T. C.
İstanbul Üniversitesi
Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü
Batı Dilleri ve Edebiyatları Anabilim Dalı
Amerikan Kültürü ve Edebiyatı Bilim Dalı

Doktora Tezi

Herlanders: The Development and Transformation of Feminist Utopias in the Literature of the United States

Kudret Nezir Yunusoğlu

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Tez Danışmanı: Doç. Dr. Türkan Araz

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Herlanders: The Development and Transformation of Feminist Utopias in the Literature of the United States (=Amerikan Yazınındaki Feminist Ütopyaların Feminist Kuramlarla İlişkili Olarak Değişimi ve Dönüşümü)

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ÖZ

Bu çalışma, feminizm ve ütopya kavramları arasındaki ilişkiyi, Amerika Birleşik Devletleri yazını ve tarihi özelinde, feminist düşünce ve ütopyacılığın ortaya çıkışı ve gelişimini ele alarak irdelemeyi amaçlar. Çalışmada, Batı ve Amerikan ütopya geleneklerini özetlenerek ve ütopyacı düşüncenin Amerikan feminizminin tarihi açısından taşıdığı önem vurgulanarak, Amerikan feminist ütopyalarının 19. yüzyıldan 20. yüzyılın sonuna kadar geçirdiği evrim, tarihsel bir bağlamda, bu türün önde gelen yapıtlarında ayrıntılı olarak incelenerek ele alınır. Çalışmanın temelini oluşturan sav, ütopya yazınının temel paradigmalarında yaşanan değişimin, geleneksel feminist ütopyaların geleneksel-sonrası ve yerleşik kalıpları aşan feminist ütopyalara evrilmesi süreciyle paralel olduğuna ve 1960 sonrasında yazılan feminist ütopyaların sağlıklı bir incelemesinin yapılabilmesi için yerleşik anlayışların bu değişimler ışığında gözden geçirilmesine dayanan yeni bir tanım ve kavramlar kümesine gerek olduğuna dayanır. Bunun yanı sıra, (feminist) ütopyaların anlatım tekniklerinde bu değişimlerle eşzamanlı olarak gerçekleştiği söylenebilecek ütopyanın romanlaşması sürecine de değinilir. Çalışmada, Amerikan feminizminin ve feminist ütopyacılığının, 19. yüzyılda (feminist ütopyaların klasik döneminde), Dünya Savaşları öncesi ve sonrasında ve 20.yüzyıl sonunda aldığı biçimler irdelenir; Amerikan feminist ütopyalarındaki geleneksel anlatıların, açık uçlu metinlere dönüşümü ele alınır. Sonuç olarak, çalışma, Amerikan yazınında ütopyacı feminizme getirilen yerleşik kalıpları aşan bakış açısını ele alarak, alışılagelmiş ütopya anlayışının devingen bir kavrayışa yönelmesi sürecinin sonucunda Amerikan yazınındaki kapalı uçlu feminist ütopya anlatılarının değiştiğini vurgular ve bu dönüşüm sonucunda ortaya çıkmış olan çağdaş ütopyacı feminizmin, ütopyacı düşünce için de yeni ufuklar açabileceğinin altını çizer.

ABSTRACT

The present study is an attempt to explore the relationship between the concepts of feminism and utopia with particular reference to the emergence and development of feminism and utopianism in the history and literature of the United States. Re-situating the concept of utopia within the framework of Western and American utopian traditions and delineating the significance of utopian thought for American feminism, it aims to trace the evolution of American feminist utopias from the nineteenth century up to the 1990s, analyzing the different manifestations of feminist utopian thought in a historical context with reference to canonical feminist utopias of American literature. The underlying assumptions are that the shift in the central paradigms of utopian literature has paralleled the evolution of traditional feminist utopias into post-traditional and transgressive feminist utopias, and that this transformation has eventually necessitated the application of a new set of notions inspired by the refurbishment of ossified conceptions and a new definition for an accurate study of post-1960s feminist utopias. The study also highlights the simultaneous transformation of feminist utopias in the U.S. from traditional narratives into novelized and open-ended texts. In the final analysis, it asserts that the new transgressive perspective on utopian feminism in American literature has gone beyond the ordinary categorization of utopia and moved towards a dynamic understanding that has radically transformed the close-ended narratives of earlier feminist utopias in American literature, and that contemporary utopian feminism may indeed open up new vistas for utopian thought.

PREFACE

Utopia, as a literary genre and as an expression of a certain way of philosophizing and dreaming, is usually said to be a product of the Western mind and its philosophical traditions. If we keep in mind the fact that until the twentieth century Western schools of philosophy and literature *and* the historiography of utopianism comprised only male figures as constituents of 'the great canon,' the rather belated emergence of feminist traditions – including the feminist streak in Western utopian thought as well – after an arduous struggle seems comprehensible. The present study is in fact an attempt to contribute to the recent feminist and utopian studies that try to 'chart' the development of a feminist utopian tradition. Following a brief survey of the history of utopia in Western and American traditions, this study tries to explore the evolution of American feminist utopias as it manifests itself in the canonical examples of American literature from the nineteenth century up to the 1990s. In these pages, it is argued that the transformation of the central paradigms of utopian literature during this period has in fact run parallel to the evolution of traditional – and close-ended – feminist utopias into post-traditional, 'transgressive,' novelized and open-ended feminist utopias, and that such a transformation has eventually called for the conception of a new set of notions about utopias, which is essential to conduct an accurate study of recent – and particularly post-1960s – feminist utopias. Thus, the study asserts that the emergence of this new 'transgressive' perspective on utopian feminism in American literature has brought about a dynamic understanding that has radically transformed the close-ended narratives of earlier feminist utopias in American literature, and that contemporary utopian feminism *may* in fact nourish utopian thought in years to come.

Although it is never possible for an academician to express his/her debt to all the people who, one way or another, intentionally or unintentionally, have helped him/her in the process of research and composition, I still believe that these pages offer an invaluable opportunity to express my heartfelt feelings of gratitude to these people. I owe thanks to many people for the help, encouragement, and criticism that they provided me with during the long months that I spent writing the present

study and lecturing at the Department of American Culture and Literature, Istanbul University.

First and foremost, I would like to express my indebtedness to my patient and kind-hearted advisor, Associate Professor Türkân Araz, who has not only guided me through many narrow straits at tempestuous seas but also inspired me with her knowledge, wits, and her sense of humor. Needless to say, without her constructive criticism, our long sessions together devoted to reading my drafts, and her observant eye, this book would simply not have been written. Similarly, Professor Ayşe Erbora, who is not only the Head of our Department but also my *alma mater* incarnate, has encouraged me during this long journey and shown great kindness and sympathy, and she has indeed raised my spirits whenever I felt like being caught in the web of insoluble problems and worries. My discussions with Professor Tülin Polat have also contributed to my evolving understanding of the relationship between utopian thought and feminism.

I am also very grateful to my colleagues at my department, who have always supported me with their friendship and encouragement throughout my research and studies. Here, I want to thank two of my colleagues individually, Research Assistant Koray Melikoğlu and Research Assistant Cenk Yay, for bringing some articles about Toni Morrison's *Paradise* to my attention.

Last but not least, my last and utmost thanks are due to my family; first, to my grandmother, who has been my beacon and guide in every conceivable way; my mother, who has tried her best to teach me how to be a decent and compassionate human being above everything else; my father, who has instructed me in matters of ideals, realities and imagination. My considerate companion and patient wife, Tülay Yunusoğlu, who has always offered her valuable insights during my studies, has suffered from my incessant reading of texts and from sleepless nights of rambling speeches. Although she has had many demanding tasks herself, she has constantly supported me under many challenging circumstances as the sole witness of my efforts. Therefore, although I believe I can never do justice to her support, I also deem these very first pages to be an opportunity to express my deepest feelings of gratitude to her.

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ABBREVIATIONS

MR	*Man's Rights; or, How Would You Like It?*
WU	"A Woman's Utopia"
H	*Herland*
VV	*A Visitor from Venus*
D	*The Dispossessed*
WET	*Woman on the Edge of Time*
FM	*The Female Man*
P	*Paradise*

INTRODUCTION

History, during its course, has certainly witnessed numerous and various discussions about diverse issues and topics but some of those discussions and debates have yielded no definite results, hence increasing the scale of challenge and import of those polemics. The word “utopia,” with its connotations and different interpretations, has remained one of those nebulous and unquiet concepts in the realm of literature, philosophy, and social sciences. It has usually been defined as some sort of an ideal commonwealth whose inhabitants live under a ‘perfect’ or ‘nearly perfect system.’ *The Blackwell Dictionary of Twentieth-Century Social Thought* defines it as “an ideal community free from conflict which incorporates a clear set of values and allows the complete satisfaction of human needs” (Outhwaite and Bottomore, 1996: 691). Although it has been used as a word associated with “hope” of betterment, especially after the rise of ‘scientific socialism’ in the nineteenth century, utopia and the words derived from it, like ‘utopian’ and ‘utopianism,’ have also been used to denote fanciful changes that are impossible to accomplish, giving these concepts a pejorative and derogatory tone. Studying the conflicting interpretations of these terms, Fredric Jameson traces the development of the uneasy relationship between Marxism and utopian thought from its nineteenth-century roots up to the heyday of the Frankfurt School, underlining both Friedrich Engels’s burning criticism of utopian socialism as an “intellectually harmful” current of thought *and* Ernst Bloch’s constructive “Utopian *analysis* or *method*” (Jameson, 2000: 361-364).

Robert C. Elliott summarizes “utopia’s fall from grace” with reference to our recent fear of achieving it, since, he claims, the utopian visions that were materialized in the twentieth century brought about absolute disillusionment, foreclosing the “eschatological visions” of the nineteenth century to a great extent (Elliott, 1970: 84-85; 101). He also adds that if the human desire to seek betterment through the utopian imagination is to be sustained, “we must do so on the condition that we face the Grand Inquisitor in all his power,” which relies on “the euclidian mind” – an expression, Elliott says, frequently used by both Dostoevski and

Berdyaev – that tries to regulate “all life by reason and bringing happiness to man, whatever the cost” (*Ibid*.: 91,101). However, *The Oxford Companion to Philosophy* offers a poised philosophical introduction to ‘utopianism’ in order to re-situate this ‘battered’ notion without any predispositions or preconceptions:

> Critical and creative thinking projecting alternative social worlds that would realize the best possible way of being, based on rational and moral principles, accounts of human nature and history, or imagined technological possibilities. Utopian thinking invariably contains criticism of the status quo. It aims to overcome social inequality, economic exploitation, sexual repression, and other possible forms of domination that make well-being and happiness in this life impossible [...] While both criticizing social life and aiming at new forms of it, utopianism nevertheless attempts to transcend the boundaries of so-called realistic and pragmatic considerations. The tension thereby created between utopian thought and social reality has led to harsh criticisms of its fantastic character [...] While Marx and Engels, for example, emphasized utopianism’s positive function of relativizing existing social reality, they nevertheless criticized its lack of a thorough comprehension and analysis of current society that alone would make concrete political action possible [...] *Thinkers like Bloch and Marcuse, however, distinguish between “abstract” and “concrete” utopias. The former are mere dreams and fantasies, while the latter are based on insights derived from critical social theory* [...]. [italics mine] (Honderich, 1995: 892, 893).

As a historian of utopian thought, Krishan Kumar tries to epitomize the prevalent and accepted outlook for utopia thus: “Utopia is regarded as an agreeable but eccentric by-way leading off the broad highway of Western social thought” (Kumar, 1991: vii). In his seminal work, *The Principle of Hope*, German philosopher Ernst Bloch tries to restore the lost appeal of utopia by referring to works from several cultural forms such as folktales, fairy tales and ideal societies. In trying to uncover the unnoticed utopian elements in various social forms, he conceives the idea of *docta spes* or “educated hope” as “*a directing act of a cognitive kind*” (Bloch, 1995, Vol. I: 9-13) which “operates as a dialectic between reason and passion” (Levitas, 1997: 70) so as to form a basis for his perception of “concrete utopia” (*cf.* Daniel and Moylan, 1997, Part II). This concept of concrete utopia rests upon the education of hope, which can transform “wishfull [*sic*] thinking into wish-full and effective thinking, from the dream to the dream come true” (Levitas, 1997: 73). Likewise, Jennifer Burwell underlines the importance of the relationship between “a utopian horizon” and “the critical impulse,” stating that the former provides a

"normative point from which to launch a critique" and the latter "the historical conditions of its production" (Burwell, 1997: ix). *The Oxford Companion to Philosophy* thus judges the true merit of utopianism when it explains the nature of utopianism further:

> It rather plays a genuine role in relation to possible and intended change in existing social conditions. To be sure, the identification of utopian thinking with socialism has often led to an overhasty dismissal of utopianism as such [...] *Concrete and responsible utopian thinking may thus be an indispensable part of social criticism. First, the projection of alternative worlds helps to relativize the present; it creates distance and estrangement from the realm of assumed necessities of social life. Second, it explores concrete alternatives and realizable possibilities that could lead to practicable changes and improvements. And third, utopias seem indispensable for motivation. The sense of a better, realizable state of affairs not only gives meaning and significance to critical engagement, but also encourages interest in and hope of achieving real change in political action* [italics mine] (Honderich, 1995: 893).

These incompatible perceptions of utopia – one disapproving and the other affirmative – seem to be sufficient to suggest the dual heritage of the word. During their long journey in history, utopian literature *and* utopia have assumed shifting meanings and contradictory undertones. That may also be accounted for by utopia's being a multi-cultural and multi-disciplinary form and idea that always functions within a multilateral framework, enabling it to reinvigorate its possibilities to survive.

It is now universally accepted that the word 'utopia' was first coined by Thomas More. His book *Utopia,* finished in 1516, was in Latin. The title is a composite of two Greek words; "not" (*ou*) and "place" (*topos*), meaning "nowhere." Yet, the first component of the word clearly alludes to another Greek word "beautiful, happy" (eu), thus suggesting another reading as "a beautiful or happy place." This twofold explanation for the word, Kumar states, moulds the "literal essence of utopia" which is reminiscent of a waking dream, which we never want to lose but also can never achieve (Kumar, 1991: 1), which also explains why Lee Cullen Khanna defines utopia's topography as "not 'out there' in another time and place" but "within the self" (Khanna quoted in Kessler, 1995: xv) – a unique remark

that suggests the possibility of studying utopias in terms of individual and social psychology.

In 1515, when More wrote Book II of *Utopia* – the first part of the book in chronological order – he was describing a non-Christian city-state with an almost communist structure in which all state policies and institutions were governed by reason, and not by monarchy, which of course reflected the dominant urge and will of a Renaissance courtier. The questions related to the notions and intentions that occupied Thomas More's mind when he wrote such a book and the reason why he seemed to contrast the order and integrity of such an imaginary state with the unreasonable and perilous governments of a divided Christian Europe − which of course recalls the period of confusion and breakdown in Athens after the Peloponnesian War when Plato wrote his *Republic* − seem to elucidate some of the basic discussions about utopias in general.

More's book describes an ideal state, following a tradition set by Plato in his *Republic*, and a strange traveler, Raphael Hythloday (meaning 'dispenser of nonsense' [Turner, 1965: 8] and thus emphasizing the duality of More's venture in *Utopia*), narrates his experiences on the island of Utopia where a communism-like system reigns in private and public life. It is for certain that the geographical explorations in the fifteenth century offered more fantastic and enchanted settings and worlds for authors, and it is quite probable that Thomas More associated his 'Utopia' with Amerigo Vespucci's and other explorers' stories. Thus it may be commented that everything in Utopia sometimes seems to stand close to the final limits of exploration of More's time – not only to geographical but also to the sociological limits – and sometimes moves beyond this.

Thomas More, in Book I – the second part of the book in chronological order – seems to speak in favor of moderation of evil and roots of evil rather than a cure, being a Catholic very much aware of human nature's frailty. So does More try to depict a better system to replace the existing ones? If one considers his opposition to Henry VIII's divorce and the affirmative approach he assumes for divorce in his book, or the pagan world of Utopia as opposed to his Catholicism, the question of his book's being a "mere" satire on More's times becomes important for utopias in

general: how can the reader know which parts of More's book – or any utopia – are seriously conceived and proposed as reforms and which are mere reveries or fantasies not meant to be realized. Kumar associates this ambivalence of assessment for *Utopia* with its existence "on the edge of possibility, somewhere just beyond the boundary of the real" (Kumar, 1991: 1). His point is of extreme importance in assessing utopias and their functions:

> So from its very inception with More utopia embodies two impulses, tending often in opposite directions. It is more than a social or political tract aiming at reform, however comprehensive. It always goes beyond the immediately predictable, and it may go so far beyond as to be in most realistic senses wholly impracticable. But it is never simple dreaming. It always has one foot in reality [...] Utopia's value lies not in its relation to present practice but in its relation to a possible future. Its 'practical' use is to overstep the immediate reality to depict a condition whose clear desirability draws us on, like a magnet. Here the very visionary and 'impracticable' quality of utopia is its strength [...] A boundary can either confine and inhibit or it can invite us to go beyond. (Kumar, 1991: 2,3)

This question deserves an emphasis. The first example of the literary genre called utopia − one should be cautious to differentiate it from many utopian tendencies present in the history of many other domains such as politics, critical theory, etc. − certainly points at a certain blur and a fog of ambivalence as it plays with the contingencies of time and space. That should not suggest that utopia is a name for mere fantasies of impossible worlds since there is a crucial difference between a daydreamer's dream and a visionary's vision. Utopia calls for the education of the imagining intellect and the organization of visions. Kumar, while defining the tradition of utopian thought in Western tradition and classifying its sub-genres, defines 'eu/u-topias' thus: "Utopia may be nowhere but, historically and conceptually, it cannot be just "*anywhere*" (Kumar, 1991: 3).

Kumar then goes on to state that all utopias are "by definition, fictions" (*Ibid.*: 25) as they are not historical texts dealing with actual worlds. So once more, one can state that utopias belong to the realm of fiction and as they do not deal with facts there is neither reason nor need to put them through a test of history and validity so as to say whether they should be condemned or discarded. They surely

belong to history but to evaluate their practicality or literary value according to this relevance of historical verification and actuality would be a shortsighted approach.

Before talking about utopia and (its) history, and before talking about utopia as a well-defined and clear-cut term, an elucidation of its 'history' should be indispensable. Such an elucidation and study is certain to show that what is defined as 'the ideal society' is certainly subject to change, too.

There are several ways of classifying and 'dissecting' utopias. One can choose from a set different criteria, and tracing utopia's history in order to find some common notions and approaches shared by some works is just one of these many ways. One can adopt a functional approach and say that some utopias may be satirical; that is to say they may try to satirize, mock at, make fun of existing ills, systems and governments, and thus they may be rather critical but not practical. Yet some utopias may be 'practical', that is to say that they may try to hold a mirror to their times to ameliorate the present ills, thus endeavoring to bring about concrete changes by displaying and advocating alternative worlds. They may be speculative as well, severing their ties with their times to look into the future.

Although utopias may dive into the ocean of 'terra incognito' of the 'yet-to-come' worlds, the concept and idea of utopia stretch back to a much earlier time than More. Kumar categorizes these utopian models, ideas and prototypes (or maybe archetypes) in four groups, and his content-based approach is also adopted and accepted by Lucy Sargisson in her *Contemporary Feminist Utopianism* (Sargisson, 1996: 15). This categorization is by no means the ultimate or final one but it may shed some light upon the question of utopia.

The first group Kumar names is "The Golden Age, Arcadia, Paradise." It is quite evident that all individuals and societies may create their ideal systems out of a common or shared history. If a given society's or individual's perfect world is based upon a golden age, like a lost paradise or a mythicized recollection, that is to say if this ideal state involves a nostalgia or a longing for the past, it belongs to this first group. As the title of this group suggests, this type of utopian thought is a highly pre-lapsarian (and prenatal too) one emphasizing the lost harmony and unity between humankind and nature (and the lost coziness of the womb), hence 'mother'

nature as a frequent setting in the works of this first group. This is the tradition of a pleasant world of plenty set by Virgil and Ovid. Virgil's *Arcadia* is the ultimate pastoral heaven in the literary tradition of the Western world. Such pagan paradises of Greeks and Romans are actually placed on Earth, emphasizing the possibility of perfection in the visible world. Those examples which were initially mundane and physical were further enriched and sublimated in Christianity by works like Sir Philip Sydney's romance, *Arcadia* (1593). Christian clergymen and societies actually added their own myths and traditions and the search for an earthly paradise – though Christian Paradise was in the world to come – continued for a long time and although it declined by the eighteenth century, the fifteenth century witnessed the greatest paradise-on-earth of all times: the New World of Christopher Columbus. The stories and narratives of the new lands such as 'Arcadia' were transformed into some utopian reflections and fantasies of the travelers, and 'travel' has remained the most employed means to narrate alternative worlds.

This tendency to conceive or to resurrect 'a golden age' and 'a perfect order' is not exclusively European. One can also describe this as an archetypal yearning of the 'collective unconscious' – if the terminology that Carl Jung devised is employed – shared by the Indian or the Middle Eastern traditions of a lost paradise. If, for example, one examines the psycho-cultural approach of fall/loss (of 'the past') and salvation/recovery (of 'the future') in Judeo-Christian mythology and eschatology as it is observed in the domain of culture, or to be more specific in the realm of literature (John Milton's *Paradise Lost* (1667) and *Paradise Regained* (1671) are perfect examples) and fine arts (one immediately remembers the Flemish painter Hieronymus Bosch), it becomes visible that "the *Krita Yuga*, the First and Perfect Age" (Kumar, 1991: 4) of the *Mahabharata* shares many of the traits of the Judeo-Christian paradise.

The second group or sub-genre of utopia is what Kumar names "The Land of Cockaygne." If the first group cited above belongs to the world of the educated and the literate, this one is the land of abundance and excess for the simple and common man. Fowls fly roasted, water is turned into wine, the pigs have knives in them and youth is everlasting. If the Flemish painter Bosch is famous for his

paintings of paradise and hell (Dufour, 1999: 34,35), another Flemish painter, Brueghel the Elder, is famed for his painting, The Land of Cockaygne (1567). This painting deals with issues related to the Christian morality of the sixteenth century and therefore reflects a satirical intention. While in the foreground a peasant, a knight and a scholar lie and wait for their food to be delivered into their mouths, famine lurks from the background (Hagen, 2000: 74, 75). This painting reflects the Christian critique of pure hedonism, or in other words this 'dream world' is a fool's paradise – which, of course, has survived in Catholicism as it was transformed from the Roman festivities into carnivals.

The third group Kumar names is related to a belief in the changes promised by 'the Millennium.' This group seems to combine the paradise of the past with that of the future. As Kumar explains, it is both the "primitive Paradise and Promised Land" (Kumar, 1991: 6). Therefore it is quite natural that this group assumes a pendulum movement swinging from a conservative paradise to a radical one. Another defining aspect of this group is the emphasis on time and finality that usually depends on a certain kind of eschatology. So, those who believe in a sudden change to occur at a certain time usually wait for some signs and a messenger or a messiah who is to restore the lost order or to realize the 'prophecy.' This notion also points at the final fight between the forces of evil and forces of good, which is an analogy of the Armageddon of the Christian lore. Then *will* come peace and justice *will* be established – or restored. As the accent is placed upon the future in this case, Kumar accentuates an extremely crucial point when he states, "it is the millennium which most forcibly introduces the elements of time, process and history" (*Ibid.*: 7). As millenarianism as an ideology is not usually meant for individuals but for communities, it tends to be collectivist, and this tendency of collective longing has been transformed into collective action. Some sects in history have claimed that the Judgement Day had already arrived; for example, the Anabaptists, a group of radical reformers who believed in millenarianism during the Reformation, rebelled under the leadership of Thomas Münzer in the 1520s, who claimed that the "imminent Kingdom of Heaven on earth" was to be established (Durant, 1957: 384). Such claims also constitute another distinctive quality of millenarianism as they do not just

describe a perfect world to come but also defend the idea that it can be experienced and lived now and here as one may simply think that he or she was living in a post-apocalyptic world and paradise was there just beside him or her. The Anabaptists of Münster, the Diggers of England and the Shakers of America are just a few examples of communities who tried to combine action for their economic and political dreams with that of a spiritual (and religious) quest. If one remembers that the America of the fifteenth, sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was some kind of a 'promised land' for both the political and religious dissenters, it seems quite reasonable that there be numerous attempts by religious and political reformers to establish utopian communities. Such a colony was first established by some Dutch Mennonites in Pennsylvania and Ohio in the 1680s. There were many attempts like this but they did not survive for long. The first one to survive is the Ephrata Community of Pennsylvania by some Germans. The Shakers (or 'the Millennial Church' as they are sometimes called), under their leader Ann Lee, believed that it was their mission to establish the millennial church in this New World. By the 1830s, the Shakers had set up villages in many states. Some of those dissenting communities pursued celibacy, some tried to establish the first church of Christ, some tried to create a system of egalitarian and communistic principles.

Krishan Kumar claims that this urge of millenarianism was able to adapt itself to the needs of science and revolutions – though not always – and therefore was able to survive in Saint-Simon's socialism and Hegel's "age of the actualized Spirit" which eventually took new forms in the thought of Marx and Engels, "despite their protestations to the contrary" (Outhwaite and Bottomore, 1996: 691), and thence in communism, giving it "strong millennial overtones" (Kumar, 1991: 11) – which seems to display the persistence of utopian thinking even in a philosophical and social movement with a strong emphasis on its scientific method against utopianism .

The last group of utopian societies in Kumar's categorization is gathered under the heading "The Ideal City." This group actually depends upon a very ancient tradition of city-states of Ancient Greece and pagan Rome rather than the Christian Paradise conceived by the Doctors of the Church. If one considers that the city itself is a longing for regulation and security and combines this longing with a certain type

of idealism of order, it is not hard to see why the ideal city was sought and usually associated with utopian thought.

After the first models of perfect cities settled or imagined in the pagan world, St. Augustine, one of the Doctors of the Catholic Church, envisioned an earthly city in a book called *The City of God* (ca. 412), which inspired many religious scholars of the Middle Ages. When the Renaissance resurrected the pagan world, and when intellect and rationality were enthroned once more, the city as an emblem of the new era began to reflect both humankind's crescent longing for perfection and order and God's (or Nature's God as was the case in the eighteenth century) rule and plan in the universe which was still substantial, and hence More's *Utopia*, Campanella's *City of the Sun*, Bacon's *New Atlantis*, all reflecting the city as a perfectly-arranged, "self-sufficient entity" (*Ibid.*: 14). Furthermore, if one tries to reconstruct the zeitgeist of any revolutionary period, be it the revolution of 1917 in Russia or the revolution of 1789 in France, it should be quickly and easily perceivable that architecture and urban environment in all the cities concerned have been among the first elements to be altered, being firmly related to the longings for a utopian space. Yet this should not obscure the fact that the ways adopted by different utopian thinkers are not identical, and although Edward Bellamy's socialism in *Looking Backward, 2000-1887* (1888) returns to an economics-based approach depending upon industrialized cities of order, William Morris envisages a new world blending "the best of Romanticism and Marxism" (*Ibid.*: 103) and combining the countryside with the city in *News from Nowhere* (1890).

This categorization can be developed and expanded as the cited groups are not exclusive and there may be some amalgamations or overlaps among them creating new possibilities of hybrid examples. Likewise, they may depend upon one another as they follow some set traditions. Although the examples cited above share some basic traits, one cannot profess that utopias depend upon one of these groups or even that utopias are combinations of these groups. Trying to define utopia from another point of view, Kumar claims that utopias share some certain elements that form their fundamental structure and each of the groups explained above contributes its specific aspect (*Ibid.*: 18,19).

The first group, which is called the Golden Age, thus donates the element of harmony and humankind's ubiquitous longing for peace and security. The second group labeled as the Land of Cockaygne provides the element of desire and longings of the libido and thus another aspect of the human psyche. The third group called the Millenarianism furnishes the element of hope. To all of these, the Ideal City appends the element of design. Yet, utopia is not just putting these elements together to create any form; the writer of utopias has to create something of his 'own' and therein lies the gist of utopian literature and its personal dimension that appeals to the minds of the readers.

Another way to understand the nature of utopia, and a very common one, is to take up a chronological and diachronic approach. Thus, one can trace the very distinct line of development of utopias as a tradition that has taken Plato's *Republic* as a model for many centuries, from Thomas More to H.G. Wells. There, one comes face to face with another important aspect of utopia: an archetype or maybe an "*ur*-type" of human imagination as a "timeless concept" (*Ibid.*: 43) which nevertheless changes in its definition, structure and style. The interaction between history and utopia therefore seems to offer a two-sided story, one concerning utopia as the critique of a given time and the other as an idea standing 'outside' time.

The mysterious city of Atlantis, the utopian island narrated in the *Sacred History* of Euhemerus (300 B.C.), the island of Crete, the city-states Sparta and Athens, as quite different reflections of utopian thought, seem to have inspired many utopian myths and narratives including *Republic* itself. Those are not utopias proper of course but they have provided future authors and thinkers with different and indispensable ideas, and have set the basic criteria and standards for their followers. The following centuries witnessed a redefinition and critique of these precedents. For example, it may be stated that More's *Utopia* is one of those landmarks as it "announced that the modern utopia would be democratic, not hierarchical" (*Ibid.*: 50), a remark that refers to the earlier utopian writings.

There are several other utopias written all around Europe in the sixteenth century, as humanism was the dominant philosophy of the time. More is thus not the sole name to reflect it in his work. *I Mondi* (1553) of Anton Francesco Doni and a

practical utopia, *City of the Sun* (1623) of Tommaso Campanella and *Christianapolis* (1619) of John Valentin Andreae and Francis Bacon's *New Atlantis* (1627), also practical in its scientific approach, are also fine specimens of the genre. These ‘new generation’ utopias seem to focus upon the physical world, knowledge and science although they convey many of the former issues discussed in More’s and others’ works, such as religion and ethics, etc. The heritage of earlier utopias notwithstanding, science and democracy emerged from these works to form the essence of rationalism and positivism alongside with other novel discourses or ideas and methods that were “to be put at the service of some ethical or social ideal” in the following utopias (*Ibid.*: 54).

Another important name to emerge in the following centuries was the French social reformer Charles Fourier, who devised the ‘phalanstère’ system of social planning. Fourier was one of the most influential names for American reformers in the 1840s, a thinker who is now cited among the utopian socialist figures, who, according to many Marxist critics, are unable to ‘read’ the material and economic infrastructure. Fourier is best remembered with his influence upon the eminent figures of Brook Farm of Massachusetts – the farm itself turning into a phalanx in 1844 – such as the American transcendentalist philosopher Ralph Waldo Emerson and his close friend Henry David Thoreau. Between 1840 and 1860, more than twenty-five Fourierist colonies were established in the United States, the most successful one being the North American Phalanx in New Jersey. Meanwhile, in France many works of utopia were written too but Étienne Cabet's *Voyage en Icarie* is probably the most important example of utopias written for practical purposes in France, which is also directly related to experimental ‘Icarian’ communities in the United States. The Icarians, followers of Étienne Cabet – the French utopian socialist – and his *Voyage en Icarie* (1840), established short-lived communities in Iowa and Texas.

Another noteworthy venture is the Oneida Community founded in 1848 by John Humphery Noyes. The community had a system in which all property was common, “complex marriage” was practiced, that is to say, all husbands and wives were ‘shared.’ Members of the community believed that socialism could not be

realized without religion, and that the "extended" family system was to uproot selfishness; children would stay with their mothers until they could walk and afterwards they were placed in an organization like a common nursery.

The Puritan mind, too, produced many works of utopia. These are sometimes religious and sometimes secular works. The most noteworthy among those is *The Law of Freedom* (1652), a practical book in which the radical Gerrard Winstanley advocates the basic principles of the Diggers, the Puritan extremists in Great Britain. This book also represents the extreme libertarian side of the English agrarian communists as it voices the idea that ownership of the land should be common. Likewise, a utopia by one his contemporaries, James Harrington's *Oceana* (1656), argues for the "eradication of monarchy" and tries to formulate a just way to distribute the land to end the "tyranny of land ownership" (Snodgrass, 1995: 390). Harrington was a name of extreme importance in England and even a Harrington party was established during the last years of the English Commonwealth (Kumar, 1991: 68). His practical utopia was at the same time so influential that the constitution of Massachusetts gathered many of its ideas from *Oceana*, and his sway was so great that even the name of the state was to be changed into Oceana (*Ibid.*: 69).

Another influential and striking example of early utopian thought and practice in the United States is related to one man's secular passion to create an ideal system. This man was Robert Owen, a British socialist and a social reformer, who founded the 'New Harmony' Community, a secular cooperative, in Indiana in 1825. Although it could only survive for three years, the attempt was able to transform the locale into a cultural center for many decades, and this 'Owenite' society was able to sponsor America's first community-supported public school, first kindergarten, and first school offering equal education opportunities for both boys and girls, thus setting an example for the following utopian communities.

Following the mounting interest in utopias during the second half of the nineteenth century, during the first decades of the twentieth century, utopian fiction and literature, inheriting the idea of progress cultivated in the previous century, was to go through a series of transformations. This was the time when H.G. Wells wrote

A Modern Utopia in 1905, moving away from names like Cabet and Morris to revive the scientific approach of Bacon and others. When the twentieth century unfortunately proved that the possibility of a perfect-planned society depending upon a 'perfect' order could become a prison or a nightmare (if one remembers Adolf Hitler's vision of "utopia" [*sic*] (Carey, 1999: 423) with his 'superhuman race,' or the gulag camps of Stalin) several anti-utopias, or dystopias – which Kumar calls the "*alter ego*" of utopia (Kumar, 1991: 47) – were written depicting 'hell on earth'.

With the rise of modernity, utopia was transformed into a part of a greater question. The static aspect of utopias as standing outside time at the perfect moment as timeless "euchronias" could not retain its credibility in a modernist conception of change and the strong presence of fleeting time (*Ibid.*: 58). Furthermore, the development of the theory of evolution (which is also a scientific expression of the idea of progress and change) necessitated a new dynamic conception for utopias, as the stagnant examples of the so-called 'perfect' utopias, it is now theorized, create the hideous worlds of dystopias.

Another important idea in utopian thought that is now clearly formulated, namely representation, occupies a crucial place in the ideological framework that informs every part of contemporary sociological studies. *The Blackwell Dictionary of Twentieth-Century Social Thought* stresses the persistence of different representations in utopian thought and explains that "the utopia of the authorities is generally one of order while that of the people is often the land of plenty and pleasure" (Outhwaite and Bottomore, 1996: 691). Witnessing the ruthless world of rising capitalism, Jack London wrote *The Iron Heel* (1907), whereas Yevgeny Zamyatin's experience in the USSR foreshadowing Stalin's time, in a 'utopia-turned-nightmare', inevitably brought about *We* (1924). The most perceptible impression was made by Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* (1932), which deals with the frightening face of science in its abused potentiality. Yet, the most famous of all is George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-four* (1949), which magnifies the problem of manipulation and thought control in an autocratic and dictatorial state, emphasizing the question of representation in utopias: "whose utopia is it?". These works of Huxley and Orwell raise questions about the role of science and the ideal of perfect

government, two of the foremost problems in utopian thought. Another name to deal with science was B.F. Skinner, who integrated its premises with behaviorism, to defend the idea of 'behavioral engineering' in his *Walden Two* (1948), whose repercussions would be heard many years later in Huxley's *Island* (1962), a book which also seems to echo William Morris, thus forming a stark opposition to Huxley's earlier *Brave New World*.

If one takes a quick look at the 1960s and 1970s, what one is likely to observe as regards the question "whose utopia is it?" is the emergence of "micro" tendencies in utopian literature instead of an all-encompassing conception. With the advent of issues like ecology, race and gender, new utopias exclusively and specifically dealing with these topics were published one after another. *Ecotopia* (1975) of Ernest Callenbach, as an example from the 1970s – the most striking decade displaying the postwar quest of counterculture for a better and securer world in utopias – clearly follows the utopian tradition in an age of technological surge when it emphasizes the eminence of formerly discarded notions and issues related to environment and libertarian government. The utopia of Callenbach was able to reinvigorate the utopia as a genre, not only providing "a summa of all the disparate sixties Utopian impulses" but also reviving "the (itself properly Utopian) ambition to write a book around which a political movement might crystallize" (Jameson, 1992: 160).

If *Ecotopia* is one important book from the 1970s, Ursula Le Guin's *The Dispossessed* (1974), which for Fredric Jameson is "the richest literary reinvention of the genre" (*Ibid.*: 160), and Marge Piercy's *Woman on the Edge of Time* (1976) are two outstanding books by two prominent women writers of utopian fiction, who were among the figures heralding the rebirth of utopia in quite a new way.

Although the dominant inclination throughout the history of Western literature has been to focus on utopias written by male figures – at least until feminism proved it partial – it still should not surprise us to see that women with feminist sensibilities *too* have put forth many works of utopia if we recall that "*the term 'feminism' has its origins in the French word féminisme, which was coined by the utopian socialist Charles Fourier*" [italics mine] (Honderich, 1995: 270).

Feminists' studies on the history of women and literature by women have in fact unearthed a buried treasure (*cf*. Gilbert and Gubar, 1996) and identified a feminist utopian tradition. In her study of feminist utopias, Carol Farley Kessler states her view that feminism, when seen as "the expression of holistic and communitarian values missing from the present order" (Kessler, 1995: xvii), indeed becomes a "type of utopianism." Margaret Whitford explains the relation between feminism and utopian thought and the nature of this relation thus:

> In all forms of feminism there is a tension between the critique of an unsatisfactory present and the requirement, experienced as psychological or political, for some blueprint, however sketchy of the future [...] (Whitford, 1995: 18)

Whitford then differentiates between two tendencies in utopian feminist approach, one of "political romanticism" (*Ibid.*: 18-19) as a longing for harmony with nature which calls to mind the nostalgia for the 'pre-social contract' state – this nostalgia being quite stagnant and infertile as it tends to ignore the creative conflicts that enable innovation; and the other of "the future 'in process'," which rejects what it defines as an unrealistic link with "a myth of the archaic mother" (Kristeva cited in Whitford, 1995: 19). Whitford, defying the first tendency, explains the latter's nature:

> But there is another strand in feminist utopian reflection which argues powerfully that we *need* utopian visions, that imagining how things could be different is part of the process of transforming the present in the direction of a different future. (*Ibid.*: 19)

Christine de Pisan was probably one of the first writers to compose a book defending women. Her book is entitled *The Book of the City of Ladies* (1404-1405) and defends women's virtues. Although the book itself is not utopian, her attempt to defend women against misogynist attacks was essentially a defiant if not utopian attitude in the fifteenth century (Kitch, 2000: 28). The forgotten tradition of such writers and utopian feminism of the following centuries were thus discovered by these new feminist writers, "linked to the belief that 'the personal is political'"

and redefined as "prefigurative", meaning that "elements of a better society can be established here and now to form model for relationships and institutions in the future" (Outhwaite and Bottomore, 1996: 692). Whitford, referring to Nan Bowman Albinski's *Women's Utopias in British and American Fiction* (1988), summarizes the refurbishment of utopia in feminism thus:

> Women's utopias, until recently, were not well known. However, feminists seeking to reconstruct women's history have unearthed a utopian tradition which is quite distinctive, and have also pointed out that the rise of 'second-wave' feminism coincides with a fresh wave of utopian fiction. (Whitford, 1995: 18)

Krishan Kumar defines this flourishing of feminist utopias in relation to the historical fact that women have not been allowed "material and symbolic equality with men" and states that therefore it is quite natural that feminists feel the need to "redress the balance so far as women were concerned" (Kumar, 1991: 102). When Margaret Whitford comments on Luce Irigaray's critique about Enlightenment values' not having been applied to women and Irigaray's demand for "the extension of revolutionary ideas to women too" (Whitford, 1995: 16), these seem to be a part of this attempt of redressing. This observation seems quite valid for male-oriented or 'patriarchal' worlds or utopias. It is not hard to unveil the general tendency of male-oriented literature (and utopias) towards women, in which women are either non-existent or exist as insignificant or subservient characters. When they appear among major characters, they are stereotyped either as idealized figures (imitating the figure of Virgin Mary) or as culprits (imitating the figure of Eve). That same fact holds true for utopian literature by and large, something that persists even in twentieth-century utopias. "Female protagonists make no memorable niche for themselves in utopian fare of the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s" (Snodgrass, 1995: 564) observes Mary Ellen Snodgrass and goes on to clarify the social background of the rise of female protagonists in utopian literature:

> The arrival of powerful, thoughtful women in the utopian matrix occurs simultaneously with the profemale movement, which encouraged women to educate themselves; choose goals without regard to society's preconceived

> notions of beauty, motherhood, and wifeliness; fulfill desires without regard to public prejudice or prohibition; and become equal participants in human affairs. (*Ibid.*: 565)

In accepting Kumar's explanation for the advent of female utopian fiction and female protagonists as a fact, one should not overlook another extremely important fact, namely that feminist utopias, too, have undergone a historical process of evolution and therefore depend upon many different and ever-changing reasons for their existence, which are of course the eventual products of some novel social, economic and historical circumstances. For example, *Herland* (1915) of Charlotte Perkins Gilman, despite its being a member of the utopian feminist canon, differs immensely from the post-sexual revolution utopias of the 1970s – e.g. from Le Guin's *The Dispossessed* – though it shares some of their features, too. Displaying the evolution of feminist utopias in relation to the way they have handled issues related to femininity since their emergence in the United States is one of the principal ends of the present study. Such a study may also help to elucidate several points about the conception of utopia in the twentieth century because

> in our own time, feminism has been virtually alone in attempting to envision the Utopian languages spoken in societies in which gender domination and inequality would have ceased to exist: the result was more than just a glorious moment in recent science fiction, and should continue *to set the example for the political value of the Utopian imagination as a form of praxis* [italics mine]. (Jameson, 1992: 107)

The innovations brought to utopian literature by feminist utopian writers seem to have invigorated this old tradition just when the demise of utopia (Jameson states that "utopia" was a "code word" for "socialism" [*Ibid.*: 159]) and ideologies (Jameson reads "ideology" as "Marxism" in this case [*Ibid.*]) was proclaimed by names like Francis Fukuyama or when the followers of Robert Nozick claim that the utopia of libertarian right has arrived as it is described in Nozick's *Anarchy, State and Utopia* (1974). Jameson voices his doubt about a similar issue related to what he defines as "the end of the very rich feminist work in the Utopian genre" when he mentions Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale* (1985) as a feminist dystopia.

He asks "to what degree these multiple Utopian impulses have been prolonged into the late seventies and eighties" (*Ibid.*: 160).

Nevertheless, the latest generation of female utopian thinkers and writers, many of whom are either feminists or women who write about women, such as Hélène Cixous and Luce Irigaray, are able to find new means of expression and new ways to avoid those cul-de-sacs and to change the bearing of their works towards the needs and calls of a new world to create novel approaches in utopianism. Their efforts have altered the course of feminist utopian thought in many ways as the cross-fertilization of feminism with other movements and domains has enriched an essentially social phenomenon with philosophy, and the feminist novelists' efforts to situate utopia and feminist ideas in the realm of fiction gave birth to some new concepts for the history of utopian thought, such as "the novelization of utopia," which is discussed in the following chapters.

One of these recent concepts and terms was coined by Lucy Sargisson, who brings together and defines many of these novelties in the matrix of what she calls "transgressive utopianism" (Sargisson, 1996: 57,58), the fundamental aspects of which are its "incompleteness, open-endedness and fluidity" (Kumar, 1991: 59) and its "libidinal femininity and economy" (*cf.* Sargisson, 1996: 112-116). In the same vein, Whitford explains the most prominent contribution of contemporary feminist utopias as "the stress on uncertainty and unpredictability; it is certainly not uniquely the vision of static future of harmony" (Whitford, 1995: 19). Thus, one of the long-established features of utopia, namely 'perfection' (fixedness and stagnancy), seems to be questioned: utopia now becomes 'process' (continuity and dynamism). Burwell too compares what she calls 'the second-wave of feminist utopias' – written after the 1960s – with the traditional nineteenth- and twentieth-century feminist utopias to point out that the former have in fact

> inaugurated a revolution in the utopian form in literature, which began to incorporate conflict, imperfection, difference, and transgression into representations of an ideal social space that traditionally had been defined by its harmony and its stature as a sutured reality. (Burwell, 1997: xi)

As stated before in this study "utopia is not just anywhere," and Lee Cullen Khanna defines these new utopias as "the capacity to see afresh − an enlarged, even transformed vision [...] a *vital utopia* [italics mine] requires change and *interaction with alien forces* [italics mine]; otherwise it becomes a barren and useless idea" (Khanna quoted in Whitford, 1995: 19). Ursula Le Guin's *The Dispossessed*, for example, seems to embody perfectly Khanna's definition for the new conception of utopia, since Le Guin's utopia *lives*, that is to say it really involves time (a dynamic perception of time) and space (interaction between utopia and 'the outside') whereas another long-established conception about utopias is their being 'outside time and space.' These new approaches and aspects, for which Kumar says utopia's classic form is "ill equipped to provide" (Kumar, 1991: 59), will be discussed in detail in the following chapters in relation to contemporary feminist utopianism.

The works and approaches cited above have been of necessity limited to a few fundamental items in respect of the scope of the present introduction which aims to offer not a comprehensive survey but an outline of the development of utopia and utopian tradition in Western thought *and* an attempt to elucidate the background of utopian thought in relation to its reflections in and its appropriation by feminist thought and literature in the United States.

CHAPTER 1

A HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

1.1 HISTORY OF FEMINISM AND UTOPIAN FEMINISIM IN THE UNITED STATES

The historical injustice of allocating the public sphere with all its opportunities to men and imprisoning women to domestic life with al its burden was perpetuated for many centuries until the second half of the nineteenth century when at least in some parts of the world, mostly in Western Europe and America, women came to realize the need to organize and to unite so as to question the unfair division of labor that was there just because they kept quiet. The possibility of challenging the status quo was feeble but many women were nevertheless determined to redress the age-old and time-worn injustices that they were made to suffer.

Even a quick glance at history would suffice to portray the roles played by women in history. Any women's history or any biographical study of women's history – and there are not many – would cite many important and eminent names of women who are celebrated thanks to their courage, strength and abilities. One can mention many influential names like Queen Elizabeth, who was maybe the most glamorous monarch of the United Kingdom, or Sappho, the famous woman poet of the Antiquity, or Jeanne d'Arc, the national hero of France. Although these and many other names have been referred to as triumphant figures of women's history especially during the very first years of burgeoning feminism when the need to show models for women was high, they were all isolated figures. Many of these women either had to relinquish their 'feminine' identities or decided to do so in order to assume new 'masculine' ones or to imitate male gender roles, and their success had not helped with the betterment of the status of women. Only after the emergence of an organized quest and struggle for amelioration were women to defend the idea of feminism which would give them the chance and the power to be 'real women' – or

to be whatever they would profess as their new identity or identities – not the reflections of the male sexual imagination that have been 'molded' by men.

Many American women intellectuals tried to alter the status quo by action and propaganda. They were not the first ones to tackle these obstacles of prejudices and limitations. Some educated and intellectual women like Mary Wollstonecraft had defended the basic rights of women against some influential names of the eighteenth century like Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Rousseau, among the foremost names of the Enlightenment, claimed to oppose all social ills in his works, but Wollstonecraft claimed that he did so but for one: injustice towards women. In his *Emile* (1762), a treatise on education, Book V deals with the education of women and Rousseau's ideas in that book are a shocking surprise for the reader as it is stated that women are of weaker talents, so equality between sexes is not possible and therefore they should be educated to serve the needs of men. In the book, it is stated that women's training should enable them to comfort men as docile, dependent and submissive beings of weaker mental capacity. Wollstonecraft's attack on Rousseau's ideas about the education of women was also a call for *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792), also the title of her groundbreaking work in which she explained the historical structure that had led to the state of dependency and ignorance for women through the inculcation of sex roles, which resulted in the exalting of men at the expense of transforming women into pure virtue – strangely combined with a Christian disgust of Eve's sin – and artifacts (*cf.* Wollstonecraft, 1996: pp. 18-78). This was indeed a tradition inherited from the courtly love tradition of the Middle Ages, which in turn was devised by a strange combination of chivalric values and the Judeo-Christian tradition most explicit in the parable of Adam and Eve.

Common sense called for equal rights for everybody but women and their grievances were not an issue when kings and queens and classes were of concern. Both the Enlightenment and the French and American Revolutions were planned and acted out by some leading figures who were exclusively male. As many feminist historians have emphasized, history deals with wars and kings, and *herstory* therefore should be watchful to record women's struggle as the 'oppressed class' in every period (*cf.* Miles, 1993: 11-16). The philosophers of the Enlightenment emphasized

the urgent need to declare the basic rights of *men* as feminism was not really a part of the project, and the male leaders of the French Revolution could not cope with the sudden and radical change defended by the Gironden Theroigne de Mericourt and by the Gironden Marie Olympe de Gouges's *Declaration of the Rights of Women and Citizens* (1791) – she was executed by the order of Jacobine Robespierre – so women had to fight for another enlightenment to assert their 'inalienable rights'. These rights were for the adult males of all classes without any discrimination or privileges.

When Mary Wollstonecraft explained the injustices committed towards women and all the double standards, she also prepared the way for the philosophical and critical basis of feminism, highlighting the most controversial issues like marriage, education, citizenship, work, political rights, and 'woman as social construct,' and alongside with the Declaration of Independence, sketched the model for the future *Declaration of Sentiments and Resolutions* (1848) at Seneca Falls.

During the American Revolution, Abigail Adams too was demanding in her letters to her husband John Adams, the second president of the United States, that the new code of laws be more favorable to women in a time when black slaves, Indians and women could not cherish the basic democratic rights of free white males. Her letters were of no avail for the plans her husband had for the Declaration or the Constitution but she was remembered in 1848 as a figure who contributed to the composition of the Declaration of the Seneca Falls Convention through her ideas.

After the first decades of the republic, the United States of the 1830s was to witness the aftermath of such struggles and ideas. That decade was a time of turmoil in America, a nation going through a process of rapid industrialization just before the Civil War. Women's property rights – valid only for the unmarried – were hardly practiced in real life except in rare instances. Moreover, for women, to fight for these rights as a unified group was not realistic as they were also separated by race, class, ethnicity and region, a fact that created various groups of women with different concerns. While problems of domesticity and family responsibilities suffocated many European-American married women, "Native and African-American women continued to be engaged in subsistence and commercial

agriculture" (Kleinberg, 1999: 12). Matrilocal and matrilineal descent patterns were the norm among many Indian tribes, and their mythologies, instead of deeming woman as sinful, bestowed economic and political significance onto them in relation to their role in agriculture (*Ibid.*).

Meanwhile, through the industrialization of farming and agriculture in the nineteenth century, women's labor was reduced in value and women's domain eventually moved towards their homes. As far as the women living on the farms are concerned, their world outside – outside the boundaries of 'huswifery' – was usually defined by their 'marketing adventures' as they were the ones to sell the dairy products of their farms, which made up their new economic activity in many cases.

Women of the cities were also affected by the rise of mercantile capitalism during the first decades of the nineteenth century. As capitalism transformed their world too, they were compelled to learn how to sell their home-knitted stockings or homespun clothes, or, as the case was for many, to process the raw material for the textile industry distributed by merchants. The outcome was the creation of a new economy for women; they learnt to toil for many days and nights, which also resulted in the development of a new awareness of economic power. But still, this new resource was not for women only – they had a family to look after. Yet "urban women's occupational range narrowed as the nineteenth century progressed" (*Ibid.*: 15), and only widows were able to work in different jobs but the jobs of their late husbands were hard to deal with. Single women were usually domestic servants as domestic service was their only marketable ability. Free black women were on the other hand were usually either laundresses or servants "well into old age" (*Ibid.*: 18). Later on, many young women were attracted by the opportunities offered by factories and slowly many of them became separated from the household production system, and workshops became the norm for some time although the wages were not satisfactory "precisely because it differed from the male model of full-time wage earning separated from the domestic sphere" (*Ibid.*: 28). The low wages – discrimination in the form of unequal wages is also another issue in feminism – and the sarcastic approach of manufacturers and employers coupled with their double

burden at the factory and at home forced many women to retreat to the old domestic sphere.

In the years before the Civil War, "the ideal division of labor in the farm family economy mirrored that of the urban dwellers," that is to say, women were looking after the family and men were the breadwinners (*Ibid.*: 20). The economic enterprises of women and their physical contribution in the farms were looked down upon with disdain as the role for women was defined as the caretaker of the family, and the income they provided was overlooked. Their domain was around the hearth of their homes whereas men had to work and work as the sole provider of income, which in turn reinforced women's status as dependent and secluded them from the outside world. "The work undertaken by women within the household came to be viewed as a labor of love rather than as "work" especially for the better off" (*Ibid.*: 33). Many of literate and writing women in newspapers and magazines assumed the role of guiding and instructing 'mothers' in household management as technological developments of the 1840s necessitated better handling of "cooking, heating and lighting innovations" (*Ibid.*: 40), which displayed a woman's success in caring for her family. What followed was a surge of recipe magazines for nice cakes and for 'emotional' education for women as women finally lost their former status of producer and they now would only consume the new products offered to them. This seems to be both a disadvantage – women were exclusively passive and secluded – and an advantage – as they were free to organize and to think about their social status.

In the second half of the nineteenth century, Victorian ideals were dominant in American society, especially among many members of the middle and upper classes among European-American married women. When, in 1852, Amelia Bloomer, a defender of dress reform for women, advocated patterns for "Turkish pantaloons" to free women from their corsets and long skirts, the idea was ridiculed, probably because this new dress was not designed by male designers and it was too sexually attractive (*Ibid.*: 87). Even though the ardent women's rights activist Elizabeth Cady Stanton supported her efforts for reform, this radical attempt proved unsuccessful.

On the other hand, the dominant milieu of Victorian thought cultivated an unalterable set of ideas for womanhood that included some central virtues for women. The first one was piety, which defended the idea that women were innately more religious and spiritual in nature than men – which of course meant that women were also sentimental and romantic by nature. Purity of American women can be cited as another idealization. Their hearts and bodies had to be free from sin and sexual intercourse until they got married. Yet marriage did not mean that they could enjoy it. Strict Victorian morality, which was also paralleled in some parts of the United States, preached a kind of non-pleasure principle even after marriage, which of course crippled the sexual life of Victorian women if not destroyed it.

It would be unjust to claim that all women complied with these norms of domesticity. Some dissenters like Lydia Maria Child, an influential reformer, refused the double standard which formed the basis of the cult of womanhood, "remarking that the world would be a better place if supposedly female virtues permeated men's behavior and double standards ceased" (*Ibid.*: 41). Besides, Native Americans and African Americans were not able either to conceive such a cult of domesticity or to long for it.

Working-class women and frontier women too lived outside the boundaries of such debates and they had other concerns to think about. The former were either lost in the worries of daily toil or partaking in the rising labor rights activism, and therefore they did not provide role models for the cult. Frances Wright, one of the radical utopian feminists of the time, commented that women's rights movement was "irrelevant to working-class and slave women" (*Ibid.*: 93). The policy of trade unions related to women's rights issues fluctuated between the "family wage ideology" – many conservative labor unions and magazines thought that they were defending the sacredness of "the family circle", "the land", "the community" and "the home" – and "equal wages for women", The Knights of Labor's support for "equal pay for equal work" being a direct opposite (*Ibid.*: 121,122). The frontier women were also hardly aware of such notions of the Cult of True Womanhood while settling the West: neither of them had the economic and social substructures of the middle class women in the East. To alienate women from these 'vile' models,

such 'marginal women' were usually demonized as figures of moral collapse – or read, the collapse of the family and controlled reproduction.

Another historical 'duty' of women that has been carried on for centuries was rationalized in accordance with the morality of the age: submission. It was an absolute necessity not only for the order in the family but also for women too, because the idea that 'women are children for ever' resulted in their forced obedience to the decisions and directions of their husbands and other male betters so that these could 'protect' them from the "chaos and impurity of public life" (*Ibid.*: 34), whereas recently immigrated women, slave women and many other groups were all exposed to these dangers due to either "cultural choice, economic necessity, or the imposition of others' values upon them" (*Ibid.*: 35). Immigrant women usually worked as servants for middle class women for low wages, helping them with everyday household tasks.

Another idea that prevailed in society by the support of women's magazines was the domesticity of women, which was indeed a recent consequence of the Industrial Revolution. The emergence of the new differentiation between the public sphere of work – which did not include many middle or upper class women though many women from the lower classes worked in dire conditions – and the private sphere of home, which circumscribed the world of women of all classes. Genderification of the economy created the "cult of domesticity" – yet this cult carried different undertones for working-class women and middle-class women. Home and kitchen became the domain of woman and also ironically her refuge from everyday life. By the 1860s, middle class women were circumscribed by the limits of their houses whereas workingwomen had to combine the spheres to survive. Although the new role for women precluded the public sphere, it was instead glorified as 'equally important' as men's work. In all cases, the sanctity of motherhood was further emphasized, and to support the working husband at home was the way to be the "angel in the house." Women had to play this role, it was said, for it was necessary to stabilize and to improve the dynamics of economy in the United States. Furthermore, for men, letting one's wife work would be admitting the

insufficient income of the family whereas a mother staying at home would be "a measure for male success" (*Ibid.*: 37).

