power of the state and the corporate world manifests itself here in the form of exploitation and violence. In this context, people's lives are reduced to biopolitical bodies. They are used as experimental subjects, organ donors or disposable labour. The inhabitants who are denied the status of citizens live a life of deprivation. They are controlled by organised neglect and constant surveillance. It echoes the stories of communities displaced by global capitalism, and Atwood's depiction of biotech companies provides a strong critique of this scenario. Corporations control health, reproduction, and even the ability to survive in a world. When science and profit become one, human life is reduced to a collection of biological data points, useful only to the corporate system. In her book *Life as Surplus: Biotechnology and Capitalism in the Neoliberal Era*, Melinda Cooper builds upon Foucault's analysis in *The Order of Things* (1970) of how biology and political economy are formed and affected by each other. She argues that biological processes are becoming increasingly intertwined with capitalist strategies for accumulation, creating new sources of surplus value (Cooper 13).

The Compounds-pleeblands binary initially reflects familiar dystopian themes, that of privileged elites versus forsaken masses. The Compounds and pleeblands are not just opposites; they are two strategies, linked together for biopolitical control in the late modern era. Here, the Compounds are places where normal laws are put on hold for the sake of hygiene and promised safety. Biotech companies become sovereigns when they watch over people and enforce health and behavior norms that affect every part of their lives. These areas are closed ecosystems where life is always conditional. Any kind of deviation, whether genetic, social, or economic, can lead to quick expulsion or worse, a shift of space from the privilege of heterotopia of crisis to the heterotopia of deviance.

The pleeblands are not managed spaces. They are areas of systemic neglect. Without laws or health care, life in pleeblands is always dangerous, from violence to pollution to disease. However, this abandonment is not external to biopolitics. By letting things get worse, the ruling order controls pleeblanders by not doing anything, putting them in danger while making their bodies useful as test subjects or economic resources. In *MaddAddam*, the deeper pleebland is described in detail:

In the darkest pleeblands, there wouldn't be any verbal foreplay. No rattlesnake-warning quips and banter, just a rapid stab or slice or even a bullet from some obsolete, illegal firearm. The Linthead gang was especially vicious, according to the net. And the Blackened Redfish. And the Asian Fusions. And the Tex-Mexes with their drug-war tricks – the stacks of heads, the legless bodies strung up from old movieland marquees. He figured there must be a lot of Tex-Mexers controlling the Truck-A-Pillar highway heading south, it was close to their territory. (Atwood, *MaddAddam* 161)

Violence here is immediate. There is “no verbal foreplay,” no warning, no ritual of encounter. Life can end suddenly, without explanation. The reference to gangs, mutilated bodies, public displays of violence, such as heads stacked and bodies hung from marquees, signals a world where death has lost juridical meaning. These acts are not punishments. They are expressions of power operating outside the law. This brutality is not chaotic in the sense of being outside power. It is the result of systematic abandonment. Corporate governance withdraws protection from these spaces while continuing to benefit from them economically and biotechnologically. The pleeblanders are left to police themselves through gangs and fear, while their inhabitants remain available as disposable labour or raw biological material. The life here is abandoned politically but retained materially. Pleeblanders are not outside power, but are included solely as bodies, open to exploitation yet denied recognition or rights. Their lives, always exposed and at risk, are managed through systemic neglect.

To govern existence is inevitably also to decide whose life counts and whose can gently dissolve into nothingness. There is a stark illustration of life being reduced to raw material: “You could get a good price for human bones in the deeper pleeblands, where carved artisanal human-products jewellery was a fashion: Bone Bling, it was called” (Atwood, *MaddAddam* 385). The reference to “a good price for human bones” marks the point at which life loses even its residual moral or legal value. In the deeper pleeblands, the human body is no longer protected, instead, it is processed. Bones circulate as commodities. What remains is material residue, stripped of personhood. These bodies are not simply killed; they are used after death without any symbolic recognition. The dead are not victims in a legal sense, they are matter. Even death is productive, even remains must circulate. The market completes what sovereignty begins. Importantly, this trade exists only in the deeper pleeblands. The Compounds maintain their moral cleanliness by displacing bodily degradation elsewhere. The pleeblanders are not outside the system, but they enter it only as expendable matter. Their bodies sustain economies they never benefit from. When human remains become ornaments, the boundary between life and commodity collapses. This is similar to the example of the cemetery used by Foucault for explaining the fourth principle of heterotopia: “Fourth principle. More often than not, heterotopias are connected with temporal discontinuities... thus, the cemetery is indeed a highly heterotopian place, seeing that the cemetery begins with that strange heterochronia that loss of life constitutes for an

individual, and that quasi eternity in which he perpetually dissolves and fades away” (Foucault, “Different Spaces” 182).

After the viral apocalypse, the Compounds-pleeblands binary collapses. Everywhere is now a ‘heterotopia of deviation’ without walls. Snowman’s travelling into both destroyed Compounds and pleeblands shows that under extreme crisis, distinctions weaken and all life becomes exposed, robbed of meaning or protection. This situation illustrates Foucault’s third principle of heterotopia: “A third principle. The heterotopia has the ability to juxtapose in a single real place several emplacements that are incompatible in themselves” (Foucault, “Different Spaces”181). There is a scope of reading this paradox of blurring the boundary between Compounds and pleeblands using Giorgio Agamben’s ideas of bare life and the state of exception.

The *MaddAddam* trilogy demonstrates a valuable site for interrogating biopolitical rule as a spatial project, where corporate power secures itself by reorganising life through genetic intervention, classification and surveillance. Foucault’s biopower and heterotopia become helpful in highlighting the Compounds and pleeblands as linked sites that support profit-driven biopolitical governance. The paper therefore shows that the trilogy’s speculative world is not merely dystopian description but a critique of how power claims the authority to include and exclude across differentiated populations.

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