The income value created within the home was usually ignored by statistics, and the cult of domesticity could not ideologically take into account what it defined as a natural outcome of women's inclinations. Motherhood became a voluntary vocation and women began to protect their 'territory' against what were then perceived as threats: "intemperance, immorality, poverty, and slavery" (*Ibid.*: 35). Mothers devoted much of their time to rearing 'virtuous' children, as there were usually seven or eight children in each family; birth control, condom and diaphragm use were usually practiced by the upper classes. These and many other 'virtues' of the age were later adapted to fit the policies for women in the Third Reich, the famous three 'K's: 'Kirche', church; 'Küche', kitchen; 'Kinder', children. It was a very heavy burden for such 'delicate and fragile creatures' but they did not have to 'fear' anything under the protection of their fathers, husbands and other male authorities, who indeed knew 'better' about everything from abortion to work.

The situation of the genteel European-American women may be depicted and explained thus, "while other women, notably African and Native Americans, recent immigrants, and the poor, were increasingly enmeshed in an economy which relegated them to hard labor for low or no wages" (*Ibid.*: 33). The differentiation among different groups of women actually led to a new social stratification, forcing many women to reconsider their roles and rights in society.

This process of reconsideration was also enhanced by the rising ratio of public schooling and literacy for girls, especially in the North. Formerly, for many women, the way to express themselves bereft of all means for art and communication was quilting. It was not only a typical symbol of American women's frugality but also one of the few ways to reveal their emotions and to gather and to discuss.

During the 1820s and 1830s, literature, a means that later became popular for women's self-expression, began to develop as a new medium of expression. Kleinberg reports Ann Douglas' remark that "American literature became feminized during this era as women increasingly dominated the cultural market place and comprised about four-fifths of the reading public" (*Ibid.*: 69). Many women were

editors and some were writers, but their articles, stories and magazines revolved around the concept of 'home,' invigorating the already established stereotypes about women. The liberal education that some women longed for was looked down upon, for some women writers were writing articles claiming that the proper education for women was about their home, an idea which, of course, clearly reflected the dominant patriarchal view about women. This was a paradox of 'literary domestics' who "found it difficult to reconcile their own activities outside the home with the ideology of the era; they regarded domesticity as women's true vocation, but abandoned it for financial or intellectual reasons" (*Ibid.*: 72). It may nevertheless be stated that it was through such paradoxes and such magazines *too* that the prejudice about women's intellectual inferiority was overcome.

Girls in the United States had to travel a very fatiguing distance to get educated, which was, by and large, an arduous but also a usual practice of the era. Education was, many thought, a very hard training for women, a process that could cause severe health problems − which, needles to say, would endanger the future generations of America. When their "book learning typically ended at the age of 10 or 12," many families could not afford to send them to academies − and when they could, it was usually the boys; thus, many charity schools were established, like Anne Parish's Charity School for Poor Girls (*Ibid.*: 59). Republican ideal of motherhood both supported maternity after book learning as women's domain for national productivity and also claimed that economic responsibilities were too much of a burden for women.

On the other hand, many defenders of women's rights who believed in the mental and academic capacities of women were trying to break the bonds holding the progress of female consciousness chained to the ground. In America, just like Wollstonecraft in Great Britain, Judith Sargent Murray, writing under the pen name Constantina, was defending female education in her *Essay on the Equality of the Sexes* (1790), "arguing that boys and girls began life with the same abilities, but society limited females to a smaller sphere" (*Ibid.*: 61), an idea which has been repeated by many eminent feminists.

Women's education was not popular among priests as they feared that educated women would not be submissive any more, which, of course, was a great threat to the social stability and national production of an emerging nation. When the famous abolitionist and women's rights defender Sarah Grimke or former minister Lucretia Mott defended women's education as the sole way for a true interpretation of the Bible, or when Sarah Margaret Fuller defended equality of all souls and independence for women in true Transcendentalist fashion in her *Woman in the Nineteenth Century* (1845), many opponent and "lukewarm" (*Ibid.*: 90) clergymen showed their most antagonistic faces, knowing that schools also offered a release from domestic world. They held education in high esteem as long as it served the needs of the cult of domesticity and motherhood. The General Association of Congregational Ministers was one of the many religious associations to direct attacks on raising support for female education although teaching was supposed to be a "natural extension of the female role" (*Ibid.*: 64). Meanwhile, membership in Protestant churches included much more women in their congregations as "men devoted themselves into business affairs" (*Ibid.*: 81), and in order not to be outdone by Protestant education, Roman Catholic Sisterhoods opened girls' schools throughout the United States (*Ibid.*: 67). Among many disputes and outrages the ratio of learned women was rising in the first half of the nineteenth century while higher education was still hard to attain if not for organizations such as the National Board of Popular Education, which "prepared female teachers and missionaries for the western territories in the 1840s" (*Ibid.*: 68). Still, the first female graduates, which included Lucy Stone, were to be objects of ridicule for a long time.

Having found the necessary circumstances to organize and to fight for women's rights, the nascent feminist struggle in the United States flowed in different riverbeds to meet in the future. White women's struggle was but too evident for a white feminist but America's black women slaves had different and much more difficult problems to cope with – the cult of domesticity was certainly not their concern. While the white women of Western Europe and the United States struggled to break free from the chains of domestic life, black families were torn apart and black women were kept ignorant, raped and killed. Black slaves were oppressed,

preached absolute obedience, killed, tortured, and yet black women were also raped in front of their families, bereaved of chastity, and sold as chattel. Although only a minority of white women worked, the plantations depended largely upon the labor of black women, "at a time when less than one-eighth of white women were economically active" (*Ibid.*: 21). As the icon of black feminism from New York, Sojourner Truth, emphasized, slave women had to produce and reproduce for slaveholders, especially after 1807 when slave trade became prohibited and black children were the only way to raise profits (*Ibid.*: 22). To marry a black woman was punishable by law but to rape one was not in many states for she was the property of the landowner. The chastity of white women was of cardinal importance but black women, when they gave birth to their children after the rape, were only threats and rivals for the lady of the plantation. They also served double time: they worked in the fields and at night when they returned to their cabin they had to work for the family, too. The only way they could survive was through kinship, a tradition brought from their homelands in Africa as something that would help them stay alive in those dire days. These ties of kinship would later develop into the notion of sisterhood among black women, empowering their ideas about solidarity while surrounded by inadequacies and cruelty.

After the Civil War, black men of the United States were given the right to vote by the Fourteenth (1868) and Fifteenth Amendments (1870). The Fourteenth Amendment, which regulated post-Civil War society, included no reference whatsoever to women – white or black – and its second section carried the word "male" into the constitution for the first time. Sojourner Truth was a former slave from New York who voiced the grievances of black women at a time when black men could vote – but not white women – and black women, she claimed, as black men's companion, working as hard as they do, had to have the same rights, otherwise they would remain slaves. Harriet Jacob's *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl: Written by Herself* (1861) was an appeal "to white women immersed in the cult of true womanhood to accept that slave women also had a right to their purity of blood and devotion to their children" (*Ibid.*: 75). A freed slave, Fredrick Douglass, moved from Maryland to New York into Quaker societies – which were influential in the

abolitionist and suffrage movements in the U.S. – which were then fighting against slavery and which had a long-standing tradition of equality for women, and as a male figure present at Seneca Falls contributed to the formation of the link between anti-slavery movement and feminism.

The most influential figure for Douglass was Lucretia Mott, a fiery Quaker defending the abolitionist cause, who united the different struggles of the black and white women. Lucy Stone was also another outstanding feminist of the era, another supporter of the anti-slavery action and the feminist cause. The attitude towards women and the discrimination sustained by men made Mott realize that an organized resistance movement was necessary to defend women's rights. Elizabeth Cady Stanton, one of the leading feminist figures in the United States, had felt the same need with Mott and penned the Declaration of Sentiments and Resolutions.

In 1848, the year the New York female Moral Reform Society appealed to the state legislature "to protect women from predatory males by making seduction a criminal offence" (*Ibid.*: 83), the Seneca Falls Convention gave birth not only to the Declaration but also to feminism as an organized social movement in the United States. Mott and Stanton, who drafted the Declaration, took the Declaration of Independence and the radical approaches of the 1840s in Europe as their model, thinking that such documents were highly effective in Europe and America at that time. They realized that some male defenders of abolitionism were not supporting female attendance, and even detested "promiscuous female representation" so much so that they ousted female members at the 1840 World Anti-Slavery Convention in London (*Ibid.*: 94). This 'unfortunate' event ignited the process of preparing a draft for a declaration that would assert the principles defended by women's rights activists. Eleven of the twelve resolutions against domesticity and genderification of behavior defended the basic rights of women against injustices practiced by men, and they were adopted without any disagreement by the convention. The twelfth resolution about elective franchise for women was adopted only after Fredrick Douglass's firm support "from the floor" (Schneir, 1995: 77).

Another Quaker figure of the nineteenth century and an intimate friend of Stanton, Susan B. Anthony, assumed the role of an organizer for the burgeoning

movement and they formed the basis of active feminism in the United States although their regular conventions and attempts – including the Declaration – were ridiculed. Nevertheless, two weeks after the Declaration, "another convention was held in Rochester," and within the same year black women's request for "voting and speaking rights" ringed throughout the National Convention of Colored Freedmen in Cleveland – and it was accepted (Kleinberg, 1999: 96). All of these developments and the endorsement of new Married Woman's Property Acts testified to the fact that their protests and actions led to some concrete results.

Drafting declarations and holding conventions were not the only ways for many activists like Anthony: through sit-ins at polling places and registering women for the elections, Anthony got herself and some other women arrested due to charges of 'illegal voting.' During her trial, Anthony defended herself by the Fourteenth Amendment, explaining that "citizenship" of the United States could not exclude women, and though she was fined to pay $100, in an act of civil disobedience – many of her actions were guided by this principle – she refused to obey the "man-made, unjust, unconstitutional forms of law" (Schneir, 1995: 136) and did not pay the fine.

During the Civil War, which finally freed black slaves from servitude, men were away fighting in the trenches, and women had to take care of business and economy as always. The hardships of the decade hit women most, as *they* had to breast the burden with their children. Some women opposed the war; some supported it. Grimke, Stone, Stanton and Anthony were among the names, who, in accordance with their abolitionist ideas, supported the government against the Southern states. Many black women escaped north via the Underground Railroad, who later on served in the Union forces – Harriet Tubman, a former slave, was the legendary guide of the runaways. Many women's organizations founded by Northern women collected money and took care of the wounded; some womeneven served as spies (Kleinberg, 1999: 99).

After all was said and done, what women painfully learnt from this bloody war was better organization, both at home and outside. In other words, the Civil War helped women – especially Northern women – to move from the sphere of

domesticity towards the public sphere. Slowly, more and more women learnt to question the problem of slavery in relation to women's 'servitude'. However, the acceptance of women in some charity organizations and schools after the war, for many people, did not mean that they could get involved in political matters; nor did it necessitate the accomplishment of women's rights reforms.

After the Civil War, after the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments, black people were given the right to vote, but only men would benefit by the change. The question of supporting this move or protesting it was difficult to answer for many feminists. Anthony and Stanton were opposed to the amendment as it excluded women whereas Stone was in favor. Republican Party sided with the supporters of the suffrage for African-Americans whereas the Democratic Party sided with the Equal Rights Association. So priorities had to be defined as political games were played for votes. This conflict revealed the uneasy side of the abolitionist-feminist coalition, displaying the complex network of relations between two organic movements. Many abolitionists thought that women's rights could be postponed for some later time, and the ostracizing of female members at the World Anti-Slavery Convention in London foreshadowed this attitude. Although Sojourner Truth objected to this sectarian approach strongly at the 1851 Women's Rights Convention as she believed that "men would oppress women regardless of the race," Fredrick Douglass, the famous exponent of both issues, supported the idea that "the battle of Women's Rights should be fought on its own ground," probably because he thought that uniting abolitionist struggle with women's rights would jeopardize success for both (*Ibid.*: 96). So two immediate issues to be solved, and both belonging to one seemingly organic camp, clashed to divide the movement into two. This conflict that resulted in a split was formerly portrayed, though without any intent, in a novel by Harriet E. Wilson, *Our Nig* (1859), which deals with the marriage between a black man and a white woman, and in which the villains are "white women, not slave holders" (*Ibid.*: 76).

After the defeat for both sides in Kansas, two separate women's rights organizations emerged. The first one was the National Woman Suffrage Association (NWSA), founded by Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton. Stanton's and

therefore NWSA's radical approach attracted the famous and eccentric women's rights activist Victoria Claflin Woodhull, who advocated "legalized prostitution, free love, and dress reform" (*Ibid.*: 193). Her declaration about what would happen if women would not get the right to vote was extremely radical – especially for the patriotic supporters of NWSA: "We mean treason; we mean secession [...] We are plotting revolution; we will overthrow this bogus republic, and plant a government of righteousness in its stead" (*Ibid.*: 194). The second organization was the American Women Suffrage Association (AWSA), founded by Lucy Stone and Henry Blackwell – the conservative of the two.

At the beginning of the 1890s, these two factions joined hands to form the National American Women Association (NAWSA) (*Ibid.*: 193) and to reorganize the movement. After 1870, when the Suffragist movement started a harsh battle to win the right to vote for women in Great Britain, supported by some eminent liberal philosophers like John Stuart Mill – who was a close friend of the Langham Place Circle activists for women's rights – it had its own repercussions in the United States. The Congressional Union was founded in 1913 to follow "British suffragists' single-minded devotion to the cause" (*Ibid.*: 201). To be "the angel in the house" was deemed, in fact, to be a prisoner, a dispossessed and lost figure that was rather susceptible to being "the mad woman in the attic". The so-called 'social feminists', who did not limit their search for reforms to suffrage, were also another source of influence for the new suffragist women as they incorporated social reforms into women's rights movements.

Carrie Chapman Catt, president of the newborn NAWSA, argued that "giving immigrant and African-American men the vote but denying it to genteel white women made them into "subjects"" (*Ibid.*: 199). Many comments like this eventually led many to think that NAWSA was a rather conservative association, which was partly true, for it "feared losing white southern women's support more than alienating African Americans" (*Ibid.*). This, in turn, was eventually followed by a harsh criticism by African-American women.

All the while, the economic and social developments of the Old World went on influencing American foreign policy and history, although America, for

some time, tried to abstain from interference with Europe-related problems in accordance with its isolation policy. World War I, of course, altered American policy for good: it would mark the beginning of American influence in Europe. The war of 1914 also opened up a new path for American women, who had to fill the vacuum created by men's absence, and many educated and uneducated women took the formerly male-occupied jobs in the white-collar sector and government sector. This change of former jobs – from textile workers or domestic servants – heralded another advance on women's side, although they had to leave their new jobs after the interval of war.

Carrie Chapman Catt, who employed the threat of war as a "means of justifying female suffrage," thought that, if accepted, women's votes would ensure "women's support", an idea also upheld by President Wilson (*Ibid.*: 201). Finally, when the Nineteenth Amendment was passed by Congress in 1919, many of the states, including New York, Illinois, South Dakota, Michigan, Oklahoma had already enacted suffrage laws (*Ibid.*: 202). A federal law was now within reach and with the support of the Supreme Court on its side, NAWSA succeeded in making Congress consider the amendment: "The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the Untied States or by any State on account of sex."

The following year, 1920, witnessed the adoption of the Nineteenth Amendment – the year in which the 'Miss America' beauty pageant was born as well (Faludi, 1991:50). Kleinberg's comment that women's right to vote was accepted as a "measure of gratitude for their [women's] participation in the war effort rather than as a matter of social justice" offers an alternative look into American history. Whatever the motive and outcome of the adoption of the amendment may be, it meant a giant step for women's rights. The following years raised yet new theoretical questions such as whether women's suffrage would be effective in reaching other goals of women's rights movements, and whether women would get lost in party politics. Furthermore, despite the efforts of some black societies' attempts to preach about the gains of the new amendment, black women usually failed to register to get the right to vote in many southern states due to literacy tests and other obstacles.

The so-called radical feminists, on the other hand, were much more critical of American economy and politics in relation to women's rights. The most radical feminist of the period in the United States was probably Emma Goldman, or 'Red Emma' as she came to be known, an anarchist of Russian origin, who was an *opponent* of women's suffrage and turn-of-the-century warmongers, and an exponent of free love and contraception in relation to women's rights over their bodies. Suffrage for women, she claimed, was a 'fetish' and she went on to define the suffrage movement as an attempt severed from the economic realities of American people and as related to the middle class problems (Gamble, 2001: 242). Goldmann was surely a quite marginal figure in the United States, and her ideas merging anarchism and feminism were not welcome; her U.S. citizenship was taken back in 1908, and she was finally deported in 1919, the year in which the Nineteenth Amendment was passed by Congress.

Another and much more remembered contemporary radical is Charlotte Perkins Gilman, a socialist feminist of her own kind, and the author of the famous utopian work, *Herland* (1915). In 1898, Gilman achieved fame with her controversial book, *Women and Economics: The Economic Factor between Men and Women as a Factor in Social Evolution* (1898). Her arguments, which emphasized the importance of social environment instead of biology as a decisive factor for the roles of men and women in society, and the development of an industrial society releasing women from the home, are still radical and they were much more revolutionary for fin-de-siècle America.

Another riverbed that one can pursue throughout nineteenth-century American history is the utopian streak in feminism, as clearly exemplified by Gilman's *Herland*. Feminist utopias can be found in many forms such "dream vision, satiric dialogue, alternative future, communitarian romance, and science fiction" (Kessler, 1995: ix). Much criticized by twentieth-century intellectuals for its 'unrealistic' and 'romantic' approach to the material and historical basis of women's rights movement, utopian feminism or the utopian search of women for their rights was quite a common and idealistic search for 'retrievable injuries.' There was, of course, a certain difference between communal experiences of utopia and literary

utopias as narratives, the former being tested and the latter standing for alternative futures that were not always meant to be materialized.

Many utopian experiments in America had their basis in religious sects and their search for the ideal commonwealth on earth, which should not, of course, obscure the fact that America has been a land of utopias right from the start. John Smith, the founder of the first permanent British settlement in America, was maybe the first creator of an ideal continent image for America. The Pilgrim Fathers' search for their 'commonwealth' is surely another central example, maybe an archetype for America in the following centuries. These images and examples, though transformed according to many ideologies and longings, have gone on creating their own myths of utopia throughout American history.

When American women realized that they were fed up with patriarchal systems of society which rather circumscribed their intellectual and spiritual pursuits, or when they thought some alternative communities could offer something better, they decided to join some experimental communities, many of them religious. The most famous one among these was the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, or the Mormons in short. The basic point of attraction for female converts of the Mormon society – it was composed of individuals who believed that earthly reforms such as sharing everything and communal faith could lead to God's approval – was that they were endowed with roles of real importance, which nevertheless did not mean that they were able to break free from their traditional roles. This point alone should be sufficient to remark that "these societies were part of the church structure rather than challenges to the patriarchal society" (Kleinberg, 1999: 85). Their sanctioning of polygamy, as a way to attract converts, resulted in public unease and enmity, and they had to migrate west. Kleinberg's short but striking explanation for the benefits of Mormon practice of plural marriage is that for some rural women it "provided companionship and shared child-rearing; for others it was a trial to be borne for the sake of eternity" (*Ibid.*: 86). This community has survived into the twentieth century and yet, inevitably through some concessions, "they accepted public sentiment regarding marriage" (*Ibid.*: 87).

Another alternative community was the Oneida Community, founded by John Humphrey Noyes in 1848. Although many of these experiments were short-lived, the Oneida community would be able to prove its longevity, surviving well into the last decades of the twentieth century although in a new form, as a joint-stock company (Kitch, 2000: 24). The Perfectionists, as they were rightly called, established this community in New York. Kleinberg summarizes the basic objectives of the Oneida community:

> [The Oneida community] had a complex marriage system, avoided sexual exclusivity, and promoted voluntary motherhood. Women and men worked together, shared domestic work, used birth control (*coitus reservatus*) to avoid pregnancy and enhance female pleasure, and raised children communally. They wished to attract women and upheld their claim to equal rights within the community. (Kleinberg, 1999: 87)

Sometimes, American women tried to establish their own communities such as the Society of Believers in Christ's Second Appearing, or the Shakers in short (Kitch, 2000: 22,24). Such communities established by women had a stronger tendency to challenge traditional roles for women. In 1775, the Shakers, led by their leader Ann Lee, who claimed that "she embodied Christ's spirit in female form," created a secluded world for themselves in which they segregated the sexes and defended equality between them to create the first community, as they believed, to "disenthrall women from the condition of vassalage," securing them by "just and equal rights with men" in accordance with "Ann Lee's belief that the godhead contained male and female elements" (Kleinberg, 1999: 86). Many of their converts were between the ages of 20 and 45 "who had been married or were seeking a means for support outside marriage" (*Ibid.*) in a Shaker world of celibacy, pacifism and simplicity, which, according to Kitch, neither tolerated much criticism (Kitch, 2000: 47) nor altered the "convention of female domestic service" as "each Sister was assigned to make a particular Brother's bed, do his laundry, and sew on his buttons" (Andrews quoted in Kitch, 2000: 42). In spite of the changes that have taken place since the foundation of the Shaker communities, the Shaker utopian enterprise seems

to have survived to our day although the legal and material conditions are no longer the conditions of the nineteenth century.

Another important community was the Nashoba Colony in Tennessee founded by a Scotswoman, Frances Wright, in 1825. Kitch informs that this colony had “dual liberatory purposes: the emancipation of slaves as well as women through the elimination of private property, class distinctions, nuclear families, and religion” (Kitch, 2000: 37). Based upon these ideals, “liberal divorce laws, and married women’s property rights” were introduced (Kleinberg, 1999: 86), which were not the only radical steps taken in the colony: separating children from their parents to educate them, and mixing of races were also shocking for the colony’s neighbors who suspected that “the community was promoting free love between the races” (Kitch, 2000: 37).

Another one, the Woman’s Commonwealth or the Sanctificationists’ community, founded by Martha McWhirter in the 1870s, had its roots in the Methodist Church. They, like many other utopian feminist communities of the time, thought that the only way to be free of the marriage bond was through celibacy, which also meant the liberation from “the restrictive laws regulating married women’s economic activities in nineteenth-century Texas” (*Ibid.*). Like many feminist communities of the nineteenth century, the Sanctificationists advocated the idea of celibacy against marriage as a release from a system that secured no economic rights for women. Kitch therefore claims that these communities were in fact unable to overcome “the family/sex question” (*Ibid.*: 33). Likewise, although the Owenites too tried to remove the “oppressive and damaging effects of the patriarchal family” (Levitas, 1990: 39), their communities in the United States – particularly in New Harmony – were never able to make the sexual reforms necessary to transcend the ingrained (male) values and attitudes and to create a sexually equal society (*cf.* Kolmerten, 1990: 68-101; 142-169).

What Charlotte Perkins Gilman and other feminist voices of the nineteenth century advocated in their feminist utopias was based upon other precepts. These literary works were not written to be lived out but to criticize and to suggest alternatives. The first example of such American feminist utopias is probably Mary

Griffith's "dream novelette" called *Three Hundred Years Hence* (1836) (Kessler, 1995: 250). The work is based upon a male's narration of an altered United States in which women seem to occupy the central role. Kessler's remark about the work is that "though women's rights receive central focus, women characters strangely do not" (*Ibid.*: 3). Kessler also underlines the Jeffersonian influence in Griffith's work. Kitch notes the basic themes of this work such as the eradication of war, reforming of industry, etc.

Like many of the first feminist utopias, Griffith's work seems to stand close to traditional examples, as it does not "propose to eliminate men or marriage" (Kitch, 2000: 65). Yet as one of the first examples of this genre, it should not be overlooked because although utopia as a literary genre is very ancient, so few works until Griffith's time had dealt with women's problems, let alone being written by them. What had been petty issues in traditional utopias became central and fundamental in women's utopias.

Following Griffth's lead, many feminist utopias were written between the years 1840 and 1920. Sally L. Kitch in her *Higher Ground* states that separatist feminist utopias, that is to say, "manless (or man-free)" utopias, were a "staple of feminist utopian fiction" (*Ibid.*: 64) during these years although they were not the only examples of feminist utopias. Gilman's *Herland* (1915) is also an example of this approach in feminist utopias, and maybe the most intricate one. Many similar works – more than two hundred – were written during the period between 1836 and 1915. It may be stated that these works testify to the longings of American women for equality although the points and issues highlighted by these writers were diverse. Olive Banks argues that, although there were different issues treated in different ways, there were basically three intellectual sources for women's movements/feminism.

The first one is evangelical Christianity, which was related to the "ideology of women's moral guardianship" (Kessler, 1995: xix). This first source cannot be specified as a major influence in feminist utopias, although it figures in Annie Danton Cridge's utopia. It rather served to imply the moral superiority of women over men. The second influence is defined as Enlightenment philosophy,

which unearthed the power of reason and natural rights (*Ibid.*). As the idea of fighting for equal rights pervaded the world, many women too began to advocate the idea that they were neither inferior nor frail beings and should have equal rights with men. The influence of Enlightenment has been immense and many theses of feminism were instituted upon the principles introduced during the Enlightenment, and these are manifest in many feminist utopias, especially in those written during the periods when equal rights movements were strong. The last influence is communitarian socialism with its "economic, political, and social innovations" (*Ibid.*: xix). This last influence has been immensely substantial in shaping many feminist utopias, including many works from both the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Issues like child-care, labor, gender roles, and marriage have been discussed within this framework, which has had the advantage of incorporating many novelties from communitarian utopias, too.

1.2 ANNIE DANTON CRIDGE: *MAN'S RIGHTS*

The most influential utopia before Gilman's work is actually a dystopia for many men. Annie Danton Cridge's *Man's Rights; or, How Would You Like It?* (1870) envisions a world in which gender roles are reversed and 'the cult of true womanhood' is practiced by men. The book consists of nine satiric dreams that seem to follow the ancient tradition of dream vision as a device releasing the suppressed creative power of the subconscious. It is an ironic portrait of a world in which the "true cult of manhood" prevails. Griffith's work was probably a source of inspiration for Cridge.

Man's Rights discusses issues related to marriage and gender roles in a society on Mars. The unfairness of marriage, Kitch comments, repeating Carol Farley Kessler's study of feminist utopias, was a dominant theme in fifty-five examples from the period between 1840 and 1920 (Kitch, 2000: 65). Another prevalent theme was the shortcomings of the home and the traditional family for both women and children. The organization of the family has usually been seen as an

extension of the dominant ideology rather than a simple unity of spouses and children. The first impression of the narrator about this dream society thus is a reversal of women's burden. First, we are presented with "the home of the lowly" (Kessler, 1995: 6):

> I thought those gentlemen-housekeepers looked very pale, and sometimes nervous; and when I looked into their spirits (for it seemed in my dream that I had the power), I saw anxiety and unrest, a constant feeling of unpleasant expectancy, – the result of a long and weary battling with the cares of a household. (MR 5)

The narrator is quick to realize the "weak," "stoop-shouldered" and "unsexed" men who are chained to their homes by housework. Not only the kitchen but also the nursery and all other parts of the house usually associated with women are taken care of by men. Preparing the dinner, mending the clothes, sewing and the like – all emblems of womanhood – are among men's responsibilities and duties. At the end of the day when the lady of the house is back in her "angelic beauty", "so charmingly combined with intellect" and in sound health, the gentleman of the house is exhausted, and all he can do is to move to and fro in his rocking chair, watching his lady reading by the fireside in comfortable slippers. The focus of the narration then shifts towards a family that is wealthy enough to keep servants for housework. The 'Bridget' of the house – an Irish name which usually recalled a 'housemaid' during the 1870s (Kessler, 1995: 309) – seems to hate his gentleman-housekeeper, and this man seems to be in no better condition than the gentleman of the first house.

The reader then is taken to a "housekeeper's indignation meeting" at which all men wear kitchen-aprons as symbolic of gender role reversal. The meeting is described with humorous undertones, illustrating male figures with babies in their arms. This is in fact a women's rights meeting turned upside down. By employing this device of role reversal, Cridge voices the grievances of women in a witty manner. At the meeting, women complain of the daily drudgery of housework and ask for inventions from which they can benefit. This longing of women to be free of kitchen work and ironing – two symbolic acts of womanhood – was one of the crucial women's rights issues of the nineteenth century because many women

thought that technological innovations would break the chains that tied women to the kitchen and the house. Many of the economic blueprints to free women of the house were based upon the employment of recent inventions for domestic use – something reminiscent of contemporary advertisement policies.

Charlotte Perkins Gilman's *The Home* (1903) deals with the same contradiction between the public sphere and the domestic sphere. Such emancipation, many women thought, would speed up the process of women's integration into the public sphere and would result in an extension of women's rights movements. Cridge's solution for domestic imprisonment due to housework is expressed by a character in *Man's Rights*: to form cooperative kitchens and workshops (MR 8). The succeeding pages of the work depicts a 'Land of Cockaigne' for the men of this dreamland:

> And forthwith there sprang up large cooking-establishments in different parts of the city, that could, as if by magic, supply hundreds of families with their regular meals. I looked and lo! what machinery had done in the weaving of cloth, above and beyond what had been effected by the handloom, was accomplished here. The inventive genius of the age had been at work; and the result was a wondrous machine that could cook, wash, and iron for hundreds of people at once [...] The washing and ironing, I discovered, was done in the same expeditious manner, by machinery; several hundred pieces going in at one part of the machine dirty, and coming out at the other end a few minutes afterwards, rinsed and ready to dry. The ironing was as rapid as it was perfect—smooth, glossy, uncreased, unspecked; all done by machinery. (MR 8,10)

This dream vision for men reflects some of the dreams of a nineteenth-century American woman, excluding the right to vote for women which is not achieved here yet. Cridge's work also mirrors a presumption of her time that technology would be the means to materialize the dream of a better future, liberating women from the burden of housework and creating "an emancipated class" (MR 10). In envisioning such a society, she eventually questions the gender roles and their division in her society, and yet she, rather than redistributing these roles to men and women, seems to allot them to machines.

If one thinks of the critical function of utopia, this dream can be interpreted as a search for alleviating the burden of women, and the narrator seems to

emphasize that such a technological development would bring about a possibility of sexual equality. As the first dream of liberation for ‘men’ and of equality between sexes is over, the narrator returns to her “reality,” and yet the dream remains as a herald of the “good time coming”, when technology and science, two pillars of progress at the turn of the century, will bring into every household “peace, sweet peace” (*Ibid.*).

The second dream in the book largely deals with the issue of women’s garments. The narrator “pens” her dreams down as soon as she awakens at “midnight”, the part of the day with which women have been associated, before she forgets them – though her husband thinks it improper to write at this time of the day – and when she can still remember them free from the interference of daily realities (*Ibid*). The narrator and her husband roam the streets of this dream city to discover its more extraordinary aspects. The common device of role reversal is once more employed so as to imply the stereotyped approach toward women’s dress, and the narrator mentions not only the variety and elaborateness of men’s “dresses” but also underscores women’s general attitude and interest towards other women and their dress. With their embroidered dresses and tiny “portemonnaies” these men, shunning the mud of the streets, seem to be lost in their magazines of fashion, living in their domain of knitting and embroidery, and devoting their time to gossip only. In this satire, the narrator seems unable to stand this vision of “degradation”:

> “Alas! alas!” I said: “what means this degradation? Why have the lords of creation become mere puppets or dolls? Where is the loftiness and intellectuality of *man* — *noble man*! (MR 12)

After this ironic remark about men’s prowess, the narrator deals with another seminal issue in feminism: work and marriage. The cliché of the “angel in the house” is ridiculed by the example of a boy who wants work like women do and “learn a business.” The ‘patriarchal system’ in the capital of that dream nation seems to have dominated every single post and institution of importance, such as courts, colleges, etc. As women of the nineteenth-century United States were very much excluded from this system, the narrator’s effort here seems to question the dilemma

of judging women as vain and beautiful 'creatures' only. This quite naturally leads to the fallacy that the women in the dream are destined to rule and to govern as the men are held to be inferior creatures, implying an essentialist assessment of women's and men's qualities. What is implied by this is that keeping women away from the right of education by several excuses, sexual domination and 'house imprisonment' being among these, in effect keeps a vicious circle going, only strengthening the already existing prejudices about women's inferiority. As some women were not able to find any means to work (yet as explained before many women indeed had to work in dire conditions) or to learn a business, their financial status totally depended upon their masters' will and mercy. Their financial dependence, needless to say, brought about a moral enslavement, too, which forced them to resort to every possible way or trick to get some money from their husbands, an economics of moral dependence discussed in Gilman's "A Woman's Utopia," too. The narrator's remark in this role reversal seems to suggest the control of a master-slave morality that harms both sexes in different ways:

> Man was not the only sufferer, but the wrong done to man acted and re-acted on woman; for men, being defrauded in their education, and nearly all avenues of pecuniary independence closed to them, marriage, with those half-educated, dependent creatures called men, was necessarily their highest ambition. There was no other way for them to obtain wealth or a home; hence, they devoted all their powers to the one grand object of catching a woman with money; hence woman became also the sufferer, being often trapped into marriage by one of these silly, worthless men, who has learned well the arts and schemes of wife-catching. (MR 15)

The degradation of both sexes due to the established order of patriarchy seems to contribute to the continuation of the vicious circle about women's capacities. The dream also offers exceptional male figures who are able to match the qualities of the best women in that dream society. These extraordinary figures refute the common prejudices about women's deficiencies, for if some male members of that society can be extremely successful even under such restrictions, there seems to be no plausible reason to claim that offering the same opportunities of education to women would not transform them into similar individuals, too. The essentialist approach about women's frailty and inferiority also rests upon some overlooked

aspects of education emphasized not only by Cridge but also by many twentieth-century feminists.

Another issue related to education seems to be the problem of consciousness-raising among women, which is not solely related to formal education. Cridge, when she wrote *Man's Rights*, was able to observe the change going on among women, which gained momentum after the Seneca Falls Declaration. Her greatest skill as a narrator of contemporary issues is maybe best seen in Dream Number Three in which she portrays a lecture on man's rights, an allusion to many meetings in the nineteenth century as well as a reference to Wollstonecraft's book, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*. A meeting with such a theme is a good laughing stock for the women in the dream who attend the meeting. After the emancipation brought about by technological developments, 'men' having the "leisure for thought" realize that there are still many rights that they have not achieved yet. Therefore, reflecting the changes in Cridge's time, this dream tackles the problem of voting, which seems to be the next step for 'men'. During Cridge's time, the campaign for women's suffrage was definitely the greatest issue of debate both between men and women and among women.

The third dream dealing with the "wrongs" of man before the "rights of man" reemphasizes the importance of education and upbringing in the formation of "men," rejecting the alleged physical frailty of women, and ascribing it to the lack of physical exercise. As for the claims of intellectual inferiority, the speaker at the meeting believes that if 'men' in the text are not allowed to employ their intellect for some useful purpose, it is only natural that they become feeble-witted. Some 'men' still think within the boundaries of the established order and assume it their responsibility to look after the babies. Furthermore, some 'men' seem to be satisfied with the way the things are and therefore they object to the right of voting for 'men'. As one can easily infer, women's rights movements of the nineteenth century did not find a unified block of the female sex to support them; they had to struggle to convince many women of the importance and meaning of voting for their common good.

Another noteworthy argument of irony at the meeting is about beauty. "Men," these beautiful creatures of the house, a woman says, are supposed to live within the boundaries of home. Employing the idea of heavenly beauty of curves and circles coming down from Plato and Aristotle, Cridge suggests that men are ugly creatures lacking aesthetics in their angular physical appearance whereas Nature in its harmony points at woman as the ideal of perfection. Following the argument that the parts of a whole share the same attributes, it is claimed ironically that if woman is mentally and physically superior, and if these two aspects are related, a physically inferior man must be inferior in all aspects. This travesty of logic seems to parody the commonplace approach of men in the nineteenth-century United States, and thus it transforms the so-called inferiority of the physical features of women into something divine, relating them to Nature:

> "[...] Look at his angular, long form; look at his hairy face. Is he not in his outward structure and appearance more allied to the lower animals? Look at him, and do you not at once think of the monkey? [Hear, hear!] Now turn to woman. Look at her! Does not Nature delight in curves as in lines of beauty? "See how the planets as they revolve in their orbits delight in curves? It's Nature's perfect method of form and motion. Now look at woman's beautifully curved face and bust, and compare her form in its curved outlines with the angular outlines of man's form, and tell me if *Nature herself* [italics mine] has not put the stamp of inferiority on man! (MR 22)

Woman's having a "larger organ of language than man" (*Ibid.*), it is said, means that "*woman is the natural orator*; that it is she who should be the lecturer, the speech-maker, the orator, and not man." If this greater organ is given by Nature, and if one can justify one's arguments with reference to Nature only, and without further arguments, it should not be implausible to confine "men" to his domestic world. This phallogocentric world of "woman," her tongue and language replacing the penis in the dream, gives her the power to dominate the public sphere, while "man" is destined to be "the quiet, the silent, the unobtrusive" (*Ibid.*). When the third dream of satire and irony is over, the narrator is relieved to understand that all was just a dream: "In this waking world of ours," the narrator as a female figure still concludes her narrative with a call for equality (MR 23).

The following dream further explores the issues of nineteenth-century U.S. women's rights movement. When the narrator falls asleep and dreams the venue of the meeting once more, she, like Rip Van Winkle but falling asleep instead of waking up, sees her dream world after a lapse of twenty years. The men in the dream world seem to have been able to bring about many revisions in their society thanks to some revolutionary changes in education concerning the rights of children. Cridge here seems to unite the issue of women's rights with that of children's rights, as she seems absolutely cognizant of the importance of the relationship between them. In this short dream, "men's rights" are incorporated into the greater framework of human rights, or universal rights, the rights of children being a part of this broader framework.

The fifth dream deals with the justification of sexual discrimination by the help of the Scriptures. The well-known story of Adam and Eve, here, is reversed and thus a satire on men's explanation of female inferiority is offered. This alternative Bible, it is said, was translated by able and "good women" so it has to be just and correct. Still, a different point of view for "men's inferiority and sin" is given from the New Testament suggesting that Christ did not discriminate believers. The first part of this dream suggests that religion has been abused to keep "men" down but a more careful examination of the Bible may unearth facts supporting the idea of equality instead of inferiority or superiority.

The following topic of the dream is the problem of equality of sexes before laws, which are women-made in Cridge's travesty. The inequality about property rights concerning a married couple, "the woman's" control over her husband's property, the injustice in inheritance laws, and the laws about the custody of children after the woman's death are hints by the author to suggest the unjustness sustained under the guise of matrimony sanctioned by unfair laws and the marriage contract. The narrator then goes on to discuss these matters with the men of this dream world. When she portrays a world in which men's rights are achieved and the roles of sexes are reversed, she is asked to show her land on the map. Ironically, the map being a map of this dream world contains no trace of her real world, implying that that world is lost for good. When the narrator wakes up, she draws the map from

her memory, and with the help of a friend comes to realize that it is in fact the planet Mars, the mysterious 'other,' the planet associated with men.

The next dream contains a remark by the narrator about Darwin's ideas concerning sexes and heredity. Here the narrator assumes a superficial approach and states that the peculiarities of sexes are transmitted from one generation to the other, and so these remain very much the same. She goes on to challenge this idea without any detailed argument. The repercussions of Darwin's ideas, especially those concerning sexual selection, were usually negative in his lifetime, and in the nineteenth century this was manifest in many works by both feminist and non-feminist writers. Many feminists thought that Darwin's ideas concerning the survival of species were centered on the male and competition and that its application to culture as Social Darwinism need not be necessarily true. Cridge, like Gilman after her, seems to believe in the mutability of human nature. Remembering the successful male figures in her women-dominated dream world, the narrator thus feels relieved as she thinks that the 'inferiority of a sex' [*sic*] cannot be inherited or bequeathed.

This argument then is linked to another one about some men in the dream world objecting to an attempt for the extension of the right to vote to their fellow men. Although Darwin's ideas shook the certainties of Christianity in the Victorian period, here he is mentioned as a figure whose theory is not favorable towards women. The superficial objection directed towards his ideas concerning the sexes is repeated in an uncommon context, this time to oppose sexual roles as they are defined by Christianity.

A very interesting point worth mentioning here is that although many religions hold that man was created first, the story of Lilith in the Talmudic legends, Adam's first wife who "was created at the same time as Adam," reveals an alternative female or wife figure who believes herself to be man's equal and rejects to obey Yahweh's will to make her inferior (Storm, 2001: 50). This legend suggests the usually overlooked aspect of the suppression of woman's identity in the Old Testament, which also explains the reason why it is left out. Another important point that may help to second the argument to amend woman's inferiority concerning the order of creation is offered by studies in biology:

> In some fundamental sense, women, like all female mammals, came first; the old Adam and Eve story is wrong, even as an allegory. In allegorical terms, the story would make more sense if Eve came first, and Adam was an afterthought created out of a modified portion of her body. Males are simply modified females tailored to a particular role in the reproductive process (Gribbin and Cherfas, 2001: 64).

In 1895, twenty-five years after the publication of Cridge's book, Elizabeth Cady Stanton prepared *The Women's Bible*, discussing some parts from the Old and New Testaments about women so as to challenge and to refute the orthodox perception of women dominant in her lifetime. Being a radical attempt to defend the rights of women from a religious point of view, it was actually seen as a threat to the common cause and therefore was rejected by many members of the National American Women's Suffrage Association, so much so that the 1896 convention of the association rejected its relation to this new Bible. Religion was a very perilous issue to deal with as it could raise many other problems to be added to the already existing ones (Kessler, 1995: 310). What Cridge did twenty-five years before Stanton was to handle this problem of religious perspective in fiction, blending it with humor to make it more agreeable.

Depending upon the story of creation of man and woman in the alternative Bible of the dream world, these objecting 'men' claim that they are already burdened with too much responsibility related to their homes, and that they cannot bear the burden which is to be brought about by the extension of suffrage to men. This ironic remark about the disagreement among 'men' depicts the very first discussions in the nineteenth century about whether such an extension of suffrage would be detrimental to women. Such a reaction seems to be a reflection of the post-1848 backlash – which is also underlined by Faludi's account of the first backlash in the history of the United States (Faludi, 1991: 48-49) – which had its roots in the conservative mindset of many men *and* women ('victims' of a certain kind of 'false consciousness'), who were either afraid of losing existing conveniences in marriage or going against the dictates of religion and conventions. Although this first backlash had different manifestations concerning diverse but interrelated "late-Victorian" issues such as motherhood and contraception, "brain-womb" conflict, and property

rights, female suffrage was widely accepted as the standard of the women's movement (*Ibid.*). Thus, in Cridge's work, the petition signed by the most respectable 'husbands of senators' and 'clergymen' stands as an insurmountable obstacle before the movement for 'men's rights.' Many men in the dream assume their duties as God-given and sacred and this belief comforts them as they think it proper to be employed in their daily routine, which, according to these men, cause no feeling of inferiority before women. Besides, they claim, their women can represent them in every matter, "at the ballot-box, in scientific pursuits, in the lecture-room, and in the world of business and legislation" (MR 37). This final remark in the dream, in fact, embodies the core realities of women's rights movement in various countries and at different times.

The narrator continues to write down her dreams at midnight when her husband wants to sleep, and as a result her husband remonstrates her for disturbing his sleep, and defending *his* rights, he wants her to go to some other room, probably to a *room of her own* (which she does not have), reminding the reader of the title of Virginia Woolf's famous work. Leaving aside her husband asleep, she goes on to narrate her seventh dream, which in fact deals with the problem of beauty and make-up as a hallmark of discussions about women's liberation from male norms and values. What follows is a weary argument about how 'women's' notions of beauty degrade 'men's' intellect for the sake of beauty.

In the second part of this dream, what is explained first is some women's support for 'men's rights.' That extraordinary development seems to take place when some sympathetic women read the declarations *against* men, an example reminiscent of names like John Stuart Mill, who was a staunch defender of women's rights with his wife. The following argument of the dream is a striking remark about the survival of the fittest. A woman in the dream claims that the inferior men that the narrator has encountered up to that moment are not the sole representatives of the male "race"; these are, it is explained, the "*fashionable* race," and as "inferior races must give place to superior" in accordance with the "beautiful law" given by "our Father," their race will become extinct (MR 43). The discourse related to the superiority of races was popular during the last decades of the nineteenth century thanks to the recent

researches in anthropology and the rise of Indo-European linguistics. Both Cridge and Gilman seem to make use of this discourse of race in their works, but Cridge's narrator follows this process of elimination for millennia to suggest the possibility of an age of equality between men and women.

The following dream takes the reader from the narrator's journeys to Mars back to our world, to New York, in a dream; like some other aspects of Cridge's utopia, this dream has many common points with Gilman's "A Woman's Utopia," too. After a lapse of ten years, the narrator and her husband, returning home, learn that their president now is a lady and "yet the world goes around as usual"; the world has not turned upside down but "right side up" (MR 45). The government includes many female members who have the right to pass laws by their votes. One of the first laws they pass is about men caught in the act of prostitution; a law saying that instead of sending the captured prostitutes to some asylums after arresting and imprisoning them, men should be punished by the same standards. Prostitution, an act accepted as a sign of moral depravity, has been incorrectly associated with women so as to disregard men's role in it. The subjection and degradation of women by prostitution is reflected accordingly through role reversal in the dream; houses are built for the reformation of thousands of "prostitute men" – including many revered figures of the society – and their names are made public for all to see. When the women living in poverty labelled "prostitutes" were caught, they were fined and they had to bribe the police, and the vicious circle of prostitution may be explicated by their constant struggle to survive by further prostitution. The solution to eradicate this "social evil," which was "the great moral ulcer of the nineteenth century," is presented as an example of women's ability to cope with social problems when men fail to succeed in doing so, and that "by shielding the victim and enlightening the wrong doer!" (MR 51). Once women's morality and laws replace the corrupt and unjust values of patriarchy, everything is quickly reversed, though like in Gilman's utopia, there is a tacit acknowledgement of women's inherent power to do so and no explanation for it.

The ninth dream to conclude the book deals with the economic independence of women, which is, of course, a precondition of their freedom. The

narrator first dreams herself floating in the skies, offering the reader a bird's-eye view of working conditions in the countryside and then in some cities. The dire working-conditions of the post-Civil War U.S. in sweatshops and millinery stores and overworked and underpaid women seem to be absent from the cities the narrator observes. In this last dream world, though women are not excluded from any occupations, so few of them deal with the drudgery of the cities; in fact, it is carried out by boys and men. After seeing some women at some important posts, the narrator rejoices, but the idea of unemployment among women seems to be an inevitable consequence of this low number of workingwomen. Soon after that she understands that fifty years ago some kind of revolutionary change took place, altering many things not only for women but also for society in general. Kessler, by an endnote to the text, elucidates the meaning of this change. The incident is related to the post-Civil War experience of losing great numbers of men in New England cities and to westward migration (Kessler, 1995: 311). The remaining women, widows and unmarried women, joining hands with some married women cultivate the countryside, both earning money and doing away with abject working conditions in the cities. Witnessing the success of this enterprise, it is said, many workingmen and workingwomen from the big cities emulated their example. Treading the way shown by two women, after the First Womans' [*sic*] Agricultural Convention, we are told, many became tillers of land, claiming Adam's profession. Practicing easy farming with machinery to help them, dealing with poultry, etc., women are told to have become rich. Suspicious of women's ability to sustain themselves, many newspapers write about the demoralizing effects of dealing with the soil for women, claiming that they would become "masculine" and therefore no man would marry them. What the narrator offers here is an allusion to earlier dreams in which by travesties many "vain" female figures, who make up "a numerous race of dandies and would-be do-nothings," are presented.

Here the narrator's conversation with the man from her dream reveals a stereotyped vision of woman, who is thought to be closer to nature than man is. The image is in fact that of Mother Earth, the nourishing and protecting mother, embracing "her children to her home and heart" (MR 59), an idea repeated in

Gilman's *Herland*, too. This idea of reunification, which also recalls the common dichotomy of man/culture and woman/nature, may also be observed to some extent in the eco-feminism of the 1960s. Cridge, rather than dealing with ecological concerns, tries to display women's power and intelligence even in difficult situations. Yet a very important point about the new country life is that women are joined by many men, too, leaving only "the miserable weaklings" with their fashionable mothers in the cities, who lack the ability and will to perform the actions necessary to live in the transformed country. This is not sexual segregation but a reform started by some women and followed by many others, among which are also many men. Finally, the narrator, emphasizing the importance of self-sustaining for women – which is also a precondition for the existence and survival of an all-female society as discussed in Gilman's *Herland* – shakes the hand of the lady who began the change fifty years ago. The old lady's hand in hers, namely the future in touch with the present, she wakes up from her final dream, which she hopes may be a prophecy for all women.

CHAPTER 2

THE CLASSICAL AGE OF FEMINIST UTOPIAS

2.1 CHARLOTTE PERKINS GILMAN: A LAND OF HER OWN

In *Herland*, Gilman employs a satirical language and she directs her criticism not within the framework of real or fictional communal experiences of shared life between males and females, but instead, she divides the unity of these communal experiences to create two separate identities and two fictional worlds, namely 'Herland' and 'Ourland.' The sequel to *Herland* (1915), *With Her in Ourland,* reverses the focus of the first book in which male visitors from "Ourland" witness the extraordinary matriarchal and female world of a secluded all-female society. This Amazon-like society of Herland surely reflects many of the sensibilities of Gilman's time. Her attempt to unite the socialist trends of her time with a nascent feminism is, like in many works of later feminists, the demonstration of an "essential and necessary interdependence" (Lane, 2001: x). Feminism's long history as related to socialism was to begin with many Fourierist utopian communities and Fabianism in America.

The ideological background of *Herland* also stems from Gilman's own experiences in a patriarchal world, which tried to label her as a marginal and a 'mad woman.' After her first child, feeling so depressed and nervous, Gilman sought help from S. Weir Mitchell, the famous neurologist, who was an acknowledged expert in women's nervous disorders. His treatment included less time for reading and writing, which, finally, deteriorated her situation. Realizing that the doctor's advice was indeed detrimental to her health, Gilman decided to get away from the oppressive atmosphere around her and to divorce. Her famous story, *The Yellow Wallpaper*, about a woman tormented by male figures of patriarchy, written after her divorce, in fact, reflects her experiences of hardship in a male-dominant world.

Gilman then began to work as an editor in many journals, writing and reading, which was something totally contrary to Doctor Mitchell's 'cure.' Yet, her

following career as an editor and her outlook on women's rights were molded by two important male socialist figures writing for *The American Fabian*. She, as a contributing editor to that journal, had the chance to meet the famous William Dean Howells of American Realism – who had become a stern defender of socialism after the Haymarket Incident in 1886 – the author of a less known utopia, *A Traveler From Altruria* (1894). This book contrasts two worlds, one being America and the other one being a world of altruism, based upon the viewpoint of a visitor from Altruria. The sharp contrast between ruthless American capitalism and the egalitarian state of Altruria seems to be based upon More's example in many ways.

The journal, which included many works based upon Fabianism, might have been influential for Gilman. Edward Bellamy, the author of the famous utopia *Looking Backward: 2000-1887* (1888), was also another contributor to the journal. His utopian socialism, which he called "Nationalism" (Lane, 2001: xi), was the prevailing idea in his utopian work. This work is a dream vision, a common device in utopias, which portrays a strange and democratic form of capitalism without private enterprise, crime, sickness and poverty in a world-to-come. The utopian vision of Bellamy was so popular that many "Nationalist" clubs were formed to bring about the ethical changes in his utopia. It is also known that Gilman too was affected by his ideas and she was a member and a preacher in these clubs.

In the following years, when her former husband remarried, Gilman and he decided that the child should live with her father, which of course, was another blemish for her, as she was seen as an "unnatural mother" who was merciless enough to abandon her child. Denying the social roles of motherhood and wife, she began to struggle against patriarchy and against the society that condemned her for her free will and ideology. Her *Women and Economics* (1898) was the first assault on established order and it was quickly translated into many languages as a thought-provoking book (*cf.* Gilman, 1989: pp.134-200). In that book, Gilman tried to evaluate the ideas of Charles Darwin and "their application to society" (Lane, 2001: xiii). It was known that Darwin's ideas had no *direct* associations with *social* theory and cultural development. Herbert Spencer and many contemporary intellectuals nevertheless interpreted Darwin's observations and theory to reach the conclusion

that "society's laws are irrevocably rooted in the evolutionary process, and that there is no way to interfere with the struggle for existence and the survival of the fittest," an idea which was rejected by other intellectuals like Lester Frank Ward, who instead claimed that humans, as creatures capable of changing their own social laws through their minds, could not be comprehended according to the same principles (*Ibid.*: xiii-xiv).

Gilman as a follower of Ward advocated the idea of "plasticity of human nature" (*Ibid.*), and the idea she rejected most vehemently was the alleged dominant role of males in Darwinism. Women could change their passive and subordinate roles that were imposed upon them, she claimed, if they would be aware of their collective identity, and such a change would eventually bring about a revolution in society. Her vision of a revolution was different from Karl Marx's revolutionary communism, and like many American intellectuals she seemed to be detached from Marx's idea of class struggle. Marx's ideas, introduced into America via immigrants from Eastern Europe and Russia mainly in the late nineteenth century, were popular in labor unions and organized movements, but American intellectuals who integrated socialism into their weltanschauung distanced themselves from Marx's vision as somewhat alien to American realities. Gilman's vision was to create "the peaceful collective action of women" as a "humanist" (*Ibid.*: xv). On the other hand, in her introduction to *Herland*, Ann J. Lane reports a discomforting comment by one of the characters in Gilman's *With Her in Ourland*: "only some races – or some individuals in a given race – have reached the democratic stage" (*Ibid.*: xxii). The 'humanist' approach of Gilman, then, should not obscure her racist and elitist inclinations, "sometimes offensive" – also "typical of her time and space" (*Ibid.*: xxi) – in "A Woman's Utopia" (1907) and *Herland* (Kessler, 1995: 131), which seem to mirror some dominant ideologies of her time.

Her ideas in *Women and Economics* followed the line of criticism formerly drawn by Wollstonecraft in her *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, which was based upon an analysis of women's subordination throughout history and the inhumane exploitation women had to suffer. The question was one of traits and universal essentials applied for women, and what was propagated by patriarchy had

been accepted by women, too. The so-called male traits and female-traits were ideologically defined and grouped in such a definite way that it was considered unreasonable to imagine these two groups as coexisting within an individual. Masculinity and femininity were thus defined as separate realms with a binding force of hierarchy between them. Masculine traits/men formed the domineering and dominant group. This, in fact, was essentialism applied to 'female and male psyches' and bodies, which was justified through a distorted interpretation of biology to fit the needs of the patriarchal order. The feminine traits/women were subordinate and they were supposed to be purer and more virtuous.

The generalizations about women and their 'virtues' were rooted in the historical experience of women's subordination, and therefore they would be altered if history's course could be changed in favor of women. Such a change, Gilman and many others claimed, would also free men of the unbearable burden of absolute power, and thus, this new balance of power between the sexes would help the amelioration of humanity's future. Women, therefore, had to realize that their rights were not rights only but their responsibilities as well. To bring about such a change by educating women and raising their consciousness were two issues of extreme importance. They were underlined by Wollstonecraft in the eighteenth century and they would be emphasized in the future, too.

To propagate her ideas related to women's issues, Gilman wrote three utopian works, which she probably saw as the most appealing form to present one's ideas. *Moving the Mountain* (1910), her first complete utopia (which was a revised version of her earlier "A Woman's Utopia" [1907]), presents the United States of 1940 in which women become aware of the "existing possibilities" and the whole society is altered through socialism and, after that, through a new religion defined as "Living and Life" (Lane, 2001: xvi). The new world of the United States is a humanist one and feminism or women's issues are not accentuated in such a humanist society which stands in opposition to the former "masculinist" order (*Ibid*.: xvi). This utopia is said to have been achieved by the humanist and socialist revolution of women. To convince others of the superiority of women's contribution to history, Gilman searches history to reveal and display the trace of women in every

constructive attempt for humanity. Therefore, rather than usurping the control by force, they just, in Lane's words, "reclaim" what had belonged to them (*Ibid.*: xvii). This new world places all the children into the hands of women to create a new people. Gilman, though she is not a 'defender' of motherhood as something inborn in women, still seems careful enough not to accept men as educators and "mothers" for the children whereas many second wave feminists think that severing the ties with motherhood may abate women's burden. Lane, in her introduction to *Herland*, also discusses how men have chosen complying and dependent women, namely Eve figures, instead of Liliths. In this utopia, women select the fittest men, reversing the usual pattern. Gilman here seems to transform the role of men to 'fit' the 'other species,' a fact that attests to Darwin's influence on her discourse.

2.2 A DRAFT FOR UTOPIA: "A WOMAN'S UTOPIA"

Although men are subservient and subordinate in her first works, Gilman's earlier period still adopts a view that allows her to create a world in which she can create a system embracing both men and women. In "A Woman's Utopia" (1907), an earlier work of Gilman, both men and women inhabit the world of future New York, created and ruled by women. Gilman, being aware of the ways to rupture the reader's ties with his or her real world, constitutes her utopia on a time lapse. Taking the male narrator around the world for twenty years, she brings him back to his old New York, only to find a city completely altered, save its name. The book seems to share many common points with Annie Danton Cridge's *Man's Rights*, which was published thirty-seven years earlier. Although the utopia that Gilman depicts in "A Woman's Utopia" does not do away with the existence of men in a women-based society, there are still no significant male characters worth mentioning. This work, which was never completed "because the publisher of *The Times Magazine* "was punished for his rashness" in engaging Gilman "by the prompt failure of his venture" " (Living quoted in Kessler, 1995: 132), when examined with

her *Herland*, presents a convenient viewpoint to study the development of Gilman's conception of utopia.

"A Woman's Utopia" is also significant for its "Introductory," which is actually a summary of Gilman's thoughts about utopia and women in utopia. Underlining the lack of utopias dealing with women's problems, Gilman signals the frame of her future work, too:

> Heretofore all the visions of better living have been given us by men. Never a voice from a woman to say how she would like the world. The main stream of life, the Mother, has been silent. But she is vocal enough today. She speaks and writes, lectures and preaches, teaches in school and college, spreads steadily into all human industries [...] Suppose the Mother makes up her mind as to what she wants, and speaks. (WU 135)

Underscoring the recent gains of women – though Gilman has her racist and elitist predilections – she actually tries to do what she imagines by the last sentence of the above quotation: to write about the longings, dreams and ideas of women. If the times are 'ripe' for women to speak up, she advocates, there is no more a force or a reason to keep them silent when they can ameliorate their situation by their new rights and gains. Like Cridge's utopia before her, and like Gertrude Short's *A Visitor from Venus* (1948) after her, in her 1907 utopia, Gilman assumes that only women can transform the world from its wretched condition to an earthly paradise.

Gilman chooses a male narrator to narrate her feminist utopia, a young man called Morgan G. Street, who inherits a great fortune from his rich aunt. He seems to be in love with a girl called Hope Cartwright, "a sort of cousin by marriage," who seems to be "boiling over with ideas-kind of girl I never liked" although she is "handsome" (WU 136). The narrator shares many ideas of his contemporary fellow men, who, in fact, do not see any kind of reason to try to overcome their prejudices about women. For the likes of Morgan, being a 'nice girl', it seems, means being a beautiful lady with no ideas, especially without feminist ones. The existence of a girl combining both beauty and intelligence is something Morgan cannot accept, and therefore, to evade this 'contradiction', he tends to

neglect her intellectual side and to see the 'oxymoron of an intelligent beauty' as a "delusion" (*Ibid.*).

Morgan's journey seems to be modeled after "that imperturbable Phineas Fogg" in *Around the World In Eighty Days* (WU 140). Before the proposition by Hope and her friends to change New York, Morgan the narrator believes that the world has not changed at all in "four thousand years" and he sneers at the way Hope – her name needs no explanation within a utopia – and her friends devise plans to alter the way of the world (WU 136). Such prejudices of men are questioned when Morgan returns to New York after twenty years – like Irving's Rip – and witnesses the altered city.

Seeing everything in essentialist terms, Morgan thinks that no power can change the vices of the world because history just repeats itself. Nevertheless, the women of the discussion club in the utopia claim that the world is the way it is because it has been run by patriarchy during four millennia, and so if women are 'given' the chance – they borrow Morgan's money to begin – they can change the whole order even in twenty years. This stand against essentialism and stagnation of history is based upon Gilman's claim that only women have this capacity and vision to transform the world – a point that leads to another kind of essentialism about women's nature. Gilman seems to bestow upon women some inherent and essentialist characteristics that cannot be attained by men. Bartkowski discusses the crucial paradox of inherent essentialism in Gilman's work in relation to the success of recent feminist utopias in overcoming such inconsistencies, and underlines a point that is also somewhat apparent in the 1948 post-World War II utopia of Gertrude Short, *A Visitor from Venus*:

> While Gilman does a great deal to prove that such concepts of sex distinctions are socially transmitted, she also accepts certain distinctions as biologically and physically immutable. For our purposes one of Gilman's most significant assumptions is that women's essential tendency is to *protect*, as opposed to men, whose tendency is to *fight*. Contemporary feminism must repeatedly undertake the self-critical task of checking theory and practice so that they do not succumb to the same trap of positing essentialist notions of femininity (Bartkowski, 1989: 27).

The narrator lends the money to these women – and some men – "all with the humanitarian bee in their bonnets, mad with the notion of helping the world" (WU 136), being sure that they will fail. He imagines that all these enthusiastic and idealist women will be married within a few years and then they will "practise their fine theories where they belonged – at home" (*Ibid.*).

When he returns in 1927, after traveling around the world for twenty years, seeing many cultures and becoming a learned man, neither he nor his ideas having changed – "a man doesn't" (WU 143) – he encounters a familiar and yet metamorphosed city. Although he tries to underestimate or discredit the changes, he is compelled to admit the development in his old New York. "Twenty years to a woman is a catastrophe" (*Ibid.*), says the narrator, thinking in terms of masculine superiority and aesthetics. Yet, just like the city itself, Hope seems not to have 'deteriorated', on the contrary she seems much more mature and has "a wiser face – an even finer face" (*Ibid.*). Women are even able to return the borrowed money, which symbolically stands for paying off their debts. This change in the narrator's outlook after a first experience of disbelief is also obvious in *Herland*, paralleling or accompanying a change in the reader's perspective, too.

Although "A Woman's Utopia" is a feminist utopia, too, it is not strictly focused upon women's problems but rather on women's status in a utopian industrial world. Gilman shares some concerns of Cridge, which she also discusses in *The Home* (1903), and some of these are echoed in this text, too – such as working-hour reforms, immigration policies, or doing away with the kitchen, which has been the symbol for women's labor at home and for the sphere ascribed to them. Rather than dealing with such problems directly, Gilman's work tries to depict a world altered in the hands of women. This also stems from her awareness of the interdependence of women's liberation and social aspects and also of the necessity of reforming dress, housing, education, etc. in accordance with sex/gender reforms. The transformations in women's lives are not thoroughly handled, probably due to the fact that the novel was never completed. In some ways similar to Cridge's vision of utopia, Gilman seems to be preoccupied with the life a woman leads in a city, the life of a "city mother" (WU 157). Although she cannot help mirroring her racist concerns when she

talks about the way women of the utopia "settled the negro problem" – Kessler notes the way she sees the "problem" is molded by her "having a racist mindset" (Kessler, 1995: 314) – she nevertheless takes up many ideas of her earlier *Women and Economics* once more and deals with two recurrent issues in her work; the home and the mother.

Before these issues are introduced, the first signs of change are furnished by some technological developments and some physical aspects in the city. Just like in *Man's Rights*, Gilman's work, too, removes the sweatshops, abolishes the slum and moves heavy industry away from the residential quarters (WU 162). The cleanness and glamour of the city mesmerize the narrator – they have cleaned not only the houses but also the streets, the water and the air (WU 160) – as he observes the improved living conditions in amazement. Such technological developments disappear in Gilman's Amazon-like society in *Herland*, in which technology is rather identified with the outside and foreign male world. Nevertheless, her preoccupation with order and hygiene remains, and this aspect of her utopias may be interpreted as a symbolic reflection of Gilman's idea of perfection.

Landscape and city planning has been two important concepts in many utopias, especially since the Renaissance when many utopias were written with the idea of the Golden Ratio in mind. Later on, many so-called "utopian socialists" followed the tradition and devised new cities and imagined new units to organize their communities, including the famous 'phalanstères' of Charles Fourier. Such planning was also strictly related to social planning, too. Many precursors of recent feminist utopias followed the tradition of 'the fathers', and though their problems and concerns were different, in this respect, as in many respects, they did not question the tradition, and so, some constituents of earlier utopias were kept intact. Gilman's "A Woman's Utopia" thus includes such remnants of earlier utopias, and although in her next utopia, *Herland*, she is able to shed many of these, the Weltanschauung of her times probably prevented her from seeing the remaining ones. Only after a set of paradigm shifts during the 1960s related to sexuality and philosophy, the following generation of feminist utopia writers would be able to create a sub-genre in feminism called 'utopian feminism' which would challenge some basic assumptions of

traditional utopias: thanks to the efforts of these feminists of the 1960s and 1970s, many of the long-forgotten feminist utopias would be unearthed so as to rejuvenate the utopian element in feminist thought.

Although the first examples of feminist utopias were not created after such paradigm changes, when feminists such as Cridge copied many features of 'the fathers' utopias,' they were still able to adapt them to fit the framework of feminism. Likewise, Gilman's "A Woman's Utopia" transforms the ancient tradition of city planning to reflect the impeccability of a women's utopia. Creating a world "too good to be true," the women of New York seem to dazzle the male narrator by their controlled world of "almost theatrical beauty" (WU 153). The effect of order in and around Hope's house displays a perfect world for Morgan, reminding him of "Italy, India, ad Greece" or "Alhambra, there of, Egypt, again of Rome, some quite Early English; some of Flanders or old Germany" (WU 153, 154), all being fascinating places for him. The male narrator's memory gathers all memories of 'perfect' places from his travels around the world and unites them in the consummate example of order before his eyes, which, of course reflects Gilman's fixation about order.

Accepting woman as the incarnation of chaos is as old as history itself. Therefore, women's success in creating an 'ordered space' poses a double challenge for men: these women do not accept their alleged affinity to chaos, and what is more they grip the prowess of man's domain, namely order. Yet, such a challenge necessitates an acknowledgement of the duality of order and chaos in relation to the sexes, and with hindsight, it can be stated that Gilman therefore cannot break free of some patriarchal categories and like in many separatist feminist utopias, she reproduces the existing categories of domination.

In this neatly ordered utopia, the free trade mechanisms of American economy works perfectly, electricity is everywhere, many things are cheap, the city and the countryside are skillfully organized, and these have been accomplished thanks to the power of women in politics, business and social life. Women, having learnt how to organize and act, change the *status quo* in New York "hand in hand" with men (WU 155):

> She takes a large part in business and politics, art and science, all industry and trade; that she has become stronger, more beautiful and dresses with wise good taste and personal distinction; that she is now organized and united in splendid co-ordination in every city, throughout the country and internationally as well (*Ibid.*).

Here, it is not hard to see the similarities between Cridge and Gilman as they both emphasize the importance of women in politics – although in *Herland* Gilman develops her ideas to create absolute matriarchy – as the force to eradicate vices and corruption. Gilman's utopia suggests no explanation or clue about a possible opposition to these changes in patriarchy. There is actually a tacit implication of the ideological superiority of women's 'order' and 'government' which results in the New World Party's – apparently the dominant party if not the only one – accepting women "*en masse*" and "[p]lenty of men" into membership (WU 156-157).

To achieve such a change in politics, Gilman, just like Cridge, feels the pressing need for reforms in religion as well. When *The Women's Bible* by Elizabeth Cady Stanton was published in 1895, many followers of women's rights movement were aware that to procure a sound basis for women's rights a religious reform so as to repair the injustices toward women was indispensable. This problem was tackled by Cridge even before Stanton, and Gilman in her 1907 utopia began to work on it. In "A Woman's Utopia," Gilman discusses the unification of this new religion and the notion of "free womanhood" (WU 156) or "aroused motherhood" – with its libidinal and sexual connotations – (WU 160), claiming that a religion to "turn loose" the creative energies of "mother-love" may have real reformative power. Here, the religion of the utopia as a pragmatic and scientific center of attraction and politics also combines the power of "free motherhood", "mother-love" with "social enthusiasm" (*Ibid.*), amplifying the already implanted notions about this ideal community and motherhood. It was not until *Herland* in 1915 that her ideas about a new religion would become mature. Later on, Gertrude Short would also confront the same problem but this time in relation to peace during the 1940s.

This new religion in "A Woman's Utopia" tries to incorporate science to a certain extent in order to question the validity of former religious viewpoints. The

touchstone of legitimacy for religion seems to be its convenience in relation to science as a practical tool put into the service of the state, which is suggested by the narrator's conversation with a man from this new religion; and the man's explanation clarifies Gilman's ideas about what she deems 'outdated' religions:

> Now, we don't live in Judea, nor yet in the Middle Ages. We are in America to-day, and hard at work. If our religion won't fit the Bureau of Agriculture and the Health Commission and the problems of transportation it doesn't belong to us, that's all. This one does. (WU 152)

The new religion of the utopia seems to be very mundane and industry-oriented. As the dominance of science suggests, this religion seems to serve the utopia's needs, instead of utopia serving a religion. Such an approach is probably related to the turn-of-the-century conception of scientific progress and development. The individual's unquestioning obedience to progress (as an implied tenet of this new religion as well) also explains the organic unity between the believer and his/her religion. Gilman, portraying this new religion as the offspring of common sense, relates its emergence after a 'peaceful revolution,' sweeping the other religions before it. To be 'initiated,' one must be erudite in the natural sciences, namely in biology, comparative zoology, physiology, pathology and sociology "most of all" – the last one being Gilman's favorite (WU 145). The revolutionary church of this utopia teaches not "rejection" but methods to "assert and prove" (WU 149). The swell of this religion is so strong that no one can resist it, and every one is 'indubitably' converted.

The religion that Gilman proposes in *Herland* differs in many respects from the one in "A Woman's Utopia." Still, there are some points that herald the development of her concern for mothering and children – two issues that, in fact, form the core of *Herland*. For the earlier issue, Gilman does not yet advocate her so-called radical ideas of *Herland* in this utopia. She keeps many aspects of what the Herlanders call a "bi-sexual [read heterosexual]" (H 54) life. Echoing Cridge's idea that keeping women "in a primitive relation to men, a subordinate, dependent position", very much like a "lower *race*" and therefore preserving "in them the vices and weaknesses of the *lower races*" [italics mine] in turn destroys the sense of

morality in women, because, Gilman explains, in this way, they are forced to lie and to deceive. In terms of Hegel's idea of master/slave morality, this 'slave morality' of the woman enslaves both the offspring and the (master) man. If the slave in this example cannot overthrow her master, enslavement, lies and deceit are destined to go on.

Gilman, therefore, suggests that reforming motherhood is the first step toward overcoming corruption and immorality. As a result, in this utopia, only when "women really became people – independent, self-supporting citizens" (WU 148), they were able to rear their children in a decent way. This transformation also liberated them from their selfishness, "a primitive survival of an outgrown status" (WU 150) and instead, since then, they have adopted "the all-embracing duty" and the "central doctrine", which is "Love in Action" (*Ibid.*).

This process of 'becoming' includes many aspects such as economic independence, which Gilman discusses in *The Home*. Another important point about this new religion is its upward movement from egoism toward "socioism" (WU 149). Kessler, in an endnote to the text, explains the latter term, noting that Gilman was a follower of Fabian evolutionary socialist thought rather than orthodox Marxism (Kessler, 1995: 313). As Lane quotes from the sequel to Gilman's *Herland*, *With Her in Our Land*, Charlotte Perkins Gilman seeks "no German-Jewish economist" – partially due to her racist inclinations and 'Aryanism' – to explicate matters in "interminable and [...] uncomprehensible [*sic*] prolixity" (Gilman quoted in Lane, 2001: xxi). Bullock and Stallybrass state that the adherents of this approach "put their hopes in the 'permeation' of the existing institutions and the 'inevitability of gradualness'" and "shunned grandiose theoretical speculations" (Bullock and Stallybrass, 1979: 226). Outhwaite and Bottomore emphasize the fact that "Fabianism's stress on the collective and the public led it to ignore problems such as the nature of work or divisions of gender" (Outhwaite and Bottomore, 1996: 220).

The first explanation may help to elucidate Gilman's general attitude toward social problems, her solutions – meanwhile she rarely explains the theoretical basis for such solutions or changes – for 'public evils,' and the gradual takeover of this new religion and also clarifies to a certain extent the reason why she eschewed

Marxism. The second explanation about Fabianism, though, does not reflect Gilman’s attitude. Gilman’s study of ‘divisions of gender’ and her contribution to social theory in relation to women’s rights by her books, such as *Women and Economics*, seem to unite her ideas about social reform with her feminist ideas, which is also evident in her literary works.

The most significant part in “A Woman’s Utopia” showing Gilman's mindfulness about “the nature of work” and “divisions of gender” is the conversation between Morgan and Hope in the fifth chapter called “City Living.” The great number of workingwomen attests to the prominence of industry and work in Gilman's work. She seems to be aware of the importance of economic independence for women and therefore questions the widespread belief that a woman’s responsibilities for her family actually necessitates her staying at home and dealing with housework and “domestic economy” only, which eventually means “the worst waste in the world” for Gilman (WU 170).

In other words, by Hope’s comment, Gilman attacks the bonds of marriage, which usually bind a woman to her home only, an issue also handled in *Herland* in a slightly different way. The narrator seems to be shocked by the idea of working married women whereas Gilman's insistence upon marriage between men and women or plain heterosexual marriage may surprise many radical and lesbian feminists. Her concern here, as it is throughout “A Woman’s Utopia,” is actually integrating marriage into a new industrious utopia and overcoming limitations in production caused by marriage. Hope’s comment about the relationship between marriage and industry includes men, too, but this neither alleviates Morgan’s concern nor appeases his macho sensibilities, and he assumes a bitter tone. Revealing the covert ideological intentions in the patriarchal rhetoric by a sarcastic answer to Morgan’s question, Hope does not argue with him, maybe believing in the superiority of the created system in their utopia over Morgan’s well-known yet deficient world, which now belongs to the past:

> “[...] Women in general are married, and *ought to be*; their industrial position is not affected by that. Marriage is a personal relation, *but industry is a social relation*. Maid, wife, or widow–bachelor, husband, or widower–these conditions do not alter one’s social duty. Why should they?”
> “Why should they?” I echoed. “Because wifehood and motherhood are more primal and sacred duties than typewriting and millinery.”
> “Do you mean wifehood and motherhood–really?” asked Hope with a quizzical smile, “or cook-hood and housekeeper-hood?” (WU 164)

Once women are integrated into the great cycle of production and economy, they too are subject to the (job) market’s rules. Gilman then goes on to discuss the issue of wages in the utopia. Another surprising fact is revealed in Hope’s explanation about the wages women earn, which, it is said, are not as high as men’s, especially “when they have young babies” (WU 171). Wage discrimination due to women’s biological differences is said to be countered by an extra payment for the husband. Her radicalism here falls short of real radical changes about day-cares and nurseries. Rather than removing the institution of marriage and motherhood, Gilman tends too keep them and that with reforms necessary only to keep them ‘up to date’ with her utopia.

Furthermore, motherhood, one of the most controversial topics in feminism, is not discarded but sanctified by women in Gilman's utopias. This seems to be a subversion of one of patriarchy’s most despotic definitions. The “aroused motherhood” in “A Woman’s Utopia” is explained as the ‘real motherhood,’ which is, in fact, realized and defined “for the first time” (*Ibid.*). The motherhood prescribed by patriarchy is thus defined as a weak and restrained form of this instinct – Gilman accepts it as an indispensable part of womanhood – in women. Motherhood slowly becomes a profession, or as Hope’s statement clarifies it, “all women bear children” but “only some rear children”(*Ibid.*). This differentiation between ‘bearing’ and ‘rearing’ a child – education and such ‘specialization of labor’ – which creates “one of [our] greatest professions” (*Ibid.*), one that is “only allowed to [our] highest artists” in Herland (H 82), is certainly related to Gilman's personal experiences with her own child whom she sent to her first husband after their divorce. Her experience also seems to have convinced her of the idea that only the “highly competent” can be a ‘mother’ as this ‘profession’ is understood in Herland (H 83).

This new concept of “aroused motherhood” slowly assumes the properties of a cult as Gilman's utopian vision matures, and in *Herland*, it even develops into a religion of its own right. The religion devised and described by Gilman in “A Woman’s Utopia,” a religion that possesses the power to transform the world, also foreshadows some virtues upheld by all Amazon-like Herlanders of her next utopia: “truth, love, courage, cheerfulness, justice, courtesy” (WU 150) and “honesty, efficiency, cleanness, health, beauty, order, peace, economy” (WU 157). As these values change in time, Gilman realizes that a flexible philosophy must form its basis, and she reasons that “when you find a stagnant religion you find subject women” (WU 149). The religion advocated in “A Woman’s Utopia” seems not only quite different from the religion in her later *Herland* but also much more naive in its idealism.

Although she ‘retains’ men, the family and some old notions from the ordinary world in her first utopia, Gilman also highlights some grave consequences and problems of the old world, such as ‘child labor,’ which is defined as “the real race suicide” (WU 150). The tenets of the new religion and feminist order seem to have eradicated this ‘crime’ by emphasizing the prominence of community and a communal consciousness. Yet other than being created by a group of people among whom women are dominant, the new religion has no real radical feminist content, although such content has usually been accepted as Gilman’s hallmark. The last utterance about religion in “A Woman’s Utopia,” in fact, emphasizes the pragmatic aspect of Gilman’s vision, which is very different from the Great Motherhood of *Herland*:

> “I tell you we worship God all the time–*by doing things* [...] We are all here to help on the good work [...] If I were God, I think I’d rather see people like that–happy and busy and full of enthusiasm, and loving each other in dollars and cents, as it were, than to have ‘em praising me. But maybe it’s not what you mean by worshipping God” (WU 152-153).

As for the men in “A Woman’s Utopia,” Gilman unsurprisingly introduces a system of eugenics that complies with her elitist and racist concerns. Preceding *Herland*, this text thus tackles the important issue of population growth.

Only a few pages before the end of her incomplete utopia, Gilman raises the question of demography. Being aware of Thomas Robert Malthus's book – which was an influence on Darwin too – *Essay on the Principle of Population* (1798), and his argument that there is a "natural tendency of populations to expand geometrically, and therefore faster than the resources" (Blackburn, 1996: 229), Gilman tried to devise a plan to check population growth in her utopia(s). Her idea of eugenics once more applies a combination of the terms of production/industry and evolution in relation to the concept of 'sex as race':

> "That's the mother idea nowadays–how to care for all the children born–and how to *produce* better ones. We take a conscious interest at last in *our great function*–the improvement of species."
> "It used to be maintained that the female transmitted established types and the male introduced variations."
> "Yes–that's all right. But the female introduces variation, too, and *selects among males*. That's another idea of the new motherhood. We will not marry *the inferior men*."
> "What becomes of them, pray?"
> "Nothing–they enjoy life as human beings and become–*extinct*. We make better ones"[italics mine] (WU 172)

One of the most striking remarks about religion and civilization in relation to men in Gilman's "A Woman's Utopia" is uttered during a conversation between the male narrator and Hope. Here, Hope's remarks are extremely important to understand Gilman's approach toward the issue of women's rights and responsibilities in 1907 as well as to see the point defended in *Herland*:

> "[H]as this new religion nothing to say about men? Weren't men selfish and–"
> "Yes, selfish, but not idle and not petty. Men practised the sins of commission–plenty of them; but meanwhile they kept the world going. Women practised the sins of omission, nearly all of them. The poor housewives did nothing but wait on their own families–a grade of duty belonging to the stone age; and the rich ones didn't even do that. Men did all the social service–nearly; and the women sat back and blamed them for the way they did it. *I doubt if a civilization run solely by women would have been much better* [italics mine] (WU 157).

2.3 MATURITY: *HERLAND*

When *Herland* (1915) was published eight years after "A Woman's Utopia," there were already many feminist utopias or utopia-like works published in the United States, and feminism was already in full swing. Having developed her ideas and having witnessed many important events in the United States and Europe, Gilman revised many of her contrivances in her new work. Many concerns of Gilman's earlier utopias, men, the city and industrial concerns are totally excluded from her new utopia, which is not based upon a time lapse this time but a geographical shift. Like in "A Woman's Utopia," the narrator is once more a man but it should be marked that the only male figures in *Herland* are visitors from the outside world, complete strangers like Hythloday in *Utopia* – yet their names do not suggest anything related to 'nonsense' whereas Hythloday's Greek name does. These men arrive by "plane and powered by boat, armed with the instruments of voyeuristic power: camera, binoculars, and guns" (Bartkowski, 1989: 29) – and yet, they are captured by unarmed and athletic women. These men encounter an Amazon-like all-female society that is neither described nor narrated by its inhabitants but by these alien men because of the narrative structure that Gilman employs to contrast the foreigner (the men) and the native (the women). So much so that, as Frances Bartkowski emphasizes, this women's land is "baptized" Herland as a possessive name by these male visitors, and what these women call their country is never revealed (*Ibid.*: 28). This, of course, helps to sustain a tone of irony and criticism throughout the book. This utopia, which comprises both sexes in an isolated world, enables Gilman to question many "acknowledged facts" about men and women.

One of the most extraordinary aspects of this utopia lies in its "birth," which is by parthenogenesis, which can be defined as "the development of an individual from an egg without that egg undergoing fertilization. It occurs in some groups of animals, in which males may be absent" (Allaby, 1999: 392). The offspring may be either haploid, that is with one set of different chromosomes – which enables genetic variation alongside with mutation in cells – or diploid, with a same set of chromosomes. Culturally, the motif of birth without a father is a very

ancient legend going back to Net (or Neith) in Ancient Egypt, the archetypal feminine figure:

> She is the goddess of Sais, of whom Plutarch wrote: "I am all that has been, and is, and shall be, and my robe no mortal has yet uncovered." Her cult was already ancient in the first dynasty [...] Goddess of magic and weaving [which are two things associated via woman], *originating in herself*, [italics mine] she was worshipped with mysteries and lantern processions [...] Budge sums up her significance in words that describe the Great Goddess in her full scope. "The statements of Greek writers [...] prove that in very early times Net was the personification of the eternal female principle of life which was *self-sustaining and self-existent* [italics mine] and was secret and unknown and all-pervading; the more material thinkers, whilst admitting that she brought forth her son Ra without the aid of a husband, were unable to divorce from their minds the idea that a male germ was necessary for this production, and finding it impossible to derive it from a power or being external to the goddess, assumed that she herself provided not only the substance which was to form the body of Ra but also the male germ which fecundated it. Thus Net was the prototype of parthenogenesis." (Neumann, 1991: 220-221)

Though parthenogenesis has never been observed in human beings – it is usually in ants and bees that one can find such cases – the way it is handled in *Herland* also suggests that rather than being a scientific fact about women, it may function as a symbol for sexual and genetic detachment. When Terry the macho man argues that parthenogenesis would limit genetic variation and every Herlander must be an exact copy of her mother "they aren't human – they are just a pack of Fe-Fe-Females!" (H 80) – the Herlanders explain their "careful education" which creates an 'individual' (thus they underline the impact of culture) and "the law of mutation" (and add the factor of biological diversity) which helps them. Here, Gilman discusses two different approaches in evolution concerning heredity, one being Lamarck's (an *acquired* 'trait' of an animal, he thought, would be in inherited [Thain and Hickman, 2001: 363]) and the other being Darwin's – which refuted Lamarck's theory. Zava, a Herlander, argues that even if acquired 'traits' are not transmittable, mutation and education seem sufficient to create diversity among the Herlanders.

As for the children, who are only girls, Lane reads Gilman's message as "where there's a will, there is a way" (Lane, 2001: xviii). These girls, "*our* children" (H 71), are brought up to become members of a communal life and this life makes it unnecessary to have surnames in an all-female society (a nineteenth-century

‘sisterhood’) because “the finished product is not a private one” (H 76) but a child of the community just like it is in the ants or the bees – an analogy for communal living repeated a few times in *Herland*. The figure of a common Great Mother makes it unnecessary to have a surname, as they are members of this great ‘sisterhood.’ In Herland, children ‘belong’ to their community instead of belonging to their ‘families’ or ‘mothers.’ Gilman seems to discuss this issue in her book to display the different mindsets of matriarchy and patriarchy as regards lineage. Gilman’s freeing the child of family ties, in this case from her mother, is surely related to her perception of the family as an institution circumscribing a child’s freedom ‘to be,’ though the child now lives as a part of her community, which may be defined as a ‘bigger’ family of mothers.

Many institutions and concepts that belong to the world of the visitors also disappear in Herland. Home, as it is understood in its idealized form, related to the “Roman-based family” (H 94) – and with it, romanticized motherhood – is extinct in this society; the sense of community pervades the novel. If one remembers Gilman’s personal ‘unfortunate’ experiences about marriage, her reason for supplanting it with a different and, according to her viewpoint, a more appropriate system needs no detailed explanation. Gilman’s ideas about “home” as an institution of patriarchal order stem from her analysis of the exploitation and ‘imprisonment’ of women and tyranny at home.

The irony of the novel rests upon the arrival of three male foreigners from such a patriarchal society, who have the bigoted view that civilization is related to man, man-made things, and the ideas cherished by man. Three male figures with their own separate views about the inhabitants of Herland furnish the topics of discussion from different angles. Of the three friends visiting Herland, the sociologist and educated scientist Vandyck Jennings assumes the role of reason though he begins with some prejudices. Peyser, studying the deeply embedded relationship between cosmopolitanism and its consequences in *Herland*, in his *Utopia and Cosmopolis*, identifies Vandyck’s sociological approach with Gilman’s, claiming that as a developing science, sociology was another way to “describe the threat posed by immigration to the alleged purity of olden-time American (that is to say, in their

opinion, Anglo-Saxon) culture" (Peyser, 1998: 69), a problem to be discussed below. Terry O. Nicholson is the macho man of the patriarchal society, challenging the order of the Herlanders and in return being challenged by their questions and Jeff Margrave the romantic scientist, who offers a scientific dimension for the polemics in the novel. Through these three male characters, Gilman studies the world of Herland just like a sociologist and an anthropologist from the outside world.

The three men's journey into the mysterious and legendary land never seen by 'man' seems to be – as their former experiences and logic dictate – in vain. Jeff, who is also fond of poetic visions, claims that even if there is such a land, it cannot be like the land of the Amazons; instead, he says, this land has to be one of "blossoming roses and babies and canaries and tidies, and all that sort of thing," (H 7) which reflects a romantic understanding of an all-female society. Yet contrary to their expectations, these women are not victims of "feminine vanity", and they are neither dull nor feeble-minded. The women of Herland are "Conscious Makers of People" (H 78). To learn that the girls of Herland are educated in mental activities and exercises even as little children is a great surprise for Vandyck. Besides, these are not hysteric women, either (H 81). Hysteria, coming from the Greek word 'uterus', was then associated with over-emotional females, "thus reinforcing the dualism which equated men with rationality and women with irrationality" (Gamble, 2001: 251). Bringing forth such stereotyped beliefs about women, the narrator comments on the hidden notions in Terry the macho man's mind, saying that, for him, this unknown world can only mean a "sort of sublimated summer resort" in which he can display his moustache with pride before a "rosebud garden of girls" (H 88).

Yet, Vandyck, functioning as the voice of reason, overrules their commentary to claim that such an all-female society must surely be based upon a matriarchal principle. He goes on to emphasize the fact that these women, if they exist, probably have kept their distinct customs in their secluded world. His relatively objective commentary does not go unchallenged by Terry, who is in turn objected by Jeff. In the beginning and then throughout many chapters of the book, they all think that they have many things to contribute to this land of women as men coming from

a ‘civilized’ world. After many experiences and interaction with the Herlanders, they come to realize that these women, in fact, are much more civilized than they are, and that they only have their names to give to these women by marriage (H 118), which makes no sense for the women anyway.

The very first chapter of *Herland* seems to be dominated by a discussion about some conventionalized ideas concerning women, which are also underlined when the three men begin to observe the realm of Herland. The hackneyed image of women as always fighting among themselves is quickly articulated by Terry, who advocates that such a society would be run by discord and chaos and that it would not be able to create anything related to organization: “women cannot cooperate – it’s against nature” (H 67). Jeff’s objection combines the idea of cooperation with parthenogenesis through a scientific and clever yet sentimental analogy of ants and bees:

> “‘Go to the ant, thou sluggard’– and learn something,” he said triumphantly. “Don’t they cooperate pretty well? You can’t beat it. This place is just like an enormous anthill–you know an anthill is nothing but a nursery. And how about bees? Don’t they manage to cooperate and love one another? [...] I tell you, women are the *natural* cooperators, not men”[italics mine]. (*Ibid.*)

When Terry voices his opinion that without struggle and competition, Herland is a ‘dead’ land indeed, Jeff, as the great sympathizer of Herland, defends it, saying that Terry’s charges are “masculine nonsense” and, like in many instances in the novel, gives the ants and bees as examples, claiming that they do not “raise myriads by a struggle” (H 99). While Terry’s idea represents man as the ‘founding father’/fertilizer of civilization, and therefore standing for an extreme point of dismissing an all-female society as trivial and negating women’s contribution to civilization, it also foreshadows some ideas of the Backlash writers during the 1980s and 1990s, who challenged the reclaimed respectability of women’s achievement. Terry’s mentality cannot relate the concept of civilization to women. He is the familiar womanizer figure whose ideas somewhat disturb the narrator. When Terry cannot observe his notions about women in Herland, he tends to perceive all Herlanders as ‘asexual creatures,’ “neuters” (H 98), or “aunts” (H 74), “boys” (H

87), “epicenes” (H 133), or as Vandyck puts it, as “grandmothers” (H 20). These only add to their first impressions about the Herlanders as extraordinary figures, strong and athletic (H 22), which was not the way the late-Victorian world characterized the “gentle sex.”

As Bartkowski stresses in her *Feminist Utopias*, the male visitors seem to lack this sense of differentiation between two basic interrelated concepts, ‘sex’ and ‘gender’, the first one denoting biology/anatomy (which is equal to destiny for Freud), the second denoting a social construct/process of acculturation (Gamble, 2001: 239). Therefore, they waver in their decisions about the Herlanders’ sexuality. These ‘women’ seem to lack any sign about their age, for they all look nearly at the same age, and none of them is outstandingly beautiful. Therefore, from a male point of view, sexuality and ‘feminine charm’ are not detectable in these women: such features become apparent only when they “choose to let the womanness appear” (H 128). As patriarchy creates a dichotomy in constructing the male by conceiving spheres of “ultra-maleness” and “ultra-femaleness,” men strive to be as masculine as possible and expect women to be as feminine and therefore as charming as possible. When a man imagines the world, as it is explained by the narrator, it is full of men in action and woman is only “*female*–the sex” (H 137). After two thousand years of femininity, Herland seems to have been transformed into something just the opposite. As women have replaced men here, the Herlanders see in men only maleness, the sex. Once more, a simple travesty reveals that what is accepted as a norm about women is in fact nothing more than a habit or a tradition.

Having in their personalities so much that eclipses what men would really like to see in them, the Herlanders are depicted as sexless “colonels,” signifying the ultimate masculine status a woman can achieve within the borders of patriarchy. This appellation also suggests that in a world that defines woman’s gender by her sexuality, women without ordinary notions of sexuality and beauty emanate an air of masculinity that seems to negate their sex:

> "Woman" in the abstract is young, and, we assume, charming. As they get older they pass off the stage, somehow, into private ownership mostly, or out of it altogether. But these good ladies were very much on the stage, and yet any one of them might have been a grandmother. (H 20)

Jeff, who objects to Terry's ideas, counters him by picturing a society of "nuns" living in a "peaceful, harmonious sisterhood" (H 8), which, of course, echoes just another cliché about such a society. His attitude reflects another common role and position devised for women, namely sanctifying them, turning women into Virgin Mary figures. Both views lack the economic and historical analysis necessary to reveal the true nature of woman's role in history and instead rely on time-worn clichés about gender roles.

The fact that men have written only their version of the story, what is usually called 'History,' is a point raised by many feminist writers. When Gilman's time witnessed a rapid interest in anthropology and other social sciences, no one could imagine that this process would give birth to a new feminist reading of history, which at first dealt with some 'important women,' and later on, especially during the second half of the twentieth century, broadened to include 'all women' – which seems to be an overreaching claim, as some recent movements within feminism challenged the universality of 'Western feminism' – to rewrite history as '*her*story' with an emphasis on women in history.

The question about civilization is repeated throughout the first chapters until Herland's history is made known. During the debates about this question, the 'scientific' narrator Vandyck tries to find a way to balance the arguments of Terry and Jeff, himself having his own doubts about such a society, although he avoids extreme views. When they see the very first traces of Herland, they presume that such a finely ordered place can only be a civilized country, to which the narrator in agreement with Terry adds that therefore it must be inhabited by men, too. Although they see some women and girls, they cannot envision an all-female society and therefore they 'infer' that as there are babies, there must be men as well, who may be living somewhere in the mountains. Their first close encounter with the inhabitants of Herland reveals that the girls that they meet do not speak "a savage sing-song, but

clear musical fluent speech" (H 15), bearing "all the marks of an old and rich civilization" (H 31), which suggests the excellence of their language, a sign of an advanced civilization. The modified and "clarified, simplified" language of this land is also devised for "the sake of the children" who are of the utmost importance for Herland's future (H 102). Here, it must be underlined that unlike the efforts in Post-war utopias to construct a new language for a new society, *Herland* does not present the language of the Herlanders, as it is always translated into English by one of the men. Still, a language peculiar to women with its own vocabulary, which was not a significant issue in earlier feminist utopias seems to be mentioned here, though a distinctive language with its gendered structures is neither explained nor referred to by Gilman.

Further observations reveal that many of the prevalent ideas about the women in the visitors' country are invalid for these women. This atypical world, which defies the geography and mentality of the patriarchal world, offers an alterative view with which one can criticize the dominant culture. Therefore, rather than being a blueprint of an all-female society, *Herland* serves as a challenge to women's subjugation, carrying "a greater ontological weight than would a realistic portrait of the civilization" (Peyser, 1998: 80).

Such a challenge is illustrated by the stark and witty contrast between the men's habitual attitudes and the Herlanders' surprising reactions. For example, the 'agile' bodies of these women offer the first striking contrast with the 'fragile' women of the outside world, a point that ignites Terry's interest in these 'unexpected and bizarre' figures. When the three men observe the Herlanders before learning their language and traditions, the first thing they pay attention to is these women's physical appearance. As mentioned above, with their nimble movements and short hair, these women, whose majority "seemed neither young nor old, but just women," defy the female images of Gilman's time. At this point, Gilman, like Cridge, seems to highlight some issues concerning women's garments and appearance, which deserve serious consideration, as they both think that uncomfortable clothes that women are accustomed to wear imprison them into some images which they cannot reject. Creating a vicious circle, which is also mentioned in *Man's Rights*, these

images that surround women are accepted as things that "belong" (H 30) to their inherent nature. Vandyck, as the voice of reason, begins to question these clichés about women. For example, the Herlanders' dealing with handiwork seems to be a sign of femininity for Terry, a simple argument too easily refuted by his antagonist, Jeff, who simply states that Scotch shepherds, too, knit.

Their journey into the heartland of Herland discloses a clean and well-proportioned settlement with perfect roads, great orchards and beautiful gardens. Located in a mysterious part of the world, in an isolated land very much like an island, the three men confront the female inhabitants of this unknown world who are able to overcome the men and take them as prisoners, which is explained in irony, describing the men "in the position of the suffragette trying to get to the Parliament buildings through a triple cordon of London police" (H 23). As they are members of a "civilized" people, the Herlanders do not intent to kill the men, though they strip and render them ineffective, thus treating them as guests or "curiosities" from the outside world (H 27). Another striking remark about civilization is Jeff's comment that "if they've got motors, they *are* civilized" (H 29). This seems to be a quite appropriate comment that hints at the dominant notion of amalgamating or equating technological progress with civilization.

Peyser quotes Lane's ideas about a common trait of nineteenth-century utopias, namely technology, noting that Herland seems to do away with technological development, a fact that makes it an exceptional example (Peyser, 1998: 63). Another important point that strikes the reader is that in *Herland*, culture and nature are fused into one another to cancel the dichotomy – or so it seems – and this suggests an organic unity between women and nature, which means that 'women's culture' is based upon this unity with nature, so much so that the Herlanders' education cannot be defined either as "schooling" (H 106), formal education, nor as "cultivation:" it is described as "a natural condition" (H 72) in which the children never know that "they were being educated" and grow up "as naturally as young trees" (H 95), not knowing any notion related to sin but "misplays–as in a game" (H 102). As their religion excludes the idea of punishment

thanks to their belief in 'maternal love,' education in Herland is fashioned out of the same 'compassionate' principles, too.

In "building up a great race through children" (H 95), their system, which abolishes the privacy of the nuclear family, creates a great communal family, a new race coming from a great mother figure. The Herlanders arrange everything to fit the needs of their children, which is most obvious in their literature. The narrator also learns that they have been working hundreds of years to devise new games to develop their faculties, and in doing that, they have tried to shun the mistake of trying to impose sexual roles on them. These children never cry in their "smooth and happy" world (H 103) where everyone takes care of them. As an isolated 'country' Herland faces no imminent threats, and therefore, the narrator comments, the Herlanders rather see their world as a "*nursery*, *playground* [italics mine], and workshop," or a big nice garden (H 94) in which children are brought up by women to whom teaching is only "second nature" (H 128).

Chapters Four and Five introduce the reader to the startling history of Herland, the story of a community that traces its history back to a symbolic event of parthenogenesis. Their having had no men among them for two millennia seems to the men not really credible. Another conversation between them and the women begins as the men try to define the scientific fact called parthenogenesis as "virgin birth," which is incomprehensible for the women, as their language has no equivalent for it and as they cannot comprehend the word 'virgin' in their all-female society. The women, quite naively, inquire of them whether they have another word for the male "who has not mated," which is answered rather hurriedly that the same term applies but it is seldom used (H 45).

As regards parthenogenesis as well as many instances in the book, Gilman's approach to motherhood seems to be the dominant theme throughout the work. Bartkowski, underlining Linda Gordon's studies in feminism of the *fin de siècle*, remarks that Gilman was a writer allied to two trends in feminism; one of the mid-1800s, the other of the World War I period (Bartkowski, 1989: 30). She then goes on to comment that what she claims to be Gilman's ambivalent ideas about virginity and sexuality stem from such a dual heritage:

> She has broken with the reactionary cult of "woman's sphere" but has not come to grips with speaking of sexual pleasure. Gilman's late-Victorian sexual ethics are apparent in all her writings. These contradictions are obvious in *Herland* and finally express not only the author's blindness but a historically determined blind spot as well. We can read her emphasis on motherhood through parthenogenesis as a compromise with her ideological double bind. (*Ibid*.: 30-31)

Herland, which follows a precise line of argument throughout the chapters, prepares the reader for the final confrontation between the two worlds. Before a comparison is made between Herland and the visitors' world, between them and the other women, the curiosity of the reader is raised by an interlude about domestic animals and their males in Herland. Milking and slaughtering the cow, and similar stories told by the men disturb the Herlanders, who have "developed a race of cats that did not sing," and who do not kill birds (H 49). The ensuing conversation about dogs and cats seems to be an allegory for men and women in which men are identified with dogs as aggressive animals and women with this new breed of docile cats.

As Gilman proceeds to disclose further details about Herland, her feminist imagination occasionally gets somewhat marred by some other concerns. This all-female society of Herlanders − reflecting the biased view of Gilman− is described as that "of Aryan stock," (H 54), an explanation that reflects, as stated before, the racist inclination dominant during the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries. The "Aryan stock," which came to be associated with civilization and development in civilization and culture, had to be included, it seems, in the narration so as to confer the honor of civilization upon these people who are 'certainly' "white" although they have their peculiar features due to having been exposed to the sun for many years. Peyser claims that Gilman's concern for race is also an inherent and indispensable part of her feminist utopia. Considering her utopia to be a reaction against the cosmopolitan and 'non-Aryan', non-Anglo-Saxon, non-white immigrants or groups in the United States, Peyser tries to elucidate her nostalgic search for a race of Aryan people composed of women in the deep forests of South America surrounded by the "darker-skinned natives of South America" (Peyser, 1998: 78), who are not able to articulate their knowledge

about Herland – for they cannot speak the white men's language – whereas the Herlanders have no difficulty in learning these men's language, for they are of 'Aryan-stock.'

Comparing *Herland* with Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backward*, which, on the contrary, tries to conceive a multicultural life in the cities, Peyser asserts that Gilman tries to "prevent the incursion of the global upon the local" to "offer the best chance for the rebirth of the threatened Anglo-Saxon virtues" (*Ibid*.: 65). The cities, especially New York, were centers of the new cosmopolitan way of life, which meant a fusion of 'bloods' for Gilman. Peyser quotes from her posthumously published autobiography, in which she confesses that when she was able to leave New York, she was really happy for being able to get away from "this hideous city– and its Jews" (Gilman quoted in Peyser, 1998: 90). Thus, Gilman's world, doing away with technology, the cities and their 'discontents,' carries utopia into a remote part of the world, to a world of farmer women, 'untainted with immigration and mixing of blood':

> Gilman, by contrast, looked backward to what she saw as a primordial racial past, finding there the uncontaminated essence of the groups with which she identified: Aryans and more specifically Anglo-Saxons. Eric Hobsbawm and others have shown how many in the West responded to the increased cosmopolitanism of the fin de siècle by "inventing" national traditions that manifested their difference from their neighbors. Gilman fits into that pattern of tradition building, and not surprisingly, finds that almost everything valuable about humanity derives somehow or other from the rugged purity of her racial forebears. (Peyser, 1998: 64)

Assuming the identity of a sociologist very much like Vandyck in her novel, Gilman tries to study the relation between two ideas of race, one belonging to the 'Aryans', the other to 'women.' The issue of evolution and sexual selection therefore emerges as a major issue in *Herland*. Not at all pleased with the immigration movements into America at the turn of the century, Gilman seems to fear a blending of 'superior races' with 'inferior races,' which, carried on as an analogy between women and men, clearly suggests that women, as members of the superior race, should not mix with men. Such a 'foolish' and 'irresponsible' deed

would eventually corrupt the gene pool of the superior race. Peyser quotes from *Women and Economics* to demonstrate Gilman's analogy of races and the sexes:

> One of the ways Gilman tries to alarm her audience over the differentiation of the sexes is, in fact, to compare their commingling with the intermixing of races, linking–not for the last time in her career– *gender and race* [italics mine]: "We have made a creature who is not homogenous, whose life is fed by two currents of inheritance [that is, male and female] as dissimilar and opposed as could be well imagined. *We have bred a race of psychic hybrids, and the moral qualities of hybrids are well known*"[italics mine]. (*Ibid.*:. 71)

Therefore, in *Herland*, women give birth to women by parthenogenesis to avoid such a 'genetically hybrid human being,' just as Gilman claims Anglo-Saxons should avoid marriage with the Jews, Africans, Chinese and other 'non-Anglo-Saxon stock' so as to protect their "precious genetic cargo" (*Ibid.*). This extraordinary event, according to Lane's point of view, is therefore a symbolic act. Yet, Peyser's comment concerning Gilman's ideas on biology seems remarkable, too. Evolutionary studies in biology seem to suggest that, in terms of genetics, the data defining the male sex in human beings carried on the Y chromosome is actually a distorted form of an X chromosome, "an incomplete X" (Gribbin and Cherfas, 2001: 60). While an X is paired by another X to produce the female sex (XX), when it is paired by this "incomplete" Y (XY), the outcome is the male. Taking this sequential order of the creation of the sexes into consideration, one can try to understand Gilman's approach towards this issue of 'racial sexes':

> The parthenogenesis of the Herlanders is no whimsical narrative device, but an arrangement grounded in nature. Because men are variants of essential women, their elimination is simply a precondition of a just picture of what human society is "really" about, just as, for Gilman, the elimination of "non-Aryans" would do much to reveal the highest type of which humanity is capable. (Peyser, 1998: 72-73)

Gilman weaves an intricate web among the terms 'race,' 'man' and 'civilization' among many others. For example, Herland, the reader is informed, was actually founded by a European expedition in South America. After a grim war against the natives, almost all the men taking part in the expedition die, an event

which may be explained by Gilman's words in her *Man-Made World* as "maleness means war" (Gilman quoted in Peyser, 1998: 81). The devastation caused by this war is doubled with an "appropriately phallic" volcanic eruption, signifying the men's "pernicious tendencies of masculinity" (Peyser, 1998: 81). After defeating the following rebellion by the slaves of the Europeans, two thousand years ago, "a bunch of hysterical girls and some older slave women" cremated their dead instead of burying them, as they did not have sufficient space to do so. After losing all the men of the community, it is said, one of the girls bore a child. The women of the community accepting this miracle as a sign from the gods identified this woman with their Goddess of Motherhood, just like Neith mentioned above, standing for female power and productivity instead of a phallic conception of order. This event of *deus ex machina,* rather than standing for a concrete scientific event, may be read as women's will to create their own world as pointed out by Lane in her introduction to the work. So from the lineage of a miraculous mother were born many children – "New Women" (H 56) – to form the community that stood before these three alien men while the older generation who knew about 'the race called men' passed away. So as a symbol of their historical unity, these women all hold that they have descended from one and the same mother.

In this new 'breed' or 'race' of women, Gilman does not dismiss the maternal instinct as something superficial and forced upon women. Defining it not as "a brute passion, a mere "instinct," a wholly personal feeling" but as "a religion" (H 68), she still seems to accept this notion as something *inherent* in woman – therefore as of her 'essence' – and consecrates it, giving this 'no mere instinct' more sympathetic overtones. Reconstructing motherhood as the basis of the religion in Herland, the Herlanders also sublimate mother-love in the idea of "national growth" (H 102), combining motherhood, production and religion. The idea of motherhood without fatherhood seems to be outrageous for Terry, who fears that in such a case the need for men would be eradicated. Being totally detached from what femininity means for the likes of Terry, the society of 'New Women' find and develop their ideals and virtues such as "Beauty, Health, Strength, Intellect, Goodness" (H 59). These attributes, which are the fundamental merits that are instilled and cultivated,

also underline the importance of this "nostalgic image of women," namely motherhood, which serves to protect that society's "cultural – and genetic – isolationism" (Peyser, 1998: 86) and which, in fact, constitutes their religion.

Although restrictions on women's sexual and economic life have resulted in their deterioration, turning them into, what Gilman deemed 'a secondary species' serving some "sex-functions" only (Gilman quoted in Peyser, 1998: 70), such restrictions have enabled man to develop his identity, taking away woman's lot, too. The narrator of *Herland*, comparing the two cycles of life of 'our' world with the larger cycle of Herland, states that the cycle for man in 'our' world offers "growth, struggle, conquest" whereas woman's cycle of life is about her family and "charitable interests as her position allows" (H 101). Herland, without any man of course, brings into being a cycle of communal life composed entirely of women. Gilman, depending upon the cerebral studies of her times, ironically asserts that in spite their 'relatively small brain [*sic*],' women are still able to survive thanks to what they inherit from their fathers, "a certain increasing percentage of human development, human power, human tendency" (Gilman quoted in Peyser, 1998: 70). Like some feminists after her, Gilman also discusses the detrimental effects of men's dominance over women *for men*, claiming that by taking upon themselves the freedoms and rights of women, men have actually undertaken a great burden. Men, according to Gilman, not only reduced women into helpless and dependent creatures but also "assumed the maternal position of provider and nurturer" (Peyser, 1998: 72), which, for Gilman, is the "maternalizing of man" (Quoted in Peyser: 72).

At that point, the Motherhood in *Herland* redresses this injustice by expressing what Gilman sees as existent deep in the female nature. Peyser claims that Gilman admired a sociologist named Lester Ward, who liked to lecture about "the great final blending of races into one", though she did not approve of his optimistic ideas about a "great united world-race" (Quoted in Peyser: 66). Her idea of abolishing the help of fatherhood seeing it trivial was based upon this sociologist's studies which stated that "the male [was] only a sometimes useful, sometimes necessary adjunct or incident" whereas the female was "the organism" (Quoted in Peyser: 72). Such an idea is advocated by some contemporary biologists, too:

> In essence, what has happened is that males developed solely as carriers of genetic information. They contribute genetic material to the egg cell, which will become a new individual, but they originally made no direct contribution of resources to help the egg develop [...] Females *could* reproduce parthenogenetically if the egg cells could be induced to develop on their own. But males can never do so [...] If for whatever reason, sexual reproduction loses its evolutionary edge and asexual mutation arises, it must always be the female that provides the basis of the new line and the male that falls by evolution's wayside. This applies to our species as much as to any other. Men are best parasites on women, and at worst totally redundant in the immediate evolutionary scheme. (Gribbin and Cherfas, 2001: 7,8)

Gilman, therefore, seeing the actual dominance of men in all domains, tried to revive the nostalgic cult of motherhood and that of parthenogenesis to create an alternative world and order that would venerate women. Their religion therefore has evolved to become maternal, and it is described in relation to their ethics, "based on the full perception of evolution," although the basis of their ethics is not a fight between good and evil, like it is in many religions, but "growth" (H 102). When the Herlanders underline what they infer from the men's explanations about some other civilizations, namely the ideal of 'Human *Brother*hood,' they deduce that it is something impracticable. Besides, the narrator, as "a species of Christian," suggests that the Divine Force constructed by their civilization was raised upon "successive stages of bloodthirsty, sensual, proud, and cruel gods" descending from an ancient conception of a "Common Father with its corollary of a Common Brotherhood" (H 109). This religion of the male (father) – God the Father and the Son – is constructed upon stories of sin and punishment, damnation and the devil, hell and God's vengeance, elaborated legends of the ancient Middle East.

The Herlanders' religion based upon the "Human Motherhood" ideal, which is supported by Jeff against Terry, seems to negate such notions and replaces hate and punishment with an "accumulated mother-love" (H 112); rituals and "divine service" with "glorious pageants" which serve both a religious and a social purpose (H 114). Gilman's utopia does away with the picture of a perfect world secured by future immortality and tries to create its utopia 'here and now'. This god of the Hebrews, Gilman claims, was remodeled by Christianity after the patriarchal social structure of Judaism. Displeased with a religion of fathers and grandfathers stuck somewhere in time and with a non-Aryan culture, just like in "A Woman's Utopia,"

Gilman supplants it with a religion of mothers which seems to be alive and “at work within them” (H 115), that is giving them a chance, in a sense, to get in touch with their goddess. The image of the creator that they picture is that of a Mother who wants to punish her children neither in this world nor in any other: instead of strict obedience, their relationship with this godhead is “filial” (H 114). The new religion of the Great Goddess also rejuvenates itself with changing times, rationality and the sciences, just like the religion in “A Woman’s Utopia.”

The narrator goes on to explain this notion of Motherhood, in which the Herlanders “have the virtue of humanity, with less of its faults than any folks” (H 98). Gilman tries to place many exemplary virtues into the framework of this concept of Motherhood, virtues that are also referred to in “A Woman’s Utopia,” such as “Peace, Beauty, Order, Safety, Love, Wisdom, Justice, Patience, and Plenty” (H 100), “patience, gentleness, courtesy” (H 114):

> What they call Motherhood was like this:
> They began with a really high degree of social development, something like that of Ancient Egypt or Greece. Then they suffered the loss of everything masculine, and supposed at first that all human power and safety was gone too. Then they developed this virgin birth capacity. Then, since the prosperity of their children depended on it, the subtlest coordination began to be practiced (H 67).

Secured by a sisterhood without enemies or dissenters, Herland prospers and develops a new religion, removing its many gods and goddesses and keeping only its Mother Goddess to represent their new identity. This new religion, too, is transformed into a “sort of Maternal Pantheism” (H 59) implying a reunification between motherhood and Mother Earth. This reunification seems to be between the idealized aspects of both sides and it tends to revive a nostalgic ideal of unity between nature and human beings, here made possible with the disappearance of men.

Once this new religion becomes a part of Herland, wars being obsolete, these women do not develop their world according to the principles of competition, in a way challenging the concept of struggle for survival. This point is underlined in the book when the future of Herland is discussed. As Herland is a secluded world

with limited resources and finite land, the problem of overpopulation is the greatest challenge to order and economy. Like in "A Woman's Utopia," keeping Malthus's ideas about population in mind, Gilman tried to devise a plan to keep the number of Herlanders nearly constant. In a land of parthenogenesis, the Herlanders practice some kind of birth-control – a key term in Malthus's theory – by engaging the mother-to-be in "the most active work, physical and mental" – gestation in Herland begins with a "concentrated desire" – and by directing her longing for a child towards the already born ones (H 70). Read in its symbolic meaning, this birth-control method may stand for their will and efforts to keep the population stable and at ease by diverting their procreative impulses/libido to creation and production. They have devised this 'method,' for they abhor the practice of abortion that is exercised in the visitors' land. Gilman's ideas about abortion should be assessed according to the viewpoint of an all-female society. In a totally different society based upon a collective existence, created by a completely extraordinary event, the narrator suggests, it is hard to explain the reasons for abortion to these extraordinary women, especially when these are not accepted by all the women living in the ordinary world of the visitors.

As regards population and production, the narrator informs the reader that cooperation among the women of Herland still directs their actions, and they do not attempt to invade anybody's territory to colonize it; on the contrary, they try to devise ways to uphold their principle of self-sufficiency:

> And how did those women meet it?
> Not by a "struggle for existence" which would result in an everlasting writhing mass of underbred people trying to get ahead of one another–some few on top, temporarily, many constantly crushed underneath [...] Neither did they start off on predatory excursions to get more land from somebody else, or to get more food from somebody else, to maintain their struggling mass [...] (H 68)

Instead, as Lane points out in her introduction, this new society with "no kings, and no priests, and no aristocracies" has eventually this sense of sisterhood which preaches "united action" instead of "competition" (H 60). Gilman does not correlate this idea of affectionate and cooperative motherhood with what the narrator

describes as “red hot” patriotism, a word derived from the Latin word *patriota*, meaning “a fellow-countryman,” the Latin word in turn being derived from the Greek word πατριά, meaning a ‘race,’ from πατήρ, a ‘father’ (Skeat, 1993: 335):

> They loved one another with a practically universal affection, rising to exquisite and unbroken friendships, and broadening to a devotion to their country and people for which our word patriotism is no definition at all. Patriotism, red hot, is compatible with the existence of a neglect of national interests, a dishonesty, a cold indifference to the suffering of millions. Patriotism is largely pride, and very largely combativeness. Patriotism generally has a chip on its shoulder. (H 94)

Situated within such a framework, Gilman’s ideas related to cooperation and survival seem to echo the Russian libertarian thinker and geographer Prince Peter Kropotkin, whose *Mutual Aid* (1902) stressed the importance of cooperation instead of competition as a way for survival. The three men do their best to defend the merits of competition – which also seems to explain the basis of their market economy – without which, they claim, no one would work at all. The Herlanders, thinking work to be a matter of will instead of “incentive,” sneer at the idea and claim that a mother needs no competition to look after her children, meaning that in a world of motherhood every work is like looking after children and so it does not ask for any stimulus. Terry’s conceited explanation about ‘their’ (non-Herlanders’) women’s not working but being “idolized-honored-kept in the home to care for the children” – except those “of the poorer sort” – does not mean much for a community whose structure does not envisage a concept like “‘home’” (H 61). Here, Social Darwinism as it was preached by Herbert Spencer and American liberal economy based upon the survival of the fittest seem to be questioned by the Herlanders while Jeff the romantic’s sympathy – under the increasing influence of the Herlanders’ reasoning – for them thus grows stronger.

As the male visitors delve into the secrets of Herland, they discover that the women’s knowledge covers only those subjects of practical use; for example, no history other than their own and no geology at all. Yet they are profoundly knowledgeable about physiology, hygiene, sanitation and physical culture. Their profound knowledge of physiological sciences and their being immune to or ignorant

of nearly any kind of disease seems to indicate their isolation and avoidance of both physical and ideological contact with the outside world. There are many points in the book that testify to Herland's being an ideologically 'uncontaminated island' that is hitherto undiscovered, which is of course something that is common in numerous utopias.

The oppressive atmosphere of communal uniformity results in an anonymity that occurs in many utopias that are based upon the idea of sacrificing the individual for the sake of conformity. The ""we" and "we" and "we"" (H 126) community seems to exclude anything related to individuality as it is understood by the visitors. Peyser defines this authoritative approach as "singleminded solidarity" (Peyser, 1998: 83), something not stated but felt, which grows stronger with the symbolic violation or rape of Herland by men. Greater danger creates stronger response. This Amazon-like tribe of women eventually become 'contaminated' by the knowledge of these men. As long as the 'island' of Herland is secluded, order is preserved. Peyser, in his study, mentions the exchange of information during the conversation between Vandyck and his fiancée, Ellador (*Ibid*.: 84). Hearing some 'horrible' things about his religion such as the Sacrifice, the Devil and the idea of infant damnation, Ellador runs to a temple. Suddenly, just close to the end of the book, Gilman introduces a caste of "wise and noble women" (H 110), appearing out of the blue, comforting those in need. This priestess speaks thus:

> "'Why, you blessed child,' she said, 'you've got the wrong idea altogether. You do not have to think that there ever was such a God–for there wasn't. Or such a happening–for there wasn't. Nor even that this hideous false idea was believed by anybody. But only this-that people who are utterly ignorant will believe anything–which you certainly knew before.'
> "Anyhow," pursued Ellanor, "she turned pale for a minute when I first said it."
> This was a lesson to me. No wonder *this whole nation of women was peaceful and sweet in expression* [italics mine]–they had no terrible ideas (H 110-111).

This "womb-like" (Ferns, 1999: 177) society of Herland thus portrays a common aspect of many conventional utopias, namely security, with its concern about 'peace and order' in a secluded world. Everything appears to be tamed and

controlled in Herland's domesticated world, even time. Other than the first remarkable events which initiated the experience of Herland, the Herlanders do not refer to any significant date or event in their history, which means that nothing remarkable happens any more, that is to say, having reached some kind of perfection, the time *seems* to stand still; it does not *pass*. Any memory that may upset order in Herland is absent or simply unknown or beyond recollection. The relationship of the Herlanders with their past provides the reader with many clues about Gilman's perception of time in her utopia. "Accustomed for these sixty-odd generations to act upon" (H 122) some basic principles of life, these women do not feel the need to question anything or to probe into any idea. As Ferns notes in *Narrating Utopia*, there is actually no "specific indication of *when* anything takes place during" the period of the visitors' stay (Ferns, 1999: 187). When Vandyck asks her future wife about their past religion, he comes to understand that Ellador's answer explains the idea of history and time in Herland:

> "Have you no respect for the past? For what was thought and believed by your foremothers?"
> "Why, no," she said. "Why should we? They are all gone. They knew less than we do. If we are not beyond them, we are unworthy of them [...]"
> Yet these women, quite unassisted by any masculine spirit of enterprise, had ignored their past and built daringly for the future." (H 111)

The importance of time in the construction of the self and the collective identity is maybe of the utmost importance to assess a specific feature of feminist utopias. What we call subjectivity or the self is composed *in time*, which is usually molded in what Julia Kristeva calls "cursive time" of linear history after Nietzche, or "father's time" after Joyce (Kristeva, 1993: 189,190). The idea of historical progression seems to dominate the modalities of time in patriarchy or in other words, "the symbolic order – the order of verbal communication, the paternal order of genealogy –" (*Ibid*.: 152). The lack of significant differences of things, places, and the monotony of time as experienced by the male figures in *Herland* attests to this experience.

Another way to construct the self in time, Kristeva holds, may be through what she calls “monumental time” – after Nietzche once more – and “cyclical time” (*Ibid*.: 191-192). Studying diverse examples from European and non-European civilizations, Kristeva comes to see these in many instances related to femininity and nature – which seems to echo the nature/culture dichotomy. Although this kind of time seems to be “stereotyping” in its temporality, Kristeva underlines the presence of a greater framework of time with its “regularity and unison with what is experienced as extra-subjective time, cosmic time” (*Ibid*.: 191):

> As for time, female subjectivity would seem to provide a specific measure that essentially retains *repetition* and *eternity* from among the multiple modalities of time known through the history of civilizations. On the one hand, there are cycles, gestation, the eternal recurrence of a *biological rhythm which conforms to that of nature* [italics mine]. (*Ibid*.: 191)

Therefore, one *may* still interpret this aspect in *Herland* not as a negative aspect to be found in many utopias but as a point that Kristeva defines as “women’s time”. So what seems to be stagnation at first *may* be reinterpreted as a challenge to patriarchy’s ordering of time. Like in many traditional utopias, what seems to be the disappearance of a sense of time leads to a stagnant world, which has been accepted by many as a hallmark of utopias. Yet some recent utopias which Lucy Sargisson calls “transgressive” (Sargisson, 2000: 2), such as Ursula Le Guin’s *The Dispossessed* or Marge Piercy’s *Woman on the Edge of Time*, have come forth with “a challenge to the patterns of order and structure: paradigmatic challenge” (*Ibid*.: 15) so as to devise new ways to write a utopia ‘in time’.

Kristeva, in her “Women’s Time”, goes on to associate this “cyclical time” with another concept that she calls “monumental time,” which is “all-encompassing and infinite like *imaginary space* [italics mine]” (Kristeva, 1993: 191):

> On the other hand, and perhaps as consequence, there is the massive presence of a monumental temporality, which without cleavage or escape, which has so little to do with linear time (which passes) that the very word ‘temporality’ hardly fits [...] one is reminded of various myths of resurrection which, in all

> religious beliefs, perpetuate *the vestige of an anterior or concomitant maternal cult*, [italics mine] right up to its most recent elaboration, Christianity, in which the body of the Virgin Mother does not die but moves from one spatiality to another within the same time via dormition (according to the Orthodox faith) or via assumption (the Catholic faith). (*Ibid*.: 191.)

In this aspect, the Goddess of Motherhood as the cult of Herland seems to resurrect a monumental image within cyclical time. Transporting the community of Herlanders from the progress of linear time, "progressive unfolding" (*Ibid*.: 192), the narrative places it within a cyclical modality of time: the 'monumental time' of the Mother Goddess, which is directly related to the 'cyclical time' of motherhood that (pro)creates – and (re)produces – the Goddess at every single recurrence.

Another important point worth underlining is that the subjectivity/the self of the Herlanders is not bound by their "individual lives" but a part of a greater affair, so their time is molded by a communal experience of the resurrected and reborn in every generation. The conception of a collective identity incorporates all individual subjectivity and selves, effacing all individual perception of time:

> To them the country was a unit—it was theirs. They themselves were a unit, a conscious group; they thought in terms of the community. As such their time-sense was not limited to the hopes and ambitions of an individual life. Therefore, they habitually considered and carried out plans for improvement which might cover centuries. (H 79)

The question is whether *Herland does* possess, as a feminist utopia, such a conscious quality necessary to differentiate it from other utopias written by men. As Kristeva notes "the fact that certain currents of feminism recognize themselves here [in cyclical and monumental time] does not render them fundamentally incompatible with 'masculine' values" (Kristeva, 1993: 192). Knowing that overcoming the dilemmas inherent in the symbolic order "may well be impossible in the present situation" (Moi, 1993: 139), Kristeva in her article entitled "About Chinese Women" studies the suicides of many female writers, including Virginia Woolf and Slyvia Plath (Kristeva, 1993: 157-158). Gilman, not really aware of these dilemmas inherent in her work, seems to have failed to take the imaginative leap towards a paradigmatic change in feminist utopias. Her book combines some

‘masculine values’ of the nineteenth century – if one accepts the existence of such values – which are discussed above, with some feminist concerns. Kristeva’s warning, therefore, is valid for Gilman's work as well: although *Herland* reflects and anticipates some concerns of the decades to follow, Gilman's prejudices and her obsession with ‘peace and order’ and some masculine attitudes overshadow the female self’s progress towards a new subjectivity in time. In “So When Are We to Become Women?” Luce Irigaray underlines the very same issue of identifying one’s self, a point of crucial importance for many ‘separatist’ feminist utopias:

> Having a child without a man apparently represents the height of liberty for some women. Yet this still amounts to defining oneself in relation to the other sex rather than oneself; it amounts to thinking of oneself without the other and not to thinking one’s self, thinking about oneself, about myself as a woman (á *moi-elle*), about ourselves by our selves as women (á *nous et avec nous- elles*). (Irigaray, 1993: 133)

Burwell tries to probe into the logic of separatist utopias by analyzing the way they overlook “the differences among women” and conceive women as a united whole whose members’ “authenticity” usually depends on “their nonparticipation in male violence and oppression” (Burwell, 1997: 67). Thus, she claims, such utopias exist “on the borders of patriarchy” and transfer every undesirable and detested value or act to the land of the male ‘other’ (*Ibid*.).

For the sake of security, Gilman seems to have forsaken a ‘living utopia,’ and for the sake of refuting ‘masculine values,’ she instead seems to have transplanted them into the Herlanders, creating a somewhat “‘homologous’ woman, who is capable and virile” (Kristeva, 1993: 156), a “father-identified woman” (Moi, 1993: 139). Moi emphasizes the fact that women have been associated with the “unconscious of the symbolic order” and adds that their position in this order has been perceived as marginal and as threatening “the symbolic chain” (*Ibid*.). Chris Ferns even remarks that the sole significant difference between Gilman's “separatist” utopia and the “traditional norm” is “*only* in the gender of its inhabitants” (Ferns, 1999: 178). If this appears to be somewhat extreme as a critique, Toril Moi’s

introduction to Kristeva's "About Chinese Women" clarifies the 'trap' into which Gilman, like many after her, falls:

> But again we face the same double bind: if women refuse this role as the unconscious 'truth' of patriarchy, they are forced instead to identify with the father, thus turning themselves into supporters of the very same patriarchal order. Kristeva argues for a refusal of this dilemma: women must neither refuse to insert themselves into the symbolic order, nor embrace the masculine model for femininity (the 'homologous' woman) which is offered her there. (Moi, 1993: 139)

A stagnant order being dominant in Herland, the Herlanders fear nothing, because they have not seen anything to fear at all, and as Chris Ferns emphasizes in *Narrating Utopia*, nature, too, has been domesticated "with an almost Wellsian single-mindedness" (Ferns, 1999: 177), eliminating wild animals and checking every single tree in their forests so as to create a "land in a state of perfect cultivation", a state which also suggests that something about this perfection is annoying or too much (H 11). Although the case may be interpreted as Gilman's concern for nature, akin to some kind of "proto-environmentalism", it is surely a reflection of proto-Taylorism, too, with its measuring out everything quite neatly so as to 'produce' the best result (Peyser, 1998: 88).

Another aspect worth underlining is that the notion of chaos has often been identified with women and that this identification reverberates in the novel by Terry's comments, who cannot believe that women can achieve such a state of perfect order, which men have not been able to accomplish yet. In a sense, Gilman seems to suggest that women can 'beat men at their own game', or in other words, women can perfect the values upheld by men, which also means that they therefore accept the duality propagated by men – the 'double bind' that Toril Moi mentions. So what Sargisson says about writing "transgressive utopias", namely an attempt to overcome binary oppositions and dichotomies in non-static utopias, is not quite discernible in Gilman's work. That may be due to the inherent structure of Gilman's viewpoint, which does not make use of the creative effect of conflicting ideas. Margaret Whitford's ideas about feminist utopias may contribute to this discussion with its significant perspective:

> Feminist utopian visions, then, are mostly of the dynamic rather than the programmatic kind; they do not seek to offer blueprints of an ideal future, still less of the steps to attaining it. They are intended more to bring about shifts in consciousness (paradigm shifts). (Whitford quoted in Sargisson, 1996: 52)

As regards the community that lacks "all morbid or excessive types," though they have some differences, it is made up of women, all "tall, strong, healthy, and beautiful as a *race* [italics mine]" (H 78). Such utterances in *Herland* once more call to mind the idea of racism in Gilman's work – including "A Woman's Utopia" – and her concern for eugenics, which evokes the perfect combination of order and reproduction, to create a 'better race', an idea which was first introduced by Plato in his *Republic* when he advised to wed the best men with the best women to create a race of "philosopher rulers" (*cf.* Plato, 1969, Book III). A hypochondriac-like attention for cleanness and hygiene are two of the dominant problems in "A Woman's Utopia," and this is also repeated in *Herland,* coupled with a sense of cleansing of any defective and afflicted 'race', 'sex' and 'idea' by means of a disinfecting and sanitizing ideology.

Another important point about Gilman's feminist utopia is its being a rather close-ended one. This aspect of *Herland* is of course an unavoidable result of her ideology. With such perfection implanted, everyone secured, and time almost negated, Herland is nearly stagnant and anesthetized, save those few instances when Gilman personifies some faces from among the community, or when Terry's attempt to rape his 'Herlander wife' upsets the order. Peyser, quoting Zygmunt Bauman's words, associates Gilman's "gardener's vision" and "utopian aestheticization of the world" with her "modern will toward organizational perfection" (Peyser, 1998: 88-89). Gilman's garden seems to be free of weeds, both ideological, sexual and racial. The purity of the sex is owing to the cleansing of the imperfect races, namely men – and non-Aryans – and as Ferns notes Gilman's utopia thus becomes "yet another in which some of the least appealing features of the dominant ideology of the times are still more starkly produced" (Ferns, 1999: 191).

What the narrator describes in Herland as its best aspects are of course from a male point of view. Vandyck assesses the success of the Herlanders by his

criteria; his talk about "a daring social inventiveness far beyond our own, and a mechanical and scientific development fully equal to ours" (H 81) reflects his concern. Although there is talk of a "mechanical and scientific" society, there are really so few sections in the book that may be associated with such a culture, and these are not of the kind usually found in the outside world. Likewise, when Vandyck asks Somel, a Herlander "about the worst qualities of this unique civilization" (*Ibid.*), she admits that they have their faults, adding that they are not still perfect. When the narrator goes on to challenge the 'perfect' order of Herland for the reader, it is revealed that the last criminal – "what you call a 'criminal'" (H 82) – lived six hundred years ago. This attempt to point out Herland's imperfection nevertheless fails, since the most recent 'blemish' of the community lies buried in the remains of a distant past. Besides, in order not to meet such cases again, they have developed a system of forced birth control somewhat reminiscent of the eugenics in "A Woman's Utopia":

> "If the girl showing the bad qualities had still the power to appreciate duty, we appealed to her, by that, to renounce motherhood. Some of the few worst types were, fortunately, unable to produce [...]" (*Ibid.*)

Another striking aspect of the Herlanders that Ferns mentions is the "absence of desire" (Ferns, 1999: 187), which also seems to explain the deficiency of significant action in the narrative. Among these notions related to 'desire,' sexuality seems altogether absent, both in 'bi-sexual' [read heterosexual] or lesbian form. The presence of these men in Herland is perceived as a chance to "re-establish a bi-sexual state" (H 88), which is only ironic because the male visitors are portrayed as immature beings from an alien world. These women do not have "the faintest idea of love–sex-love, that is" (*Ibid.*) or of "any sex-tradition", and there is "no sex-feeling to appeal to" due to "two thousand years' disuse" (H 92). Terry's comment about their not knowing "the first thing about Sex" (H 134) – the capital letter implying 'men' – suggests that sexuality and the male sex are combined in his mind, and when he understands that the Herlanders are indifferent to sex, he takes it as an indication of a negation of men's existence, too. The reason for the total repudiation of

sexuality in *Herland* may be explained by the rather strict moral conventions of Gilman's time, by ‘late-Victorian sexual ethics,’ or it may be read as an attempt to discard the symbolic order’s identifying woman’s self as an “object of male desire,” as the ‘other’ (Gamble, 2001: 216). Gilman, from the standpoint of the Herlanders, seems to question the hypocrisy about love and sex in marriages. Although Ellador thinks that the ‘outside world’ has probably been able to “specialize” the act of “sex-love” into something of “higher, purer, nobler uses” – to produce “high creative work,” in “floods, oceans of work,” accomplished in the “intense happiness of every married pair ” – the reader along with Vandyck realizes that love and sex as practiced in the ‘outside world’ have not brought about such changes at all (H 127).

Heterosexuality is not the only form of sexuality absent in Herland. Lesbian sexuality also being excluded from this utopia, any viable idea of erotic desire except one that concentrates on rearing a child is excluded. This experience is best described by Ferns with the concept he calls “infantinilization” (Ferns, 1999: 188). When the visitors, the father or lover figures, who think that they are from a superior civilization, try to run away from Herland, they are caught as naughty ‘truants,’ and they come to realize that they are actually treated as small helpless children in the hands of a myriad of mothers. So Ferns, too, sees in the marriage scenes of the three men a subtle parody of their situation: three men to marry three Herlanders who know nothing about sexuality. Ferns comments on the significance of these marriages by remarking that they “serve to expose the realities underlying so much male rhetoric regarding the sanctity of marriage[s]” (*Ibid.*) which are “made in Heaven” (H 121). The men, deprived of sexual intercourse, transformed into powerless children, cannot find any “women” – in a derogatory sense – to “protect” or to “serve” (H 89): these women are all self-sufficient and physically superior to the visitors. In these rather experiment-like relationships of the couples, harmony depends on the actions and reactions of the three dissimilar men; Jeff as the romantic shows “ultra-devotion,” which baffles his partner; Terry and his partner quarrel all the time due to Terry’s attitudes; Vandyck and Ellador, his partner, become “close friends” (H 90).

Instead of displaying any form of controlled desire towards the opposite sex, the Herlanders seem to possess no feeling whatsoever akin to sexual attraction. Staying away from sexual intercourse also secures the perpetuation of order in Herland. Once the notion of sexual intercourse enters the world of Herlanders by an attempt at raping one of them, their long established isolation is broken. When Terry tries to become a 'husband' and a 'lover' as he understands it and fails, he tries to rape Alima and rationalizes his attack saying that "[t]here never was a woman yet did not enjoy being *mastered*" (H 131). Trying to 'hunt' her, to 'master' her, to "catch and conquer" (*Ibid.*), just like a hunter or a colonizer, he is caught and tied – unmanned in a sense – after a failed attempt at rape: the 'Ourlanders' cannot give their nationality (or surnames) to 'their wives' and conquer them by the heritage of their fathers and their fathers' names.

After failing to give the only thing they have, their names, to the women, the men are at a total loss of manhood and of their masculine identities. Jeff the romantic "worships" his 'wife' Celis, so much so that he becomes one of the Herlanders according to Vandyck's point of view; the way he appreciates their world, it is said, is not ""like a man," but more as if he wasn't one" (H 123). Jeff seems to have incorporated their philosophy and ideology so deeply that he is 'converted' and taken into – or 'lost' to – the Motherhood, and therefore he decides to stay with them. Terry's attempt to rape Alima, therefore, is a last endeavor to assert man's dominance over woman by a physical assault, his final 'feat.' Finding a woman he cannot dominate, and a 'race of women' he cannot subdue, a land he cannot tame, Terry, a man from the 'civilized' world, has to act in the final parody of the book, blundering in his attempts to retrieve his manhood. When his case is taken before a local Over Mother – who is introduced as a figure of high authority close to the end of the book (H 90) – as a case of assault and disturbance in Herland, Terry, of course, is not to be judged according to 'his rights in his world.' The decree after a long trial calls for the expulsion of the men from Herland so as to evade any further threat to the "pleasant family in an old established, perfectly run country place" where everything has to be safeguarded and ordered, with "nothing to overcome" (H 99).

Finally, it seems, the men may contribute neither their Y-chromosomes nor their names to that culture; the hope of a "New Tie with other lands," "Brotherhood as well as Sisterhood," and "with evident awe, Fatherhood" is lost due to the narrow-mindedness of masculinity. Terry, who defends the idea of fatherhood as necessary for motherhood at the beginning, rejects the 'debasement' of man into a 'father' only and tries to prove his manhood. The ironic attempt at matrimony, marrying the 'race of women' to the 'race of men', of Ourland and Herland, is doomed to fail due to Terry's presence, the novel suggests, who all the while has retained his immature attitudes and prejudices against women. When read in its symbolic meaning, Terry's personality and attitude towards what he calls "this miserable half-country" (H 134) of "one-sided cripples" (H 142) exemplifies the uncivilized and unenlightened aspects of patriarchy, which render it incompatible with a much superior world. During his most acute moments of despair in explaining things to Ellador, even Vandyck, the voice of reason and of the golden mean, feels "a sudden burst of sympathy for poor Terry" (H 139).

When Jeff decides to stay with Celis in Herland, neither wanting to go back to his corrupted world nor willing to take Celis there – they stay in Herland to experience "dual parentage" (H 140) – Ellador departs from Herland to study 'Ourland' – her adventures are narrated in *With Her in Ourland*, the sequel to *Herland* – the institution of marriage and the mothers in 'Ourland' and to examine "our "civilization"" (H 136). Ellador, who cannot grasp the meaning of forming a family "without regard to motherhood" (H 138) or children, has to confront a whole different world; she must yet see what 'love' stands for in 'Ourland.' Vandyck, although it is a long experience for him, nevertheless comes to appreciate her affection and love. This urge to love "up" Ellador, instead of "down" as his inferior, he thinks, is in fact something inherent in man, though of a "prehistoric consciousness" (H 142). The little boy completes the circle of experience and rediscovers his love for the mother: like "a very little child" lost for centuries, Vandyck finally "comes home to his mother," clean and safe, to a love "that didn't irritate or smother" (*Ibid.*). He seems to experience a very intimate relationship with his 'wife,' who seems to be transformed into a mother figure in his eyes. Shedding

his former ideas about women, Vandyck experiences the 'true essence' of a relationship with a sovereign woman whom he thinks he has to love "up"; he is neither Terry the macho man nor Jeff the mollified lover; relinquishing his pride, he learns to appreciate the merits of an uninhibited woman – even without sexuality.

When Vandyck takes Ellador to his world in the sequel to *Herland*, she faces many lies, fights, frauds, the problem of immigration in the United States and yet finds hope in the developing women's and labor movements; and there, she echoes many ideas of Gilman related to races and women, amply displayed in her letters and philosophical writings. Lane, in her introduction to *Herland*, quotes the final remark of Ellador in 'Ourland,' which portrays the new experiences she has in this patriarchal world, signaling the process of maturity in a woman who comes from a utopia to meet the 'other' when this is exactly what men are supposed to do: to see women beyond 'the sex,' as 'people':

> At first I thought of men just as males–a Herlander would, you know. Now I know that men are people, too, just as much as women are. (Gilman quoted in Lane, 2001: xxii-xxiii)

CHAPTER 3

THE POST-WAR REALITIES AND FEMINISM: WHITHER EXPECTATIONS?

3.1 'AFTER THE WAR': AN AFTERMATH OF DEVASTATION

Feminism, as a term denoting women's rights movements and a certain philosophy, has certainly assumed many different contents and approaches in different circumstances. The period from the 1840s up to the 1920s, for example, was largely concerned with the issue of voting and developing a consciousness of equal rights whereas, although these issues were still actual, the post-World War II years introduced different notions and views into feminism as well. The civil rights movements and anti-war, anti-Vietnam movements, the famous march on the Pentagon in the 1960s and '70s, and many similar political and social reactions and movements of the new era ignited a new dynamics within feminism.

Before the 1970s, the golden era of feminist utopias in the twentieth century, feminism and feminist utopias had to face a great crisis out of which a different and transformed idea of feminism emerged. Having lived through many important incidents during the 1960s, some intellectuals among American women, feeling that women were still "second-class" (Gamble, 2001: 310) citizens in their country even during this change in the world order, decided to initiate a new system of thought and action to delve into the core of patriarchy, which, they thought, had invaded not only the language of daily life but their own discourse, too. Kate Millet, just to name an eminent figure from the Second Wave feminism, tried to disclose the hidden structures of patriarchal power relations in literature (*cf*. Millet, 1972: 294-335). Before the 1960s, although there were some attempts to keep the movement alive, feminism's going through a process of redefinition after the war and its being

beclouded by the post-war crisis on a global scale necessitated a hibernation period for feminist utopias as well.

Many examples that were written before World War I, and therefore before the Nineteenth Amendment, dealt with some educational and economic problems of women such as marriage, work and voting, whereas the 1960s introduced a very important concept and idea which would become a key term for the 1970s: women's liberation. Many feminists of the First Wave worked to redress injustices toward women's legal and social equalities, and although they are referred to as 'feminists' today, they did not "necessarily see themselves as feminists in the modern sense" (Gamble, 2001: 233), and the gist of their efforts was usually related to reforms and improvements, not revolution. The term "Second Wave Feminism" with its revolutionary and different aspects was coined by Marsha Lear to refer "to the increase in feminist activity which occurred in America, Britain and Europe from the late sixties onward" (*Ibid.*: 310).

If we leave aside the fact that feminism in these parts of the world with its own peculiar problems and history has lacked a universal framework to associate itself with other women from various parts of the world – which also explains the birth of recent micro-movements and coteries in feminism, a point that became a crucial in the 1980s and '90s – and try to observe the change in this new 'wave,' we can notice that its content becomes more revolutionary to the extent that it breaks away from the earlier patriarchal conceptions of women by women. In the '60s and '70s, the Second Wave also signaled the emergence of different methods and questions in feminism, employed by different groups such as black feminism, socialist feminism and lesbian feminism. Gamble's short but important remark about the new wave of feminism in fact summarizes the gist of the change, which is qualitative rather than quantitative:

> The slogan 'the personal is political' sums up the way in which second wave feminism did not just strive to extend the range of social opportunities to women, but also, through intervention within the spheres of reproduction, sexuality and cultural representation, to change their domestic and private lives. (*Ibid.*)

The great project of utopias, which had been devised to change a whole society and culture, had to be replaced with a new kind of utopia in which the personal had to be changed to reconstruct society. In politics, this tendency was actually a parallel movement to the New Left. The fundamental idea was to reorganize society not from 'above' but from 'bottom-up,' or as Le Guin's protagonist in *The Dispossessed* epitomizes it:

> "Do they expect students not to be anarchists?" he said. "What else can the young be? When you are on the bottom, you must organize from the bottom up!" (D 126-127)

This *leitmotif* of organization was indeed a significant one, substantial in nearly all the social formations of the era: the New Left of the '60s and '70s in the United States was actually a loose framework holding together diverse tendencies such as student movements, peace groups, feminists, radical intellectuals, communists, anarchists and ecology movements among many others.

Before such a change of mentality from reform to revolution in feminism, feminist theory and feminist utopia had to deal with the afterglow of the Nineteenth Amendment: now that American women acquired the right to vote, which had been the greatest ideal of feminism up to that moment, what would they do with it? The crisis of the 1920s in feminism was based upon a very simple question: what comes next? Having obtained the right to vote, feminism seemed to have lost one of its greatest propelling forces, and although there were still several important problems to be solved, American feminism experienced the languor of the moment after World War I. In addition to that crisis in feminism was added the severe destruction engendered by World War I and II, which also called attention to the pressing problem of establishing a long-lasting state of peace. After the havoc that claimed the lives of thousands, peace, as one of the greatest ideals of humanity, seemed to take over the scene. Two major projects, the United Nations and the European Economic Community (which developed to become the European Union) were conceived to prevent further wars and to stabilize order in Europe, which was

also a concern of the United States, now well on its way to become the greatest economic and military power of the world.

Another problem was the dwindling demand for women in the job market during the post-war periods, especially during the depression of the 1930s. The dire conditions of both World War I and World War II nevertheless created a great chance and possibility for American women to take the jobs vacated by men, since they were enlisted to fight in the Old World. Before the Great Depression, therefore, women attained a strong stand in the market, which, of course, lasted for a short time. Yet, before the survivors returned from the front, women had become indispensable in the United States. Sometimes, these embittered veterans could not continue from where they had left, and the sense of loss created a strange kind of misogyny, coupled with a trauma of war. Ernest Hemingway's and F. Scott Fitzgerald's female characters, Brett in *Fiesta* (1926) and Jordan Baker in *The Great Gatsby* (1925), reflect the male outlook of the post-WWI period as regards this feeling of insecurity as well as the image of a liberated 'masculine' or 'boyish' woman. The image of the liberated woman in a world of changing moral values was quite disturbing for men, who were still struggling with their problems of masculinity. Meanwhile, some women tried to imitate the roles played by men: they wore men's hats, trousers, played golf, drove cars, drank, and had 'promiscuous' affairs. The recognition and apprehension of these changes for women signaled the coming of a future backlash movement even back in the 1920s.

This new experience of social recognition alongside with greater economic freedom was something that women had to relinquish with the return of the men traumatized by war. Yet this retreat did not mean that what had been gained was completely lost; instead their experiences in the job market took women one step forward and led them to the sphere of action and labor, although this was usually the market's demand rather than women's. Nevertheless, in the 1940s, feminists had another opportunity to press for the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA), and "the '40s-era Congress passed thirty-three bills serving to advance women's rights" (Faludi, 1991:51).

When World War II was finally over, American men returned from the front once more to reclaim all the things and jobs that had belonged to them, and thus, the wartime economy that had created the image of the hardworking American woman – Faludi refers to the famous 'Rosie the Riveter' icon to illustrate this image – quickly receded; so much so that during the two months following the end of World War II "800,000 were fired from the aircraft industry; by the end of the year, 2 million female workers had been purged from heavy industry" (Faludi, 1991: 51). With today's hindsight, it may be stated that though many women in the United States thought that suffrage would solve a great part of their problems, there were yet many prejudices and inequalities that could not be overcome by the sheer power of vote. It would take some time to realize that women's movements had to deal with several more fundamental problems that were imbedded in American society. Women now had the power to change some institutions by voting against them but there were also many things to be changed, which were neither institutions nor laws but conventions and prejudices.

Kessler also explains how some of these prejudices were still justified and furthered by some so-called 'scientific' facts. The school of psychoanalysis founded by Sigmund Freud, for example, defined woman in terms of masculine sexuality and lack of penis. The repercussions and, consequently, the burden of Freud's theory were strongly felt both by feminists and non-feminists alike. Thus, Freud's precepts have been much criticized by many later psychoanalysts, both male and female. Some feminists, such as Phyllis Chesler, the author of *Women and Madness* (1972), have claimed that "psychoanalysis regards sickness as a normative characteristic of femininity" (Gamble, 2001: 300). This fact, of course, can be explained by man's potential fear of woman, who is dominant as the mother figure during child-care – a fact, it may be claimed, that results in man's will to oppress woman as a kind of reprisal.

Although some radical names in psychoanalysis, like Juliet Mitchell, see a revolutionary essence in woman's instability and therefore, in a sense, transform the degrading outlook of Freudian school into an advantage with potentialities to break free from the patriarchal order, many psychoanalysts of the immediate Post-

War period followed and employed Freud's teaching, which gave a big boost to the patriarchal system's justifications. Later on, many feminist psychoanalysts emphasized the fact that Freud's approach is without any doubt sexist and therefore only intensifies the already dominant values and attitudes in society. Suffrage alone, thus, seems unable to alter these mossy prejudices that have their roots in the most ancient myths and religions.

Although the overall situation during the 1950s was not really hope inspiring, there were some exceptions, and a step was taken toward the life outside home. Yet, in most cases, American women were forced back to their previous roles in their kitchens. The press and all the media propagated images of housewives, and a new world of house gadgets with 'ingenious' functions was invented to encourage women to become what they had been earlier: happy housewives. Rather than acquiring a self-sufficient status with equal rights, many women were heartened to find a nice man and to start up a family, which would mean a nice house, nice children, and, if possible, a nice dog, too. Faludi explains the fate of the women who had to face the '50s backlash when they decided to become working women, or "poorly paid secretaries" instead of "full-time "happy housewives"" (Faludi, 1991: 54):

> Instead, with each turn of the spiral, the culture simply redoubles its resistance, if not by returning women to the kitchen, then by making the hours spent away from their stoves as inequitable and intolerable as possible: pushing women into the worst occupations, paying them the lowest wages, laying them off first and promoting them last, refusing to offer child care or family leave, and subjecting them to harassment. (*Ibid*.: 55)

Kessler, in her study of feminist utopias, states that feminist utopias have actually developed through three periods, the first of which extends from the 1830s to the ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment, which enabled women to vote in 1920 (Kessler, 1995: xx). She also adds that many of the United States utopias written by women between these dates were feminist ones. The second period begins with the Amendment in 1919-1920 and ends in about 1960 with the rise of social movements. The number of feminist utopias written between these years, in the post-

World War I (and post-Nineteenth Amendment) and post-World War II periods, display a great decline in number, and in fact “none appeared during the 1950s” (*Ibid.*). Gertrude Short’s *A Visitor From Venus* (1949) seems to be one of the very few feminist utopias written during the 1940s, and after this example, the genre disappears for some years to be resuscitated by a new generation. The third period may be said to start in the year 1960, although the beginning of this period can be extended between 1960 and 1968. Whether this period is over or not is not discussed in Kessler’s or Kitch’s analyses but the 1980s seem to have witnessed a rupture with the 1970s, probably due to the rise of the New Right in the United States with Ronald Reagan and with Margaret Thatcher in the United Kingdom.

Thus, to conclude, it may be stated that the 1940s and ‘50s cannot be called indisputably fecund decades when assessed from the perspective of feminist utopias. The promises of a better and freer future for women had to wait for some years – until the consciousness of a new generation of women would take a definite shape to challenge the Post-War order. It may be claimed that until the 1960s a silent period ruled in the United States with its depressive mood, which was also the eventual offspring of the Depression era and its stifling milieu that beclouded the country. For American women, this was further aggravated by the prejudiced heritage of ‘Freudian psychoanalysis,’ which relegated them to a secondary status. In the decades when “womanhood” and “wifehood” were still the most momentous aims to evade the label of a “spinster” and when the loss of labor opportunities for women after the Crash of 1929 dominated the scene, women could only wait for the moment of ‘reawakening’: Gertrude Short’s utopia, within this framework, can be defined as a sign from the last years of the 1940s, a work that “anticipates by some two decades the 1970s outpouring of feminist utopias” (*Ibid.*: 213).

3.2 GERTRUDE SHORT: *A VISITOR FROM VENUS*

When Gertrude Short wrote her 'utopia,' the world was devastated with the havoc raised by two world wars. Seen from a feminist point of view, it may be stated that many women were in fact compelled to reconsider their loyalties before and during the war. Many were in favor of peace, and yet many felt that it was necessary to work and to support their countries, their "fatherland." When there was need of munitions, women had to work in order to produce guns, too. Not many utopias were written during the immediate post-World War II period, which was vexed by economic troubles, and anything that comes closest to a literary utopia is Short's work. When Short wrote her utopia-like dialogue, *A Visitor from Venus* (1949), she placed her hopes of peace into her work in which women seem to emerge as the personification of peace, referring to an age-old affinity between women and peace, which can be traced back to Aristophanes's *Lysistrata*.

Short, who was originally a comedienne, in her utopia, has her female narrator overhear a conversation between two Venusites about our world. The literary device employed here is quite reminiscent of *With Her in Ourland*, in which a Herlander leaves the utopia to reconnoiter the realities of the outside world. The criticizing stranger/outsider is of course one of the overused devices of narration in utopias. The reader, following the narrator's train of thought about this conversation, comes to comprehend the way a visitor from Venus (the planet associated with femininity) would see the world in its wrecked situation after the wars. The core of the overheard dialogue is the underdeveloped civilization on earth and its relation to wars and men. Men, being depicted as warmongers, are clearly associated with the planet Mars, although the text does not state the name at first, whereas Venus as the planet of serenity is overtly correlated with women.

The work begins with clues about a female pilot's experiences about flying and the way she compares herself to a "GI", a male soldier; and this comparison she makes exposes the true meaning of her flying experience: Roberta Renfrow, the pilot, believes the act of flying a plane to be a symbol of her (female)

independence and skill. Thus, in symbolic terms, Roberta also assesses her piloting experience as a criterion for her past relations with men and with her fiancé in particular, who develops into an emblem of all men.

Forced to land on an indefinite and obscure place – a "no-place" – near a snow-covered valley by a mountain, she leaves her plane behind as the pinnacle of "her" civilization – an act that is reminiscent of *Herland*, though the visitor here is female. A stranger in a strange land, she knocks on the door of a house she finds at a nearly uninhabitable place. When she enters the house looking for shelter, she examines the place thoroughly and infers that it must be inhabited by women, which makes things even harder to grasp, since she at first presumes a house at such an altitude can only be inhabited by men. She then decides to sleep there for a while and after severing her ties with the physical reality of the outside world, following her sleep, she loses her sense of passing time, which drags her deep into this 'no-place' that belongs to the Venusites. Without the conveniences of her "modern" world, she is not able to find a medium to connect her to her habitual experiences. Waking up to a new day, she is ready to discover the mystery of the place.

Trying to unearth the mysteries of the house, Roberta finds a fine collection of books from many languages, poems, novels, etc., all of 'best quality' – i.e. not best-sellers – which she takes to be a sign of erudition. She, in this new house/world, then begins to question the male voice in her even when she is studying the bookcase and the books. Her fiancé, Dick, the domineering voice in her life, the male voice of her habitual world and the voice she drags into this new world, disturbs her contemplation, which of course provides the reader with the first necessary details for one of the basic functions of many utopias: criticism.

Although Roberta is not able to enter the world of the strange aliens who seem to visit the house to observe life on Earth, she still listens to their conversations about the civilization of which she is supposed to be a part by the help of a telecommunication device. The first clues she gathers about those Venusites are not sufficient to help her in her efforts to determine the sex of the parties, which she nevertheless seems to figure out in quite a short time. A few minutes later she discovers that they are two female characters talking in English, who are from a more

advanced world than ours, that is, both mentally and technologically. Visiting the world, they face the illogicality of wars, the seeds of destruction humanity sowed, and many other social ills that are of course always narrated with the delicate humor of Short. From that point onwards, Short's work assumes the function of a parody of World War II and the Post-War period so as to expose the gap between human ideals and realities, like the one related to "democracy."

Short's work then moves back to the evident comparison between Roberta's world and the Venusites' assessments of it, when one of the aliens, Veh, comments on the reason why the wars on Earth cannot and will not end. Seen from this viewpoint, wars are associated with men, a conviction that is corroborated with the alleged sexist domination of patriarchy that is said to perpetuate the spirit of never-ending wars. Here Short's sense of humor also reveals itself and assumes the critical aspect of a utopia rather than a prescriptive vision:

> "*I would judge from what you report that Earthites are on the right path. But why are they so long in abolishing wars?*"
> "*That is largely due to another division that seems never to have been thought by Earthites. That lordly, domineering voice on the radio is man. In all languages it means the same, and that is 'the boss.' On earth it is 'he' the boss, and 'she' the bossed!"*
> *"Boss? Zua, what is a boss?"*
> *"Another name is 'man-ag-her.' And believe me he does!"* Zua laughed, *ruefully* [mine italics here]. *"This boss is the creature of primary importance. He is what they call 'man.' The secondary creature is woe-man.'"* (VV 223)

Overhearing this dialogue between the Venusites, Roberta comes to understand that their civilization is much more advanced when compared to that of the Earth's, and therefore the tone of their conversation is one of irony and pity combined. With a defective system of democracy based upon an ideal of "individual dignity and freedom" (*Ibid.*), the inhabitants of the Earth are indeed very far away from this Venusian utopia with its "autarchy" or "government by the self" or "government from within" (VV 315). Although the text mentions this ideal for a few times, there is no clear indication of any viable way that may help establish such an idealized system of government, which, therefore, remains as mere wishful thinking. All that the text offers is a prophecy for the future of civilization on Earth till the

ultimate era of peace is reached, and that is only after great upheavals and chaos. If one considers the aim Short probably had in mind when writing *A Visitor from Venus*, namely that of satirizing the order of the world based upon wars and patriarchy, it becomes much easier to understand the following quotation:

> "*They were talking of brotherhood among nations* [...] *always brotherhood, never sisterhood.* [...] *We have had these relationships so long we are now one nation, so we could understand their aspirations.*" (VV 225)

The Venusites of course acknowledge the technological and material improvements on Earth but they also observe that the "Earthites" lack the necessary maturity in human relations to ameliorate the living conditions. Cut off from one another and devastated by ideologies of race, the Earthites are unable to overcome cultural barriers and prejudices such as racism, a subject discussed and criticized by Short in relation to sexism, too – a point highlighted also by other feminists such as Cridge and Gilman.

The discussion about the superiority of "Fatherforms" over "Motherforms" constitutes the following part of the dialogue as a continuation of this sequence of race-sex analogy. Just as the non-white races are thought to be intellectually inferior, "Eve" is also reckoned to be a subordinate creature that may be dominated/colonized. From the Venusian point of view, this obvious prejudice on Earth is based upon a system of binary thinking. Man stands for pure intellect whereas woman stands for pure beauty, which is eventually lost after youth. This criticism, which is valid but also commonplace, is followed by another cliché comment about the role a woman is supposed to play in her relationship with a man. Showing only small signs of intellect and accepting flattery and playing man's game of beauty and glamour, woman, from a 'Venusian perspective,' seems to be very much like the 'male figure' that Cridge depicts in her *Man's Rights*.

Overhearing and then listening to the following part of the conversation about men's approach to femininity and women, Roberta thinks about herself and her fiancé, who of course belongs to a different world at that moment. Her fiancé, Dick,

in fact stands for that conventional male figure who wants to dominate his wife and turn her into an artifact that he can display:

> "Wish I had some of those clothes and perfume now." Roberta looked down at her flying suit with distaste. "Dick wanted me to stay home and wear them. We quarreled, too, our last evening together. I can't forget his words, 'I want you like you were before this idea of flying entered your head. I want to come home to find you in flowered dresses, flowers in your hair, flowery perfume that caresses me when I come near. That's the way you were when we met, remember? I don't like you in that *unholy* outfit. And I want you to marry me before I go over.' [italics mine] (VV 229)

Here the text returns to Roberta's and the reader's world. Roberta hesitates for a second about her decision of breaking free while she once more lapses into seeing herself through male eyes. The reference to Roberta's decision about becoming a pilot and flying has of course some connotations, and other than being a physical act, it symbolizes her passion to break loose and soar up to the skies like a "free bird" before being put into a golden cage of dresses and perfumes. The "unholy outfit" of course refers to the violation of the sphere designated and sanctified for women at home. After expressing this issue of "women's sphere," the text underlines the recent developments in women's rights and highlights the fact that ever since American women acquired some new rights after the World Wars, they cannot be expected to "wear the old dresses of the past days." Although the text has a very humorous tone in general, here it assumes a very sober expression and almost proclaims that the American woman will never accept her assigned roles as "her proper sphere of influence" (*Ibid.*). Although men thought that women had to stay home during the wars and "keep the place in order," many women like Roberta assumed new roles and identities, which they had no idea of relinquishing when their husbands returned from the war.

Shattering the images created for them, many American women – that was true for many European women as well – were now able to display their intelligence, sometimes even for the pro-war efforts although wars are defined as "Adam's institution" in Short's text (VV 230). Zua, one of the Venusites, here clarifies the male point of view of bearing children and bringing them up: that is, to

be integrated into a vicious circle of wars and re-production of patriarchy. In olden times, children of the 'Earthites,' whom they themselves brought up, were thrown to the fires of Moloch, an Ammonite god in the Old Testament, who dwelled in the valley of Hinnom (the so-called "Ga Hinnom" or "gehenna") (Storm, 2001: 53):

> "*Centuries ago they offered their children to another fiery god, Moloch. Eve's sacrifices were supposed to be so sacred that she dared not weep for her loss, lest tears offend. Today, Eves offer them to another fiery god, Mars, and still sacrifices are too honorable for tears. They must be proud of sons who die on a field of glory!*" (VV 230)

This new god, Mars, which is analogous to Moloch and which stands for patriarchy, seems to be as bloodthirsty as his predecessor and outdated from the viewpoint of the Venusites. They rather deem the rise of a new cult based upon the "rights of Eve" as the only solution to overcome the complications created by men, an idea once more reminiscent of Gilman's idea of a "Mother Goddess." Short then elaborates this idea further by stating through the words of the Venusites that after so much "fathering," the world is in need of "mothering" (VV 232). Short's criticism of patriarchy and the present order, therefore, does not go as far as denying the notion of "motherhood," which is amplified and 'dignified' for a greater context. Describing men as little children, the Venusites think that women of the Earth can now play an active role in the betterment of the world, acting as "a check over Adam."

Short's work then once more tries to relate the so-called essential association of woman to world peace and tries to justify this correlation. Taking many ideas that may be called essentialist, Zua claims that instead of abolishing the patriarchal motherhood-home relationship, women can enlarge the frame to include all humanity by following the mother-home analogy. Furthermore, when humanity is able to see the godhead in a female form, or put differently, when it succeeds in reflecting the ideas of "feminine virtues" on to its all-male godhead, God the Father, the dream of ever-lasting peace will be realized.

> "*Eve is not naturally an organizing creature, She is individual. Her thinking is closer to the welfare of the child and home, the smallest unit of government, and the most intimate in all lands. As the mother, it has been her*

> *child and her home. Now she is beginning to think in terms of the world-wide homes, and the children in them."*
> *"Just thinking about them?"* Veh prodded.
> *"She is beginning to organize to do some things. Not on a grandiose scale. She is not much impressed with insignia, banners and bands. But she has won some freedoms and is using them to win others. She will be required to win many more, to be a completely free agent in many divisions, if Earth is ever to be a safe place. In some nations she has dared to go further and call the Only One 'Mother.' Earthites recognize what they term their Heavenly Father as a Supreme Being. When they recognize this Being as Mother, too, it will bring complete peace on Earth, such as Venus has known for ages."* (VV 233-234)

To explicate Short's ideas further, it can be stated that she retains the parentage analogy to criticize the father-son lineage in favor of the mother-daughter relationship. Short's other claims of interpreting the Bible from a female viewpoint had been attempted earlier with greater skill, especially the New Testament's notion of love was underlined to underscore the feminine aspects of it, although it is a purely divine form of love for a distinctively male god figure.

Short's foremost argument here seems to be the urgent need to emphasize the importance of a possible unification of God the Mother and God the Father to attain world peace. To reach that 'perfect status of peace,' women have to 'fight,' which of course leads to a paradox, to a condition that displays the idealistic and defective wishful thinking of the Venusites. If this is what Short thinks about peace and women, it lacks the necessary observation to disclose the real causes of war and relies upon some abstracted notions about men and women. Although, in her work, she *seems* to be aware of such contradictions, e.g. 'fighting for peace' "to win peace" (VV 235), her analysis, if it exists at all, cannot probe into the core of this difficult matter to disentangle itself from this contradiction. The Venusites, who come from a planet of peace and higher civilization still believe in some essentialist generalizations such as "mothers are mothers the earth over" (*Ibid.*). Firmly believing in the affinity between Venus and love, they try to unearth the neglected and latent love in the New Testament so as to abolish the "exclusive and possessive" aspects of the present kind of love, which they think would eventually produce a world of harmony between men and women. This utopia of the Venusites rewrites the Christian myth of the Messiah to prophesize the liberation of Eve, who will achieve

what Adam has not been able to achieve, namely peace, a yearning that occupies the most significant place in this post-war utopia.

Although Short makes use of a mixture of space-fantasy and satire to develop the foundation of her work till the very end, the last pages of *A Visitor from Venus* also move towards a dominant tone of millenarianism with religious images and figures including a female messiah. In fact, this craving can be interpreted as the last hope of a woman who has witnessed two World Wars and whose only hope for peace lies in an idealized feminine nature. The role Short designates for women eventually broadens its initiative to a 'greater' need, namely the greater good of the Earth and of all peoples. Still, women's efforts for such an ideal order will pay off while they will have to serve as wardens over men:

> "*But there is hope. Light is breaking, old concepts are fading. All the viciousness now coming to the surface will be conquered by love in the hearts of the Eves. They will come into their own in mothering the Earth. With this service, their capacities for compelling and keeping peace will multiply. Places in government and education will be theirs. They must help the peace they make, or Adam will explode Earth out of the universe!*" (VV 240)

Just when the conversation's topic moves towards charity and love to come, Roberta touches the dial through which this communication is possible and therefore she breaks the connection. All she has been able to get is a short glimpse of a 'dream world,' and she cannot find the radio station again to follow the dialogue, which she thinks is a 'play' for the audience. Now the connection nearly lost, she hears some final utterance barely audible: "Someone on Earth will need to remake that connection before there can be a further communication from us to that planet" (VV 242), which is to say that someone has to reach the planet Venus through his/her efforts and through love.

Now the dream-like scene is over, stupefied by what she has heard, Roberta 'wakes up' to the 'real world' that surrounds her with its snow. The momentary glimpse of illumination captures her, and she takes the radio as a token of her incredible experiences just as when a mountaineer, who thinks that he will find the "furrin-like" woman who visited the hut last year, enters the hut only to find this

“’Merican” woman “same’s” him (VV 243). The man launches a short tirade against women who “want to be cavortin’ round above the clouds in men’s clothes” (*Ibid.*). His complaint seems to remind the reader of the complaints of Short’s time and to forebode the future reactions against the feminist movement, what would probably be called the “Backlash”. This seems to verify Faludi’s observations about the emergence of the Backlash many decades prior to the 1980s (Faludi, 1991: 47-55). Besides bringing back the domineering male voice into Roberta’s world, the mountaineer also claims that women have nothing to do with flying, i.e. freedom and initiative, because the Bible does not allow them to act the way Roberta does. This method of disdaining new female liberties by reference to the Bible was, of course, not a novelty, and Short’s portrayal of the scene only matches the style of a comedienne. While the man grumbles angrily about “these modern flyin’ women,” Roberta has no choice but to leave behind the hut and the moments she lived in there, as the mountaineer is the only man to take her back to the world down below. Therefore, from the mountaintop “meekly, and in silence” she follows the old man (VV 243), submitting at least for the moment to his dominance in being taken back to the patriarchal world of wars.

CHAPTER 4

THE RESURRECTION OF FEMINIST UTOPIAS

4.1 AFTER THE WAR: A 'SILENT' INTERLUDE

A Visitor from Venus marked the end of an era of feminist utopias; in fact, it was the last example of the genre until its resurfacing in the late 1960s. Feminist utopias had reached their peak during the advent of modernism, and after the experience of two world wars no one dared to write a work that would envision a perfect society. Besides, all hopes that were kindled during the second half of the nineteenth century were spent in vain, or worse still, in cruelty and horror in two decades of war. Some authors like the Russian Eugeny Zamyatin foresaw the trouble of the coming years in utopias, in this particular case, in the USSR during the 1920s. Likewise, some authors like George Orwell – who was a keen observer of this exciting political and social experience – wrote about the rise of Stalinism and the Spanish Civil War to portray what they saw as the hell within a utopia. During the 1930s, though many people witnessed the rise of National Socialism, not as many people were able to predict the atrocity that was to follow. Adolf Hitler's 'utopia' was in fact the pinnacle of utopian illogicality, or to put it in a better way, a monomaniac fervor carried to its extremes.

In the United States, the 1940s and '50s were decades of restructuring for the nation, and to fit the needs of a post-war economy, American social life was reorganized, which resulted in a campaign to allure women back into their 'proper sphere of action.' Advertisements, newspapers, later on television, and many other media propagated traditional gender roles and tried to incorporate these roles with the new 'working woman.' It was a paradox that brought about new problems for the ideologues of patriarchy, as it was now lucid that women would never return to their former sphere. Later on, the very same ideologues began to preach about the

discontents of the careerist woman, claiming that the family was about to disintegrate, that fathers and children were not receiving enough attention – which was in many ways the reiteration of the nineteenth-century conservative discourse. Therefore, a new women's 'utopia' of superbly equipped houses and kitchens was designed to keep women at home. Ironically, that was indeed reminiscent of what some of the very first feminist utopias half mockingly dreamt of. In fact, women were supposed to play with their 'toys' at home, leaving serious matters to men.

On the other hand, the political turbulence of the 1960s shook the establishment at its very roots, and the sexual revolution introduced many completely different roles for women. When women realized that there was a world outside to which now they could contribute – and voting was just a part of this greater world – they were no longer satisfied with their 'toys.' Yet, this is not to say that all women grabbed and grasped these ideas with ease. The *zeitgeist* actually eased the way for the birth and dissemination of different ideas and tendencies among women, creating a variety of camps. As it usually happens in many different contexts, a search for a new identity augmented the discrepancy of thought among women, too. Although women of the United States realized that they were free – to an unprecedented extent – to decide how their new identities should be defined, not all of them made the same decision. From a feminist perspective, once again, this problem was diagnosed as an outcome of 'false consciousness' among American women, a point that had been mentioned by Cridge in *Man's Rights* as well. Thus, consciousness raising became a crucial concern among feminists, and while names like Shulamith Firestone adopted a revolutionary approach and supported radical changes, the expected counter-revolutionary move developed slowly, too, to find strong exponents with the rise of neo-conservatism and the New Right politics.

Critic Sally L. Kitch, on the other hand, adopts a different paradigm to elucidate the decline of utopias during the 1940s and '50s. She talks about a return to realism after the heyday of utopianism, which, she claims, also explains the post-1980s turn from utopian fiction. She sees utopianism as "a virus" that infects the "heart of feminism" (Stimpson, 2000: viii) and offers a "[p]ost-utopian realism" to reduce the 'detrimental' effects of utopianism on feminism (Kitch, 2000: 9). Kitch's

approach mirrors both the disappointment of the post-war generations in the United States and the post-modern turn from grand narratives and ideologies. Yet the works composed by writers like Ursula Le Guin or Joanna Russ seem to transgress the definition of utopianism given by Kitch. Besides, the core of Kitch's critique relies on some literary examples that can be classified as traditional utopias, although she does not hesitate to define all kinds of utopia as "life-producing hormones that also fuel death-producing cancers" (*Ibid*.: 10). Yet, it is also important to note the fact that the retreat from utopia in feminism during the 1950s had nothing to do with theoretical concerns or intellectual disillusionments. On the contrary, it was to a great extent related to socio-political issues and problems, some of which had global repercussions that affected the utopian imagination as well.

What changed the course of events after the 1950s was the anti-authoritarian movements, counterculture, and autonomous attempts to envision better futures, which forced many politicians to revise their time-worn conducts. The political atmosphere of the Post-War period in the United States, coupled with the Baby Boom of the following decades, would not bear the heavy burden of the ancient policies of government and politics. Seething with micro-movements, with many libertarians asking for reforms in every domain, the 1960s witnessed two significant events; the Rise of the Cold War and the Vietnam War. Protests against the state policies were frequent, radicals numerous, times full of trouble for the Establishment. A restless youth demanding the world 'right here and right now' raised its voice not only in the United States but also in Europe.

In the United States, racial minorities voiced their claims louder, adherents of the counterculture demanded a sexual revolution, while many women marched the streets to protest the inequalities still perpetuated by 'their' laws and 'their' governments. To meet the demands of the era, President J. F. Kennedy had formerly created some commissions to propose some amendments for women in 1962 (Schneir, 1995: 71). Thus, major changes in laws were put into force by the middle of the 1960s, which, of course, included some modifications for women, too.

The Civil Rights Act of 1964, which was made up of eleven parts – also called "titles" – was thus devised to protect the rights of minorities in the U.S. in

general and of African-Americans in particular. This act both referred to several former rights in the constitution, which were not really effective, and defined several new ones. Of course, such an act was the outcome of the endless toil of many reformist groups in the U.S., including Afro-Americans and women. After many protests by the anti-war movements, sit-ins by the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) – of which Marge Piercy was a member – and after the March on Washington in 1963, discrimination against minorities was prohibited by this document. Title VII of this legislation had the greatest significance for women, although its adoption was rather unplanned. By this title, women of the United States acquired the right of equal employment in their laws instead of discrimination, though its actual implementation would take longer. Thus, after these reformist legislations, some control and protection units were established as well to oversee and to observe the changes during this process.

Such changes also paved the way for another proposal to bring about further reforms in the United States. In 1972, "the coverage of Title VII was broadened to encompass educational institutions" (*Ibid.*: 73). In the very same year, the "ERA," Equal Rights Amendment of 1972, which guaranteed equal legal rights for men and women – was prepared, and yet, it was defeated in 1978 with the efforts of a short-lived group called "Stop ERA," which claimed that the ERA "would destroy family values and encourage homosexuality and lesbian lifestyles" (Duchak, 1999: 293). Still, by small but strong steps, women established themselves as equals in payment and employment.

These changes on the political and societal levels, as a consequence, found their way into fiction. The liberal mood of the '60s ousted the already marginalized didactic and conclusive discourses. In fiction, what Peter Filling calls the "novelization of utopia" (Fitting, 1990: 153) was long on its way to replace the didactic narratives of former utopias. Jean Pfaelzer defines this change on the narrative level of utopia in the following way:

> The traditional utopian narrative is, similarly, a didactic "picture" rather than a mimetic tale, a social and political parable in which internal literary structures point to and establish a normative statement about historical

> process [...] The text is an illustration whose intention is finite and determined. The readers' tasks are to assimilate and agree, to get the point [...] In the past twenty years or so, we no longer have read utopian narratives as conclusive [...] Now we read in the more fragmented manner in which Luciente viewed Bolivar's hologram in *Woman on the Edge of Time* [...] The hologram, as narrative, reflects the shifting and dissolving interpretations of the society. (Pfaelzer, 1990: 191-192)

Restated in a different way, it may be argued that the new discourse has upset the traditional reader-author/encoder-decoder relationship so as to incite new ways of reading and writing that contribute to the constructing of a possible future. Pfaelzer labels this paradigmatic shift as a "transition from a teleological view of the future to a deconstructionist view of the future" (*Ibid.*: 193). Thus, he also highlights the importance and impact of what Jacques Derrida and deconstructionist philosophy achieved in the post-1960 years. Dangling between an "anything goes" kind of liberalism (or maybe the ultimate liberation from the patriarchal modes of thinking as the French feminists' attempts exemplify) and what Fredric Jameson calls a proof of our "incapacity to imagine utopia" (Jameson quoted in Pfaelzer, 1990: 193), this new narrative approach poses a crucial question for our understanding of not the future of utopia only but of postmodernism's future as well. As some feminists constructed their theories in the light of post-structuralist thought – and with ideas from the deconstructionist school in particular – feminist utopias, after developing social and literary associations, now assumed a highly philosophical tone. So much so that Toril Moi defines the philosophy of Cixous, a figure usually defined as a post-feminist (though she never accepts *even* being called a 'feminist,' just like Foucault's rejection of being called a 'post-structuralist') thinker, as "an imaginary utopia" (Moi, 1985: 102). It should also be stated that Cixous's most influential contribution to women's movement – as she does not approve of the term "feminism," which for her is a "bourgeois, egalitarian demand for women to obtain power in the present patriarchal system" (*Ibid.*: 103) – was in the second half of the 1970s, a fact that highlights the chronological parallelism with the utopias which are discussed in this chapter. Cixous's "utopia" appears to be an anti-theoretical one that resists a strict analysis that would yield some results in a conventional narrative.

In the 1970s, one may both find new feminist philosophies which are totally rigorous and utopian in essence, and many outstanding examples of literary utopias reminiscent of what Lucy Sargisson defines and defends in her book *Contemporary Feminist Utopianism* as "transgressive utopias:" utopias which violate the boundaries of dualistic structures and binary oppositions of patriarchal constructs which have dominated utopias for centuries, by making use of post-structuralist philosophies like that of Cixous. Thus, it has to be stated that what may be identified as breaches or ruptures in the dominant discourse of patriarchy – that occur in philosophy and literature too – as well as in this 'new' understanding of utopia can be regarded as the product of an aggregate of criticisms from different domains. Fredric Jameson's fear about our new "incapacity" is directly related to the question about deconstruction with its social and political implications, which, of course, reaches new heights as it also arouses fears of being lost among many criticisms in a world of dispersed power/autonomous coteries without any structures and visions. If feminism is also one of these 'infamous' grand narratives, it necessarily follows that it will not be spared from the 'interrogations' of postmodernism. A discussion of this new situation and of post-feminist tendencies can be found in the last chapter of the study, in which the ramification of feminism and its aftermath are discussed.

To sum up the remarks about the situation during this period of transformation, it must be emphasized that feminism as an effective movement of this new period, gaining momentum after such reforms both on a societal and literary level, was also fed through several channels, including new approaches in sociology, psychology and philosophy. Freud's theory, which was based upon a male-centered outlook, was toppled as post-structuralist critiques of power and institutions as studied by feminist philosophers and theoreticians were incorporated into feminist theories. With the revolutionary surge of the times, utopian thought, likewise, was revived with a different soul and contributed to by diverse social movements that resulted in a creation of a new understanding of utopia. The development and coming of age of new ideas such as ecology also resulted in the creation of new concerns and topics in utopianism, to which Ernest Callenbach's *Ecotopia* is an example. Thus, eco-feminism, following the experiences and theories of ecological struggles and

movements, demonstrated how different opposing ideological movements of the ‘60s found the opportunity to criticize both capitalism, patriarchy and the exploitation of nature. Thus, these new utopias, their sails full with the wind of future promises and with a new vision in sight, set out during the 1960s to reach their zenith in the 1970s.

4.2 URSULA LE GUIN’S *THE DISPOSSESSED*: A ‘METATOPIA’

> “I thought I knew what ‘realism’ was,” Keng said.
> She smiled, but it was not an easy smile.
> “How can you, if you don’t know what hope is?”
> (D 351)

Ursula Le Guin’s *The Dispossessed* (1974), as an innovative and different utopia of the 1970s, marks the new ascent of feminist utopias but with new methods and new concerns. After the experience of the 1960s and the New Left, the Summer of Love, anti-Pentagonism, free love, commune life, the black rights movement, and a new generation of feminism, Le Guin and her contemporaries eventually saw the world from a new perspective which altered the former traditions of utopia for good. At first sight, Le Guin’s “ambiguous utopia” seems to follow some traditions set by More’s *Utopia* and the Renaissance passion for landscape and habitation planning so as to explicate what transportation, communication and architecture are like in a utopia (D 95; 97; 187). Yet this utopia, determined to do away with worn-out blueprints of perfection – like many of its contemporaries – follows the preferences of the new generation of utopia writers, who are in fact the children of an earlier generation already disillusioned with utopias, yet eager to revive the concept of utopia and relate it to the individual. This novel idea, of course, owed many of its principles to the rise of individualistic autonomy in the 1960s.

Le Guin’s “ambiguous utopia” does not have a female figure as its focal character, and it does not deal with obviously feminist issues as Chris Ferns attests to

in his *Narrating Utopia* (Ferns, 1999: 221). In fact, the narration develops around a male character, Shevek. Besides, those issues handled by many feminist utopia writers are not as central to Le Guin's work as it is, for example, in *Herland*. Le Guin rather tries to weave many other issues from non-feminist utopias into feminist questions. *The Dispossessed* is a highly controversial work interpreted in different ways by diverse critics, and though some claim that it is quite revolutionary in its treatment of various issues, many also object to its retaining some conventional values and views about gender relations, too. Chris Ferns thus notes some oppositions to *The Dispossessed*:

> Shevek, the utopian physicist and mathematician, whose return to Urras constitutes the narrative link between utopia and the analogue of our own reality, is viewed by a number of critics as little more than a classic stereotype: the 'Great Scientist' (male, of course), who leads humanity forward by both his discoveries and his example. Worse, he is a heterosexual male, who in a society where there is no marriage, nor any taboos against multiple relationships, deliberately chooses to live in a monogamous partnership. While other modes of sexuality are positively portrayed–Bedap, for example, easily the most politically astute character in the book, is gay– this is dismissed as sheer tokenism [...] Overall, while her utopia may radically question many of the norms of existing society, Le Guin is viewed as ultimately reinscribing one of its fundamental bases—namely, patriarchal authority: like so many utopias before it, *The Dispossessed* reinscribes the very norms of the gender relations it purports to challenge. (*Ibid*.: 220)

Many critics have actually compared and contrasted the protagonists and methods of Le Guin's *The Dispossessed*, Marge Piercy's *Woman on the Edge of Time* and Joanna Russ's *The Female Man* as regards feminist issues (*Ibid.*) to reach the conclusion that the female non-white ('Chicana') character of Piercy's work, and the connected selves of four women in Russ's work with their more radical approach, in fact, portray more successful examples of subversion of patriarchy. In spite of such harsh criticism, *The Dispossessed* has been accepted into the new canon of feminist utopias both by Lucy Sargisson and Carol Farley Kessler – just to cite two eminent critics of feminist utopias among many others– thanks to its "atypical male" hero (Kessler, 1995: 281), *She*vek, who, for some, stands for an alternative set of values also advocated by some feminists. Besides, Shevek does not in fact comply with the conventional 'great male scientist' stereotype in many aspects, either:

> Le Guin uses Shevek's apparent conformity to conventional sexual values as a means of exposing other forms of difference. For Shevek is far more than the mere conventional hero to which Le Guin's critics reduce him: in his role as a visitor, not to, but from utopia, his inability to be persuaded by the values of the society he encounters (the reverse of the traditional visitor to utopia's almost immediate conversion) serves to unmask many of its limitations. (Ferns, 1999: 222)

Another striking point about *The Dispossessed* is that it exemplifies a new streak of thought in the Western tradition of utopias, namely a 'metatopia,' meaning a utopia involving a meta-layer exposing the suppressed and silenced questions of utopias, such as the problem of future generations in stagnant utopias, the relationship between ideal worlds and the individual. Shevek, the protagonist of *The Dispossessed*, epitomizes one of these problems with the following words:

> The Settlers were idealists, yes, to leave this world for our deserts. But that was seven generations ago! Our society is practical. Maybe too practical, too much concerned with survival only. What is idealistic about social cooperation, mutual aid, when it is the only means of staying alive?" (D 135)

This is not a trivial question but one that is constantly asked throughout the book in different contexts. It also seems to be related to a different but relevant question of whether the human being's inclinations, or what is usually called 'human nature,' can ultimately be 'rectified' for good within the life-span of a single generation, which, of course, seems rather suspect. Le Guin here clearly acknowledges the dualistic structure of human nature, challenging the idea that it is 'essentially' good but deteriorated by the corruptive presence of the state:

> In the early years of the Settlement we were aware of that, on the lookout for it. People discriminated very carefully then between administering things and governing people. They did it so well that we forgot that the will to dominance is as central in human beings as the impulse to mutual aid is, and has to be trained in each individual, in each generation. Nobody is born an Odonian any more than he's born civilized! (D 168)

Le Guin's questions also center around the essential issue of the totalitarian essence of perfect blueprints. Opposing the totalitarian structure of traditional utopias, she displays the corruptive effects of power on one of the

imaginary planets in her work. She takes the reader through three different worlds exposing the defects of each, and removing the concept of utopia from the deep freeze of ideology places it in the running course of time. Although humanity has been promised 'absolution' and 'salvation' in utopias, the individual has never been examined or studied within the context of literary utopias. The social contract theory seems to be a very distant idea in many utopias, if not nearly in all, as they are products of a 'single' mind. Therefore, one man's paradise and its consequences in this no-place did not form the subject matter of utopias until very recently. Even the consent of the individual to be governed by a higher power or a quasi-sacred institution called 'the state' has not been able to vanquish the tyrannical or totalitarian aspects of power; on the contrary, it has even given birth to greater and more powerful authoritarian governments. The following quotation from *The Dispossessed* should summarize the culmination of this process in a concise way:

> With the myth of the State out of the way, the real mutuality and reciprocity of society and individual became clearer. Sacrifice might be demanded from the individual, but never compromise: for though only the society could give security and stability, only the individual, the person, had the power of moral choice—the power of change, the essential function of life. The Odonian society was conceived as a permanent revolution, and revolution begins in the thinking mind. (D 333)

Particularly, during the decades following the post-structuralist studies of history by Michel Foucault, intellectuals of the Western world pondered upon the internalized aspects of power in European institutions, which eventually had its repercussions in feminism, too. What Foucualt tried to emphasize was the imperishable essence of power among human subjects and the way it was organized and systematized in discourse. The relationship between the sexes was now perceived as one related to power. Even in the anarchist world of *The Dispossessed* where private poverty is abolished and abhorred, and where hierarchy is not coercive, people tend to abuse the principles of the system to erect a concealed hierarchy and coercion. At first sight, Le Guin's utopia, like many utopias in Western history, seems to portray a world of perfection with its ideals of companionship (comradeship in this anarchist society), tolerance, equality, only to name a few

among many cherished ideals of the Old World. Yet even a neglectful eye cannot overlook the seamy sides of Anarres, which also constitute a part of this anarchist utopia.

Le Guin here reflects the ultimate realistic aspect of the book as regards what many thinkers have tried to define as related to human nature, namely the question whether coercive power, instead of being abolished, can find a way to revive itself even in an ideal world: “There are people of inherent authority; some emperors actually have new clothes” (D 56); or as a scientist from Urras puts it: “No need to pretend that all you Odonian brothers are full of brotherly love [...] Human nature is human nature” (D 69). Thus, even in an anarchist world, love of freedom that is supposed to serve the common good of society may be smothered by the ‘social conscience’ or by the people who persistently crave this coercive power. Under such circumstances, it is probable that one becomes a follower of some imposed ‘walls’ of morality lest s/he become an outcast, or someone who desires to assert his illicit power over his/her fellow comrades.

The gist of the question and its answer of course lies in that greater question of human nature: can one understand human nature in terms of a set of patterns conceived by human beings? Can human nature be defined as an essence beyond the reach of historical transformations? While one envisions a perfect world of glamour, one is usually blinded by the light of his/her own creation, so much so that the multifold aspects of the human psyche and mind are usually overlooked either accidentally or – as is often the case – deliberately. Whether a person believes in cooperation or competition may lead his/her conception of an ideal world to a one-sided vision devoid of the unwanted aspects of experience.

Le Guin instead places these contrasting aspects of experience and of life in the midst of an anarchist planet to manifest the ‘ambiguous nature’ of her ‘utopia.’ Situating her utopia in its fictional history, unlike the superficial and symbolic presence of King Utopus in More’s *Utopia*, Le Guin tries to trace the roots of Anarres in the pre-utopian world order, which also survives on another planet side by side with a ‘utopia-turned-dystopia.’ This not-so-perfect world on Anarres – a world of no property – may be a utopia ideologically, but scarcity instead of abundance

seems to hover over this no-place. Ferns reads this aspect of Anarres as “a richly suggestive metaphor for the process of trying to breathe life into and give a substance to a political abstraction” (Ferns, 1999: 227), namely anarchism – or “Odonianism” as it is called in the book. Yet, even the anarchist principle of ‘mutual aid’ defined by Peter Kropotkin, the Russian anarchist, which is practiced in this utopian world as a means to “*prevent* suffering” (D 61), fails to achieve the immaculate world picture of a utopia: “A society can only relieve social suffering, unnecessary suffering. The rest remains. The root, the reality” (D 60). That seems to be Le Guin’s point when she points at the basis of her conviction about sharing and utopia and when she interprets the concept of utopia from an antithetical point of view:

> “What have you left then? Isolation and despair! You’re denying brotherhood, Shevek!” the tall girl cried.
> “No–no, I’m not. I’m trying to say what I think brotherhood really is. It begins—it begins in shared pain.”
> “Then where does it end?”
> “I don’t know. I don’t know yet.” (D 62)

When Shevek delivers his speech to the revolutionary groups that he meets in Urras, he finally appears as a wanderer who has just found an answer to his questions, which combines his idea of individuality with the communal, too:

> We are brothers in what we share. In pain, which each of us must suffer alone, in hunger, in poverty, in hope, we know our brotherhood. We know it, because we had to learn it. (D 300)

A state of perfection, of course, has been accepted as the ultimate criterion to define utopia, and yet the ambiguous utopia of *The Dispossessed* rejects to start with such a stagnant and dead world. This is supplemented with Shevek’s quest for his self via the journey he has to take to the past of his utopia, which is out there on the opposite planet, waiting to be ‘unearthed.’ Thus, transforming the very core of traditional utopias, Le Guin ‘violates’ another norm by introducing the human factor into Shevek’s utopian planet.

The Dispossessed, which is in many ways a science-fiction book, tells the story of two antagonistic island-like worlds – i.e. like the island in More's *Utopia* – and traces one man's journey from his 'utopian' yet not perfect (nearly anarchist) world to a non-utopian planet (of capitalism and state socialism). Both the utopian world/planet and the capitalist and socialist worlds are very much circumscribed by their realities only, all of them claiming to be attempts at achieving the perfect order. Stuck somewhere in time, these worlds seem to have neglected the developments around them or some aspects of human existence, which are usually defined as 'realities' of human nature. Although they offer their own versions of perfection, their rationality is not sufficient to create the real utopian world that Le Guin envisions, a dynamic world in touch with the individual. The basic concern of Le Guin in her book seems to be the question whether this utopian longing can be realized within an institutional and governmental body or system, which from an anarchistic viewpoint seems hardly possible.

In all these three worlds in *The Dispossessed*, human beings and their lives are portrayed within the confines of stagnation, which also offer shelter from implicit threats that may come from the outside/other world. The easy security provided by these introverted worlds, as a consequence, paves the way for the duplication of stereotyped characters that do not possess any consciousness of their position or situation. Just like the island of King Utopus, they too are surrounded by the space in which they are located. The two worlds at cross-purposes, Anarres and Urras, obviously stand for two separate systems of governance; Anarres is an anarchist world founded upon the principles of a female-founder figure, the anarchist Odo. On the other hand, Urras is dominated principally by two prevailing powers, the first one a capitalist state, and the second one, as its mirror image, a state-controlled socialist government, both of which represent two different yet related outcomes of the '*ur*-system' of property that has dominated the Western scene for centuries.

The way these different worlds are reflected to the reader depends upon the vision of an adventurer from Anarres, Shevek; that is to say, the book revolves around his '*bildung*,' and thus *The Dispossessed* can also be read as a

bildungsroman. As Shevek leaves the anarchist Anarres behind, his journey into the heart of his world's past on the 'other' planet indicates his first encounter with the surmounted, repressed and forgotten heritage of Urras and with the 'failed' communist utopias, which had been there as a part of Anarres's history before Shevek's people 'forgot' about them, and which are in fact still there for him to see. Le Guin here seems to be able to intertwine a critical discourse of static utopias with one's personal search for utopia and self-discovery – or 'self-recovery':

> And least of all you cannot have the present, unless you accept with it the past and the future. Not only the past but also the future, not only the future but also the past. Because they are real: only their reality makes the present real. (D 349)

The narrator epitomizes this strained relationship between Shevek and the world around him with a very accurate comment: "To die is to lose the self and rejoin the rest. He had kept himself, and lost the rest" (D 6). The issue emphasized here is also related to a person's choice between his/her private and public selves, or to the question concerning the relationship between the defining 'tag' of one's society and that person's sense of individual existence. This particular point attests to Burwell's remarks about contemporary feminism's "participation in an identity politics whose aim is to reconceive the relationship between subject and society" (Burwell, 1997: xi).

It is obvious that through Shevek's quest to make sense of the past, Le Guin highlights another overlooked aspect of utopian worlds, namely the interrelation between the individual and the society. The dominant social and economic systems in Urras, which comprise one capitalist and one state-communist country united by their concern for property instead of its repudiation, compel Shevek to ask questions concerning his understanding of the utopian world of Anarres. A world inherited unconsciously has to be re-read and re-structured as a new text, which nevertheless cannot assume a final form, because, according to the viewpoint advocated in the book, although you 'always come home' after a long journey full of discoveries, the home you find is never the same, for you return

transformed and altered by what you have experienced. Thus, a utopia cannot retain its utopian aspects once one steps outside the boundaries of his/her utopia, both in space and in time, for what s/he may find after the return becomes a new text. So utopia as a perfect blueprint – and as an immaculate text – cannot be written, and thus it should be stated that – although it may sound paradoxical in terms of the prevalent definition of utopia – a sound utopia's nature lies in change instead of stagnation.

Shevek's (re)discovery of the other 'worlds' puts the 'discovered world' topos of literary utopias to question. Instead of finding an exact utopia on a certain spot, Le Guin's character becomes a living and becoming utopia. Thomas More's narrator in *Utopia* is surely a very passive one, subjected to some perceptions and ideas emanating from an ideal world. In *The Dispossessed*, it is rather Shevek himself that becomes a 'utopia in flesh and bone,' trying to (re)discover the complete picture of his native world and therefore his identity through a journey to Anarres's past – the past which is nearly always left out in utopias. In symbolic terms, he breaks down all the walls – an emblematic occurrence in many scenes of the book (D 1; 33) – that surround the introverted worlds of incarceration one by one:

> There was a wall. It did not look important. It was built of uncut rocks roughly mortared. An adult could look right over it, and even a child could climb it. Where it crossed the roadway, instead of having a gate it degenerated into mere geometry, a line, an idea of boundary. But the idea was real. It was important. For seven generations there had been nothing in the world more important than that wall. *Like all walls it was ambiguous, two-faced. What was inside and what was outside depended upon which side of it you were on*. [italics mine] (D 1)

Rejecting the stiff walls of stagnant utopias, which, when perceived from outside, look as if they were "prison camp[s]" or places "in quarantine" (D 2), Shevek becomes a fluid in constant motion. Thus the ultimate wanderer and traveler Shevek, becomes an intellectual and spiritual nomad who will not stop to be a 'wall' to surround his own quest. In that respect, he also connotes a utopia incarnated without fixed and safe boundaries, someone whom the settled and the establishement deem suspect. Although all the members of these worlds are 'possessed' by their

‘dead truths,’ Shevek’s journey to his past transforms itself into a trek into the future of utopias, questioning the problem of posterity in utopias. This question about the following generations in this particular utopia, of course, is not only about Shevek but also about the ‘fate’ of utopias as well. From Le Guin’s viewpoint, the answer is certainly crucial, as the survival of any utopia in time depends upon a painstaking and difficult attempt to find an answer to this question.

Whether Shevek is able to reach the ultimate core of utopian longing is an easy question to answer if understood in Le Guin’s terms, that is to say, if we understand that ‘you can never return to the home you left behind’ and though your home may not be altered, once you are back after a long journey, you, as a new person, find your relation to your home changed. This aspect of the journey narrated in *The Dispossessed* creates a multifold structure of Shevek’s trek, not only in ‘space’ – pun intended – but also in time, and furthermore, in ‘utopia’s time.’ Chris Ferns’s explanation for this conception of time and experience clarifies some important points in Shevek’s *bildung*:

> Shevek’s experiences in the present reality of Urras are not merely counterpointed to, but moulded by his past experiences in a utopia which at the same time constitutes an embodiment of a possible future. *The Dispossessed* is a utopia which might also be termed a ‘chronotopia’. (Ferns, 1999: 228)

In fact, journeying towards Urras is also journeying back in time to the past of Anarres, towards what is left behind and ‘interred.’ This journey therefore assumes a predominant hue of being in time rather than being in space. If one accepts Shevek’s sense of identity and the self as the ground on which utopia is to be envisioned, it may be asserted that the journey to Urras and back is in fact in Shevek’s mind. Human beings construct their sense of the self by relying on the conceived experience of an unbroken chain of events in time, which make up their sense of an ‘I.’ Echoing and probably alluding to Albert Einstein’s General Theory of Relativity (called “Ainsetain” in the book), a journey outward and then homeward bound is explained thus:

> You *can* go home again, the General Temporal Theory asserts, so long as you understand that home is a place where you have never been. (D 55)

Shevek, in the beginning, feels obliged to set sail for this journey towards the unspoken worlds, and at the end when he returns to rewrite his identity as a new person, he appears to be reborn as a greater figure, wise enough to surmount the partial visions of Urras and Anarres and to go over their 'walls.' His search for a theory of time concerning physics and philosophy is in fact to overcome such barriers that are eventually impediments to one's vision of the 'other side.' Having perceived the possible outcome of his theory about "the static and the dynamic aspects of the universe" (and of utopia) and about the "Sequency and Simultaneity points of view" (D 280), Shevek feels that the wall is "down" (*Ibid.*) and the difference between Urras and Anarres is "no more significant to him than two grains of sand on the shore of the sea" when there are no "abysses" or "walls" (D 281).

When his journey is completed, Shevek returns to Anarres at a new sunrise when the narration stops and does not attempt to carry the reader towards a new day. His realization that the journey is over for the time being also involves an awareness of having completed the circle. Ready for new journeys now, Shevek has comprehended that his understanding of utopia does not rely on 'making or doing it'; it is an incessant revolutionary search for 'becoming.' If a revolution leading to a utopia is going to take place, from the individualistic yet also from a socialist or anarchist viewpoint, first and most of all, it has to be within the individual:

> You must come to it alone and naked as the child comes into the world, into his future, without any past, without any property, wholly dependent on other people for his life. You cannot take what you have not given, and you must give yourself. You cannot buy the Revolution. You cannot make the Revolution. You can only be the Revolution. It is in your spirit, or it is nowhere. (D 301)

Shevek repeats the same idea later in the novel to emphasize the individualistic aspect of the revolution and utopia Le Guin probably has in mind, which is also reminiscent of Zamyatin's critique of the first decade of the Soviet

Union in *We*. Instead of *We*, Le Guin here wants to foreground the role of 'I', yet 'we' keeps on echoing, too:

> 'The Revolution is in the individual spirit, or it is nowhere. It is for all, or it is nothing. If it is seen as having any end, it will never truly begin.' *We* can't stop here. *We* must go on. *We* must take the risks. [italics mine] (D 359)

When the narration concludes with the arrival of Shevek in Anarres, and when Shevek has reached out for the *yin* in *yang* and the *yang* in *yin* in different worlds, Le Guin, by 'taking the risk' of transgressing the boundaries of conventional utopias, eventually underscores the significance of Shevek's ideas about the possibility of a permanent revolution. Rejecting the oversimplified notions of 'journeying out' and 'coming home,' Shevek moves in circles moving through opposite worlds. Traveling to see the discordant worlds, he tries to dissolve the dialectical contradiction between the two worlds put before him as 'either/or'. The dichotomy suggested by different systems still turns Shevek's thoughts towards a bilateral perception of oppositions that may evade the shallow understanding of the citizens of the two worlds:

> "I have never thought before," said Tirin unruffled, "of the fact that there are people sitting on a hill, up there, on Urras, looking at Anarres, at us, and saying, 'Look, there's the Moon.' Our earth is their Moon; our Moon is their earth."
> "Where, then, is Truth?" declaimed Bedap, and yawned.
> "In the hill one happens to be sitting on," said Tirin. (D 41)

Shevek, when his quest for a new identity is complete for the time being, is able to step back a little to see what it is really like to be an Odonian anarchist from Anarres in the 'other' world. That also calls for suspending the 'realities' that one has taken for granted for many years so as to assess their real worth and value. If they can stand this test of genuineness, they may become proven facts instead of mere indoctrination. Shevek has to find for himself whether Urras is really "disgusting, immoral, excremental" (D 43) or not:

> “No; I said we only know what we’re told. And do you know what we’re told?” Tirin’s dark, snub-nosed face, clear in the bright bluish moonlight turned to them.
> “Kvet said it, a minute ago. He’s got the message. You heard it: detest Urras, hate Urras, and fear Urras.” (*Ibid.*)

There are not many alternatives for a static utopia to survive: it either lives on totally isolated and unaware of the world outside, or adopts an antagonistic attitude towards the outside world; these attitudes may be conceived as the ultimate requirements for the ‘survival’ of a traditional utopia. As it tries to duplicate its citizens and reproduce the dominant ideology – for this is surely a must to ‘keep peace and order’ – such a utopia repeats its message against the current of time. Shevek, therefore, rows against the current of his own society to see the ‘other’ that they have not been really told about. Another striking point about this quest is that although Shevek is able to see the abuse of power and corruption on his native Anarres, many of the Anarresti are simply conditioned to blame Urras to exculpate themselves.

If put in terms of virology, it may be stated that Anarres, through its ideology, tries to keep its organism free of ‘propertarian viruses.’ In fact, indicating a symbolic state of security coupled with isolation, a virus and sickness-free world has been a trademark of several traditional utopias, too. Thus, the following paragraph seems to include a not-so-unintentional – if not deliberate – reference to this tradition:

> Most young Anarresti felt that it was shameful to be ill: a result of their society’s very successful prophylaxy, and also perhaps a confusion arising from the analogic us of the words “healthy” and “sick.” They felt illness to be a crime, if an involuntary one. (D 119)

When Shevek sneezes on this alien planet of Urras in spite of some precautionary vaccinations, he admits to one of his Urrasti colleagues that the Urrasti doctors have actually diagnosed him as allergic to their planet (D 69). Likewise, if Urras is closely examined, it is also possible to find the very same fear there as well. When Shevek lands on their planet, he goes through a vaccination process to ensure

both his and their ‘safety.’ This metaphor of sickness, of course, discloses the fear of contamination in closed societies. Shevek the scientist (one among the many other roles he assumes in Anarres) is also kept out of direct contact with the citizens of Urras lest he should ‘contaminate’ anyone, which may in fact shake the whole order of Urras. This paranoia of contact aims to keep Shevek’s communication with revolutionaries and insurgents at a possible minimum. This fact also highlights another important point about isolated utopias, namely that they ask for extreme vigilance to survive, which, of course, demands the utmost attention for the surveillance of contact with the outside world:

> “Are we so feeble we can’t withstand a little exposure? Anyhow, they can’t *all* be sick. No matter what their society’s like, some of them must be decent. People vary here, don’t they? Are we all perfect Odonians? Look at that snotball Pesus!” (D 43)

Like it is expressed in Lao Tzu’s *Tao Te Ching* – a popular text among many radicals of the 1960s including the American poet Kenneth Rexroth (Farrell, 1997: 55), and among writers interested in Jungian psychoanalysis and Eastern philosophies such as Le Guin – although Shevek’s journey seems to be related to his departure for Urras, it in fact consists of both traveling afar and coming back: “I do not know its name; I label it the Way [i.e. Tao]. Imposing on it a name, I call it Great. Greatness means it goes; going means reaching afar; reaching afar means return” (D 24). So does Shevek leave for Urras with nothing in his hands and returns with those empty hands. Other than the principles that he learnt from Anarres, he lets no property curb him; neither is he encumbered with possessions nor ‘possessed’ with possessions (D 75).

Apart from this extensive discussion about the nature of utopias, Le Guin’s *The Dispossessed* also deals with some important issues in feminism, which became central in the second half of the twentieth century, such as gender roles, sexism in language and sexual domination through language. Thus, Le Guin’s book may also be read as a culmination of the feminism of the 1960s and ‘70s. What has been accepted as the ‘linear’ and ‘solid’ perception of the (not gender-specific)

'masculine' meets the cyclic, the holistic and the (not gender-specific) 'feminine.' Besides, instead of an economy based upon competition and rivalry, Le Guin's Anarres offers an alternative based upon cooperation and mutual aid, following the ideas of the legendary revolutionary Odo, whose principles are closely associated with those of the Russian anarchist Kropotkin, the author of the famous book entitled *The Mutual Aid*. When Kropotkin wrote his influential book, what he tried to do was to prove the fact that in evolution, competition is not the only factor acting upon living things, but cooperation within a species and between or among species is also inestimable for survival (*cf*. Kropotkin, 1914).

Fusing this principle of cooperation with her own approach, Le Guin tries to imagine a new libidinal economy based upon a non-patriarchal system, one that is unlike the examples in Urras. Altering the definition of the relationship between the subject and the object from 'having' to 'being,' she challenges the phallogocentric conception of the libido as exclusively masculine. What Lucy Sargisson defines as "transgressive utopianism," which rejects the dichotomies of patriarchy to find new ways of "conceptualizing the past, present and future" (Sargisson, 1996: 59), involves this kind of an attempt, too. When Shevek questions the economy based upon buying and selling, Le Guin seems to echo the debates about the importance of the 'gift' as the starting point of an alternative system to capitalistic economies. Shevek's words, in fact, serve as a concise critique of the system that preserves the status quo:

> "I am letting the propertarians *buy the truth* from me."
> "What else could you do, Shevek?"
> "Is there no alternative to selling? Is there not such a thing as the gift?" (D 345)

Sargisson underlines the importance of this approach studied by George Bataille in *The Accursed Share* (1933) and by Marcel Mauss in *The Gift* (1923-1924) and refers to Jacques Derrida to explain the 'utopian essence' of the gift, which is directly related to the theories of value and exchange economy that have dominated the global scene for centuries. Studies by many sociologists have pointed out the

significance of this gift-giving act in many so-called ‘primitive’ societies that have not adopted capitalistic economies. Likewise, Sargisson tries to elucidate the philosophical relationship between ‘the Proper’ and ‘the Gift’ with reference to Derrida’s ideas about the concepts of ‘the Proper’ and ‘property’ and about the verb ‘appropriate,’ all of which, according to Derrida, are based upon the “Drive of the Proper” that “impels us towards appropriation: the appropriate and correct way to be” (Sargisson, 2000: 113-114). As an alternative to the Proper as the ‘propelling’ drive of market economies, Sargisson underlines the utopian potential of the Gift:

> Concepts inhabit a system – or economy, the function of which is the creation of meaning. Meaning is thus codified. He [Derrida] names these economies ‘The Proper’ and ‘The Gift’. The Proper is dominant. The Gift is utopian, unattainable and even unimaginable. (*Ibid*.: 136)

Another aspect of this ambiguous utopia is that it negates the prescriptive approach of many utopias and refuses to be defined as a closed form of solutions. This ‘story’ about an ambiguous utopia, therefore, closes ‘open-ended’: open to new changes without a claim to perfection and offering a wider perspective instead of retaining binary oppositions. This new concept of feminist utopian thought is thus structured not by certainties and fixities but by ongoing explorations for change.

This is surely a criticism of the dominant trend in utopias, of something nearly taken for granted as ‘essentially’ utopian, namely, of doctrinism. Instead of envisioning a feminism that situates itself as the exact mirror image of patriarchy, this new generation of feminism and feminists – including two important exponents of this novel approach, Hélène Cixous and Lucy Sargisson – adopt a more flexible stance which tries to conceive a new set of ideas to start with. Aware of the inculcated aspects of patriarchy and the phallogocentric order in daily speech and logic, they claim that societal and individual diversity and transformation are as important as a change at the level of politics.

This process of interrogation has actually led many recent feminists to reassess the nature-culture, man-woman, society-individual and the state-citizen dichotomies, and some, following Foucault’s analysis, have been able to unearth the

hidden essence of these relations, seeing power as the concealed gist. Thus, names like Ursula Le Guin, Murray Bookchin and Val Plumwood have tried to probe into the heart of issues related to 'domination' – in the broadest sense of the word – and 'the will to dominate', be it about politics, nature or gender. Likewise, what Le Guin portrays as an alternative in *The Dispossessed* is an ambiguous utopia that aims to question such inhibiting structures and notions with reference to governance and gender.

To challenge the patriarchal order and an economy of possession, Le Guin welcomes a 'fluid' conception that comprises a different perspective, one that can challenge and oust such incarcerating and debilitating structures. Shevek's attitude as a male, therefore, rather reflects that kind of a sensibility to be found in this new feminist approach. Although he is a 'man' physiologically, he seems to embody Le Guin's pro-woman ideas and may thus be read as an incarnation of such a feminist approach, regardless of his 'sex.' To support this claim, it may be further argued that Shevek displays no character traits of a male from Urras or of a male from any patriarchal society at all.

Another aspect related to Le Guin's approach in *The Dispossessed* has eventually become one of the most important elements of the recent feminist theories: language. Although some utopias written prior to the twentieth century dealt with this issue of language, it was either an ornamental or a trivial one and not an important concern. Following the rise of linguistics and structuralism in the twentieth century, alongside with the debates over language, especially after the philosophy of language professed by De Saussure and Wittgenstein, language has been accepted as the ultimate medium in which human epistemology is shaped. To what extent such a focal role can be attributed to language in understanding the intellect is still a hotly debated issue; yet whatever the outcome of these debates may be, it has been ascertained that language is a pivotal element on all sociological and philosophical levels. Thus, the discourse of power embedded in language has been recognized as another crucial element of utopias.

One of the basic functions of language in *The Dispossessed* is to organize property relations, and another important one is to display sexual discourse in

language. Accordingly, Le Guin reflects on the points that she discerns from the ordinary and daily use of language. Like many utopia writers of the twentieth century, she too ponders upon the hidden implications of seemingly 'neutral' utterances. Without altering the premises of sexism and property in language, it means little to conceive new systems, for what has been present in the former system (in A-Io) will surely reappear some time later in language. Therefore, one may observe the close link between the social order and philosophy of the new society in Anarres and that of language from the very first chapters onwards.

The citizens of Anarres reject not only personal property rights but also relations leading to appropriation between human beings, so much so that even children are assumed to be autonomous individuals, and although they have mothers and fathers, their relationships with their parents seem to be based upon a highly libertarian approach; the usually taken-for-granted protectiveness of the mother is rather vague in Anarres (D 325). From the Anarresti viewpoint, such protectiveness begins before birth, during pregnancy, and the 'biological drive' eventually becomes a social hindrance (D 331).

The children of Anarres are therefore brought up with very different notions from ours. The process of 'education' in Anarres is supposed to teach them that everything they see around them belongs to their community, which precedes their individualistic concerns. Le Guin, as it may be inferred from some instances in the book, *does* emphasize the possessive instinct in human beings, but she also accentuates the importance of education in 'molding' this instinct. Thus, it may be stated that the libertarian world of Anarres relies upon the corrective power of education – which is also another form of inculcation but a necessary one introduced in order to avoid total chaos. Shevek, brought up to become an adult capable of comprehending these principles, experiences a confrontation between his ego and superego as a child:

> The knobby baby stood up. His face was a glare of sunlight and anger. His diapers were about to fall off. "Mine!" he said in a high, ringing voice. "Mine sun!" "It's not yours," the one-eyed woman said with the mildness of utter certainty. "Nothing is yours. It is to use. It is to share. If you will not share it, you cannot use it." (D 27)

This communitarian preference is something common in many utopias – usually as an indication of the non-individualistic/egalitarian aspect of such worlds – though it also involves the risk of giving rise to the exclusive rule of a totalitarian regime. What Anarres ultimately tries to create is a world of 'learned-sharing':

> The singular forms of the possessive pronoun in Pravic were used mostly for emphasis; idiom avoided them. Little children might learn to say "my mother," but very soon learned to say "the mother." Instead of "my hand hurts," it was "the hand hurts me," and so on; to say "this is mine and that's yours" in Pravic, one said, "I use this one and you use that." (D 58)

Thus the Pravic language of Anarres tries to evade words and verbs denoting possession so as to constitute a language that too is 'dispossessed.' Although Shevek has to use these words during his stay in A-Io and Urras, he nevertheless feels that they are foreign to his vocabulary and his understanding. Examples of conceptual and linguistic difference are revealed as Shevek travels in different parts of Urras, meeting different people. Although the people of Anarres are thought to be atheists by the people of Urras, this seems to be a distortion on Urras's side, since they apply their own terms to understand the concepts of Anarres. In such cases, it becomes evident that their language in fact dominates their patterns of thinking. In Urras, religion seems to be 'possessed' within the walls of churches, whereas the language of Anarres diffuses morality throughout society, and 'religion' as a word has no equivalent in the Pravic language of Anarres. As the state does not exist anymore, many words of the old language called 'Iotic' have fallen into disuse, such as "prison," "sentenced," "locked," "propertied," and "slaves" among many others (D 34-35; 42; 44).

When Shevek the scientist is accepted as a guest from the despised planet, the first words he exchanges with the Urrasti men confirm his view that the concepts related to everyday matters are quite different in this new host world. Even the very first encounter between the two worlds is a sufficient sign to suggest the mode of sexual oppression in Urras, a scene in which a woman from the Arresti Defense Forces meets the phallic image of the gun on the belt of a Urrasti man. This gun is supposed to protect the Urrasti man against the protesting Anarresti while they

take the “bastard” (D 3), i.e. Shevek, to their world. The Urrasti of course know ‘how to swear,’ since from their perspective sex is something ‘dirty,’ and blasphemy as a notion related to religion still exists in their world whereas the Anarresti have difficulties in finding such words (D 258).

In addition to these swear words, Urras has also retained all of its concepts related to superiority and inferiority, such as the ones reflected in some particular words like ‘higher’ – meaning of superior rank in the hierarchical order – while the Anarresti have developed an attitude favoring linear relations. The titles of Urrasti scientists look ridiculous to a man who comes from a planet where such concepts are not defined in a similar way, since the ideologies are diametrically opposite.

The issue of equality between men and women, though it is not the central concern of the book, nevertheless assumes an important overtone when it is understood that such an equality, rather than being a totally independent entity, is essentially a part of the greater framework that constitutes the system in Anarres. When Shevek, who is brought up on the libertarian planet of Anarres, travels to Urras, his ordinary actions as an anarchist are more than enough to expose the intrinsic patriarchy of the capitalist system in A-Io. The “virtue” of women in A-Io or Urras in general depends upon their playing the assigned roles as ‘respectable’ objects of ‘worship’ within the boundaries that they themselves accept. The fact that women of Anarres *do exist* and live as independent human beings, free to do whatever they want and to become whatever they wish, is enough to shock the Urrasti:

> “Is it true, Dr. Shevek, that women in your society are treated exactly like men?”
> “That would be a waste of good equipment,” said Shevek with a laugh, and then a second laugh as the full ridiculousness of the idea grew upon him.
> The doctor hesitated, evidently picking his way around one of the obstacles in his mind, then looked flustered, and said, “Oh, no, I didn’t mean sexually—obviously you — they ...I meant in the matter of their social status.”
> “*Status* is the same as *class*?”
> Kimoe tried to explain status, failed, and went back to the first topic. (D 16)

Having established a new world with a new language, the Anarresti with their new way of thinking 'fail' to grasp the way gender is codified and defined by the hierarchy in Urras. Shevek's defense of women's determination to work simply shocks the Urrasti men, who assess every male-female encounter as a meeting within the confines of this hierarchy. Thus, to defend women's rights, or even to advocate women's right to "transgress" their 'presumed' sphere of "delicacy" is "to lower yourself constantly to their level" (D 17) in the eyes of the Urrasti, since their world is "exclusively male" (D 81). Women are stereotyped so as to be confined within 'their proper sphere' – a point criticized in almost every feminist utopia – as "a source of inspiration" and "the most precious thing on earth" (D 75); they bear their fathers' and husbands' name; they do not attend any schools; they wait for their men to 'pay' for them – in short, they accept to become invisible (D 214). Just like it is in many societies, women of Urras are also asked to believe that though men seem to reign, they are in fact 'controlled' by women (D 215).

When the Urrasti men assert that "what women call thinking is done with the uterus" (D 73), this claim echoes similar misconceptions taken for granted by some opinionated Anarresti men, too. A conversation between Shevek and another Anarresti man raises a question about the 'nature of women':

> "[...] But *most women*, their only relationship to a man is *having*. Either owning or being owned."
> "You think that they're different from men there?"
> "I know it. What a man wants is freedom. What a woman wants is property. She'll only let you go if she can trade you for something else. *All women* are propertarians." (D 52) [...] "You know, I don't agree," he said to long-faced Vokep, an agricultural chemist traveling to Abbenay. "I think men mostly have to learn to be anarchists. Women don't have to learn."
> Vokep shook his head grimly. "It's the kids," he said. "Having babies. Makes 'em propertarians. They won't let go." He sighed. "Touch and go, brother, that's the rule. Don't ever let yourself be owned."
> Shevek smiled and drank his fruit juice. "I won't," he said. (D 54)

Although one may possibly encounter such Anarresti men who claim to know the 'inherent nature of women,' Annares as an anarchist planet seems to have transcended such conceptions on its way to eradicate many age-old institutions related to patriarchy. The 'institution of marriage,' in a true anarchist vein, is also

obsolete in Anarres, for it is accepted as a detrimental extension of the capitalist-patriarchal system of A-Io and Urras. As regards this particular issue of marriage, partnerships, and the family, Ferns states that although one may observe many cases of conventional gender relations retained in Le Guin's work – which will not probably satisfy, for example, a lesbian feminist's utopian longings – these are not presented as "the model" to be followed like in blueprint utopias, but as "one among many" options, and that the characters are eventually given the freedom of choice (Ferns, 1999: 221). Those who prefer a monogamous partnership expect no 'ever-lasting' relationship and accept its limitations and its 'diseases' such as "jealousy and possessiveness" (D 245-246).

The Dispossessed also suggests that when the female 'Mother figure' of Anarres, Odo, composed her anarchist principles, she was not so adept at offering new perspectives for sexuality, which also implies that she did not have ready-made solutions for all problems. Yet, the utopia of Anarres does not dream of a sudden change as regards women and sexuality; *in this respect*, Shevek's world seems to rely on the idea of evolutionary change rather than a revolutionary one for an improvement in matters of sexuality. The Anarresti, thus, seem to have understood that the basic principles of Odo can also be applied to matters of sexuality to go beyond even Odo's own experiences (D 245):

> An Odonian undertook monogamy just as he might undertake a joint enterprise in production, a ballet, or a soap works. Partnership was a voluntarily constituted federation like any other. So long as it worked, it worked, and if it didn't it stopped being. It was not an institution but a function. It had no sanction but that of private conscience. (D 244)

Furthermore, such a partnership and an attempt to keep it may offer a counterbalancing force in a libertarian society like that of Anarres. Thus, the idea of abolishing and prohibiting monogamy to 'liberate' women and men (a revolutionary idea dictated from 'above') is dislocated by a tolerant idea of letting every person be whatever she or he wants to (maybe hoping for an evolutionary change). Ferns defines this approach as a "larger struggle *to keep utopia utopian* [italics mine]" (Ferns, 1999: 223):

> To maintain genuine spontaneous fidelity in a society that had no legal or moral sanctions against infidelity, and to maintain it during voluntarily accepted separations that could come at any time and might last for years, was something of a challenge. But the human being likes to be challenged, seeks freedom in adversity. (D 246)

Ferns also suggests that Le Guin does not make use of any "convenient" technological tricks to solve the problems related to sexual politics and pregnancy, that is to say, although the book includes many details related to science fiction, in matters of human relations and sexuality, Le Guin does not rely on parthenogenesis or on any *deus ex machina* abounding in science fiction. Since no form of state as the Urrasti understand it exists in Shevek's world, marriage seems as necessary as an appendix is to the body. Relinquishing all notions related to it, the Anarresti have also devised an alternative organization of society to achieve a feeling of greater unity among themselves. Doing away with the former vestiges of economy and laws, the Anarresti, like it is done in many in feminist utopias, abolish marriage, seeing it not as an independent institution but as a covertly coercive device of the 'system':

> He knew from Odo's writing that two hundred years ago the main Urrasti sexual institutions had been "marriage," a partnership authorized and enforced by legal and economic sanctions, and "prostitution," which seemed merely to be a wider term, *copulation in the economic mode* [italics mine]. Odo had condemned them both, and yet Odo had been "married." (D 18)

As regards the family, words denoting relationship among relatives are also explained in a footnote by the author herself as in the example of the definition of "tadde." Le Guin's attention to such cultural nuances is probably a consequence of her father's influence on her as an anthropologist. Thus, aware of the possible social reorganizations in the revolutionized world of Anarres, Le Guin imagines a new set of 'family' ties – one that reworks the common notions concerning the relationship between parents and children – that stresses the significance of a greater family, namely the community:

> Papa. A small child may call any adult *mamme* or *tadde*. Gimar's *tadde* may have been he father, an uncle, or an unrelated adult who showed her parental or grandparental responsibility and affection. She may have called several

> people *tadde* or *mamme*, but the word has a more specific use than *ammar* (brother/sister), which may be used to anybody. (D 47)

The foundations of this libertarian and anarchistic world depend upon the teachings of a female figure, a 'visionary Mother'. The figure of a founding Mother is surely a trait shared by many feminist utopia writers, and to name Gilman among them also signals a tradition. The figure of Odo is of vital importance as a central *sign* in the book. She is the Mother of the Anarresti, a true anarchist who had to suffer for a better future, a woman who never saw Anarres and died on Urras. Although the protagonist of the book is a male character, the teaching that has shaped him was developed by Odo. It is no real surprise to see that the capitalist and patriarchal society of Urras calls Odonianism "womanish," without the "virile sides of life" and, moreover, claims that the Anarresti cannot grasp what "courage" – as the Urrasti understand it – is (D 287). This 'Mother' figure calls to mind the biography of the very first philosophical anarchist, William Godwin, who was against the institution of marriage but who nevertheless married Marry Wollstonecraft the famous feminist.

To explain the complex personality of this *ur*-Mother of Anarres, it is also necessary to refer to Emma Goldman's writings about prostitution and marriage. Alice Wexler, in her biography entitled *Emma Goldman: An Intimate Life*, highlights the common points between Goldman's and Gilman's ideas, pointing out their similar ideas about economic independence, marriage and prostitution (Vexler, 1984: 194). The relation between economics and the family thus has been underlined various times by diverse writers and philosophers from different periods among whom there are many anarchists. Le Guin's portrayal of the alternative relationship between the sexes in Anarres probably depends upon her own observations of the "free love" experience of the 1960s and '70s. A free "partnership" of two people depending upon their consent seems to be truer to their "nature as Odonians," a 'second nature' created by their education. Le Guin, in the true utopian fashion, sometimes devises units and architectural systems (very much like Charles Fourier's designs) to describe the sexual life in Anarres:

> In adult terms, the principle referent for a single room was a sexual one. Every domicile had a number of singles, and a couple that wanted to copulate used one of these free singles for a night, or a decad [*sic*], or as long as they liked. A couple undertaking partnership took a double room; in a small town where no double was available, they often built one on to the end of a domicile, and long, low, straggling buildings thus might be created room by room, called "partners' truck trains." Aside from sexual pairing there was no real reason for not sleeping in a dormitory. (D 110)

The way the Anarresti bring their children up is also modified by this new approach so as to rear uninhibited individuals. Thus, this particular attitude about free love and relationship removes the too-often-mentioned problem of the encumbrance of the family on both the wife and children. As regards sexuality and intimate relations, all the related terms in the Anarresti language comprise both sexes because sexuality is not something men and women experience alone. Sharing, as in everything else in Anarres, forms the basis of the sexual act:

> In Pravic it made no sense for a man to say that he had "had" a woman. The word which came closest in meaning to "fuck," and had a similar secondary usage as a curse, was specific: it meant rape. The usual verb, taking only a plural subject, can be translated only by a neutral word like copulate. It meant something two people did, not something one person did, or had. (D 53)

A physicist educated about these principles concerning the family, sexuality and property, etc., Shevek comes into contact with the alien lands of Urras and analyses the alternative systems he observes, contrasting them with his native Anarres. Although Odo is long dead, her final message reaches the people of Anarres and Shevek via her epitaph that is in Urras, "to be whole is to be part; true voyage is return" (D 84), which underscores the importance of the symbiosis between the society and the individual, and the importance of 'return,' which also plays an important part in Shevek's journey. The significance of the first utterance pervades the gist of the search for utopia in Shevek's (hi)story. The second part of her epitaph hints, though less discernibly, at another particular related to Shevek's utopia: how his personal discovery of utopia is revealed by the 'real journey home.' This 'journey back' in fact raises an important question: If Anarres is Shevek's motherland, and if

Urras is the historical motherland of the Anarresti, when is it that Shevek really 'returns home'? :

> The Odonians who left Urras had been wrong, wrong in their desperate courage, to deny their history, to forgo the possibility of return. *The explorer who will not come back or send his ships to tell his tale is not an explorer, only an adventurer; and his sons are born in exile. He had come to love Urras, but what good was his yearning love? He was not part of it. Nor was he part of it. Nor was he part of the world of his birth.* [italics mine] (D 89)

Experiencing and observing the systems in both worlds, Shevek ultimately realizes that he is the 'orphan-wanderer' who cannot find his 'true home' and who must transform his everlasting journey into his '(be)coming home.' Yet this seems only natural when one remembers that Odo herself "was an alien: an exile" (D 101); although she dreamt of a new world away from the oppression in Urras, she died and was interred in Urras. Thus, when the possible implications of Shevek's quest are read symbolically, it may be stated that the perfect order that is sought for in numerous utopias is to be found only in constant change instead of one fixed place. When Shevek comprehends that Odo was never able to see Anarres, and that the Anarresti as emigrants constructed a world one step away from Urras, he desires to take a step 'forward' – back to their past, to Urras and Odo and to his future. His attempt is to overcome the mutual denial and negation on both sides, what he calls "tribalism" (D 76), which also means that he is aware of the fact that he must learn to discover and face his past although neither the Urrasti nor the Anarresti have such a yearning.

At the end of the book, the world that Shevek first belonged to, namely Anarres, assumes the symbolic function of a receding rainbow, making of him a new 'flying Dutchman' in search of his personal utopia. Thus Ferns's classification of *The Dispossessed* as a 'chronotopia' is attested to by Shevek's personal quest. To contribute to Ferns's comment, it may be added that the future Shevek seeks in this chronotopia exists not in a "perfect" tense but in a "conditional" one (Ferns, 1999: 230). It is a comprising approach involving both "being" and "becoming" (D 224), a theory not approved of by many physicists in Anarres. The problem of time from

Shevek's standpoint is not merely a question of physics but also a question of causality and ethics, a metaphysical question entailing questions about decisions and consequences in temporality. Thus, he feels this impassioned urge to find the sequential order of his existence by his journey:

> He was alone, here, because he came from a self-exiled society. He had always been alone on his own world because he had exiled himself from his society. The Settlers had taken one step away. He had taken two. He stood by himself, because he had taken the metaphysical risk. And he had been fool enough to think that he might serve to bring together two worlds to which he did not belong. (D 90)

Shevek could have accepted his role as an eminent physicist on Anarres and turned a blind eye on the corrupting influence of power in Anarres. He could have pretended not to see the "walls" erected in his own community, delimitating its members in different ways. The walls that were built against the threat of invasion from Urras have deteriorated into symbols of a stagnant world, and Shevek cannot know what he has to know without surmounting them both in real and symbolic terms. Thus, there is no way of knowing what a utopia stands for without asking questions about the decisions of its citizens. Anarres, though a utopia, is a flawed one, and yet many people tend to disregard its deficiencies. Already having problems related to scarcity (in a utopia), not all Anarresti follow the teachings of Odo, comprehending their essence. The moral responsibility of all citizens is obvious for everyone, for the precarious existence of a world created by their forebears relies primarily on this awareness. This fact alone is not convincing enough to deter some from abusing their prerogatives for personal profits.

Shevek, as a scientist, has to go through some personal experiences to understand what one's will to power really means on Anarres. Shevek's confrontation with Sabul, who is another scientist from his native planet, serves as an instance in which one can observe the devious and conniving characters of Anarres. Sabul, who only approves of the ideas he likes and of the people who do not pose a threat to his career, in a way, serves as an incarnation of all the corrupt elements that Shevek observes in his own society. Since men like Sabul try to exert their authority or power over anyone they meet, Anarres seems to be on its way to become a world

of ‘power wolves’. The hidden and insidious “will to power” as defined by Nietzche and redefined by Foucault emerges in Sabul’s personality as the “will to dominance” (D 168) when all coercive elements are eradicated only to reveal what is concealed in such people. Indeed, it is against people like Sabul – who pose a “lasting threat” to their way of life – that the Anarresti show “lasting vigilance” (D 96):

> The absence of all enhancements and enforcements of authority left the real thing plain. There are people of inherent authority; some emperors actually have new clothes. (D 56)

After such experiences, Shevek comes to comprehend that “the walls” are not demolished in Anarres; they are only concealed. Transforming the libertarian teachings of Odo into “laws” by each new generation, a tacit fear of the new and a subtle form of authoritarianism have committed the “ultimate blasphemy” (D 168) of building up ‘walls’. Without any visible center of coercion, some unwanted behaviors still persist and they are not likely to go away by mere wishful thinking. When one of his friends talks about his observations on Sabul and their society, Shevek comes closer to the point of realizing the real essence of power on his own planet, which seems to have formed an ossified structure that is reminiscent of the ones in other political systems:

> “No. We have no government, no laws, all right. But as far as I can see, *ideas* never were never controlled by laws and governments, even on Urras. If they had been, how would Odo have worked out hers? How would Odonianism have become a world movement? The archists tried to stamp it out by force, and failed. You can’t crush ideas by suppressing them. You can only crush them by ignoring them [...] Public opinion! That’s the power structure he’s part of, and he knows how to use. The unadmitted, inadmissible government that rules the Odonian society by stifling the individual mind. (D 165)

After having understood the seamy sides of his own world, Shevek decides to travel far and wide to see what the other worlds have in their sacks to offer. He is alarmed by what his friend says when he speaks about the rule in Anarres as ‘a government of social conscience controlled by bureaucrats’ who fear change (D 166-167). The dilemma between majority rule and the effaced individual is now

coupled to another question related to human nature and anarchism here: how to get the optimal performance from the individuals in a given society without either suppressing them or letting them become authoritarians. Sabul is actually the emblem of such authoritarians, the emblem of a suffocating social conscience that fears change. Yet Shevek assumes that such a fear of change coupled with mediocrity in men like Sabul, which has assumed the graveness of a "suicidal sickness" (D 166) stemming from Anarres's being tightly sealed and not stemming from Urras, is not supposed to diminish his own sense of morality and duty, but on the contrary, it may enhance his perception of responsibility.

While traveling to Urras, Shevek does not carry anything with him that is of significant property value, given that as an anarchist he owns no such things. He stands an absolute alien, without any money or possessions. From a world of doors with no locks, he arrives at the world of *ur*-property. Thus, the "archist" system of Urras simply shocks Shevek, in whose world money and land ownership do not exist. A-Io, which is the capitalist opposite of Anarres, is depicted as a world of plenty where wealth is gathered in the hands of capitalists and in their system that is upheld by insatiable "profiteers", laws of coercion and a morality of oppression. Remembering Odo's words, "Excess is excrement [...] Excrement retained in the body is a poison" (D 98), Shevek understands that there are many hidden faces of Urras, as regards both everyday facts and surplus production. In fact, the capitalist system of A-Io carefully packages up everything to ensure that nothing touches anything else. Shevek is also tested by the temptations and promises of A-Io, all empty packages, and yet he stands firm against them, seeing through the system and the fact that in A-Io, he, too, is "carefully packaged" (D 199).

Instead of being motivated by certain common needs or being unified by a cooperative struggle against scarcity, the people of A-Io are stimulated either by a fight for survival or by making profits; cooperation and mutual aid, which form the ideological infrastructure of Shevek's world, are replaced with competition. The motto of Urras is 'competition for profit' or "the strongest survives" (D 220) – though the price paid is hardly mentioned by the Urrasti. Thus, when Shevek observes the 'appalling examination system' in Urras, he decides to mock the

tendency 'to study and to learn in order to compete' by a proposal that insults the Urrasti students' perception of 'justice' and reflects his own world's communitarian values:

> He asked his students to write paper on any problem in physics that interested them, and told them that he would give them all the highest mark, so that the bureaucrats would have something to write on their forms and lists. To his surprise a good many students came to him to complain [...] And some of them objected strongly to his giving everyone the same mark. How could the diligent students be distinguished from the dull ones? What was the good in working hard? If no competitive distinctions were to be made, one might as well do nothing. "Well, of course," Shevek said, troubled. "If you do not want to do the work, you should not do it." (D 128)

Shevek, the observer from a utopia observing another world as if it were another utopia, cannot see any corrective power either in the laws or in the prisons of Urras. The glamour and all the dazzle of the Urrasti cities with their huge and impressive government buildings, shops and banks cannot mesmerize Shevek to lure him into a sleep of fancies. The 'free press' of A-Io in fact censures every disturbing fact; universities produce nothing of value concerning the public good; the people approving of Shevek's success and ideas are the same or similar looking people sent by the A-Io government:

> He talked pure anarchism, and they did not stop him. But did they need to stop him? It seemed that he talked to the same people every time: well dressed, well fed, well mannered, smiling. Were they the only kind of people in Urras? "It is pain that brings men together," Shevek said standing up before them, and they nodded and said, "How true." (D 144-145)

When the 'deprivation' of this land of plenty slowly begins to take shape in his mind, Shevek tries to voice his arguments against the deceptive system of Urrras, an attempt quickly muzzled by the Urrasti press, which do not hesitate to report and to broadcast the comments that he never made as his statements. When he is asked by whose initiative he has been sent to their planet, Shevek answers mockingly that the only initiative he knows is his own (D 76), as his world has no power either to stop or to send him. Under this strict regime, Shevek's dissident ideas and criticisms of Urras cannot reach anywhere for fear that his mere existence in

flesh may ensue a growing belief in the existence of an anarchist system: Shevek the scientist is welcome, but Shevek the anarchist is not (D 81).

Shevek, who arrives in Urras as an independent individual from Anarres, grows disturbed by their seeing him as the representative of his planet. In Urras, the perception of individualism rests upon egoistic motives. The egoism at the level of the individual pervades the modes of production and accumulation in Urras. For Shevek, the irrational process of production represents a frightening aspect of Urras. His eyes eventually study the unfamiliar economic order of this new world that now encircles him. Coming from a planet of scarcity and of unstable order, Shevek scrutinizes the pro-consumption policy of production in Urras where artisans, laborers, farmers, and all other true producers are either absent or out of sight. Consequently, Shevek immediately comes to the realization that these people are indeed hidden "behind walls" (D 132), imprisoned there, separated from the "incredibly luxurious" face of Urras with its "dormitories, refectories, theaters, meeting rooms" (D 81). Urras seems to be a 'wonderful' world of consumers and vain glory, although it gives the impression of a live organism full of promises: in fact, it is a world where one is 'free from' anything but never 'free to do anything' (D 129). For Shevek, this is actually the logical outcome of a society in which there are only buyers and sellers, re-producing "no relation to the things but that of possession" (D 132). Observing anxiety on the faces of the few Urrasti he has seen, Shevek tries to comprehend the meaning of this mood on Urras by asking some rhetorical questions:

> Was it because, no matter how much money they had, they always had to worry about making more, lest they die poor? Was it guilt, because no matter how little money they had, there was always somebody who had less? (D 207)

Le Guin here also associates Shevek's presence in A-Io with another idea from the history of utopian thought, namely millenarianism. After realizing that the sections of A-Io that he has seen so far are nothing more than some scenes embellished with niceties and arranged for his visit, Shevek eventually becomes

aware that the slums in which the working class people and the poor dwell are kept far from his reach. Thus, when Shevek cannot stand to watch the fake scene of this makeshift life and decides to find these people, many in A-Io are scared that his ‘advent’ may ignite a revolution:

> The myth—the one who comes before the millennium—‘a stranger, an outcast, an exile, bearing in empty hands the time to come.’ They quoted that. The rabble are in one of their damned apocalyptic moods. Looking for a figurehead. A catalyst [...] Damned rebellious cattle, send them to fight Thu, it’s the only good we’ll ever get from them. (D 231-232)

The followers of Odo in Urras, the anti-centralist libertarians actually testify to these fears of the capitalist Urrasti. Although they hope that Shevek will become Odo resurrected and be their quasi-mythical savior, he refuses to play this role that is assigned to him:

> It’s not just because they want this idea of yours. But because you are an idea. A dangerous one. The idea of anarchism, made flesh. Walking amongst us. (D 295)

In fact, these people desperately need such a leader figure, but Shevek’s empty hands offer no solution or prescription for revolution, because, as stated above, his understanding of revolution is one that grows from within the individual. These libertarians think that “Odo was only an idea” and an *ideal* for them whereas “Dr. Shevek is the proof” *incarnated* (D 296). Meanwhile, many Urrasti are recruited to fight against the state-communist Thu – against the archenemy – A-Io’s ‘other,’ and to die. Here, Le Guin vaguely alludes to the events of the Cold War period as well – the U.S. (A-Io) versus the U.S.S.R. (Thu); without one the other could hardly carry on its projects of world domination and discourses of democracy or communism.

Another alternate world on Urras that also suffers from doleful faces is Thu, a country whose government is highly reminiscent of state communism. This ‘lost chance of a utopia’ also *belongs* to Urras, the planet that represents the past of Anarres. Thus, in contrast to Anarres, which comprises only an anarchist community,

A-Io and Thu of Urras make up a pair of opposites. Other than this pair, there is also a third one called Benbili, an African or South-American-like underdeveloped state, caught between the influences of these two conflicting powers of Urras. Anarres, on the other hand, surrounded by the limits of its planet, faces no neighboring threats, whereas Thu and A-Io, as two dominant ideological centers of Urras, pose a perpetual threat to one another.

Even though the people of Thu seem to be the citizens of a state possessed by an authoritarian ideology, they in fact form a significant group of people, since they *claim* to be the 'political adherents' of the immigrants who left for Anarres. These people, whose existence on Urras has some symbolic connotations concerning their ideological and organic unity with the political and social systems of Urras, serve to portray a communist replica of A-Io, for they are depicted and defined as absolute 'archists.' The authority of the state is not subject to any question, or as Le Guin puts it, the individual cannot "bargain with the State" when it is the State that issues 'the coins of power' (D 272) as it does both in A-Io and Thu. In these two countries, where every spoon-fed citizen is accustomed to giving his/her consent to the government, the press censures and checks all the news that is to be presented to the public. In a world where no one is an individual, Shevek recalls his native Anarres, whose citizens' conformity also encircles him with its walls. Thu, with its high-built walls to protect itself against Urras, in turn creates a state as though and strict as that of A-Io without any illusions of freedom at all – if the mirror-image perceptions of statism in the two worlds are to be compared. Communitarian ideals of Thu being distorted, the aspiring utopia of Thu has eventually 'evolved' or rather degenerated into a dystopia. It appears that its future is now surrounded and restricted by the walls the people themselves have built.

Yet, it is at this point that Shevek's arrival confuses the established order of the country and kindles the long-forgotten fervor for revolution. From Shevek's perspective, the experience of being among the citizens of Thu is coming into contact with the enthusiasm for revolution in the world to which Odo belonged, a world in which revolution was to be *made* – whereas Shevek believes that it cannot be 'made' but one can transform him/herself into it. Thus, Shevek's viewpoint suggests that to

evade such dystopias, everyone is supposed to find his/her own utopia to make it live and breathe. Such an understanding or conception of utopia on a personal level of course signals the dissolution and the "passing of mass utopia" discussed in Susan Buck-Morss's book, *Dreamworld and Catastrophe* (*cf.* Buck-Morss, 2002). Le Guin's "ambiguous utopia" may be interpreted and assessed according to at least two different perspectives, one being reading Le Guin's book as an epilogue to Western utopias, and the other being reading it as a prologue to a new and different approach to utopias, which is on the process of being defined. As Ferns recapitulates briefly, utopia as a way of thinking has to go through many changing phases not to lose its revolutionary aspect. Challenging though it may seem, the utopian mind as the expression of a quest for ideals and utopia as a literary genre may eventually learn how to take measured and successive steps from conventional ideals towards 'realism' and then from 'contemporary realism' towards new ideals, pursuing this evolutionary track of change ceaselessly:

> [f]or Le Guin, the utopian ideal can neither replace reality nor exist in isolation from it. Instead, the two are inextricably linked—although not in the static, binary opposition that Khouri suggests; rather what is portrayed is a symbiotic relationship in which each gives the other what it lacks—the reason to go on changing. (Ferns, 1999: 228)

4.3 MARGE PIERCY: *WOMAN ON THE EDGE OF TIME*

> "War, she thought. I'm at war. No more fantasies, no more hopes. *War*." (WET 338)

Marge Piercy, another figure from the 1970s, was among those women writers who composed utopias dealing with feminist issues and social change. Piercy, when compared to Le Guin, was a rather radical name, a much more prominent activist of the '70s. As a radical poet and writer among the feminists of the era, she headed the Students for a Democratic Society so as to end the war in Vietnam (Snodgrass, 1995: 418). A true child of the revolutionary '60s, she was an ardent defender of civil rights as well as the feminist cause, and this was an approach she

shared with many of her feminist contemporaries. Her *Woman on the Edge of Time* (1976), a work juxtaposing utopia and dystopia in a way similar to that of *The Dispossessed*, reflects her concerns about social injustices, women's rights, and anti-authoritarianism of the times.

The utopian fiction that Piercy composed, though it shares many points with Le Guin's *The Dispossessed*, begins in a totally different temporal and spatial context, one of twentieth-century America. In fact, her contemporary society as she depicts it appears to be a true dystopian world with its injustices, discrimination, crime and sexual subjection. Piercy, in this respect, creates her dystopia within the realities of the United States of the 1970s. She portrays the present-day dystopia of a thirty-seven-year-old 'Chicana' working class woman, Consuelo Ramos or Connie, a woman who lives on the margins of existence in New York City. Piercy probes into her mind and soul from the very first pages of the book to mirror what a nightmare life is for a poor Mexican-American woman in a world where every Chicano longs to be an 'Anglo' – educated and successful. These longings and realities that pervade her spirit create three different faces in her character:

> I've always had three names inside me. Consuelo, my given name. Consuelo's a Mexican woman, a servant of servants, silent as clay. The woman who suffers. who bears and endures. Then I'm Connie, who managed to get two years of college—till Consuelo got pregnant [...] Then I'm Conchita, the low-down drunken mean part of me who gets by in jail, in the bug-house, who loves no good men, who hurt my daughter [...] (WET 122)

Connie's Hispanic neighborhood is a picture of crime, poverty, madness, and prostitution. An intelligent and educated 'Chicana' – a "shoddy merchandise" nevertheless (WET 35) – and someone quite extraordinary for her community, Connie is depicted as a lonely and sensitive loser, someone 'worn out' too fast, ignored by the people she loves. Brought up in a crowded family of constant troubles, having had her share of abortions, and having conflicted with her mother, "a woman of thirty-seven who had given up making any plans" (WET 47), she tries to hold on to her vague dreams of a better future in which she dreams of constructing a family-centered utopia.

The novel begins tightly embedded in some realistic scenes such as the one in which Connie beats up her niece's pimp and breaks his nose in order to protect her, because her niece also stands for the bright future that she one day hopes to establish secure from violence – and from the likes of her pimp – and poverty. After her attack, Connie is committed to the psychiatric ward in Bellevue Hospital and hospitalized, and as it is made clear later on, this is not the first time she experiences such an incident of hospitalization. The chapters which introduce Connie to the reader also include her 'story' of how she was in love with another underdog from this poor neighborhood, a man called Martin Ramos, and how her child, Angelina, was taken away for custody due to her beating her up and treating her badly during a nervous breakdown after losing her lover.

Connie's final act to save her niece from her pimp and to start from scratch proves to be ineffective as she too testifies against Connie, and she thus loses her final hope of a fresh start after being abandoned by her only close relative. Her daughter is taken away, her niece refuses to save her and that is for the sake of a pimp who beats her and refuses to have a child from her. For that reason, the 'personal' utopia that Connie conceives in the beginning is one that includes herself, her niece and her niece's children – one of a recovered family in which she will be the mother she once was, and an 'Anglo' mother she has never been. In that fantasy, she is both a mother and a child playing with dolls:

> Like figures of a paper, like a manger scene of pasteboard figures, a fantasy shone in Connie since her conversation with Dolly that morning: she and Dolly and Dolly's children would live together. She would have a family again, finally. She could be ever so careful and good and she would do anything, anything at all to keep them together [...] The dream was like those paper dolls she had had as a child, dolls with blond paper hair and Anglo features and big paper smiles. (WET 14)

Her society and its institutions take both away from her, and her self is the only thing that remains of her dream. Connie's determination to keep the final remnants of her 'lost future' is thus put to the test throughout her stay at the hospital, during which she appears before a group of pedant doctors who reject to hear her version of the fight she had with her niece's pimp and who try to break her will to

tame her, to control her and to use her. In short, it may be stated that the hospital follows the usual procedure in ‘diagnosing’ illnesses without any sincere concern either to understand her or to ‘cure’ her – in fact, her illness is instantaneously perceived as an opportunity to carry out some scientific researches.

Surrounded by unfriendly institutions, her lover and daughter lost, trying to survive in a world of prostitutes, pimps, violence, and experiencing a strong sense of being trapped in this kind of life, Connie suddenly meets a strange figure from a different and utopian world, Luciente, someone who illuminates her bleak future – as ‘his/her’ name suggests – and her guiding “moon” when she tries to escape from the mental hospital (WET 232). Connie experiences great difficulties in figuring out Luciente’s sex as his/her outwardly features do not conform to ordinary categorizations of Connie’s world. Connie, who never accepts the clinical diagnosis about her schizophrenic guilt of abusing her child, excessive drinking, and many other lesser crimes, grows puzzled and frightened by the sudden appearance of this stranger before her eyes. She takes this strong and bright figure with muscles to be a man mocking her, another white man who has nothing better to do. This wo/man whom Connie takes to be a man explicates his/her identity and clarifies his/her reasons for finding and getting in touch with her.

Throughout the book, the question of Connie’s mental sanity slightly blurs the reader’s vision, and her travels to a future utopia sometimes carry a sort of ambivalence. The reader is caught hesitating to decide whether Connie in fact meets a person from a utopia and travels to his/her world that is within the fictional reality that the book creates, or whether it is due to her schizophrenia – which the doctors say that she has – and due to her hallucinations and illusions. Whether this utopia that Connie visits intermittently is just a result of her flight from the realities of the hospital or whether it exists in ‘reality’ is not clarified. One thing for certain is that such moments of escape into Luciente’s utopia become her ‘reality’ and maybe function as a means to overcome or to cope with the psychological burden of a fear of being hospitalized forever. One can even claim that it is these fears in her mind and psyche that build up Luciente’s paradise. Therefore, the utopian world of the future emerges from the present day sufferings and fears of Connie through a

sublimation-like process, enabling her survival under oppressive circumstances and her visits to Luciente's utopia.

This utopian figure, 'Indio-looking' Luciente, arrives from the year 2137, or as s/he is not using a device to travel in time but contacting the sensitive and 'catcher and receptive' mind of Connie, one may say that s/he rather contacts or communicates with her as a 'sender.' S/he explains that Connie was chosen to partake in a research project about different worlds and cultures, and s/he establishes this link with her via a kind of mental sending-receiving contact – which may be interpreted as some kind of male/sender/active-female/receiver/passive (WET 45) relationship, too. This wo/man who can be described as effeminate, or better still, as having an unknown look of sexuality, takes her to a non-sexist, communal world in America's future where the principles of social organization are based on essential needs and harmony instead of economic competition and the exploitation of nature and of human beings – a world Connie cannot even dream of.

In fact, this utopian world is not perfect but it nevertheless strives to overcome its imperfections; its citizens aspire to live in peace despite the fact that they are entangled in an ongoing war against their enemies from a dystopia. The town that Connie visits in this utopia, Mattapoisett, is similar to Anarres in *The Dispossessed* in some respects such as its scarcity of resources and its decentralized government and management processes. Although Connie ridicules the advances of this utopia, since death, sickness, and mental problems still exist, Luciente reminds her that to overcome such 'problems,' one has to quit living as a human being and become a "metal, plastic, robot computer" (WET 125). Thus, like in many post-traditional feminist utopias, perfection as the ultimate state of completion is excluded right from the start in Mattapoisett, although a yearning for the best is what keeps this utopia alive.

Analyzed from a different perspective, this utopia, like Le Guin's *The Dispossessed*, is not 'feminist' in a way similar to Gilman's *Herland*. Piercy's work criticizes and exposes not only patriarchy but also the structures of power, science, and capitalism, seeing these notions as interrelated; thus, feminist questions exist and are easily discernable in the book, and yet they are presented as parts of a greater

civil rights utopia, one that tries to incorporate diverse problems that haunted Piercy's time. Her book, therefore, envisions a very different conceptualization of feminist issues, diverging from traditional utopias in its approach and narrative.

Within such a framework, Connie's vision leads the reader through shifts between the appalling conditions of psychiatric wards and a utopian future. The utopian world of Luciente seems to reflect the exact opposite of the American nightmare that Connie experiences. Luciente's introduction of his/her own world later on helps Connie struggle and stand up for herself and for others against the inhuman treatment in the so-called treatment centers.

Connie's agony and suffering during her stay at these mental hospitals do not reflect the anguish of a single Chicana woman. Following the advent of deconstruction and the critical theories of the 1960s, many intellectuals such as the French philosopher Michel Foucault, R. D. Laing, the exponent of the anti-psychiatry movement, and Felix Guattari, who targeted "the legal bondage of the institutionalized patient in conventional state hospitals" (Massumi, 1996: 3), were questioning power, authority, and domination so as to display the power structures involved in the construction and institutionalization of such centers of authority. Some of their objections were rooted in the shortcomings of mental hospitals, some in the "terrible revelations of the European concentration camps" (Outhwaite and Bottomore, 1996: 522), and some in the philosophical notion (after Foucault) of seeing madness and mental illnesses as the outcome of historical processes and therefore rejecting the notion of illness as a defining term for madness. The doctors in the book, as authoritarian representatives of such established norms, employ no real psychological tests to understand what Connie is going through, or what really happened during the fight she had with the pimp. Connie's having beaten her child and having broken her arm are enough evidence for them to believe the pimp's testimony that it was in fact Connie who beat her niece and broke his nose. Her former records prove that she is a schizophrenic, and therefore there is no need to take pains to understand her when labeling a person is much easier and convenient. Connie, though, never accepts the self-assumed superiority of the doctors of the ward.

Piercy, like Ken Kesey does in *One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest* (1962) – but from a different perspective – lays bare and criticizes the methods applied in such mental institutions (Connie, too, is called a "cuckoo" in the book [WET 29]). Thus, the process of 'treatment' at Bellevue hospital begins with rubbing out Connie's personality and past – her cards and photographs – to the point that she cannot object to anything at all. Her attempts to explain that she is sane only serves to convince the doctors that she is a true schizophrenic who claims that she is not 'sick':

> Did they think you had to be crazy to protest being locked up? Yes, they did. They said reluctance to be hospitalized was a sign of sickness, assuming you were sick, in one of these no-win circles. (WET 17)

Thus, her defense of her mental sanity sinks into the quicksand of the doctors' logic out of which no one can drag one's self, or into "their nets of jargon hung all with tiny barbed hooks" (WET 60). Yet, at the same time, 'Connie the schizophrenic' seems to be sensible enough to understand that this system of treatment does everything other than 'to treat the patients.' She is also clear-sighted enough to see the two male figures, her niece's pimp and the doctor, determining her fate. The male domination over a woman's body here strikes a parallel with the subjection and erasure of her identity:

> The iron maiden was carrying her to Rockover again. A bargain had been struck. Some truce had been negotiated between the two men over the bodies of their women. (WET 31)

The drugs that Connie is forced to take weaken her in capacity to struggle; the experiment for which she is chosen as the guinea pig aims to break down her will and to force her to surrender her self. These incidents epitomize her experiences at the hospital. The pills she refuses to take act as symbols of the ideology she is forced to 'swallow.' Although she cannot break free in the beginning, after spending more and more time in Luciente's world, Connie begins to feel strong

enough to run away, although she is not really sure whether she will ultimately be able to break free from diverse forms of domination and patriarchy around her.

Yet, when she is caught after her failed attempt to escape, Connie is brought back to be placed under even harsher control and more dangerous experiments. When the doctors need a guinea pig to experiment with, they just try to lure the 'patients' with the vain hope of release; or if they refuse to cooperate, they coerce them to do so, telling them that otherwise they will have to remain hospitalized for the rest of their lives – as it happens with Connie – or they simply consult one another to declaim that the patient cannot be cured by normal medicine and maybe experimental medicine can 'save' him or her. Connie remembers quite well that her lover Claud too had taken part in some medical experiments in prison and died although he had hoped to shorten his sentence.

Thus, these self-assured doctors, who appear to be emblems of the state and of patriarchy, conclude that Connie should be taken to the ward of experiments, which is controlled by the staff at Rockover State Psychiatric Hospital. Mental clinics, Connie knows, are only a part of that system of great and powerful (white) males, like many hospitals in the United States that do hysterectomy on women just because they "wanted practice" (WET 45): the pimp telling her that he is the boss, the judge telling her that her child will be taken away from her, the government man informing her that she will not receive any unemployment benefits, the doctor telling her that she is insane without any doubt.

Connie, throughout the book, observes three different worlds, one of her own time, one of Luciente's utopia, and one of a frightening dystopia. She moves into the future through some mental processes, but every time she returns to her own time, she finds the tangible existence of the ward and the hospital walls around her. The tension that builds up inside her develops after these journeys, which may also be read as her progress towards a conscientious rebellion. Therefore, her mind exists in two tenses: the present tense of her realities and the future tense of Luciente's world. In her own time, she has no future and friends. Her only future and friends exist in Luciente's world, and the contradiction between these two worlds and tenses reaches its climax when Connie learns about many attractive and admirable aspects

of their lives and makes up her mind to rebel against the authority of doctors and to run away.

Luciente's utopia, like many utopias, of course, offers its own vision of an ameliorated future, which is also reflected and countered by a reverse picture, a dystopia, to which only a chapter of the book is devoted. As it is in many traditional utopias, Piercy too deals with some important issues such as work, labor, punishment, private property, marriage, education, and government. The people of Mattapoisett sometimes want to have some luxury items as their private property, and yet the longing being no obsession, when they quench their desires, they return them to let someone else have them for another period. This aspect of the utopia is clearly contrasted with the dystopian vision of New York that Connie sees later in the book, in which the "multis," the proprietors of great multinational corporations, own everything, including human beings, human organs, and genuine food.

In Mattapoisett, governments and the state, just like in many (feminist) utopias, as the culmination of patriarchal (and capitalist) modes of organization, are replaced with smaller anti-authoritarian town councils, which offer the possibility of devising better methods for the participants' self-governing and democratic organizations. This is also contrasted with the short dystopia in the book, in which the *1984*-like SGs monitor every individual from the "Securcenter" – where they can read their minds – to discourage and to prevent any dissidence and aberration, and to reach a never "verting," never "deflecting," never "distracted" state of reliability (WET 299).

As the libertarian system in Mattapoisett has modified or removed many institutions of Connie's time, mental hospitals, too, are thoroughly reformed to be transformed into pleasant open-air centers for rehabilitation instead of retaining their former status as "loony bin[s]" (WET 65). Studying how Piercy criticizes the detrimental effects of a "loony bin" by contrasting it with a better solution should suffice to elucidate how a utopia may assume some social responsibilities. Such reforms put into practice in Mattapoisett also demonstrate the libertarian organization of the society:

> “Our madhouses are places where people retreat when they want to go down into themselves —to collapse, carry on, see visions, hear voices of prophecy, bang on the walls, relive infancy —getting in touch with the buried self and the inner mind [...] How can another person decide that it is time for me to disintegrate, to reintegrate myself?” (WET 66)

Labor and work, from Plato’s *Republic* to Piercy’s work, seem to have dominated a certain portion of utopian discourse. Luciente narrates how the emancipation of work power of each individual in Mattapoisett increased their output, and how drudgery is taken care of by some machines. Echoing Le Guin’s approach, Piercy also adopts this communitarian system of work handed down for many centuries since Plato’s time, and yet, in concordance with the spirit of the times, she, just like Le Guin, sets some principles of voluntary labor according to needs and demand.

As regards social classes, such a categorization seems out of touch with the realities of Luciente’s world where the word ‘poor’ makes no sense. The absence of the poor is also contrasted with the dystopian vision in the book when the prostitute-like woman that Connie meets there looks down upon her as a poor woman, calls her “dud” (WET 288), talks about the difference between the poor “duds,” all of whom have “brain deficiencies” (WET 299), the “middle flacks” and the “richies,” (WET 291) who are still ‘the richies’ of Connie’s time. Luciente’s world, which assesses each individual according to his/her merits, forms a stark contrast with this dystopia in which poor people are born losers, “animals,” the “diseased,” and also the “walking organ banks” for the rich (*Ibid.*).

Piercy’s vision, just like the ones in *Herland* or *The Dispossessed*, also deals with one of the essentials of utopia, namely cooperation and competition as forces acting upon production, and as two faces of human existence, if not of human nature. Although many feminist utopias seem to follow the principle of cooperation or mutual aid alone, the utopian world in Piercy’s work incorporates these two possibly complementary aspects of life, conjoining Darwin’s ideas with those of Kropotkin so as to emphasize the idea that competition and cooperation may exist simultaneously. Competition is nevertheless reserved for sports, games, fighting,

wrestling [...] poemfests, carnival" as "decoration" and not for "a living, for scarce resources, for food" (WET 174-175).

Piercy, nevertheless, seems to have curtailed the part allotted to such discussions as her utopia's paradigms are different when compared to those of earlier works. She rather highlights some further issues within the framework of her utopia and handles these in relation to some certain problems, which she puts at the core of all other issues: environment, exploitation, the family and motherhood. These questions are handled as the basis of her feminist assessment of a utopian future. Some related topics such as the creation of a new vocabulary for a utopian world, a point discussed in Le Guin's work, too, seem to form the ideological infrastructure of the utopia. As regards language, for example, instead of gender-specific personal pronouns, the utopian community of Mattapoisett employs the word "per" instead of 'his' and 'her,' and so "person" instead of 'he' or 'she.' To redefine the interpersonal relations, Luciente's utopia coins verbs like "to intersee" or "to inknow," stressing a deeper level of empathy (WET 56). On the other hand, the dystopian world in the book seems to possess a limited vocabulary that is made up of some abridged words and abbreviations, devoid of expressive power.

The ideological power structures embedded in language are also disclosed during the first encounters between Connie the 'educated Chicana' and the utopian Luciente. Although they both speak 'English,' they are not always able to understand each other; and this linguistic difference – and difficulty – lies neither in their 'races' nor in 'the universities that they attended.' The interval between the times/worlds of Connie and Luciente, a period covering a hundred and fifty years, seems to have changed many things. Yet, Piercy does not provide the reader with sufficient information on this issue, which could have elucidated the questions about what happened during those years to help such a change take place – and what she explains has no prime importance for her concerns in the book – but it is evident that a fundamental transformation of culture took place, displacing many former concepts and ideas. Yet, Luciente's efforts to explain these changes in language cannot surmount the ossified dispositions in Connie's mind at once. Language seems to have

been a battleground for Connie, who has always tried to speak like ‘Anglos’; and it was by language that she has been insulted and attacked and oppressed many times:

> “[...] Your vocabulary is remarkably weak in words for mental states, mental abilities, and mental acts—”
> “I had two years of college! Just because I’m a Chicana and on welfare, don’t try to tell me what poor vocabulary I speak with. I bet I read more than you do!”
> “You plural—excuse me. A weakness that remains in our language, though we’ve reformed pronouns. By your language I mean that of your time, your culture.” (WET 42)

Piercy is also careful to relate such linguistic novelties of a new world with some of its revolutionary aspects such as environmentalism, a reflection of the emerging sensibilities of Piercy’s time. In fact, ecology and concerns about nature were not novelties when *Woman on the Edge of Time* was written. The rapid process of industrialization that transformed the economic structure of Europe during the nineteenth century had a strong impact on literature as well, a fact that can be demonstrated by a study of the nineteenth-century romantic mindset or by a close reading of nineteenth-century literary utopias. While some authors preferred to compose their utopias integrating the latest advances in natural sciences and technology, some nevertheless decided to ‘retreat’ to a pastoral world like the romantics of the nineteenth century.

For the most part, technology, science, *and* progress, with their promises for humankind, were welcomed as highly affirmative and assuring concepts, and yet one hundred years sufficed to witness the devastating effects of mishandled and abused technology. In fact, these concepts have never been merely related to questions about epistemology; on the contrary, they have had their direct repercussions in various domains of the humanities. Therefore, after the havoc that devastated the Western world in the first half of the twentieth century, many intellectuals and scientists began to question the role these concepts played as ‘hostages’ in the hands of mindless and reckless ideologies of domination – over nature and over their fellow human beings. Besides, instead of environmentalism, an approach many radical ecologists and eco-feminists deemed a weak and superficial

way of protecting nature against exploitation, ecological movements tried to expose capitalism's detrimental effects upon nature. Since capitalistic investment has always depended upon the never-ending use of natural resources, these movements of the Post-war era prognosticated the ultimate outcome of the intricate nature of such abuse. Therefore, it is not surprising to meet some self-appointed "Animal" or "Earth Advocates" (WET 151) in Mattapoisett where ecological concerns are important.

Piercy, in tune with the ecological principles of her time, also fuses nature and religion to replace Christianity, while some feminists, including Gilman, have instead preferred to rework the ancient cults of the Great Goddess to suggest a new understanding of religion. The religion of Mattapoisett has nothing to do with a male god figure but it is rather "being joined with all living / in one singing web of energy" which seems to be woven into the idea of Mother Nature (WET 181). On the other hand, it may also be stated that 'Mother Nature' as an interpretation of another ancient tradition is here redefined as something modern and integrative. In this ecological society, Luciente him/herself is a plant geneticist, and his/her thoughts and worries about nature are totally ridiculous for Connie, who lives in twentieth-century New York. When Luciente speaks of "poisonous chemicals, nitrites, hormone residues, DDT, hydrocarbones, sodium benzoate" (WET 54) and the like that exist in Connie's time/world, s/he only sounds condescending and snobbish for Connie. His/her small community, which is made up of nearly six hundred people, is one that is mainly based and structured upon agriculture and ecology with its bicycles instead of cars – 'boxes of death' – small houses instead of skyscrapers, whereas the dystopia in the book, reflecting the extreme opposite, holds many skyscrapers with more than two hundred floors.

After many utopias of relief and comfort, which technology helped to imagine and visualize, Piercy and many eco-feminists opted for a non-urban life, organized in small agrarian communities that try to be "ownfed" (WET 70) instead of producing excess. Technology in Mattapoisett, though, is not forsaken but its limits and uses are redefined to protect and to preserve nature and human beings. The town councils debate many important technological decisions to be taken, and as

everyone's future is involved, scientists – who usually constitute a special 'caste' – are not left to their own devices.

Thus, Piercy also compares Connie's time/world with Luciente's time/world to suggest how science and technology have been manipulated by the states and the capital, which have manipulated – or influenced – many ethically immature and irresponsible scientists. Luciente explains how physics, for example, contributed to the building of deadlier weapons such as the atomic bomb but remarks that their utopian community has come to realize that the biological sciences are what really count for the future: "Control of genetics. Technology of brain control. Birth-to-death surveillance. Chemical control through psychoactive drugs and neurotransmitters" (WET 223). Unheeded, researches in such fields may indeed lead to an upsurge in dangerous experiments that are likely to put many people at risk, including Connie. The device that the doctors implant in her skull by the phallic act of 'raping' the integrity of her mind – a "thermostat" to control her emotions (WET 282) – conditions her to obey and to be submissive, and it is only through her interaction with Luciente's free utopia that she can get rid of its powers. Similarly, the dystopia in New York's future offers frightening examples of brain control and psychoactive drugs, which becomes explicit when the "beauty-oped" and genetically analyzed prostitute offers Connie "risers, soothers, sleepers, wakers, euphors, passion pills" (WET 292) and talks about her SD's (a kind of solider) "SC," Sharpened Control, which can turn on or off "fear and pain and fatigue and sleep," or control the spinal cord (WET 297).

The biological sciences, among all sciences, are given special prominence in Luciente's world because, dealing with the genes that make up human beings, they possess the power to shape the future. Whereas Shevek in *The Dispossessed* is the physicist dealing with time, Luciente here is the plant geneticist dealing with life. The different preferences of the authors reflect their different concerns, Le Guin's being rather philosophical and in tune with her 'metatopian' concerns, and Piercy's being about the ways to conceive a better future. Thus, genetics, which is likely to remain one of the crucial debates of the twenty-first century, also receives special treatment in the book. Genetics and eugenics, when

employed the way Gilman does in *Herland*, serve to reinforce the concept of race and the differences between races; between black and white, white and yellow, etc. — and also between men and women as analogous of races. However, in Mattapoisett, genetics is utilized for a different purpose, namely to overcome racial differentiation, while cultural differences are still maintained for 'diversity:'

> At the same time, we decided to hold on to separate cultural identities. But we broke the bond between genes and culture, broke it forever. We want there to be no chance of racism again. But we don't want the melting pot where everybody ends up with thin gruel. We want diversity, for strangeness and richness. (WET 104)

As a second-class citizen of the United States, Connie the 'Chicana' knows what the melting pot and racism are really about. Yet the way she is conditioned impedes her comprehension of such an extraordinary approach. Thus, Connie, who longs to be an 'Anglo,' thinks that this transformation of genetic make-up and therefore of cultural perceptions is just "invented," and these children, "black Irishmen and black Jews and black Italians and black Chinese" (*Ibid.*), are "little puppies" without "the stigmata of race" (WET 106).

Eugenics as a 'science' directly related to genetics accentuates the role that science and scientists are to play in the future. Although Luciente and many of his/her friends advocate the intermixing of genes – "The Mixers" – and the use of genetic intervention only to prevent birth defects and diseases, there is also another group of people in Mattapoisett, called "The Shapers," who want to "intervene genetically" so as to apply eugenics (WET 226). When Connie travels to the dystopian future of New York because of the medications she is given, she observes a world controlled by the enemies of Luciente's utopia. The people of this dystopia are programmed before birth to carry out some certain social roles. This world seems to be the culmination of genetic intervention where, for example, women are either "moms," who are "cored to make babies all the time" (WET 290), or "contracties," prostitutes with perfect breasts and buttocks, constantly having "beauty-ops" to keep in good shape – and yet both classes are 'designed' to serve as "cunts" (WET 299). In a true dystopian manner, the inhabitants of this world have a name and serial

number to identify them. Men are also genetically engineered to be classed into "SDs," "assassins," who have a "basic killer drive" instead of a "sex drive" (WET 298), and some other sorts, all working for the "multis," who can afford to change their genes and to buy new organs. In short, in this future dystopia, science seems to have evolved to serve only those who have the great amount of money necessary to live up to two hundred years.

To summarize this debate about science, technology and responsibilities, it may be stated that in Mattapoisett, science is not isolated from the daily life of its members as a specialized field closed to the layman. If, for example, geneticists ever become totally free from checks and restraints, and if they ever come under the state's or the big capital's control, they, just like many physicists who had to serve the states' interests during the world wars, may be coerced to develop a pseudo-science of eugenics, or another form of an ecological catastrophe, which would also lead to the ruin of humanity as a consequence.

All these questions related to ecology and technology, of course, reflect the sociopolitical reforms of the 1960s. Having analyzed the city as the locale in which such forces collide, and having realized the detrimental effects of the city upon the individual, Piercy favors communities on a smaller scale, which can meet the demands of its members in an ecological environment. Cities also represent huge centers of consumption, of petrol, of plastic, of skyscrapers; centers which exploit all the resources of the countryside. This project of rejuvenating nature is directly related to the utopian plan of Luciente's world. 'Mother Nature' has to be saved alongside with all children, women and men; that is from the hands of patriarchy and capitalism, whose methods of domination are in many ways similar, a point also clearly put in the novel.

At this point, the novel's narration gets closer to the Marxian utopias of the nineteenth century but also reflects the common discourse of Marxist-feminist analysis of power and exploitation as well as touching upon some inculcated categories of thinking in Western philosophy:

> "I guess the original division of labor, that first dichotomy, as enabling alter divvies into haves and have-nots, powerful and powerless, enjoyers and workers, rapists and victims. The patriarchal mind/body split turned the body to machine and the rest of the universe into booty on which the will could run rampant, using, discarding, destroying." Luciente nodded. "Yet I can't see male and female as equally to blame, for one had power and the other was property." (WET 211)

Revolving around such an ecology-based utopia, Luciente's world also presents many different aspects concerning everyday life, which are revealed during Luciente's first conversations with Connie, giving the reader a chance to catch a glimpse of this transformed world. During this exchange of information between two worlds, Connie narrates her world, the only one to which she is accustomed and knows, while her words are interpreted by Luciente to unveil an age of "Greed and Waste" (WET 55), in which pollution is not as outrageous as it should be, and ecological thinking is a mere 'fancy.' When, later on, the pollution in the future dystopia of New York is observed by Connie, it becomes clear that one step further from Connie's world is a world without the sun, fresh air, a planet deserted by the rich people to live in space. For the ones living down on Earth, there is no 'outside' to be seen, since the air is thick with pollution; and windows, useless and long forgotten, are therefore replaced with changeable visions on the walls.

The novel's critique of Connie's time is thus tightly interwoven into this eco-feminist outlook, which appears to be one of the dominant aspects of the narrative. This outlook also alludes to a time that is non-existent in the novel; a time that is already left behind in Luciente's utopia, a phase that belongs to the non-narrated period caught between a utopian present and a past world – of Connie's time – that is portrayed as rapidly deteriorating. This is, in fact, the interval between Connie's time and Luciente's utopia, which was brought about by a revolution that took the fallen humanity from the 'mire' into the heights of utopia. This interval, which is usually omitted in utopian narratives, seems to have been conceived as an inconsequential segment of temporal and narrative sequences in literary utopias.

Following Piercy's mention of the ills of Connie's time – which is marred by pollution – the omitted interval that is underlined above is epitomized by "petrochemical foods" (WET 56) – which are still the only foods that many

inhabitants of the dystopia know and eat (WET 296) – and the final march on the Pentagon. The plays performed by the people of Luciente's utopia allude to a moment of fracture with the old world, like in many narratives of revolution, but they also hail the important moments *before* the revolution as contributions to the culmination of their struggle. It may be stated that the passage of time from Connie the oppressed to Luciente the free is encapsulated here in a collage of moments of historical importance, which also situates the history of this utopia within the larger history of feminism (with its allusions to the Seneca Falls Convention, Harriet Tubman, and Sojourner Truth's text, "Ain't I a Woman") as well as emphasizing the anti-militarist aspect of this revolution:

> "[...] But Bee is a chief and at the next feast, person will make the menu and direct — the feast of July nineteenth, date of Seneca Equal Rights Convention, beginning women's movement. Myself, I play Harriet Tubman. I say a great speech —Ain't I a Woman? — that I give just before I lead the slaves to revolt and sack the Pentagon, a large machine producing radiation on the Potomac—a military industrial machine?" (WET 173)

After the 'great revolt,' when the utopia was put into practice, a process of deconstructing the values of the patriarchal world seems to have taken place so as to create new concepts for a new world. Motherhood, as one of the key concepts of both feminism and feminist utopias, was thus reconsidered in relation to what is usually defined as the 'institution' of the family, which, in Mattapoisett, is not based on the marriage contract or anything similar to it. As regards motherhood, the first shock becomes manifest when Connie realizes that the 'men' of Mattapoisett can breastfeed, too. This 'sacred' ritual between the child and the mother seems to be shattered, taking away one of the last 'distinguishing' aspects of women. Luciente and the people of Mattapoisett interpret such a difference between Connie's world and theirs as the disappearing of the last remnants of anatomical differences which 'used to' define sexual roles in society or in the family. The androgynous nature of human beings in this utopian society also suggests an erasure of binary oppositions based upon the biological division of the sexes. As it might be inferred from this explanation, Piercy also hints at the affinity between this particular position about the

sexes and post-structuralist thought (WET 211). The rejection of patriarchal – as well as of heterosexual – categories is also elucidated so as to explain how a new set of notions and norms prevails in Luciente's world:

> "But why?" Parra looked at her as if she were really crazy. "All coupling, all befriending goes on between biological males, biological females, or both. That's not a useful set of categories. We tend to divvy up people by what they're good at and bad at, strengths, and weaknesses, gifts and failings." (WET 214)

Seeing that children are 'developed' outside the mother's womb, in fact inside some machines, Connie finds the vision horrifying and immediately senses something uncanny about the system of 'breeding' children. Such visions of 'child tubes' or the like have become hackneyed images of science fiction and many writers owe the idea to Huxley's infamous dystopia, *Brave New World*. At first sight, such a vision simply shocks Connie, who thinks that in a world that is completely dominated by men, the only thing that has belonged ultimately to women has been lost, too.

The utopian vision about motherhood (childbearing and childrearing) in Piercy's book seems to echo many of the ideas put forth in Shulamith Firestone's radical book, *The Dialectic of Sex* (1970), which was published six years before Piercy's. Firestone's book amalgamates her revolutionary feminist ideas with her strong belief in the "utopian vision of the liberating potential of technology" (Levitas, 1990: 141). She acknowledges the fear propagated by such unusual visions but also underscores the important point that the dystopian interpretations of such novelties are actually the result of a conditioning promulgated by patriarchal modes of thinking:

> We are all familiar with the details of Brave New World: cold collectives, with individualism abolished, sex reduced to a mechanical act, children become robots, Big Brother intruding into every aspect of private life, rows of babies fed by impersonal machines, eugenics manipulated by the state [..] The family (which, despite its oppressiveness, is now the last refuge from the encroaching power of the state, a shelter that provides the little emotional warmth, privacy, and individual comfort now available) would be destroyed, letting this horror penetrate indoors.

> Paradoxically, one reason The 1984 Nightmare occurs so frequently is that it grows directly out of, signifying an exaggeration of, the evils of our present male-supremacist culture [...] The Nightmare is directly the product of the attempt to imagine a society in which women have become like men, crippled in the identical way [...] However, we are suggesting the opposite: Rather than concentrating the female principle into a "private" retreat, into which men periodically duck for relief, we want to rediffuse it — for the first time creating society from the bottom up. (Firestone, 1995: 250-251)

In Piercy's book, when Connie reflects on her repugnance for the altered concepts of motherhood and childbearing in Mattapoisett, she in fact perceives them through her own lenses instead of Lucienete's, thus believing everything to be a product of a "male-supremacist culture," of which she too is a part, despite being a woman. When, at first, she feels that she hates the people of Mattapoisett, it is because she cannot conceive a woman (a man, too, in this particular case) claiming that s/he is the 'mother' of a child without bearing it. Such babies, too, are only "bottleborn monsters" of a ghastly future (WET 106). To say the least, Connie's orientation about motherhood is more biological than cultural – what Bartkowski defines as "motherliness" (Bartkowski, 1989: 72) – even though her sentimentality about this issue is also, according to Firestone, what has chained women to the ground. Thus, it is not until the very later chapters of the book when she comprehends the intricate structure of patriarchy that Connie is able to overcome her prejudices about Mattapoisett and to relinquish her ideas about biological motherhood and the nuclear family – which, of course, suggests the superiority of these utopian values over those of Connie's world and time. Connie, the representative of the second-class citizen, feels the necessity to hold on to some notions and concepts like motherhood, childbearing and heterosexual love in her world of loss and defeat. Thus, what Mattapoisett offers as freedom, in the beginning, is offensive to her.

First of all, Luciente's androgyny triggers Connie's prejudices about sexuality as her/his appearance contradicts everything she knows about dominant sexuality traits. S/he seems to be a 'woman' with breasts but also has strong muscles, and yet s/he behaves with "unselfconscious authority" like a man; so, Connie thinks, she must be a "dyke," like those chicana lesbians in Chicago. When Connie shouts,

exclaiming that Luciente is a “woman,” Luciente’s answer only adds to her confusion: “Of course, I’m *female*” [italics mine] (WET 67). Her surprise and anger remain with her for a long time while she thinks over and over again of her own experiences as a mother and judges what she sees according to *her* biological definition of a woman. Luciente’s sex remains a mystery for Connie until she comes to accept him/her as s/he is:

> Anyhow, Luciente now looked like a woman. Luciente’s face and voice and body now seemed female *if not at all feminine*; too confident, too unselfconscious, too aggressive and sure and graceful in the wrong kind of totally coordinated way to be a woman: yet a woman. [italics mine] (WET 99)

Later on, Connie really tries hard to comprehend what the word ‘family’ means for the people of Mattapoisett, who do not possess the notion of ‘fatherhood’ as she understands it. Thirdly, Connie’s explanation about surnames is completely out of frame in this utopia where no patrilineal ties exist. Yet when she makes love to Bee, one of these ‘men’ from the utopia, she remembers Claud, her lover, and the joy they shared long time ago; and when Connie compares her world of anguish with Luciente’s world, she ultimately thinks that if she had the chance, she would give her daughter – and therefore her future – to the people of Mattapoisett, “people of the rainbow with its end fixed in earth,” among whom she could grow up to “walk in strength like a man” (WET 141).

In close relation to motherhood, the nuclear family, another crucial topic of debate, receives the same amount of attention in *Woman on the Edge of Time*. Following Firestone’s lead, Piercy and many radical feminists (including many Marxist feminists) of the era attacked the nuclear family, seeing it as an extension of the capitalist system, the perpetuating force behind all the inequalities between men and women and behind “compulsory heterosexuality” (Gamble, 2001: 100). These inequalities proceeding from the nuclear family as an institution were backed by (patriarchal states’) laws, which culminated in the act of marriage or the marriage contract. Thus, when the family structure of Mattapoisett is explicated, it becomes obvious that it has nothing to do with the nuclear family or ‘matrimony.’ Liberated

from what is depicted as the state's coercive patriarchy, compulsory heterosexuality and reproductive concerns, the family as the sole means of perpetuating the patriarchal control of reproduction – upheld by the state as well – becomes defunct in Mattapoisett. Connie, replacing her former conceptions of the family – which have their roots in her past experiences – with the one she adopts in Mattapoisett, eventually feels like a member of this alien but warm and big family-society.

The dystopian vision in the book, on the other hand, offers a dismal picture of this issue when the 'contract woman' talks about how their contracts are made, which is of course an ironic allusion to the marriages in Connie's world, through which men usually attain the control of women's reproductive capabilities and sexuality. The presence of force in sexuality – and of prostitution in contracts – in this dystopian world also reminds one of Andrea Dworkin's explanation about marriage as an institution "developed from rape as a practice" (Dworkin quoted in Gamble, 2001: 269):

> "All the flacks make contracts. Contract sex. It means you agree to put out for so long for so much. You know? Like I have a two-year contract. Some girls got only a one-nighter or monthly, that's standard [...]"
> "What happens when your contract runs out?"
> Gildina shrugged nervously. "Sometimes they renew." [...]
> "Can you get married?"
> "This is. I mean you know the richies marry old-style. I heared [*sic*] they figure back generations. But this is how it is for us."
> "Suppose you have a baby?"
> "If it's in the contract. I never had a contract that called for a kid. Mostly the moms have them. You know, they're cored to make babies all the time. Ugh, they're so fat!" (WET 289-290)

Piercy's utopian world seems to share many points with Firestone's work, the critique of the family being just one of those. In dealing with such feminist issues of her time, Piercy also echoes some revolutionary ideas of the 1970s when she relates the way children are born in Luciente's utopia. Firestone's ideas concerning the abolition of a biological demarcation "restricted to the genitals" (Firestone, 1995: 247) also constitute a part of Piercy's schemes devised to liberate women of their burden:

> I submit, then, that the first demand for any alternative system must be:
> 1.The freeing of women from the tyranny of their reproductive biology by every means available, and the diffusion of the childbearing and childrearing role to the society as a whole, men as well as women. (*Ibid.*)

From a feminist perspective, the transformation of the conception of motherhood appears to be among the greatest accomplishments of the utopian society in Mattapoisett, since it has paved the way for the liberation of women from their 'God-given' (Eve's punishment from a patriarchal viewpoint) 'biological burden' of bearing children, or from the "fundamental inequality" that "nature produced" (*Ibid.*: 246). What Firestone defined in her book as 'emancipation' from "female trouble" (*Ibid.*) is quick to perplex Connie's mind and heart. She rather sees an appalling scene before her eyes, which is in fact due to her misreading that generates a fear of 'men's appropriation of motherhood,' whereas, in Mattapoisett, there is no notion of fatherhood as Connie understands it:

> Connie gaped, her stomach also turning slowly upside down. All in a sluggish row, babies bobbed. Mother the machine. Like fish in the aquarium at Coney Island.
> Their eyes were closed [...] Sacco-Vanzetti, whose sex she could not tell, stared. "Did you bear alive?"
> "Come on Sacco-Vanzetti, don't be narrow!" Luciente made a face.
> "If you mean have I had a baby, yes." She stuck out her chin. (WET 102-103)

Such inventions and novelties about childbearing explain only one side of the story in Mattapoisett. To understand how such a bio-technical 'advancement' found its counterpart in other aspects of daily life, one must also take into account the new understanding of sexuality in the utopia. In fact, as regards sexuality, Luciente's world does not apply any restrictions at all as long as no one is maimed physically or psychologically, and the experience of sexuality as an independent act – not as a 'substitute for love' or as a replacement for 'something missing' – is also acknowledged. Women and men – as categories defined in terms of 'obvious' biological differences – and gender-based 'characteristics' pertaining to both sexes as well do not exist in Mattapoisett, which is indeed a change that has also made it possible to experience – from Connie's perspective – uninhibited non-

heterosexual/homosexual relationships with more than one person. Another significant fact about the nature of sexual and intimate relationships in Mattapoisett is that jealousy is accepted as an eventual outcome of a multilateral relationship, which seems to be a realistic bit of explanation within the framework of a utopian redefinition. Besides, fertility being no precarious issue related to sexuality, what is usually belittled as 'sterility of homosexuality' is now redefined as 'free sexuality'. It is evident that such liberties shake the foundations of patriarchy in such a way that the nuclear family (or "the biological family" as Firestone defines it [Firestone, 1995: 249]), which forms the basis of the state system and patriarchy-related institutions, becomes obsolete.

As explained and illustrated above, one of the most important aspects of this utopia, which Piercy brings up throughout the novel, is the way the family is structured and conceived. The opening chapters of the book elucidate Connie's background: the terrible childhood she went through at the borders of penury, her efforts to establish a nice family, and her defeat by the forces against which she has constantly fought – the forces over which she can assert no control. Therefore, her conception of a family is a dream-like thing. On the other hand, the family as an ultimately different concept in Mattapoisett is contrasted with her stereotyped ideas about the nuclear family. Free from the sexual and gender roles of Connie's world, the people of Mattapoisett form greater families that are made up of three mothers – the word 'mother' here comprising the 'male' who looks after and breastfeeds the child, too, as there are no 'fathers' (WET 74) – or rather of three "comothers" – since this is how they are defined in the book – who are united to bring up a child, an experience defined as "kidbinding" in the book. Therefore, Mattapoisett does not depend upon an 'all-women' solution to create a non-patriarchal society. Whereas Herland is situated within the confines of a binary opposition, namely the fundamental one between man and woman as the reflection of a biological polarity, Piercy's utopia, adopting a different strategy, transforms the categories of man and woman into 'females' and 'mothers'. According to Dorothy Berkson, such an approach of placing 'motherhood' at the core of culture so as to "maternalize men" – instead of trying to remove it – is "the only way to save patriarchal culture from its

excesses” and to make men “voluntarily give up the selfish and hierarchical values” (Berkson, 1990: 100). Thus, in order to achieve this end, the women of Mattapoisett had to forego the only power they had, namely giving birth to children – a power that is closely related to the male conception of the ‘Original Sin’ – and rearing them:

> “When we were breaking all the old hierarchies. Finally, there was that one thing we had to give up too, the only power we ever had, in return for no more power for anyone. *The original production*: the power to give birth. Cause as long as we were biologically enchained, we’d never be equal. And males never would be humanized to be loving and tender. So we all became mothers. Every child has three. To break the nuclear bonding.” [italics mine] (WET 105)

In Luciente’s utopian world, sexuality is not a matter related to childbirth or the conception of a new type of family only. Freedom of sexual experience in Mattapoisett is so great that even children – reflecting the libertarian vein of Piercy’s time – are free to learn about sexuality without the interference of adults in any way. Such freedom in sexual relations is clearly contrasted with the dystopian vision in the book, in which women are categorized and subjected to the ‘supreme’ authority of the male (gaze) that perceives them as sexually subordinate and defective. The movies that the “contracty” watches on her “Sense-all” are in fact ironic remarks about a patriarchal fantasy, about the ultimate domination of men over women and the affirmation and intensification of class distinctions. Besides, from the themes of some movies that the ‘contracty’ watches it is also possible to infer the presence of a ‘veiled’ mockery of the age of revolts – the era of revolutions that precedes the foundation of Luciente’s utopia. Although the revolutionary fervor of this age is commemorated and venerated by the people of Mattapoisett, the imagination of the dystopian world seems to mock the history of Luciente’s utopia by applying unto it its own version of history, thus distorting it by promulgating narratives that combine violence, brutality, and gore with male fantasies of lesbianism and rape. Sexuality in this dystopia is not something to be enjoyed and relished by both sexes; it is just a display of power, an exhibition of male dominance *and* a manifestation of one’s – and always the male’s – superior social and economic status:

> “Sorrinda 777”: Story of a love never supposed to be, between a low-level medimat swab and a doctor in service to a nuke fission family; her faithfulness, her suffering, her shining love: will she give the ultimate sacrifice of her heart to replace his legal contracty’s coronary dystrophy? FD 15. [...] “When Fems Flung to Be Men”: In Age of Uprisings, two fem libbers meet in battle— kung fu, tai chi, judo, wrestling. Stronger rapes weaker with dildo. SD man zaps in, fights both (close-ups, full gore), double rape, double murder, full Sense-all. HD 15. (WET 293)

In Mattapiosett, where oppression, patriarchy and its institutions are eradicated, where reproduction is guaranteed by extra-womb ‘childbearing,’ and where welfare is preserved by a humanitarian system, it is impossible to conceive the ‘return’ of such dystopian scenes or the ‘resurrection’ of the repressive rule over sexuality, since they do not have the chance to get a foothold anymore. Such a feeling of freedom – which pervades Luciente’s community – also calls to mind some of Firestone’s radical proposals for the establishment of a new society that she tried to describe in her works. Firestone actually defines something very close to Piercy’s ideas when she explicates her notion of “full sexuality,” which elucidates the prevalent understanding of sexuality in Mattapoisett:

> 4. The freedom of all women and children to do whatever they wish to do sexually [...] Full sexuality threatened the continuous reproduction necessary for human survival. And thus, through religion and other cultural institutions, sexuality had to be restricted to reproductive purposes, all nonreproductive sex pleasure considered deviation or worse. The sexual freedom of women would call into question the fatherhood of the child, thus threatening patrimony. Child sexuality had to be repressed because it was a threat to the precarious internal balance of the family. These sexual repressions increased proportionately to the degree of cultural exaggeration of the biological family. (Firestone, 1995: 249)

The freedom that children enjoy in Luciente’s world also seems to be a striking point in many post-1960s utopias, something that may be easily comprehended with reference to the libertarian approach of the era. Liberating the child from restrictions and providing an uninhibited process of learning, of course, lie at the heart of the question of how to reform society as a whole. The same approach may also be observed in Le Guin’s utopia besides many others. In fact, such novel attitudes about rearing children in the 1960s and ‘70s led to the

development of new schools with new methods, which followed the initial example set by the educator Alexander Neill in 1924, the famous 'Summerhill,' a school which adopted an effective child-based education system that was to serve as a model for further attempts. In fact, many feminists and radicals imitated and improved such systems related to education and child rearing, as they thought that this question of pedagogy had to be tackled if anything was really meant to be reformed or restructured.

Education in Mattapoisett, therefore, rests upon Piercy's visions of a better method and understanding of education, which is carried out in nature, where experience is the medium and the means of learning. In Mattapoisett, therefore, children, as individuals of this society, are freed from the presumed oppression of many institutions (and from the dominance of patriarchy), including that of the family, to assume a new identity. Such a radical shift of course eradicates the state system and patriarchy by not reproducing their structures. That is to say, a child in Mattapoisett is not supposed to play the 'child' anymore, as s/he will be brought up according to her/his inclinations, choosing his/her own name and life. After a dangerous initiation rite in forests and in the wilderness, the child returns with a new name to become an equal of the people who were once his/her mothers. This rite takes place when the child is about twelve years old, the age of puberty, whereas, in Connie's society, children are supported by their families well into their adolescence. In Mattapoisett, once the new identity of the child as an adolescent begins to emerge after the initiation rite, the family ties between the child and the 'comothers' are replaced with the ties between the adolescent and the society, since the function of the family is fulfilled, and it must now give way to the workings of this utopian society.

Through her observation of such improvements and freedoms, Connie experiences and feels the yawning gap between her hospital ward and Luciente's utopia. After visiting the dystopia and having nightmares, she comes to understand that she, as an individual, is indeed a part of the war between two alternative futures; one as *bright* as *Luciente*'s world with all its sensibilities, and the other – also disclosed through Connie's mental contact with an unknown mind from a strange

place and time – a nightmarish world of dystopia where everything is totally oppressive and totalitarian. While the narration presents the confusion in Connie's mind during the climax of the conflict in her psyche, Connie finds herself in the midst of an imaginary battle in which Luciente's people fight against some unknown powers of oppression. The most striking point here seems to be a blurring of vision at this peculiar moment; an overlapping of imagined enemies with all figures of oppression in her mind:

> She glanced around and saw all the enemy floaters zeroing in on them as if summoned to this attack. As she started to left and right she saw that they were piloted and manned by Judge Kerrigan, who had taken her daughter, by the social worker Miss Kronenberg, by Mrs. Polcari, by Acker and Miss Moynihan, by all the caseworkers and doctors and landlords and Cops, the psychiatrists and judges and child guidance counselors, the informants and attendants and orderlies, the legal aid lawyers copping pleas, the matrons and EEG technicians, and *all the other flacks of power who had pushed her back and turned her off and locked her up and medicated her and tranquilized her and punished her and condemned her. They were all closing in, guns blazing.* [italics mine] (WET 336)

While having visions about the future that Luciente describes and illuminates for her and for the reader, Connie also encounters this sort of a dystopia in her mind that belongs to an alternative future, one that is totally different from Luciente's, one of America's bleak future if the doctors of Bellevue and Rockover Hospital succeed in shaping, controlling, taming and subduing her mind. In order to do that, they place brain implants and try to control her mental processes. These attempts to domesticate her mind also trigger a dystopian vision that she fears to encounter after the bright utopia of Luciente. This bleak and terrifying world with its artificial facade, Connie knows, is only an outcome of malicious decisions: a dismal world that is ruled by absolute patriarchy – oppressive, owned and controlled by the (male) "multis." Piercy seems to suggest that if you let patriarchy and institutions of the (capitalist) state construct your future for you by controlling your mind, you should be ready to expect the worst.

Thus, when Connie comes to understand that she is not a mad woman in fact but "a prisoner of war," caught in a psychiatric ward (WET 328), she decides to

fight to break free from the mental hospital, not only to save herself, but also to save the utopia. To do that, she moves from the defensive to the offensive, as the war "raged outside her body now, outside her skull" (WET 337). Fearing that Luciente is killed in the clash with their enemies during their last contact – and yet s/he tells her that no such battle took place at all – she decides to attack, symbolically, to avenge his/her imagined death – this death also signifying her weakening link with him/her while her decision to retaliate and to attack gets stronger. Renouncing all her former "fantasies" and "hopes" (WET 338), she resolves to use any weapon she can lay her hands on against her enemies. By her decision, she loses all contact with Luciente, which may mean that his/her mission is complete, and now Connie has to fight in her own world, or that she has really "annealed" her mind and therefore lost all contacts (WET 375).

Before reaching this point of transition, Connie reaches the climactic moment of psychological conflict, for, once she declares war, there is no going back. When she explains her plans to murder the doctors to Luciente during their last encounter, Luciente's reply conveys a significant message: "power *is* violence [...] we all fight when we're back to the wall – or to tear down a wall" (WET 370). Stealing the poison from his brother's house when she is released from the mental hospital for a weekend, she poisons the doctors with her "weapon," justifying her deed by saying that this is war, that these people exercised their power on powerless people, including her friends and her lover, who died in the hands of these doctors and this ruthless system. Her 'war,' therefore, is transformed from a personal one into a "dedication." For once in her life, Connie tears down the walls of passivity that have been built around her in order to break free and to assume an active and also aggressive position as a woman:

> "I murdered them dead. Because *they* are the violence-prone. Theirs is the money and the power, theirs the poisons that slow the mind and dull the heart. Theirs are the powers of life and death. I killed them. Because it is war." (WET 375)

4.4 JOANNA RUSS: *THE FEMALE MAN*

> "And the way into Whileaway is barred neither by time, distance, nor an angel with a flaming sword, but by a cloud of or crowd of gnats. Talking gnats." (FM 104)

The 1960s and '70s witnessed not only the emergence of new cultural and social milieus that spawned utopias – some embedded in social circumstances, some in purely imaginary worlds – but also the rise of different manners and techniques of narration. Although Le Guin's and Piercy's utopias transformed many deep-seated conceptions and ideas concerning the content and principles of utopias, the narrative techniques they applied in their works were quite traditional. That is to say, the traditional Cartesian subject 'inherited' from earlier narratives was kept intact, and the experience of a fractured sense of personality – to which the Western world was subjected during the crisis of the Post-War era – was not reflected in their narrative strategies. Thus, the postmodern experience and the techniques the burgeoning postmodern literature consulted were not employed in their feminist utopias. It may thus be stated that although the subject matter was innovative and the notion of utopia was resituated, the eye that observed the world and the utopia looked through the very same lenses of earlier works.

In this respect, Joanna Russ's *The Female Man* (1975) is an extremely exceptional work among many utopias, including those written during the 1960s and '70s. Russ was a famous figure of the 1970s thanks to her "radical lesbian stance" (Gamble, 2001: 307). She also shared the radical feminist anger of many of her contemporaries, which is easily discerned in the novel. Russ's book integrates her ideas about feminism and lesbianism with her postmodernist narration and science fiction so as to air a loud war cry against patriarchy. With its fragmented narration that comprises different kinds of genres – including dramatic monologues, imagined reviews of *The Female Man* itself and even fairy tales – the novel's postmodern narration – which is based upon idea and character rather than plot – is allotted to four heroines, four different minds from different times and places, representing

different personalities women usually assume in society. Each of these fictional selves with its own realities makes its own statement – in its own distinctive manner – about its confrontation with society and about the encounter between its female consciousness and the male one. On the other hand, the book's fragmented and yet interrelated narratives of four women, all having names beginning with the letter "J", also call to mind the narration of a schizophrenic woman trapped in a patriarchal society, or of a "cluster protagonist" (Bartkowski, 1989: 54). Although the narrations of these four different characters may be interpreted as reflections of a divided self, Massumi's description of a different kind of schizophrenia – defined in his *A User's Guide to Capitalism and Schizophrenia* – may be revealing here, since it also highlights the relationship between postmodern multiplicity and the book's multiple points of view:

> The "schizophrenia" Deleuze and Guattari embrace is not a pathological condition. For them, the clinical schizophrenic's debilitating detachment from the world is a quelled attempt to engage in it in unimagined ways. Schizophrenia as a positive process is inventive connection, expansion rather than withdrawal. *Its twoness is relay to multiplicity*. [italics mine] (Massumi, 1996: 1)

Joanna Russ, in fact, uses the imaginary world of science fiction – of 'what might be in the future' – to reveal the contrast between life as it is experienced by many contemporary women and its alternative that is situated in a radically transformed future. Russ's handling of science fiction, though, is not constructed upon numerous technological contraptions and devices found in many works written by male authors. She inserts the element of science fiction so skillfully into the intricate narration of the book that it actually serves to further her – to borrow a term from Roland Barthes – "writerly text," which asks for the active effort of the reader in the process of recomposing the work (Bartkowski, 1989: 172). Just like many utopia writers who incorporated science fiction into their works in the twentieth century, Russ too adopts the opportunities that it offers so as to illustrate totally different and alternative realities that cannot be conveyed by a portrayal of our ordinary experiences only. She combines the above-mentioned elements of her

narrative with science fiction to criticize the symbolic order in her own radical way. Therefore, Russ, who is recently said to be trying to "defend feminism against the critiques of the so-called 'post-feminists'" (Gamble, 2001: 308), mounts her attacks on patriarchy's handling of language through her narrative that combines the juxtaposed voices of four women with a feminist rendering of science fiction.

The Female Man narrates what happens when these four different women, Jeannine, Janet, Joanna, and Jael, representing four contrasting selves and mentalities as well as four totally different economic and social histories of absolutely different worlds and realities, meet. Yet their meeting in the United States, on Whileaway, and on Jael's world is not an 'ordinary' gathering of different characters from different times and locales: Russ provides us with a contextual theory through which we are supposed to understand the relationship and links among these four women in the book. This theory is also supported by the continual shifts from one character to the other as they form what Russ calls a "twisted braid" (FM 7):

> Every choice begets at least two worlds of possibility, that is, one in which you do and one in which you don't; or very likely many more [...] It's possible, too, there is no such thing as one clear line or strand of probability, and that we live on a sort of twisted braid, blurring one to the other without even knowing it, as long as we keep within the limits of a set of variations that really make no difference to us. Thus the paradox of the time travel ceases to exist, for the Past one visits is never one's own Past but always somebody else's; or rather, one's visit to the Past instantly creates another Present (one in which the visit has already happened) and what you visit is the Past belonging to the Present —an entirely different matter from your Past [...] Thus, it is probable what Whileaway—a name for the Earth ten centuries from now, but not *our* Earth, if you follow me— [...] Whileaway, you may gather, is in the future.
> But not *our* future. (FM 6-7)

Bartkowski, referring to Freud's ideas about femininity, also claims that such an act of depicting twisted braids in narration may be a reference to the invention of weaving by women "from the imagined necessity of covering the so-called "wound" of castration" (Bartkowski, 1989: 51). Here, it is quite obvious that the *text* may also be read as a *texture* woven like "a twisted braid" –as Russ puts it– or like a Möbius strip upon which we walk, "blurring from one to the other without

even knowing it as long as we keep within the limits of a set of variations that really make no difference to us" (FM 7). In terms of narration, Bartkowski also states that such an intricate structure creates an effect that "estranges" the reader from the commonplace narratives that abound in literary utopias. Another explanation may be that such a twisted braid with the appearance of two sides but in fact having only one is the rejection of dichotomies/binary oppositions.

Joanna Russ first introduces Jeannine, a girl living in an economically depressed U.S. (which has not gone through World War II and the revolutions of the 1960s) and expecting to get married but anxious at the same time, as she is not totally convinced that it is the right decision for her. In this alternative version of the United States, conventionalized gender roles receive considerable attention, and therefore, it is not really difficult to understand why her concerns about her feminine appearance and her daydreams about a prince (the husband) to release her (the wife) pervade her thoughts. Entrapped in a world created by her patriarchal society, she longs to break free from her low self-esteem and the indifferent world around her represented in the personality of her boyfriend. She seems to be caught between her conflicting impulses of breaking free and retaining her role as a conventional woman who has to enjoy "being a girl" (read 'being courted, flattered, served', etc.) or a woman who would not "be a man for anything" (FM 86), whereas, in fact, she has no real options to become a man. Jeannine also embraces some of the mystification devised for women such as accepting the idea that women possess some "magic" or "intuition" which helps them to achieve an "understanding of the inside of things," something that men lack (FM 108) – maybe a recompense for the Freudian diagnosis of a psychological and physiological lack. Eventually, these clashes within her self and her desperate need for a man to 'show her to herself' distort her self-perception and lead up to a psychological burden that annoys her. Her ontological concerns are always circumscribed by the problem of marrying a man or seeking an identity outside marriage. When she finally gives in and decides that the most appropriate thing to do for a girl in her situation is to marry, she feels some kind of an ecstatic joy while, in fact, she kills her 'self' and her attempts to 'exist':

> She loves herself, and if I stand like Atropos in the corner, with my arm around the shadow of her dead self, if the other Jeaninne (who is desperately tired and knows there is no freedom for her this side the grave) attempts to touch her as she whirls joyfully past, Jeannine does not see or hear it. At one stroke she has amputated her past. She's going to be fulfilled. She hugs herself and waits. That's all you have to do if you are a real, first-class Sleeping Beauty. She knows (FM 131).

Joanna, one of the other three, is a typical figure of the 1970s, a second-wave feminist and a professor living in a real-like U.S. – unlike Jeannine's – trying to exist in a 'man's world' by behaving just like a man, that is, trying to become the "female man"; she tries to achieve a sense of personal self-esteem, which is almost unattainable for her in a patriarchal society. Therefore, Joanna appears to be a vivid illustration of the woman who desperately tries to make up for her presumed lack of penis – what is defined as the 'penis envy' in Freudian terms – but fails in her attempts. Woman's psychology, from Freud's viewpoint, largely relies on this recognition of 'the lack,' and therefore woman is defined as 'the lack,' *homme manqué* (Rycroft, 1995: 128): "She had "lost" something" (FM 193). Such an idea dismisses the possible counterpart of this experience in men; like the 'Electra complex' in the male corresponding to the 'Oedipus Complex' in the female, Judy Wacjman's psychoanalytic theory asserts that men also experience a different kind of lack, one that is related to the womb, which gives birth to life and to the ultimate metaphor for 'creation' as well. Wacjman thus claims that men "give birth" to science and weapons to compensate for women's "magical power" of giving birth to both men and women (Tsaliki, 2001: 81).

Woman's lack or her guilt of being the "cunt" (FM 193) – a word used in the dystopia of Piercy's book as well – defined by her vagina, it may be stated, contributes to the presence of man (the existence of penis), a point which is summarized in the novel with the Latin expression "*Non Sum*" (FM 59). Simone de Beauvoir defines the penis envy not as a yearning for a penis but for "male power," whereas Freudian psychoanalytic theory defines the desire for a child as a "penis-substitute" (Gamble, 2001: 293). Joanna nevertheless seems to be a more liberated figure when compared to Jeannine, though she still feels circumscribed by men telling her what women may or may not do. Joanna sometimes assumes the voice of

the author herself – which is incorporated into her stream-of-consciousness – to provide a commentary on her own society with its sexual prejudices and norms. Although she presents a better figure than Jeannine, Joanna, just like her, still represents the woman who is about to kill her self metaphorically by accepting to let go of her own female ego 'to become a man' (FM 94).

Janet Evason then enters the narrative – she appears on a Broadway sidewalk from *nowhere* (from a 'utopia' as Bartkowski notes the pun) – as the utopian visitor, a traveler from Whileaway, which is a world that has had no man for the last nine hundred years, that is, after the calamitous plague that killed every single man in their world – yet in the concluding chapters, Janet the warrior from the dystopia of the book claims that this plague incident that all the women of Whileaway talk about is a lie and she herself (and of course the anti-male attitude that she represents) is the 'plague' that created Whileaway (FM 211).

Whileaway is a utopian world which was probably renamed 'while men were away,' or to "while away the time," that is, as a pastime (FM 108). Simone de Beauvoir's 'complaint' that "woman cannot even dream of exterminating the males" (de Beauvoir, 1952: xix) seems to be proven false at least in fiction by separatist utopias like that of Russ's. Bartkowski explains that the world of Whileaway was actually composed before *The Female Man,* in the form of a story entitled "When It Changed" – a story that is rewritten in Chapter VIII of the book. The great plague that decimated the male population is referred to as the "Catastrophe" (FM 12) but the absence of men makes no difference for the new generations of women on Whileaway, as they do not know what the word 'man' is supposed to mean any more. The absence of men may also be read as the culmination of 'female bonding' or 'sisterhood' in symbolic terms. The Whileawayans now possess the knowledge of 'genetic surgery' to actualize "the merging of the ova" (*Ibid.*). Janet Evason explains that she received her surname from one of her mothers' name, Eva – which is probably an allusion to Eve or "Ova," the plural form of the Latin word "ovum" – as there are no fathers to 'bequeath' their surnames. As for the surname "Eva*son,*" Janet clarifies that "Evason is not "son" but "daughter." This is your translation" (FM 18). Needless to say, Russ, in creating such a utopia, follows the (separatist) tradition set

by Gilman and therefore does not create “a genderless world of biological males and females” like the one in Piercy’s work (Bartkowski, 1989: 50).

Coming from a different “probability/continuum” (FM 22), Janet stands for the ideal woman who has grown up without any constraints related to gender, and thus she seems to illustrate the extent to which a woman’s suppressed potentialities may be fulfilled without hindrances. This self-confident woman figure is able to handle any matter, including the ones that are usually defined as pertaining to ‘the sphere of men’; she can fight and defend herself whenever she is in danger; and although one would not expect to hear such things in a utopia, it is also revealed that she has in fact killed four people in her duels.

During the course of their lives, the three women get closer to one another, learning about each other and talking about their experiences. Janet visits Jeannine’s and Joanna’s worlds to analyze men, since they cannot be found on hers. During her stay, Janet learns from Joanna and Jeannine all the particulars of the relationship between the sexes as well as the roles women are expected to play and the things that they dream of in their worlds. She, in return, tries to elucidate some of the interesting aspects of her rather serene society on Whileaway.

Before the issues related to utopia are raised in the book, Janet’s first encounters with Joanna’s world offer a juxtaposition of her utopia’s values and those of Joanna’s world, which also serves as a prologue to Janet’s world. During the cocktail scene in the first pages of the book, Russ’s narrative takes the reader from one conversation to another, and in one of these, a man leaning towards Janet asks, “What do you think of the new feminism, eh? [...] Do you think women can compete with men?” (FM 43) although Janet cannot comprehend his question, since she does not belong to a world in which such a comparison makes sense.

The allusion here seems to be related to the patriarchal outlook on the so-called ‘Post-War problems of working women,’ who had relinquished their former roles as housewives and adopted a new awareness of existence: to overcome the “feminine mystique” and “the problem that has no name” – as Betty Friedan named the depression of the ‘desperate housewives’ who were entrapped in the sphere of housewifery in the United States – and to exist as individuals with self-respect,

women of the United States, who moved into the job market, expressed their ambitions to be as successful as men – which, of course, was something like a blasphemy at that time. Although they were employed at some certain jobs and with lower wages usually, due to their 'audacity,' they usually faced the anger and mockery of the patriarchal establishment that only saw the dissolution of the family and some other 'threats' in what was actually a new opportunity for women.

The Post-War experience of the U.S. proved that women could be mobilized as "a great, cheap labor force that you can zip in when you are at war," and yet returning them to their former roles as mothers, who have the 'dignified responsibility' and "the most important job in the world" of giving birth to the next generation, feeding them, cooking for them, in short, sacrificing their futures for them, would be easier unless feminists 'caused so much commotion' (FM 137). At the end of the same paragraph, Joanna, echoing nineteenth-century feminists like Gilman, also highlights a common statement of feminism about women's rights, that of unpaid house labor, a problem which seems to have persisted well into the Post-War era.

Without waiting for an answer to his question, the man at the party attempts to justify his answer to his own question about the new feminism, saying that "the new feminism" is a "very bad mistake." What the Second Wave of feminists defend as women's rights, according to the man's viewpoint, is due to a defect in the assessment of women's capabilities:

> "You can't challenge men in their own fields," he said. "Now nobody can be more in favor of women getting their rights than I am. Do you want to sit down? Let's. As I said, I'm all in favor of it. Adds a decorative touch to the office, eh? Ha ha! Ha ha ha! Unequal pay is a disgrace. But you've got to remember, Janet, that women have certain physical limitations," (here he took off his glasses, wiped them with a little serrated square of blue cotton, and put them back on) "and you have to work within your physical limitations." (FM 43-44)

The humorous tone of the narrative makes itself felt here as the man's tirade about the physical superiority of men is skillfully proven false as Janet is forced to fight and eventually beat him, for he keeps on harassing and molesting her,

considering himself to be superior to her in every conceivable way. The clichéd words in the 'blue book' – a guide to the commonplace codes of behavior – of the man who tries to beat Janet are also contrasted with Joanna's 'pink book' which preaches submission and appeasing behavior to women: "*Man's bad temper is the woman's fault. It is also the woman's responsibility to patch things up afterwards*" (FM 47).

The party scenes in the third part of the novel, including this section about the two books, which ridicule the heterosexual role-playing of gender, allow Russ to illustrate the common conception of feminism that many people hold and the challenge that Janet introduces into Joanna's life. Although feminism comprises many issues other than equal pay and the abovementioned prejudices about women, in these first scenes such issues are left out so as to focus upon some misconceptions and 'worn-out' categorizations to provide a foil for Janet's utopia.

Ultimately, Russ introduces another female figure from a dystopia – which is made up of two separate and warring societies, Manland (all-male) and Womanland (all-female) – Jael Reasoner, an assassin and an employee at the Bureau of Comparative Ethnology (FM 158). The scenes from Jael's world also call to mind the dystopian scenes in Piercy's book, which, like many similar examples in feminist fiction, serve to form a contrast with the utopian vision – though some completely dystopian works related to feminism, such as Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*, have been written, too.

Jael Reasoner, this frightening woman with a significant surname and a horrifying appearance, actually offers another chance to study the three women, two from 'our' world and one from a utopia. The figure that this woman from dystopia makes offers a new framework for the depiction of possible interactions among the women, offering a chance to study various feminist attitudes as well. Her arrival brings the other three together, as Jael, the emblem of her fellow women, heralds a future world of gender wars that none of them wants to conceive. She is indeed a merciless assassin and a defiant warrior fighting against Manland, a woman who really enjoys killing men or using them as sex slaves. Analyzed in a greater context, she is the embodiment of feminist resistance against patriarchal oppression carried to

its most radical extremes in a world of fanatic sexual conflicts. It is, in fact, she who unites the narratives of other women in the final chapters of the book. While she tries to unify the three women and persuade them to aid her in the war against 'Manlanders,' she asserts that they all, in fact, are merely the different manifestations or faces of one (and the same) woman, despite their being brought up under different circumstances and being parts of different histories:

> We ought to think alike and feel alike and act alike, but of course we don't. So plastic is humankind! Do you remember the old story of the Doppleganger? This is the double you recognize instantly, with whom you feel a mysterious kinship [...] even I can hardly believe that I am looking at three other myselves. No layman would entertain for a moment the notion that he beheld four versions of the same woman. (FM 162)

The unification of the four different selves becomes evident only close to the end of the novel. Jael the dreadful warrior is the one to bring these different sets of thoughts represented by three separate women together: "I said goodbye and went off with Laur, I, Janet; I also watched them go, I, Joanna; moreover I went off to show Jael the city, I Jeannine, I Jael, I myself" (FM 212). Just before this 'revelation,' the narrator also 'informs' us – using a somewhat allegorical "Everywoman" – saying that "Jeannine is Everywoman" and "I, though I am a bit quirky, I too am Everywoman" (*Ibid.*).

The utopian of world of 'Whileaway' is not revealed to the reader's inspection as it is usually done in many conventional (feminist) utopias. That is to say, long descriptions of utopian scenes are not frequent, save those mentioned or alluded to by Janet Evason or the narrator, or furnished by the conversations. It must be emphasized, though, that *The Female Man* depends upon multiple perspectives – in a true postmodern fashion – that make up for the lack of such details. As the four women coexist simultaneously, we read about different times in comparison. Janet's Whileaway is a kind of lesbian utopia where only women exist but the absence of 'men' has to be pointed out by the host on the television who interviews Janet: "There have been no men on Whileaway for at least eight centuries – I don't mean no human beings, of course, but no men" (FM 9). Such remarks are also uttered by

Joanna to explicate that woman as a 'species' has been defined as non-(hu)man or as a 'lack' throughout history: "You can't unite women and human any more than you can unite matter and anti-matter" (FM 151). In other words, Joanna cannot affiliate her role as a submissive woman with her "human life, my intellectual life, my solitude, my transcendence, my brains, and my fearful, fearful ambition" (*Ibid.*) – and any attempt to do so has detrimental effects for the severed identities of such women. What Joanna asks for is the acknowledgement that women are human, too. She decides to become a "man" because there is no other way to be accepted as human – as half of the world population represents the entire history. At this point, it becomes obvious that Joanna's attempts to become a "female man" in fact indicate an outlook that is completely different from that of Janet's world – which has repudiated the 'presence' of men – and that appears to be the direct opposite of that of Jael's world, which fights against men.

Janet's first impression of Joanna's world and her reactions in the Pentagon raise some related questions as well: "Where the dickens are all the women?" (FM 8). Besides, the title of the book itself also hints at Russ's interest in the amalgamation of genders and in the way gender is socially constructed. Her observations attest to the fact that the ossified gender categories are retained in Joanna's world, and that woman is generally regarded as the sole object and focus of (male) sexuality – for example, Joanna realizes the way people stare at her legs in the subway car (FM 83) – whereas man, rather than being defined as related to sexuality, stands for the 'inclusive' human being, 'the first sex.'

Therefore, at first glance, Janet's perception of Joanna's world seems to deconstruct the binary oppositions based upon – as "everything becomes translated instantly into its own inside" on Whileaway (FM 95) – the contradiction between the male and the female by revoking the issue of men's absence or presence, thus making these points irrelevant; but at the same time, it also calls to mind the 'presence of absence' in Joanna's world, a paradoxical state that may be explained as the 'absent female's' search for an identity through the 'present other,' namely the male.

Whileaway, decentralized and free from patriarchy, forms some kind of a contrast not only with Joanna's and Jeannine's worlds but also with Jael Reasoner's dystopian world where women and men are warring all the time. Jael's is a world of violence where women must keep on fighting all the time whereas Janet fights only when there is a threat – and that is when she is forced to defend herself in cases of "temperamental incompatibility," just like she does in her own world (FM 41). Jael the dystopian woman comes to Joanna's and Jeannine's time and world – since she cannot travel to Whileaway – to find Janet the woman-from-utopia to impress and to 'convert' her so that she can take Joanna, Jeannine and Janet to her fierce and deadly world of separate male and female societies. Jael's hope is to persuade Janet into allowing her to use her utopian world as a training camp for their female soldiers. Although Janet, contrary to Jael's expectations, is not impressed with her world of violent wars, Jeannine the passive girl creeps out of her shell to assist Jael in her plans to annihilate men.

The narration of Janet's utopian world is structured around many feministic aphorisms uttered and examples given by Janet. Whileaway, the utopia in which human males have not existed for many centuries and in which an all-female culture reigns, is 'there' only in fragments. For example, it is revealed only by some fragmentary episodes and explanations that the Whileawayan religion and philosophy are wholly female-oriented, a point somewhat explicated later on by further details. In fact, the philosophy that guides Janet's world is said to be based upon the (frequently-evoked) female principle of change – "everything (they know) is eternally in transit," and yet this principle is not related to "Tao" (FM 99-100) – although adequate clarification concerning the origins or the basis of this principle is not provided to justify this principle:

> There is an unpolished, white, marble statue of God on Rabbit Island, all alone in a field of Weeds and snow [...] an outsized figure as awful as Zeus [...] At first She is majestic [...] Her whole figure is a jumble of badly-matching planes, a mass of human contradictions [...] Persons who look at the statue longer than I did have reported that one cannot pin It down at all, that She is a constantly changing contradiction [...] (FM 103)

Likewise, the reader is informed that there are multiple mothers in Whileaway just like in many all-female utopias, and greater families composed of many people – this, too, reflects the communal life style of such utopias – but no further details are provided. Yet, like in many feminist utopias, Whileaway too is always placed before the reader to be juxtaposed with alternative worlds, be it Jeannine's world – although World War II has never occurred in her version of the '70s' America – or another imaginary one. In Whileaway, without men, women go on living in a pastoral world without big cities – and without any serious problems – as they work and quit working to take care of their children. Whileawayan industry depends upon on a strange and complex high-tech device called the "induction helmet," a cybernetic device controlled by brain waves and used to operate any machinery without physical strain, thus making it "possible for one workwoman to have not only the brute force but also the flexibility and control of thousands" (FM 14). Russ here accomplishes in her utopia what Piercy did in a different way, namely to bring together a pastoral society of farms and a post-industrial world of technology so as to depict a world in which the pastoral becomes dominant. This aspect of feminist utopias especially abound after the 1960s, probably as an outcome of the ecological concerns and the supposed link between feminist issues and ecological analysis:

> Whileaway doesn't have true cities. And of course, the tail of a culture is several centuries behind the head. Whileaway is so pastoral that at times one wonders whether the ultimate sophistication may not take us all back to a kind of pre-Paleolithic dawn age, a garden without any artifacts except for what we would call miracles [...] Meanwhile, the ecological housekeeping is enormous. (*Ibid.*)

Janet arrives from this strange world of wonders and from a women's universe to find Jeannine. Yet, when Janet appears out of nowhere and tries to comprehend the ways of our world under Jeannine's tutelage, she encounters great difficulties in understanding how she should act in public and why; or how she should dress. A part of considerable length is devoted to such adventures of Janet as well as the quotidian experiences and personal observations and thoughts of Joanna

and Jeannine. The incident that exemplifies Russ's humor best is probably the one in which Janet is supposed to understand why she should be dating a man instead of a woman, and such scenes are frequent in the first chapters of the book, like the one in which she is asked how sex can exist at all if there are no men on their world – and Janet explains how it does without any embarrassment at all, her society's taboos being completely different – waste and ignorance, just to name two. While having children is usually considered to be a great burden on *our* Earth, as far as Janet explains, on Whileaway it is rather a "vacation" of five years that starts when women are thirty.

In relation to motherhood in a society entirely composed of women, the family once more seems to be an interrelated issue. As Whileaway is free from the demographic conditionings of outer circumstances and birth thanks to their knowledge of genetics, they are able to devise a different system of familial organization. Russ, just like many utopia writers, follows the tradition of conceiving a different and non-nuclear family with one biological mother, "the body-mother," and "the other mother" who contributes the other ovum (FM 49). Moreover, the family is of course not made up of these members only as Janet Evason mentions a family with nineteen members. The farms, as ecological units of Whileaway, serve as the only family units, thus uniting the principles of ecology with a new rendering of the family. Besides, belonging to a family enables them to enter some associations and the parliaments, which, otherwise, are not accessible (FM 51). At twenty-two, girls either "marry into pre-existing families" or "form their own," thus choosing their "geographical home" (FM 52). Russ also disperses the nuclear family, which is nearly always perceived as a component or an extension of the patriarchal state apparatus, to make up families composed of twenty to thirty members from different ages. These families, which accept polygamy as the norm like in some other utopias, in fact form a "world-wide" web of kinship (FM 81). Polygamy, according to their viewpoint, also offers a solution to some psychological discontents caused by monogamy because it prevents the formation of ties "that will engage every level of emotion, all the person, all the time" and thus "artificial dissatisfactions," too (FM 53).

Another issue that Russ mentions – one that is raised in Piercy's book as well – is education of children. After taking care of their children's – girls' – "finer spiritual needs" for four or five years, and after bringing them up as independent persons, the mothers send their girls to regional schools. This separation marks the beginning of real character formation, both with its reference to loss of maternal security and with its "eternal optimism" behind this "dissatisfaction" (FM 52). As Whileaway's culture depends upon one sex only, the common theories of psychoanalysis are not likely to apply in this particular case. The girls of Whileaway probably experience something quite different from the experience in a heterosexual community, for in this case the father is absent. Thus, the absence of heterosexuality shakes all given norms. A Whileawayan girl, though through a very difficult process still, can nevertheless conceive of herself as a totally separate individual. No father figure and thus no male libido exists either to be adopted or to be challenged. As it is underlined in the book, the "Whileawayan character" is also explained with the relationship between the mother and the child, which may also be observed in the way the children are educated:

> Whileawayan psychology locates the basis of Whileawayan character in the early indulgence, pleasure, and flowering which is drastically curtailed by the separation from the mothers. This (it says) gives Whileawayan life its characteristic independence, its dissatisfaction, its suspicion, and its tendency toward a rather irritable solipsism. (*Ibid.*)

Here, it must be underlined that the system of schooling on Whileaway seems to be a little bit more concealed when compared to many feminist utopias, the common tendency being a rather free system. Russ, to say the least, does not draw such an overtly libertarian portrayal of education, even though she too notes that the girls are finally "turned loose" when they reach puberty (FM 50). Yet, the fact that the girls are not impelled to channel their libidinal energies to a male figure frees them, Russ seems to suggest, from the patriarchal modes of conditioning also dominant in education. Moreover, it should also be marked that Russ handles the issues of child bearing, family, education as three components of a greater issue to be

analyzed and modeled together just like it is in Marge Piercy's utopia as well as in many others.

The feminist utopia that Russ provides, although it is essentially separatist and as Whileawayan women have no living memory or history related to men, is not based upon sheer men-abhorring or despising separatism. It must be emphasized, though, that Janet thinks that men are, in fact, just another group of 'species' to be examined and treated in 'the appropriate manner' if they are as arrogant as the ones she meets in Jeannine's world – that includes beating them when they get nasty with her. She does not in any way feel any kind of dependence upon men, neither in psychological or physical matters nor in economic matters whereas Jeannine's world seems to be full of such feelings of reliance on men although she now and then feels like rebelling against such limitations. When Janet is molested by a macho man from Joanna's world, she does not hesitate to react, and as she knows how the use her strength in such cases from her experiences in her own world, she is able to counter the aggression of the man.

Sexuality in the book is pictured as something related to lesbian love rather than a heterosexual relationship. Lesbians, when analyzed according to the dictates of genderification or the heterosexual norms, cannot be 'classified' as women because the term 'woman' has always been defined in opposition to man. The heterosexual experience Joanna goes through only reinforces her observations about men's obsession with female sexuality: "After we had finished making love, he turned to the wall and said, 'Woman, you're lovely. You're sensuous. You should wear long hair and lots of eye make-up and tight clothing.'" (FM 150). In fact, Joanna's and Jeannine's heterosexual worlds offer an antithesis of Janet's homosexual world. In Janet's Whileaway, sexual relations exist both inside and outside the family. The only taboo concerning sexuality that the Whileawayans retain is on sexual relations with "anybody considerably older or younger than oneself" (FM 53). The television host's insistence that "one sex is half a species" (FM 10) actually underlines the fact that the absence of men can only mean the abolition of sex and eroticism, at least for the men like the host himself. When Janet tries to explain what kind of sexuality – lesbian – exists on Whileaway, the 'moral concerns'

of the TV channel interrupt her explanation. The lesbian sex scene in the book between Janet and a teenage girl whose family thinks that being a writer is not becoming for her exposes Janet's ideas about sexuality and its function. The family that Janet stays with for some time to learn about the family on Earth also provides her with new clues about Joanne's civilization. Observing the young girl of the house, Laur, who reads Engels on the family and Freud – whose theory suggests that she is a "victim of penis envy" (FM 65) – and who wears man's leather jackets or "too-big" man's shirts, Janet tries to understand the mindset of this girl from a different world who rejects the roles set for young girls and women. Her patriarchal society has tried to teach her "Finding The Man. Keeping The Man. Not Scaring The Man [...], soothing The Man, flattering The Man [...], losing yourself in The Man" (FM 66). She has adhered to the principle of "Non Sum," which Laura repeats over and over again like her philosophical axiom: "Says over and over to herself Non Sum, Non Sum, which means either *I don't exist* or *I'm not that*, according to how you feel it." (FM 59). The first explanation, needless to say, refers to a patriarchal conditioning whereas the second explanation is related to her lesbian inclinations and therefore means that she does not fit into the categories of heterosexuality.

In short, she is allowed to possess feelings but not an ego, whereas she wants to be a mathematician or a female "Genghis Khan" (FM 67). Her search for identity *beyond* feminine beauty is a cry for recognition. It seems that when Laur could not find in men what she longed for, she got 'stuck' somewhere between lesbianism and a fear of being labelled as "abnormal" – until Janet made love to her:

> I've never slept with a girl. I couldn't. I wouldn't want to. That's abnormal and I'm not, although you can't be normal unless you do what you want and you can't be normal unless you love men. To do what I wanted would be normal, unless what I wanted was abnormal, in which case it would be abnormal to please myself and normal to do what I didn't want to do, which isn't normal. (FM 68)

Jeannine the conventional woman is likewise simply shocked in another scene when Janet and Laur touch each other (FM 143). When Jeannine finds Janet's dildo, though she is not able to understand what it is, Joanna tells her that it is

"infinitely" dangerous as it is also something that indicates a deviation from the heterosexual relationship:

> "What it does to your body," said I, choosing my words with extreme care, "is nothing compared to what it does to your mind, Jeannine. It will ruin your mind. It will explode in your brains and drive you crazy. You will never be the same again. You will be lost to respectability and decency and decorum and dependency and all sorts of other nice, normal things beginning with a D. It will kill you, Jeannine. You will be dead, dead, dead. "Put it back." (FM 148)

This lesbian relationship is also presented to be compared and contrasted later on with the servile sex relationship between Jael and her male slave. The dystopian worlds of Manland and Womanland depict a world of absolute isolation of sexes so much so that sexuality in both worlds is strictly embedded in an atmosphere of dominance and artificiality created by the male or the female. The Manlanders possess a higher level of technology than the Womanlanders, but as they lack the means to have children (women?), unlike the Womanlanders, they either buy babies '(re)produced' in Womanland – all of them boys – or, for the very few who can afford it, they order infants "made from their very own semen" 'imported' from Womanland (FM 167). It must be emphasized that although Manland seems to be peopled only by men, there are also some different 'categories' such as "the changed" – men who are transformed into women by surgery – and "the half-changed" – "who keep their genitalia but who grow slim, grow languid, grow emotional and feminine" (*Ibid.*) – all devised to plan a genderification of the Manlanders, "who demand sexual difference as long as it is the result of artifice" (Bartkowski, 1989: 57). The Manlanders fight against 'real' women as enemies, since they cannot conceive any possibility of having a sexual relationship with them – Bartkowski calls this a "taboo" (*Ibid.*) – whereas their own manufactured products, the feminized men, satisfy their desires and longings:

> Five out of seven Manlanders make it; these are the "real-men." The others are "the changed" or "the half-changed." All real-men like the changed; some real-men like the half-changed; none of the real-men like real-men, for that would be abnormal. Nobody asks the changed or the half-changed what *they* like. (FM 167)

As these “fully-changed” men, who live in “harims and whore-homes,” are labeled “cunts” (FM 167-168); real women, long forgotten in the realm of men, have become mere enemies. Russ also directs her attacks on the so-called homosexual constructs and ideologies that control the gender relations of Manland as well. Explaining that all the real-men have a sexual desire for the changed men and some real-men for the half-changed, Jael utters an ironic remark about the Manlanders that “none of the real-men like real-men, for that would be abnormal” (FM 167). Before moving on to Jael’s and her enemies’ world, an example worded by Joanna’s cynical remark would help to illustrate how women live as ‘slaves’ of men in the dominant heterosexual culture: “(Selah, selah, there is only one True Prophet and it’s You, don’t kill me, massa, I’se jes’ ig’nerant)” (FM 152). This how the slave imitates the master (to use Hegel’s terms once more), how s/he comes to ‘mimic’ him – like the colonized does in the presence of the colonizer.

Russ’s criticism of heterosexuality as spelled out by Jael later on is without any doubt related to her lesbian feminism. After reflecting the sexuality in Joanna’s world, Russ goes on to examine sexuality’s relation to gender in two warring worlds of Jael’s time: Manland and Womanland. Referring to the relationship between the “real-men” and the “fully-changed” of Manland, Jael states that that kind of a relationship is in fact a master-slave relationship (again Hegel’s terms), therefore not genuine homosexuality, and asks a crucial question about the sexual classifications of Manland: “How can you love anyone who is a castrated You? Real homosexuality would blow Manland to pieces” (FM 180). As Susan Ayres states in her study of the “straight mind” [read absolute heterosexuality] in Russ’s novel with reference to Monique Wittig – who claims that she is a “lesbian” and not a “woman” (Creet, 2003: 492) – and her ideas about the subject, such a simplistic reversal of roles can yield no genuine emancipation for women but a mere retaliation that only reinforces the already existent gender structures:

> Thus, unlike Whileaway, Jael’s world reinscribes the straight mind and in Wittig’s terms, it is an unsuccessful revolution against heterosexual institutions because it merely “substitute[s] women for men (the Other for the One)”(*SM* [*The Straight Mind and Other Essays*] 54-55). (Ayres, March 1995)

By this suggestion, to explicate Ayres' remarks, it may be stated that Russ seems to imply that if 'man' as a category or a 'class' vanished in a 'genuine' homosexual setting, 'woman' as a category would vanish as well. This would eventually entail the abolition of heterosexual systems of gender because without the presumed difference of the sexes, there would be no means to retain the 'sexist oppression' on women.

Such optimistic conceptions of alteration are countered simply by the facts of Manland. When the four "J"s go to Manland to attend a business Jael has to take care of, they meet their first "half-changed," who is Jael's business contact Anna. Jeannine feels some kind of a strange intimacy with Anna, which makes Jael call them "[s]isters in misfortune," as they, from Jael's perspective, share a femininity grounded on weakness and submission as "a *modus vivendi*" (FM 172). The way Anna is described once more clarifies the way gender and sexual roles are defined in Manland:

> a half-changed in a pink chiffon gown, with gloves up to his shoulder, a monument of irrelevancy on high heels, a pretty girl with too much of the right curves and a bobbing, springing, pink feather boa [...] Like Garbo playing Anna Karenina, decorated all over [...] His green eyes shrewdly narrowed. This one has intelligence. Or is it only the weight of his false lashes? (FM 171)

After Jael's observation that "[t]here must be a secret feminine underground that teaches them how to behave [...] , somehow they still learn the classic shiver, the sloe blink [...]" (FM 171-172), Anna's ideas about these alien women should be added, too. This "half-changed," who in some way that Jael cannot understand behaves according to the rules of 'femininity,' thinks that Jael (inside her "asbestos-like fireman's suit") and the others as well must be "real men" for "what else can I be if I'm not a changed" or a half-changed (FM 173). Another figure that contributes to the demonstration of the inflexibility of sexual classification in Manland is Boss-man's 'wife,' Natalie, a 'changed,' "clicked in with a tray of drinks – scarlet skin-tights, no underwear, transparent high-heeled sandals like Cinderella's – she gave us a homey, cute smile (she wears no make-up and is covered with

freckles) and stilted out" (*Ibid.*). Such figures of feminized men who dress like women present examples of Russ's parodying of fixed gender identities under heterosexuality.

Likewise, when Jael "impersonates" a Manlander diplomat in "a primitive patriarchy on an alternate Earth" (FM 188), she appears disguised as a "Prince of Faery" in this foreign world. Jael's role, in addition to a parody of female gender roles, illustrates another example of male gender roles. Russ seems to conjoin humor with critique in her fiction about gender roles. To summarize this aspect of her critique, it should suffice to relate that the Womanlanders know that no 'real woman' can exist in Manland as the Manlanders "*have been separated from real women so long that they don't know what to make of us* [women]*; I doubt if even the sex surgeons know what a real woman looks like. The specifications we send them every year grow wilder and wilder and there isn't a murmur of protest*" (FM 169).

The case for Manland being thus, one should also study sexuality and power in Womanland, that is, in Jael's world. Womanland, as a dystopia, represents an alternative outcome of the attempt to exterminate heterosexual institutions. Jael's world, unlike Janet's, not only portends the dangers of extremist precepts for a sexual revolution but offers a parody of heterosexual institutions as well. The male sex slave of Jael, the cyborg-lover Davy, the "most beautiful man in the world" – a retaliation for the reification of female beauty – and a "mesomorphic monster-pet" for Jael, (FM 197) generated artificially from chimpanzee germ-plasm and lobotomized, is a perfect counterpart of "fully-changed" men 'produced' by different means. Davy is depicted as a half human, half animal creature that serves Jael like a machine. His 'work' is to please her, just like the altered men of Manland trying to please the "real-men." Davy acts as the perfect housewife – and the perfect housemaid – a submissive and meek slave playing at home like a dog and awaiting Jael's orders. Davy, therefore, seems to represent a travesty of what feminism criticizes as a woman's burden. So everything about Davy's 'work,' including his sexual services, represents Jael's controlled leisure and her 'having him' as her own: "I'd had him. He was mine" (FM 198). After a "didactic nightmare" (FM 196) about rape and women, Jael has sex with Davy, a scene in which she makes him "come by slipping a

finger up his anus" (FM 197), probably making up for the lack of a penis. Such scenes also suggest a feminine repossession of a masculine power, which embodies the experience of acquiring a penis and the so-called masculine tactics of dominion over the 'other'. Yet Janet, when she observes this (heterosexual?) sexual relation between Jael and Davy, cannot help but exclaim, "Good Lord! Is *that* all?" (FM 198), a significant expression which might be hinting at Russ's perception of the act of heterosexual intercourse between the (implied) male and the (implied) female. Janet's words, therefore, also seem to insinuate a lesbian's perspective of a heterosexual affair, maybe emphasizing its lack of intensity.

Russ depicts these two women – Janet and Jael – and refers to their strange worlds of utopia and dystopia to examine some important notions of the '70s feminism as well, such as gender and sexuality as revealed by Joanne's and Jeannine's thoughts and concerns. One of the related issues is labor (and work power), which makes its presence felt in many utopias. As there is a constant demand of labor to keep the utopia alive and a contrasting force of liberties with weaker bonds of government – Whileaway lacks a "government in the sense that you mean" (FM 91) although its unseen power makes itself manifest when it classifies and directs the work power – just like in many utopias, Whileaway cannot be the Land of Cockaigne, and hard work is what awaits girls when they are seventeen. Thanks to some important technological developments like the induction helmet, the women of Whileaway work three hours a day and sixteen hours each week. Yet there is an incessant emphasis on women working and working all the time, which seems to be related to what Beechy defines as "reproduction of the labor force" (Bartkowski, 1989: 72). This expression may be interpreted as an overlapping of 'labor as work' and 'labor as giving birth,' as two interrelated concerns. Some women like Janet, "Safety and Peace" officers, also have the responsibility of tracking down the women who are "unable to bear the tediousness" of their work, and, if persuading such people to return to their jobs proves impossible, the solution, though not overtly put, is – "You guessed it" (FM 55) – to kill them. Put differently, these S & P officers like Janet are also the ones who compel women to work in this strange utopia of female productivity. It may also be stated that Russ's feminist utopia, to a certain

extent, though it may be ironic, elevates the necessity to work: There is both an exaltation of work and a compliant about the endlessness of it. The way work is conceptualized on Whileaway may also be explained by a fear of loss of some advantages acquired after women had the opportunity to enter the public sphere and work in jobs that men used to dominate. The disappearance of the bourgeois distinction between work and home for women converges with the loss of many greater dichotomies of the book, just as the one between man and woman, the private and the public. Russ, here, echoes the eulogies for work from nineteenth-century utopias although she resituates work in a feminist context instead.

The only release from this cycle of production is described as the five-year period of child rearing when women look after their children with the identity of someone other than a 'perpetual' worker. After such explanations about work, it must be emphasized, too, that these hard-working inhabitants of utopia nevertheless know how to celebrate life and nature in their "arcadian anarchy" (Bartkowski, 1989: 76) whenever they do not work:

> **What Whileawayans Celebrate**
>
> The full moon
> The Winter solstice...
> The Summer solstice
> The autumnal equinox...
> The flowering of trees...
> Happy copulation
> Unhappy copulation...
> Leaves falling of the trees...
> Birth...
> Divorces...
> Nothing at all...
> Death (FM 102-103)

Throughout the book, the issue of work power assumes greater importance with references to Joanna's time. It also seems to have more points related to the ordinary life of a woman in the 1970s, too. These two alien women also offer a confrontation between their radical visions of feminism and liberal feminism of the 1960s and '70s – two colliding approaches after women's becoming active in the nation's work force. In fact, such an approach of liberal feminism was

emphasizing women's equal rights in matters related to work as an easy and quick remedy for their discontents. Jeannine the librarian's and Joanne the professor's worries, as working women, also reflect some of the problems of middle-class American women – who once hoped to be protected by the Equal Rights Amendment – problems that are in a way reminiscent of the aftermath of Betty Friedan's solution for the "problem that has no name," namely to work to gain self-esteem, identity and economic independence.

According to Friedan, what she called the "feminine mystique" created something like an uneasiness or anxiety in non-working American women who were told that instead of trying to compete with men, they should rather seek satisfaction in marriage, household appliances, rearing children and sexual passivity. Friedan associates the loss of former active role and liberties of working American women – which, she claims, they possessed until the first decades of the twentieth century – as the cause of this new crisis (Friedan, 2001: 335). As a solution Friedan claims that a decent work would liberate women and alleviate or dispel the 'feminine mystique' (*Ibid.*: 336)

Thus, when many housewives became working women, and when they complained about different problems concerning their jobs and families, and about being torn between home and work, the patriarchal establishment was quick to decry feminism's insistence on a different and defiant role for (working) women, and to name feminism as the cause of this new 'desperation' among working women. In one of the first sections of *The Female Man*, which is composed of brief fragments from a series of conversations at a Manhattan cocktail party full of stereotyped male and female figures, a male figure, passing by the women, utters an abrupt remark which is closely related to the above argument: "You women are lucky you don't have to go out and go to work" (FM 35) – which highlights men's uneasiness about working women and about the words 'work' and 'women' uttered together: it also epitomizes the common viewpoint of patriarchy about women's status in society, which is eventually a restatement of the old 'domestic sphere' for women.

Another scene from the book deals with the very same problem in the form of short dialogues between a man and a woman. The title of this theatrically set

conversation, "The Great Happiness Contest," is once more related to the issue of the "feminine mystique," a woman trying to come to terms with her decision to work and the trouble caused by this. The first conversation portrays a group of women conditioned to compete so as to become the happiest woman ever and they exaggerate their "achievements" without any stop, talking about the things that are supposed to make them happy. The second conversation illustrates the role that a woman is supposed to play as an obeisant and submissive wife:

> HE: Darling, why must you work part-time as a rug salesman?
> SHE: Because I wish to enter the marketplace and prove that in spite of my sex I can take a fruitful part in the life of the community and earn what our culture proposes as the sign and symbol of adult independence--namely money.
> HE: But darling, by the time we deduct the cost of a baby-sitter and nursery school, a higher tax bracket, and your box lunches from your pay, it actually costs us money for you to work.
> So you see, you aren't making money at all. You can't make money. Only I can make money. Stop working.
> SHE: I won't. And I hate you. [...]
> SHE: [...] Why can't you stay home and take care of the baby? Why can't we deduct all those things from your pay? Why should I be glad because I can't earn a living? Why—
> HE (with dignity): [...] I will leave you alone until loneliness, dependence, and a consciousness that I am very much displeased once again turn you into the sweet girl I married. There is no use in arguing with a woman. (FM 117-18)

Such scenes of painful humor, in fact, reflect the problems "caused" by women's leaving her "proper sphere" behind to make a career, a problem for the future of the family. To say the least, from Russ's viewpoint, an attempt to play so many different roles promulgated by bourgeois values in the life-span of one woman with "different set of values" (FM 119) – 'the beautiful woman,' 'the intellectual woman,' 'the skillful woman,' 'the dimwit playgirl,' 'the doting mother,' etc. – and not losing one's femininity is simply absurd – hence the fragmented and divided aspect of the narration, and the four "J"s in the book.

Likewise, Jeannine, whose world is totally clouded by strict gender roles and codes, is impeded from finding a decent work. Besides, as she has no real plans for her future but to marry "someone who can take care of" her (FM 114), she seems to be stuck in a desperate condition of a thwarted personality. Her dilemma between

personal security in marriage and being a working woman confuses her mind and once more echoes the "problem with no name". Jeannine, though she feels she *has to* marry someone, resists marriage as a way to deliverance – until the moment when her chances for marriage also begin to dwindle:

> No matter how nice it is to be courted and taken out, eventually you say "I do" and that's that. It may be a great adventure, but there are fifty or sixty years to fill up afterwards. You can't do that with romance alone, you know. Think Jeannine—fifty or sixty years! [...]
> I'm trying to talk to you sensibly, Jeannine. You say you don't want a profession and you don't want a man—in fact, you just fell in love but you condemn that as silly— so what is that you want? Well?
> *Nothing.* [...]
> *I want something else,* she repeated, *something else.* (FM 122-123)

Jeannine seems to have some kind of an interior monologue here, reflecting the common distress of many women. The jobs that she knows she will never have are principally of 'masculine disposition' – being an airline pilot, a truck driver, or a mathematician. Her job does not promise any hope for her; as for love, at first sight, she seems quite close to it, but in fact, she denies taking it *the way that it is presented to her*. In short, her situation is one of hopelessness and of a bleak future – of no utopias indeed, since she cannot break free of the masculinist perception of her own identity. Later on, when Janet wants to have a sexual affair with her, Jeannine cannot read and understand her gestures, for it is a woman and not a man that sends these signs.

To compare Joanna's success as a professor of English and her professional eminence with Jeannine's situation may suggest a different aspect of Russ's time – no need to mention the possible autobiographical connection between Joanna the character and Joanna the writer. Russ employs the postmodern vision of plural perspectives as well as disparate values, all narrated with a tinge of ironic humor in many scenes so as to ridicule the "feminine mystique" presented in such scenes. Despite her success, this professor still feels torn between some expectations she feels obliged to fulfill to be "feminine" and her strong attachment to her work, and therefore such intellectual success does not liberate her from the constraints of a patriarchal world:

> I live between worlds. Half the time I like doing housework, I care a lot about how I look, I warm up to men and flirt beautifully [...] There's only one thing wrong with me:
> I'm frigid. In my other incarnation I live out such a plethora of conflict that you wouldn't think I'd survive, would you, but I do; I wake up enraged, go to sleep in numbed despair [...] live as if I were the only woman in the world trying to buck it all, work like a pig, strew my whole apartment with notes, articles, manuscripts, books, get frowsty, don't care, become stridently contentious, sometimes laugh and weep within five minutes together out of pure frustration [...] I dream all over the place. I'm very badly dressed.
> But O how I relish my victuals! And O how I fuck! (FM 110)

Joanna here also emerges as the character through which Russ emphasizes the crucial link between work, wages, and a woman's identity. Although Joanna seems to have acquired many important things in life and success, her identity as a female is denied until she transforms herself/is transformed into a “female man.” Such a transformation calls to mind Simone de Beauvoir’s words from *The Second Sex*: “One is not born, but becomes a woman” (de Beauvoir, 1952: 249). To become a man, first of all, Joanna has to be fashioned as a woman through society’s norms and conventions (FM 133). Therefore, her ordeal sometimes echoes that of Jeannine, especially when she too feels something similar to self-contempt:

> It's very upsetting to think that women make up only one-tenth of society, but it's true. For example:
> My doctor is male.
> My lawyer is male.
> My tax-accountant is male.
> The grocery-store owner (on the corner) is male. [...]
> I think most of the people in the world are male.
> Now it's true that waitresses, elementary-school teachers, secretaries, nurses, and nuns are female, but how many nuns do you meet in the course of the usual business day? Right? And secretaries are female only until they get married, at which time, they change or something because you usually don't see them again at all. I think it's a legend that half the population of the world is female; where on earth are they keeping them all? No, if you tot up all those categories of women above, you can see clearly and beyond the shadow of a doubt that there are maybe 1-2 women for every 11 or so men and that hardly justifies making such a big fuss.
> (FM 203-4)

Such a success gives her a strange sense of identity, one that creates a “female man.” Such a reversal of identity relies not only on the masculinist society’s modeling of women but on the mockery of the simplistic belief that women’s

liberation may be achieved through paid work alone as well. Joanna has formed her self-image by looking at the mirrors of a patriarchal and masculinist world. Her anger and imprisonment is 'raw' whereas Jael offers a very combative form of 'cultivated anger,' which is also implied by her name, Jael, who, in the Bible, is the killer of the commander of the Canaanite army by "hammering a nail into his temples" (Knowles, 2000: 531). Unlike Jael, Joanna, as a character in the book, rather reflects the change of a 'female man' into a lesbian woman – she, in other words, represents a different 'probability.' Before any kind of change, Joanna, first of all, has to acknowledge her place within the male/female dichotomy, and she must also accept to see herself as conceived by men and defined by patriarchy:

> I'll tell you how I turned into a man.
> First I had to turn into a woman.
> For a long time, I had been a neuter, not a woman at all but One Of The Boys, because if you walk into a gathering of men, professionally of otherwise, you might as well be wearing a sandwich board that says: LOOK! I HAVE TITS! [...] a smirky insistence on my physique—all this dreary junk just to please me. If you get good at being One Of The Boys it goes away. Of course there is a certain disembodiment involved but the sandwich board goes; I back-slapped and laughed at the blue jokes, especially the hostile kind. [...] I thought that surely when I had acquired my Ph.D. and my professorship and [...] my full-time Housekeeper and my reputation [...] when my I.Q. shot past 200, when I had genius, *then* I could take off my sandwich board. I left my smiles and my happy laughter at home. I'm not a woman; I'm a man. I'm a man with a woman's face. I'm a woman with a man's mind.
> Everybody says so. [...]
> I knew beyond the shadow of a hope that to be a female is to be mirror and honeypot, servant and judge [...] the vagina dentata and the stuffed teddy-bear [...]
> I had a five-year old self who said: *Daddy won't love you.*
> I had a ten-year old self who said: *the boys won't play with you.*
> I had a fifteen-year old self who said: *nobody will marry you.*
> I had a twenty-year old self who said: *you can't be fulfilled without a child* [...] (FM 133-135)

Once more, Russ seems to suggest an allusion to Freud's explanation for the penis envy by a reference to Joanna's success, which she also experiences as her anguish. Here, patriarchy's 'supervising' voice and Freudian theory converge to reveal the distress experienced by women in modern societies. Joanna, in fact, fears that complaining too much about the issues that coerced her to undergo such a transfiguration may result in the surfacing of her suppressed feminine self, which

becomes discernible and dominant in her language. Joanna alludes to or maybe parodies – with a tinge of exaggeration and humor – a distinctively feminine diction which is supposed to belong to the realm of the female, a fluid style and form of writing that is related to the female body as defended and practiced by some feminists like Hélène Cixous:

> You will notice even my diction is becoming feminine, thus revealing my true nature; I am not saying “Damn” any more, or “Blast”; I am putting lots of qualifiers like “rather,” I am writing in these breathless little feminine tags [...] my thoughts seep out shapelessly like menstrual fluid, it is all very female and deep and full of essences, it is very primitive and full of “and’s,” it is called “run-on sentences.” [...] I am a woman with a woman’s brain. I am a woman with a woman’s sickness. I’m a woman with the wraps off, bald as an adder, God help me and you. (FM 137)

By these words, Russ seems to recapitulate the role language plays in many feminist utopias. Here, Joanna experiences a fear of retreating back to her female self, which is, from her “female man” perspective, something like ‘regression.’ Her words are in some way reminiscent of Elaine Showalter’s remarks about “women’s language.” Showalter’s ideas actually rely on a basic presumption supported by many feminists that women either use a special language of their own or have the ability to create one. Such remarks may be supported by works composed after many years of study, such as Robin Lakoff’s *Language and Women’s Place* (1975), in which it is claimed that “women show a preference for linguistic forms that signal tentativeness and lack of authority, such as rising intonation in declarative statements, tag questions, and expressions that mitigate the truth of propositions” (Ehrlich, 2003: 287).

As the female man, Joanna has adopted the male language system and its symbolic order, which becomes much more meaningful if her identity as a professor in an organized institution that is structured upon patriarchal traditions is borne in mind. Here, the influence of the French feminist philosophers – with their concern for language – on Anglo-American feminism becomes clear and manifest. The French tendency seems essentially related to Ferdinand de Saussure’s studies about linguistics and Jacques Lacan’s psychoanalytic studies on language, whereas the

Anglo-American tradition relies heavily upon sociology and philosophy as related to practical concerns – especially in the American case. For some French feminist philosophers, it may be stated that – though with a little exaggeration – the language which women use is their 'father tongue.' From such a perspective, it may asserted that when Joanna becomes the female man, she relinquishes the possibility to write as a woman. Another point worth mentioning here – which is another extreme – is the claim of some feminists who hold that women possess "their own delicately-felt non-lingusitic language" (Gamble, 2001: 260), and thus, the text and the pen(cil/is) – as signs of a masculinist order – should be abandoned to seek new feminist media of expression inspired by the analogy between the womb and creativity.

Even though such extremes exist as solutions for this problem of language, in the beginning, the dominant concern of the Second Wave was to remove the taints of inequality from every field of language usage. Some prominent works like Kate Millet's *Sexual Politics* (*cf.* Millet, 1972: 3-22; 294-335) contributed to a 'literature of exposition' of sexist treatment in literature. The constant emphasis in Russ's book on the words 'man' and 'woman' is just another example of the attention Russ pays to this issue. Like many feminists, Russ too seeks to disclose the hidden patriarchy in seemingly innocent quotidian utterances. Yet the French feminists' researches – just like Russ's – are not confined to this surface layer of language only; they also probe into the presumed masculine ideologies embedded in the core of everyday use of language by both men and women. Such a search for a *women's* language (and culture) necessarily gives birth to the question of essentialism in feminism as it presupposes the existence of a certain means of expression peculiar to 'women,' employed to manifest 'feminine sensibilities.' It also sustains the dichotomy of two languages for two sexes.

Julia Kristeva, following Lacan's studies about language and the self, turns to the pre-symbolic period in human life, to the "semiotic," as a non-patriarchal means of communication as it is observed between the mother and the child (Gamble, 2001: 324). Hélène Cixous may also be cited as one of those feminists who developed a theory of the relationship between the female body and language as a means to bring down the supremacy of patriarchy in women's use of language. Such

approaches that defend the ‘return of the repressed’ from the all-female zone of communication – the zones or elements of culture excluded by patriarchy’s paradigms – as the basis of a woman’s language call to mind a well-known discourse in feminism, one of separatism, which is evident both in Janet’s and Jael’s worlds, though in different ways. Joanna, on the other hand, has to speak in both cultures, the dominant male one and the repressed female one – and therein lies her inner conflict or what she defines as “the perception of all experience through two sets of eyes, two systems of value [...] almost two minds” (FM 138). At first, to become a “female man” seems to be able to “unite contrarieties in your own person” (*Ibid.*) and thus to solve them but it also stands for falling in love with what one ‘lacks’ so as to ‘become’ it, to use its language and discourse.

After such a study of the language employed and of the suffering experienced by Joanna (this ‘female-man self’ is indeed Joanana’s trauma) and Jeannine, Russ examines how such problematic issues are resituated in the violent form of Jael’s world and personality; instead of Jeannine the passive’s words, it is through Joanna’s narration of her wrath as a transformed female man that the novel moves on to Jael’s world. Joanna, in rejecting her female self and naming ‘woman’ as the ‘other,’ assumes all the features of a man (FM 140).

Jael, who thinks that she has murdered men “because she was guilty,” because she was seen as someone who rejected the role of a conventional and submissive woman, does not think that the case is vice versa, that is, she is guilty because she murdered them (FM 195). She finally loses her control and plunges into a long tirade about the significance of her incensed anger. The angry assassin Jael asks Jeannine whether she has ever killed anybody, a question which becomes meaningful when she kills Boss-man (the first half of the name characterizing the second half), who lectures on his ideas about women – accusing the Womanlanders of trying to “make everyone alike” while claiming that they let both men and ‘women’ “lead the domestic life” and the kitchen (FM 179) – without ever listening to her words and taking her for a “walking ear” only (FM 177). Jael experiences no sense of guilt after her killing as she knows that every dying man brings back “a little of my soul” (*Ibid.*). The question why she did not do something else than killing the

man has no relevance for Jael as she rejects the cliché idea that women are "too compassionate for revenge" and says that she did it because she "liked it" (FM 184). Jael, as different from Joanna, knows that her fierce identity will not be acknowledged either by men or by women because she defies ordinary expectations.

In the final chapters of the book, the prevalent interaction of narrative voices gets complicated, and here it is nevertheless possible to discern an interplay of voices between an angry Joanna and a wrathful Jael. The following quotation also echoes Laur's hypnotic words of conditioned self-denial of a 'nice girl':

> *I* am the force that is ripping out your guts; I, I, I, the hatred twisting your arm; I, I, I, the fury who has just put a bullet into your side [...] It is I, whom you will not admit exists. I, I, I. Repeat it like magic. That is not me. I am not that [...] NON SUM, NON SUM, NON SUM! (FM 195).

The way gender reduces woman to the lack and absence through language is also attacked here by a simple pronoun, 'I,' by which Jael reclaims her presence. Jael channels the culmination of such wrath to create the direct opposite of the passive woman, to 'conceive' a combative and militant woman who has adopted men's tactics to fight against them. She is also the paramount figure of a dreadful woman stereotype that persists in men's fiction, a post-modern version of the destructive woman, a "non-neutralized cunt" that is not "hooked on to a man" (FM 194). Jael, the cyborg-like woman with her dreadful appearance, her steel teeth and claws, is also the figure to offer another clue about Russ's conceptualization of work for women in *The Female Man*. Furthermore, Susan Kember, commenting on Donna Haraway's *Simians, Cyborgs and Women: The Reinvention of Nature* (1991), states that Haraway's redefinition of the cyborg calls to mind "a celebration of difference and women's desire to build affinities with human, animal and machinic others," which, it may be added, can lead to a questioning of genderification (Kember, 2003: 124). Gamble, referring to Haraway, also stresses the role the cyborg may play in feminist utopias as "indicative of transgressed boundaries" and offering "an interrogation of the assumption of a unified subjectivity," which may be valid for the female subject-body, too (Gamble, 2001: 212). Although all of these points may be

accepted as possibilities offered by this new bio-technological theory, Jael as a cyborg-like character does not incarnate such experiments that transcend or transgress the sexes but rather suggests a sharpened expression of her sex.

In her dystopia, Jael has her own ideas about these men, who "are not human" (FM 170) – it should be remembered that the word "man" has usually been used as a synonym for 'human': "*Work is power, but they farm out everything to us without the slightest protest*" (*Ibid.*). Such an attitude by Manlanders seems to endow work with a new meaning for the women of Jael's world. Men's laziness also marks the glorification of the development of women's (work) power: "Sometimes I go into one of our cities and have little sprees in the local museums; I look at pictures, I get a hotel room and take long hot baths, I drink lots of lemonade. *But the record of my life is the record of work, slow, steady, responsible work*" [italics mine] (FM 192).

In her last incensed speech to Janet, who rejects to support her war against Manlanders, Jael utters an 'unpleasant' explanation that her war (which seems to be her foremost 'work' as well) is what is actually going to give birth to Whileaway – to the utopia that tries to "efface its own violent origins" (Burwell, 1997: 54). Jael's elucidation changes the way Jael's dystopia is perceived – from a terrible nightmare to a nightmare that promises a utopia although this explanation is not accepted by Janet. The quotation below revealing the discord between Jael and Janet mirrors the conflict between liberal feminism and radical feminism, or separatist feminism (or Women's Liberation movement, which claimed that "'liberation of women' would not be welcomed without a struggle" [Gamble, 2001: 339]) as well:

> Disapprove all you like. Pedant! [...] that plague you talk of is a lie. *I know* [...] It is I who gave you your 'plague,' my dear [...]; I, I, I am the plague, Janet Evason. I and the war I fought built your world for you, I and those like me, we gave you a thousand years of peace and love and the Whileawayan flowers nourish themselves on the bones of the men we have slain. (FM 211)

Janet's utopian world is attacked by the appalling claims of Jael, whose world ultimately presents a distorted parody of Janet's utopia. The last important remark about the convergence of identities, which also reveals Jael's role as a

character, is that although "Everywoman is not Jael," "Jael is Everywoman" (*Ibid.*); or put in another way, E/everywoman may eventually become a figure like Jael in the end, although Janet refuses her utopia's connection with that of Jael's future.

Joanna, who has become a female man, is also made a lesbian by the last pages of the book:

> Does it count if it's your best friend? Does it count if it's her mind you love through her body? Does it count if you love men's bodies but hate men's minds? Does it count if you still love yourself? (FM 209)

Jeannine, the formerly submissive woman, lets go of her many earlier concerns and changes – or evolves – to become someone who is happy and able to reject the role of a docile woman so as to adopt some dictates of feminism although her rebellion is on a modest scale. After spending some time under the influence of Jael, she quits living in her small world of small worries: "Jeannine now gets up late, neglects housework until it annoys her, and plays with her food" (FM 211) and she even wishes that Jael would bring all the soldiers from Womanland.

Although *The Female Man*'s descriptions of utopia offer no ways to actualize a blueprint, and as such an aspiration is long outdated in twentieth-century fiction anyway, 'Whileawayan viewpoint' rather focuses its critique on undermining the dominant heterosexual modes, which also bind women to confining roles. It is in this respect that Russ's utopia assumes a critical role of deconstructing many predetermined social conceptions and comparing these present observations with the potentialities hidden in possibilities, thus stimulating political desire and 'educating hope,' following Bloch's definition of the function of utopian thought. Jael, whom the narrator considers the "best of us all [among the four women]" (FM 212), emerges as a figure that reveals the zenith of a woman's capacity to fight. Although we are inclined not to "believe in" Janet and "deride" her, she nevertheless steps forth as "our savior from utter despair" (FM 213). In fact, Janet comes not only from Whileaway but also from a place called "The Door," where "the labia [to use another word related to female body] of sky and horizon kiss each other," a place/part from

where hope and “all legendary things” are born (*Ibid.*), although this part of the female body has been thought to symbolize the ‘feminine lack/defect.’

The parody-like concluding paragraph of the book eventually epitomizes the tone of Russ’s novel, which excludes a closure like many examples of what Sargisson defines as “transgressive utopias”:

> Go, little book [...] bob a curtsey at the shrines of Friedan, Millet, Greer, Firestone, and all the rest; behave yourself in people’s living rooms, neither look ostentatious on the coffee table nor failing to persuade due to the dullness of your style [...] Live merrily, little daughter-book, even if I can’t and we can’t; recite yourself to all who will listen; stay hopeful and wise [...] Do not get glum when you are no longer understood, little book. Do not curse your fate. Do not reach up from the readers’ laps and punch the readers’ noses.
> Rejoice, little book!
> For on that day, we will be free. (FM 213-214)

CHAPTER 5

THE RAMIFICATION OF FEMINISM
AND
THE NOVELIZATION OF UTOPIA

5.1 AFTER THE EIGHTIES: THE POSTFEMINIST EXPERIENCE AND UTOPIA

The 1960s and ’70s, the zenith of utopian literature after the Enlightenment, mirrored the passionate yearnings of a generation which had experienced the possibilities of a better future, which seemed closer than ever after the gains of the counter-culture revolution. The ‘60s, of course, were the years of a demand for immediate change – as summarized by the rock idol Jim Morrison’s words: “We want the world, and we want it now!” – and therefore these utopias carried the ideals of an ameliorated future to their day, forming a new wave of millenarianism and forging a new perspective. If the Hegelian approach of the dialectic change in history is accepted as valid, it may be stated that the ‘revolution’ of the ‘60s and ‘70s has now been transformed into ‘reforms’ as a kind of synthesis and incorporated into the ‘system.’ The ideals and notions that abounded in the literary and political utopias of the era slowly began to ebb as the world system reinstalled a new social order.

The New Right and its conservative politics, both in Great Britain and in the United States, were quick to react at the beginning of the 1980s. For feminism, earlier signals were given in the new image of the woman created during the Post-war period when there were contradicting remarks about expectations. With the rise of a global economy and competition, woman had to be resituated within the new framework of world economy to play a double role: the perfect housewife and the successful working woman. When this new daring woman image did not satisfy the

exponents of the conservative Backlash movement, who alleged that ‘feminist radicals’ and their excessive demands were indeed responsible for a new unease about which this ‘new woman’ was complaining, they claimed that feminism had to ‘come to its senses’ and indulge in ‘self-criticism.’ The Marxist feminist tendencies, too, witnessed the decline of the Soviet power in the world, and as the philosophers of the new era – such as Fukuyama – preached the death of all ideologies and the abandonment of all grand narratives, some also claimed that the influence of utopian thought on feminism seemed to wane as well.

The ‘Backlash’ of the 1980s emerged under such circumstances as an ideological anti-feminist ‘counter-revolution’ in retaliation of “the achievements of the women’s movement of the 1960s and 1970s” (Alice, 2003: 37) in various domains such as equal opportunities, “a woman’s claim to her own paycheck” as well as “woman’s control over her own fertility” (Faludi, 1991: 54-55). During the late ‘80s and ‘90s there were several feminists who preferred to see the whole thing as the deed of an intricate network of conspiracy, while others blamed the misguided radical feminists of the past decades for leading the movement and women into an impasse, in which feminism paradoxically became the cause of every kind of societal disorder and problem that women have been suffering in recent times. This attitude seems to be a natural extension of a general animosity against women’s rights movements – something that has been manifest since the very first decades of the movement. Susan Faludi, who has contributed many crucial ideas to this theory, points out that the Backlash has been a recurring event in the history of the women’s rights movement (*Ibid*.: 47), and the last one only proves the continuum by highlighting contemporary issues – such as the so-called oxymoron of a happy working wife/mother who is made to believe that she can have it all – instead of former ones. The new backlash movement preached many idealized images for women: the importance of a happy marriage, the art of being an excellent cook and a pleasing wife, the wonder of childbearing.

The Backlash, of course, clearly denotes the sly attempts of the (male) establishment to deprive women of the achievements of the last thirty years; what is more, it contrives to have it brought about by the very hands of women through

persistent ‘consciousness-lowering’ programs aimed to create consent and to secure their compliance and service. Lynne Alice also comments on the ideological connection between the Backlash and a recent phenomenon usually defined as ‘postfeminism.’ Postfeminism, when it was first theorized and defined in the early years of the 1980s, was hailed as some kind of a sham propagated by the patriarchal structures of society, and Susan Faludi emphasized its ideological affinity with the Backlash and specified it as a patriarchal conspiracy. Meanwhile, some feminists like Myra Macdonald argued that Faludi’s arguments eventually led to the negation of “women’s responses as active readers or consumers of popular culture” and of their share in the crime as conformists (Gamble, 2001:193).

Going back to the origins, Lynne Alice notes that back in the 1960s postfeminism “denoted the successful outcome of struggles by women for the right to vote, to hold public office and to occupy many more personal spheres” whereas especially in the 1990s, it has assumed a very different meaning, one that “is hostile and directed towards individual feminists” (Alice, 2003: 38). Gamble, offering an explanation for this term, suggests that it has also been defined as a part of the greater discourse of postmodernism, which aims to “destabilize fixed definitions of gender, and to deconstruct authoritative paradigms and practices” (Gamble, 2001: 298). From this perspective, the problem of feminism seems to be that it constitutes another “hopelessly outdated movement” (*Ibid.*: 44), a grand narrative with a universal claim to include all women. Gamble also adds that Ann Brooks’s criticism in *Postfeminisms*, which holds that Second Wave feminism “bases its claims on an appeal to ‘the liberal humanism of enlightened modernity’” (*Ibid.*: 50) thus relying upon established categories, displays a similar approach towards theory and grand narratives.

Gamble also recounts Sophia Phoca’s explanation for the emergence of postfeminism, which holds that it took place when members of the *po et psyche* group, Julia Kristeva and Hélène Cixous, argued for ‘difference’ and a psychoanalytical approach instead of equality with men (*Ibid.*: 298). Thus, postfeminism, just like postmodernism, appears to be a rather vague umbrella term that seems to comprise many different figures in itself such as Susan Faludi and

Naomi Wolf on the one hand, figures who deal with societal and practical repercussions of the recent changes, *and* some 'philosophizing feminists' like Hélène Cixous and Julia Kristeva on the other, who can be cited as examples of a very different tendency in 'postfeminism.' For example, Cixous's philosophy, just like it is with the rejection of grand narratives by postmodernism, deliberately evades a closure of her ideas, which would mean construing a theory.

The shared point among these names, though there is no consensus about this matter, too, is that the Second Wave feminism is insufficient to deal with the problems of our postmodern age, which must be explicated and understood by new paradigms. No wonder, therefore, that the so-called Third Wave feminists, who tried to adopt the struggle of earlier waves for a new age, took up a skeptical stance against postfeminism, which was for them a part of the latest Backlash. Joanna Russ, although she employed postmodernist strategies in narration, was, as stated earlier, also among the names to defend the historical process of feminism against 'postfeminist attacks.' Russ and some radical feminists have also given emphasis to the fact that postfeminism in many cases harbors a tendency to be "implicitly heterosexist" (*Ibid.*: 44) and that it betrays the struggle of many decades with its "ironic, pseudo-intellectual critique on the feminist rather than an overtly hostile response to it"(*Ibid.*: 45).

Such claims of postfeminists, of course, shook the foundations of a 'monolithic' understanding of feminism – and hence the link with the postmodernist notion of multiplicity and diversity. Claiming that all that could be achieved through feminism had already been achieved, some thinkers like "the swaggering self-publicist" (*Ibid.*) Camille Paglia, who, according to Gamble, "situates herself as a part of a backlash against hegemonic feminism" (*Ibid.*: 291), called the remaining demands "excesses" (Alice, 2003: 38); or, as suggested by others, feminism was not 'fashionable' anymore. Gamble summarizes Paglia's views and studies in feminism as reactions against what she calls a so-called "neurotically puritanical" feminism. It would not be wrong to state that Paglia deems what she identifies as "simplistic"– or 'oversimplified' – in feminism insufficient in dealing with matters related to women (*cf.* Paglia, 1992: 1-3; 12-13). This deficiency has been noted quite often recently

even by Naomi Wolf of the opposite camp with a challenge to its self-assumed universality:

> the definition of feminism has become ideologically overloaded. Instead of offering a mighty Yes to all women's individual wishes to forge their own definition, it has been disastrously redefined in the popular imagination as a massive No to everything outside a narrow set of endorsements. (Wolf quoted in Gamble, 2001: 49)

Here, one can feel a hostility towards an ideology that is perceived as hegemonic, "totalitarian and inflexible," which Gamble explains with reference to Rene Denfeld's remarks in *The New Victorians: A Young Woman's Challenge to the Old Feminist Order* (1995). Gamble reports that Denfeld's argument disagrees with what she calls "unswerving belief in female victimization at the hands of an all-powerful patriarchal system" that results in an "extremist cabal" that alienates the new generations:

> In the name of feminism, these extremists have embarked on a moral and spiritual crusade that would take us back to a time worse than our mother's day — back to the nineteenth-century values of sexual morality, spiritual purity, and political helplessness. Through a combination of influential voices and unquestioned causes, current feminism would create the very same morally pure yet helplessly martyred role that women suffered from a century ago. (Denfeld quoted in Gamble, 2001: 46-47)

Although a similar perspective causes Paglia to be cited as an ideologue of postfeminism, Gamble underlines the strongly essentialist streak in her ideas as well, which goes against the postmodern vein. To clarify this debate about postfeminism, it may be asserted that it marks an "individualistic, liberal agenda rather than a collective and political one" (*Ibid.*), which also explains the propensity for a non-collective thinking. An indirect inference from such remarks may be that utopia, as a vision for a *community*, does not appeal to this new trend as its 'utopias' – if they may be called so – rather reflect personal hopes and yearnings as personal constructs, which, of course, brings them closer to the domain of the novel, a genre which offers many possibilities for a 'personal utopia.' For the very same reasons,

postfeminists also face the allegation that they can do nothing but contribute to the rule of the Backlash with their dispersed and apolitical methods. The so-called 'Third Wave feminists,' as burgeoning contemporaries of postfeminists, for instance, emphasize the economic and social as well as the racial aspects of women's struggle, following and reforming the traditions of Second Wave feminists, and marking the importance of feminist activism unlike many postfeminists. It may thus be argued that Third Wave feminism aims to converse with the earlier waves and to reform them whereas postfeminism usually negates a historical perspective of feminist struggle as it adopts a rather simplistic approach that discards the tradition of feminism at once. A wider perspective may lead to a rather healthier debate within feminism instead of a dire crisis, and thus, just like it may be for postmodernism, these new debates may be the birth throes of regeneration for a new era instead of a total loss of bearing.

Within such a framework of attacks and counter-attacks, Sally L. Kitch defines her observations about the shift from a literary milieu seething with feminist utopias to one that hardly possesses an example, a shift that she calls "the retreat from utopia" (Kitch, 2000: 71). Although Kitch seems to focus on the 'problem' of utopian tendencies in American feminism, it is still not really surprising to see Germaine Greer and Betty Friedan as examples for her arguments, since these names – now labeled 'turncoats' – according to Kitch, have eventually realized by the '80s that their feminist ideas were so "abhorrent" that they must attack their own former philosophies to 'exculpate' themselves (*Ibid.*: 13). Similarly, Faludi cites Friedan's *The Second Stage* (1981) as a book written by a *former* feminist and a *recent* adherent of the New Right's discourse (Faludi, 1991: 318-324). In short, what Kitch seems to imply in *Higher Ground* is that the feminism of the '70s has lost its revolutionary enthusiasm for women's rights.

Likewise, Peter Fitting calls this new tendency "a retreat from the utopianism of the 1970s" (Fitting, 1990: 141). Fitting highlights the fact that the 1980s heralded a shift towards the dystopian, and that this may be elucidated with references to some major paradigmatic changes. Levitas refers to the rise of "fatalism" as the cause for the decline of the utopian imagination, a point that he

associates with the weakening of utopia's "transformative function" and with the recent skeptical and suspicious views about the possibility of 'controllable' social reforms (Levitas, 1990: 196-197). The recent dystopian visions, like Orwell's *1984*, indicate the possible rise of totalitarian regimes – just like the ones at the beginning of the century – although the literary utopias and collective dreams of the '70s are not identical with former traditional utopias. As discussed in the preceding chapters, these new utopias have been careful to shun the authoritarian aspects of earlier works and are usually open-ended works pointing at some possible futures and alternatives rather than drawing blueprints for perfect futures.

To understand the decline of utopias, one may try to examine the narrative changes that have been introduced by the predominance of the postmodern narrative techniques in the novel as well as arguing for an ideological explanation for this decline. Thus, Fitting studies the change for the dystopian not in the utopian ideals themselves but in the narrative that has structured them. Following the course of utopian narration from Thomas More's time, he points out a strong propensity in utopian narratives written since the Renaissance, which probably reached its peak by the end of the 1970s: "the 'novelization' of utopia" (Fitting, 1990: 153), an idea that explains why the philosophical and didactic voice of earlier utopias were absorbed in the new polyglot framework of the novel. In other words, it may be argued that although both utopia and the novel depend upon the heritage of the modern world in the West, utopias have always employed a different method of narration when compared to the novel – at least until the 1970s. The novel has been the more anarchic genre, defying all limits of narration and reflecting the ideals of bourgeois democracy whereas utopia, in the nineteenth century in particular, assumed a stronger political tone, which was inherent in the genre since Plato's time – embracing futurist, socialist, liberal or fascist tendencies. Thus, the passive reader/active writer relationship that has dominated utopias for ages is now finally repudiated for the rise of a highly novel-affiliated form, which, for some, may also mean a repudiation of traditional utopias, too.

This change in literary utopias has been hailed by some as a move towards realism as well. Critics such as Sally L. Kitch deem this an appropriate move

as they claim that utopian thought has in fact crippled the feminist movement rather than enhancing its capabilities. Such allegations are of course wrought by the fears of earlier experiences on the governmental level, which have proved both unsuccessful and injurious. Kitch acknowledges the function utopias assume in a world where women are marginalized, but sees more impediments in them than possibilities. Reinterpreting Sargisson's analysis of 'transgressive utopia' as a new form of utopia, Kitch instead argues that Sargisson's explanation actually exemplifies the shattering of utopian conventions and perceives in it a refusal of portraying "feminist values in traditional utopian terms" (Kitch, 2000: 73). While Kitch tries to interpret the decline of utopia as good news for the future of feminism, postfeminists are coming up with their idiosyncratic versions of utopias. Although Gamble talks about Naomi Wolf's understanding of feminism in a postmodern world as "impossibly utopian" because it tends to overlook some problems that exist in the underdeveloped or non-Western societies when she explains how women's 'empowerment' can be achieved (Gamble, 2001: 49), Toril Moi remarks that it is actually Cixous's ideas that resemble "an imaginary utopia" (Moi, 1985: 102). As a matter of fact, Cixous's philosophical "utopia" forms the basis of Lucy Sargisson's definition of a 'transgressive utopia.' Cixous tries to transgress the binary oppositions inherent in the symbolic order while rejecting to formulate a theory for the purpose. As Toril Moi underlines in her study of Cixous – just like Gamble's remark which holds that "third wave feminists feel at ease with contradiction" as they "have been brought up within competing feminist structures" (Gamble, 2001: 52) – Cixous's philosophy, with its "deconstructive view of textuality" and "an equally passionate presentation of writing as a female essence" countering it, also has its own contradictions and conflicts (Moi, 1985: 126). Moreover, as Moi is quick to admit, Cixous's post-structuralist approach in creating possibilities for femininity is what situates her within postfeminism and gives her work "an invigorating utopian evocation" despite such contradictions (*Ibid.*). Cixous's rejection of calling herself a feminist, likewise, suggests that she refuses to be circumscribed by feminism, which, from her viewpoint, is just an attempt for social recognition in a bourgeois world and thus not really revolutionary.

Sally L. Kitch supports her argument for the ambiguity of the present situation of utopia with reference to the subtitle of Le Guin's book *The Dispossessed*, an "ambiguous" utopia. From Kitch's perspective, these new generation 'utopias' – whether they can be called so is rather doubtful for her – in a way "undermine" the utopian visions presented in the books. Her critique, though, has no deconstructionist basis. It is possible to suggest that Kitch's analysis, which conceives utopia as some kind of an ideological straitjacket, calls to mind the postmodern understanding of avoiding a closure in the text – though her method involves nothing related to deconstructionist thought. Her criticism is rather centered around the necessity of devising a realistic contextualization of problems instead of embracing Sargisson's attempts to reform an old definition, which, from Kitch's viewpoint, only 'disserves' feminism, since she believes that Sargisson still pursues the wrong track, even when she attempts to revitalize the combination of utopian thought and feminism with her new definition of 'contemporary feminist utopianism.'

Here, the critique of utopia from a realistic standpoint meets a totally different critique offered by postmodernism, which determinedly attacks the grand narratives of the Enlightenment, utopia being one of these. Another contribution to deconstructionist thought and to postmodernism, which supply the greater framework of such criticism, comes from still another 'post-' event, namely postcolonialism. The postcolonial feminist critique of Second Wave feminism, for example, challenges a different aspect of Western feminism that has usually been overlooked for the sake of political and social integrity, namely feminism's claim for universality for all cultures. Feminism as a concept and ideology conceived and developed in the Western World has never appealed either to the colonized countries or to the so-called 'third-world' countries of the world. Even categorizations such as the First Wave and the Second Wave, as Alka Kurian notes, have been devised with respect to European and American figures and events, thus supporting the argument that feminism as advocated by Western feminism is doomed to remain a grand narrative of "western endeavour" (Kurian, 2001: 66). Such parts of the world first put under the yoke of Western imperialism and kept in a state of constant underdevelopment – and the women of these countries always being under the yoke

of patriarchy – have had no right to voice their own experiences and have been narrated from the perspective of "Western eyes." Gayatri Spivak, the Indian postcolonial theorist, defines the position of woman in such societies as the subaltern subject, who is extremely marginalized without any voice or history: Western feminism has asserted the right to speak for the subaltern since the emergence of feminism. Spivak justly argues that to get rid of its silent premise of Western hegemony and to establish a sound dialogue with the postcolonial subject, the Western feminist "must 'unlearn female privilege'" (Gamble, 2001: 323). The presumed downfall of Western hegemony in this case is supposed to yield a chance for the so-called former peripheries to 'speak' without the intervention of any interlocutors who appropriate their voices (*Ibid.*: 320).

Spivak's criticism exemplifies the objections raised in the so-called 'third world' and developing countries against a universalistic definition of feminism. The unspoken assumptions of Western feminism, philosophers of the same vein suggest, are likewise inspired by the assumptions of Western superiority: Western women are always modern and educated 'individuals' who appear freer when compared to the 'other,' whereas the 'other' from the so-called 'third world' leads a "truncated life based upon her feminine gender" as a sexual object in an "ignorant, poor, uneducated, tradition-bound, family-orientated, victimized, etc." context (*Ibid.*: 328). Thus, the 'sisters' from the West, 'who know better,' expect the subaltern subject to passively receive what is sent out by them, neglecting both the strategies devised by the 'other' and their particular problems. Gamble quite aptly remarks that third world women's speaking to the assumed center of feminism transformed many approaches that had been deemed inherent in feminism. Still, it may objected, for example, that since names like Spivak "subvert the dominant intellectual paradigms of the 'first world' from within" (Kurian, 2001: 67), a reference to Western ideologies still persists even in postcolonial discourses, which may somewhat be overcome as third world women develop a terminology and ideology completely of their own; or maybe as a part of the problem caused by Western hegemony, they will always retain some ideas related to the West, thus never absolutely free from Western paradigms. Be that as it may, the idea of "a seamlessly unified global feminism" has recently lost

considerable ground, giving way to a trend of "localized feminist practice" (Gamble, 2001: 328) that runs apace with the process of postcolonialism and rejects in principle the neglect of differences or Western-oriented hierarchies, thereby introducing a new and fragmented but also interrelated structures within feminism. Following the title of Benedict Anderson's book on nationalism, *Imagined Communities*, Chandra Talpade Mohanty identifies this process as the creation of "an 'imagined community' of women" that may become both local and global (*Ibid.*).

Gamble, while discussing the issue of the third world feminism(s), also points at the relationship between black and white women. Black women of the United States, who were slaves for many decades, were the ones who, in fact, ignited the feminist movement alongside with white women. Thus, they have never been silent, and their struggle and suffering has been narrated by names like Sojourner Truth in the nineteenth century. Of course, it is both hard and somewhat inappropriate to define black feminism or black women in the United States in terms of third world feminism but it is worth mentioning that "one of the women predominantly identified with a feminist 'third wave'", namely the black feminist figure bell hooks, has been one of the figures whose work has "persistently challenged white bourgeois women's unthinking assumption of an oppressed subject position" so as to argue against "a homogenized feminism" (*Ibid.*: 53). A *black* woman's voice, in this particular case, remarks the issues missed and/or disregarded by white bourgeois women (such as race and the white race's hegemony and imperialism), thus maybe striking a parallel with the critiques directed by the third world feminists, or as Crawford and Long define them, "indigenous women" (Crawford and Long, 2003: 253).

Among the contemporary black feminist writers who have a critical eye for issues of race and gender, no other name has probably been as influential in fiction as Toni Morrison. Morrison has been widely acknowledged as one of the most talented African-American woman writers of the twentieth century, though to characterize her achievement in relation to 'feminism' only – in the proper sense of the word – would be to undervalue her merits as a successful writer. She may be defined as a black woman carrying sensibilities both of her race and of her gender,

two core elements of her fiction which are skillfully combined and *not* cut off from one another. In her novels, Morrison has studied the dire conditions of survival for black women in a racist society. Her name has been frequently included in the anthologies prepared by black feminists and critics (Gamble, 2001: 138), thus becoming a part of the new canon of black feminism that has its own distinctive outlook on the history of women in the United States. Nada Elia explicates Morrison's ideas about race, gender, and black feminism with reference to her essays so as to highlight Morrison's emphasis on the black subject's act of narrating her own story:

> In her early essay "Unspeakable Things Unspoken: The Afro-American Presence in American Literature," as well as the later collection *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination*, Morrison argues convincingly that an Africanist presence has always pervaded American literature, but that such a presence was a reflection of *how powerful whites viewed their black subordinates, hence it was not an expression of African or African American experience. Her work, as well as of that of other black writers, is a vehicle for the articulation of that experience as viewed and lived by its own subjects* [italics mine]. (Elia, 2001: 125)

To clarify this black feminist perspective, it should be stated that black women of the United States have recently rewritten their history of enslavement, slavery, emancipation, segregation, and with the rise of feminist consciousness, they also reassessed the patriarchal domination that has been practiced upon them. The first organization to raise its voice in defense of black women was the National Association of Colored Women (NACW), founded in 1896 (James, 2003: 54). Thus, it may be stated that the first steps to define a distinctively black movement by and for black women can be traced back to the beginning of the twentieth century although it took quite a long time for the movement to mature. Stanlie M. James underlines the fact that a text written by Anna Julia Cooper back in 1892 "criticised the (white) women's movement and its leaders including Susan B. Anthony and Anna B. Shaw for *racism*, *elitism and provincialism* [italics mine]" (*Ibid.*). This problematic relationship between race and gender has been a hallmark of the double heritage of black feminism – which is also true for Morrison's novels. The most widely used image to emphasize this connection between racism and sexism has

been the rape of a black woman by a white man, whose deed is sanctioned by reason of his being her 'better' in every respect.

These issues still being current for modern black women, black feminism's march towards maturity also proved that a new inclination towards activism would aid black women in their struggle against different kinds of injustice and oppression. An intensification of black feminist consciousness has crystallized the tendencies in black feminism to give way to a notion of being an "outsider within," depending upon the "raced, gendered and classed positions in white/racialised society" (Kelly, 2003: 56). Thus, just like the so-called 'third world' feminists, black feminism in the United States developed its own tradition of writing black women's 'autobiography' so as to challenge the dominant white narratives of women's history – to be rewritten by non-whites and non-males. Jennifer Kelly also notes that both the First and Second Wave movements, as they had a universalistic outlook about feminist issues, proved insufficient in dealing with "black women's differing understanding of patriarchy, reproduction and work" (*Ibid.*: 57). Such an inquiry about black women's problems as separate from the others, of course, led to further questions about an inherent essentialism. A consequential question may be whether all black women living under the same conditions will react to an issue in the very same way just because they are all 'black' despite being separated by some other criteria. Kelly, therefore, comments that "theorisation of a black feminist consciousness can fail to problematise the post-colonial location of Third World black women" but it is also a new page in the history of feminism without which the movement will not evolve (*Ibid.*).

Such discussions about a new consciousness in black feminism were only viable *after* the 1920-1960 interval during which black women's feminist activism seemed "dormant" (James, 2003: 55) and introverted. James dates the beginning of the contemporary black feminist movement with its new consciousness to 1970 when – among many other examples – Toni Cade's anthology, *The Black Women*, and Toni Morrison's first novel, *The Bluest Eye*, the tragic story of a black girl's longing for the ideals of beauty that the white value, were published. Three years later the National Black Feminist Organization (NBFO) was founded to fight sexism and

racism (*Ibid.*). After the rise of black feminist consciousness – and after these developments in black feminist literature in the 1960s and '70s – issues like lesbianism and homophobia too were discussed and reevaluated. Black feminist writers such as bell hooks contributed both literary and theoretical works on the issues of race, feminism, and lesbianism. With the emergence of a surge of questions and debates in black feminism, the black women's movement eventually split into some coteries and some smaller groups of black feminisms as well.

The eventual consequence of such developments within the framework of (black) feminism has been hailed as a burgeoning 'ramification' or 'diversification' of feminism, giving way to a variety of 'feminisms.' Such an analysis, like in many similar cases, carries a judgment in itself and the term 'feminism(s)'– in the plural – has aroused suspicions about the future of the movement itself. Gamble, when recounting Ann Brooks's comments about this particular issue, mirrors her rather cautious outlook for the future, first by referring to Brooks's remarks on the "demands of marginalised, diasporic and colonised cultures for a non-hegemonic feminism capable of giving voice to local, indigenous and *post-colonial feminisms* [italics mine]" and then by mentioning her concerns about "how these theoretical debates can be translated into concrete action" (Gamble, 2001: 50). Brooks's concerns, as it may easily be perceived, are directly related to the activist aspect of the feminist heritage, a vital part of feminism that does not receive the proper attention that it should nowadays.

From the perspective of feminist utopian studies, this recent process, which may be defined as a ramification in feminism, seems to have conjoined the new generation of utopias. Various idiosyncratic methods and genres have been employed since the 1970s to comprehend and make use of the opportunities provided by this new amalgamation. Science fiction and fantasy, as two seemingly incompatible children of a super-realistic technological age, now dominate feminist utopias as indispensable elements of the new utopian worlds. Technological aspects in utopias, which used to be merely marginal elements until very recent decades, now 'feature' in many books. If one accepts the technological aspect (which is usually envisioned in relation to the male) in these utopias as something that evokes

promising ideas about progress and the future, it may be argued that in the hands of feminist writers science fiction has assumed a different function, one of "deconstructing gender relationships and roles, and *of envisioning new possibilities for women* [italics mine]" (*Ibid*.: 310). Thus, science fiction in feminist utopias has taken on a highly important and different role. A new generation of feminist writers who write about cybernetics (Russ was probably one of the first precursors) and 'hard-core science fiction' overflow the market. As Lisa Tsaliki suggests, this new inclination for technology in feminist utopias may be a compensation for all women ideologically alienated from the technological sphere (Tsaliki, 2001: 81).

The fantastic aspect in recent feminist utopias, which, in Russ's words, deals with "what could *not have happened*, i.e. what *cannot happen*, what *cannot* exist" (Gamble, 2001: 228), may be defined as a domain in which women produced the most successful works such as Mary Shelly's *Frankenstein*. Gamble defines the importance of this element in feminist utopias as offering a "speculative potential to both *critique a reality which they* [female fantasy writers] *perceive as male-dominated, and to offer alternatives* [italics mine]" (*Ibid.*). Thus, the shared opportunities offered by fantasy (as a new genre) and science fiction become clear in the quotations above: "critique," "new possibilities" and "alternatives" that contribute to new generation utopias. Both Marge Piercy and Joanna Russ have made use of fantasy in their utopias to describe an alternative world; Ursula Le Guin, too, has employed both science fiction and fantasy. These forerunners of the new tendencies opened up the way for new attempts supported by new ideas. From a different perspective still, it may also be asserted that the concept of utopia dissolved into some other genres of the postmodern era and lost its gist remarkably due to the 'novelization of utopia' and/or the dissipation of the 'principle of hope'.

If one still holds that these new and novelized examples that keep on moving away from the 'utopian image' created by traditional utopias – which means that s/he believes in an unchanging understanding (and nature) of utopia – can nevertheless be categorized as utopias (and many critics do so), the differentiation made by Tom Moylan in his book about utopias, *Dreaming the Impossible* (1986), may be heplful in elucidating this process of transformation. Therefore, Gamble

emphasizes the significance of Moylan's ingenious classification, which consists of two categories of utopia, the first one being the "'literary utopia,' which works to reinforce the dominant ideology", and the second one being the "'critical utopia,' which Moylan defines as 'a neutral space in which opposition can be articulated and revived'" (*Ibid.*: 330). Thus, it may be argued that this new amalgamation of postfeminism and the new 'novelized' utopias possibly offers the closest literary examples to works that can defy the first definition and to achieve a critical stance in themselves while still retaining their 'literary' features. Upholding what Lucie Armitt calls the "feminist *movement*" (Armitt, 2003: 481) by liberating it from a *stagnant* approach, these new utopias seem to have inherited the libertarian outlook of the 1970s, and yet, their new identity is, as it has hitherto been discussed, a very problematic issue.

5.2 'HOME' AS UTOPIA: TONI MORRISON'S *PARADISE*

> "Home matters not simply as a place but as the imagination's *place maker* for a vision of personal (and cultural) re/union, encompassing both that which actually have been experienced in the vanished past and that which never could have been." (Rubenstein, 2001: 164-165)

A novel that may exemplify both black feminism's different concerns and themes and the novelization of utopia is Toni Morrison's *Paradise* (1998). *Paradise*, which may be called one of the few post-1990s novels to be defined as a utopia with feminist overtones – the French *Magazine Littéraire* in fact defines the novel as "une parabole féministe et biblique [a feminist and biblical parable]" in its special issue on "la renaissance de l'utopie" (Jourdana and Fabre, May 2000: 25) – tells the story of a small town called Ruby in Oklahoma during the 1970s. The novel, as its title and the word 'parable' suggest, has very strong religious elements with references to the Bible. The story of the town at a first glance seems to be the story of a dark-skinned (co)al(l)-black community – calling themselves "8-rock" after the deepest level in the coal mines – trying to survive by its own means as an independent and completely secluded settlement in the United States. As the plot

reveals the history of this small settlement, it becomes clear that the members of this community are in fact the children of an earlier community of pious ex-slaves who tried to survive and establish a town for themselves because they were accepted neither by white communities nor by lighter-skinned black communities.

The story of Ruby is thus related to the story of this earlier town which was called Haven (one immediately remembers the word 'heaven' too) – an obviously significant name for a town established by the ousted black people after the Reconstruction period in the United States. What defines their attempt and determines the future of their posterity is a grievous experience called the "Disallowing," the rejection of the founding families by the light-skinned blacks just because their skins are darker. This piercing experience of being rejected by their 'fellow' black men, a slap in the face, alters their perception about their future and mission. Katrine Dalsgard suggests that the word 'mission' here may be explained as an expression of 'American exceptionalism' in a black guise (Dalsgard, Summer 2001: 233-248). The idea she advocates should be assessed within the Protestant tradition of the Divine Mission, which found its strongest proponents in the Pilgrim Fathers. Thus, this black community rejected by others, in a way, enters into some kind of covenant with God to ensure its future success by taking upon itself a mission of 'divine proportions.' Thus the utopian community that they aim to found assumes a religious basis as well as a racial one.

When this very first attempt to establish a self-standing community fails due to some reasons – interacting with resisting outside influences being the strongest one – the strong dominant (male) 'patriarchs' of the community – very much like the patriarchs of the Old Testament – lead their women and children out (like in the Exodus) once more to found a new utopia to be erected upon the Biblical traditions, racial purity and "the fathers' law" (P 279): Ruby. This new attempt immediately calls to mind a wish to reestablish both the "City Upon a Hill" of the Protestant tradition and the Pilgrim Fathers as well as the notion of a lost paradise, a pre-lapsarian state, which may be found in Heaven only. This point is also evinced by the lack of death in Ruby – as if it were the Garden of Eden – since its foundation, which also suggests that as death is a precondition of life, without death Ruby must

be already “dead” as an ideal community. Roberta Rubenstein, therefore, calls Morrison’s *Paradise* an exploration of “the meanings of Edenic space and time” (Rubenstein, 2001: 127):

> Did they really believe that no one died in Ruby? Suddenly Pat thought she knew all of it. Unadulterated and unadulteried 8-rock blood held its magic as long as it resided in Ruby. That was their recipe. That was their deal. For Immortality. (P 217)

In order to commemorate the attempts of the fathers and the memory of Haven, they re-build in Ruby their emblematic ‘Oven’ – which occupies a central place in the novel with the inscription it bears. When the Oven is re-assembled in this new town, it is soon understood that it has lost its former function as a utility for cooking and social gatherings and is transformed into a “shrine,” a danger which, it is said in the novel, is also emphasized in the Old Testament as related to idolatry (P 103). This clue alone suffices to suggest what kind of a self-willed ‘paradise’ Ruby has become: a town of symbolic value representing an old ideal instead of a new reality. Kathleen Marks defines this central image of Ruby as “what cannot be assimilated intact, but what must be re-imagined in the light of the new” (Marks, 2003: 148).

Until the 1960s, the secluded utopia in the heart of Oklahoma lives free from the ‘intrusion’ of white people, light-skinned blacks, without televisions or movies, under the control of the “8-rock” Morgan twins – until the new decades with their new cultural modes and music and the Vietnam War shake the order of ‘this earthly paradise.’ This “unadulterated and unadulteried” – a strictly endogamous and xenophobic – utopia-like community, which is constructed upon the principle of exclusion of unwanted ideas and novelties, slowly experiences the seeping in of the novelties and challenges, which results in a paranoiac fear of everything new and everyone different, including the children of those who married ‘outsiders.’

Further conflicts between the generations – reminiscent of the generation question about utopias in Le Guin’s book – divide the town into two camps: one in favor of the traditions and the status quo and the other in favor of a rather new and tolerant interpretation of earlier values. This divide is expounded upon by the unclear

motto on the Oven, which, two camps in the town claim, must be either "*Beware* the Furrow of His Brow" – the reading advocated by the conservative Reverend Pulliam, which insinuates the presence of the wrathful God of the Old Testament – or "*Be* the Furrow of His Brow" – the alternative reading supported by the rather liberal Reverend Misner, which implies an active role for the new generation [italics mine].

If one studies the development of exceptionalism as a source for utopian communities in the United States based upon a theological or some other basis, it is likely that many examples of disappointment may be found as a discrepancy between early ideals and following realities grows wider in time. Such a crack in the ideal is usually revealed in the posterity of the utopia – an issue already mentioned in the present study. As Dalsgard remarks in her study of *Paradise*, Ruby's downfall is first suggested by some symbolic events related to the future generation of this closed community, such as the abortion of unwanted children, the "broken" birth of wanted children, the rebellious behavior of children against their elders. As the ease of Ruby is slowly shattered, the elders of the town, the children of the founding fathers, think that the future of their utopia, which was only built after many bitter struggles and hardship, is in jeopardy, and thus they feel the need to look for a scapegoat to blame for all the things that they see as corrupt in this changing world and a concrete target to direct their anger and resentment: the Convent.

What transforms the story of an earthly *paradise* into a religious "feminist parable" is the Convent, which forms the core of the conflict in the novel – the conflict between a dogmatic utopia and a welcoming home. The Convent, which is situated at the outskirts of the town, can be defined as a shelter for women who suffer from their terrible pasts and seek refuge in a kind of sisterhood, and for some women of Ruby, like Soane Morgan and Lone DuPres, who sometimes feel themselves closer to the Convent instead of their own community, and who are relegated to a secondary status in male-dominated Ruby. The Convent's location as an "aloof neighbor" (P 10) seems quite significant when it is revealed that "neither the founders of Haven nor their descendants could tolerate anybody but themselves" (P 13).

This former mansion of a rakish embezzler, later converted into a school by Catholic nuns and called 'the Convent' and which is now inhabited by four women (one of them white) from different backgrounds and their spiritual guide Consolata (also called Connie), offers a fresh start for desperate and abused women and welcomes them – unlike Ruby – without regard to race or ethnic purity at all. Roberta Rubenstein also highlights the relationship between the Convent as a home (as a "social space that is psychically and physically safe" [Morrison quoted in Rubenstein, 2001: 141]) – which seems to have some utopian overtones here – and the Convent as a mother (symbolized first by the Reverend Mother of Consolata and then by Consolata herself), noting the parallelism between the home and the mother in Morrison's fiction (Rubenstein, 2001: 8). Rubenstein thus interprets the arrival of the four women to the Convent as the meeting of a mother with "special powers" and her "symbolic daughters" – who have either unpleasant memories about motherhood (Mavis) or about their mothers (all the others) – in a "liminal space where [their] past and future converge" (*Ibid.*) and where they also feel liberated from the burden of their past and are enfolded by the comfort of their future.

Rubenstein incorporates the two images of the mother and the home in the person of Consolata, who possesses "nurturing and all-forgiving qualities" (*Ibid*.: 142). She interprets the significance of the Convent's feeding powers in the book as reminiscent of "the gratification [...] of appetites both physical and spiritual," which seems to appeal to the people of Ruby as well since they frequent the Convent to buy bread and pepper (*Ibid*.: 143). Rubenstein also mentions the division between "matriarchal and patriarchal conceptions of the world that extends to the conception of Paradise itself," which may be elucidated as the conflict between the fathers' law and what Rubenstein calls "the mothers' law" (*Ibid*.: 147). Nada Elia defines this conflict as "the rivalry between feminine and masculine spaces, fluidity and rigidity, and permeability and insularity" (Elia, 2001: 114), and as the clash of two different epistemologies, one of the Western sphere (symbolized by the "Latinate" words of the black patriarchs and an "assimilation into European Christian discourse," which is suggested by the forced education of the Native American Arapaho girls as well [*Ibid*.: 139]), and the other of the Africana sphere (symbolized by the 'communal

dreaming' of the Convent women [*Ibid*.: 115] and Consolata's knowledge of things that are not written down in letters [*Ibid*.: 139]).

The inclusive and welcoming embrace of the Convent coupled with a nostalgic longing for a lost home that maybe never existed except in the heads of those who imagined it creates an ideal space to be inhabited by these desperate and "disallowed" women (Rubenstein, 2001: 147), a space to "collect [themselves] [...], think things through, with nothing or nobody bothering you all the time" (P 176). This aspect is summed up in the book by a quite simple but expressive comment that clarifies the prevalently feminist and utopian implications of the Convent:

> The whole house felt permeated with a *blessed malelessness*, like a protected domain, free of hunters but exciting too. As though she [Pallas, one of the women] might meet herself here –an unbridled, authentic self, but which she thought of as a "cool" self – in one of this house's many rooms. [italics mine] (P 177)

The Convent's history of transformations from a mansion belonging to an embezzler who probably carried out his sexual orgies there to a Catholic school for some Indian girls who were forced to receive education the way white men thought proper also offers different perspectives for its interpretation. The Convent, transformed by the pious "Sisters" who arrived later, is now accepted by these four women as their new home, and Consolata assumes the role of a lost or longed for mother figure which the "orphaned" women – as Rubenstein calls them – have not enjoyed in their lives. Consolata the mother figure too is described as a former orphan who was found in a pile of garbage in Brazil and brought up in the Convent by Mary Magna. Thus, the relationship between Consolata and the women may also be interpreted as the reflection of a nostalgic and utopian mother-daughter bonding, in which both the mother and the daughters are found and united.

This new home that they feel attached to, of course, is not a utopia in the proper sense of the word but for the outcome of its members' self-sufficient production and their – albeit reluctant – tolerance of one another. Though Mavis and Gigi quarrel and fight ferociously every now and then, they learn as they share the very same home, and at all events, the Convent portrays a less strained community

than Ruby, where the dominance of the Morgan brothers, the twins who consider it their responsibility to uphold the traditions and customs of the town, constitutes a severely rigid society. When Grace (nicknamed Gigi), one of the women in the Convent, who seems to be attracted to Ruby with the idea of witnessing the image of a couple having continuous sex in the desert, arrives at the Convent, she quits looking for the couple as her new home offers her sexual freedom unhindered by the restraints of everyday morality – which, of course, cannot be tolerated by the Ruby men since her presence in the town jeopardizes the prevalent ideas about morality. Ultimately, the women themselves acknowledge the change in them during their stay in the Convent, like Mavis's realization that her former identity as an inadequate and insecure mother/wife figure is dead after her long stay in the Convent (P 171). Gigi, Pallas, Mavis, Seneca – all the women – have their sad stories involving murder, sexual abuse, betrayal, and they all take refuge in the *Con*vent and *Con*solata, a home and a woman that *con*sole and heal them for the better. After refreshing themselves in a web of new relations, the women experience a change which, Sweeney claims, draws a parallel between their new identities and their spiritual homecoming in the Convent:

> With Connie "feeding them bloodless food and water" (265), the women alter. No longer "broken girls, frightened girls, weak and lying" (222). And no longer "haunted" (266), each has "embraced and finally let go of" the pain and terror that kept her imprisoned in her past (283). The Convent inhabitants [...] finally at home. (Sweeney, 2004: 60)

Consolata's convent, with its remedial aspect, depicts the direct opposite image of Ruby in its principles. If exceptionalism and exclusion of the unwanted define Ruby, the Convent, in the person of Consolata, should be defined by its inclusive approach towards things strange, extraordinary and new that these women either bring along with them or that they do during their stay:

> This sweet, unthreatening old lady who seemed to love each one of them best; who never criticized, who shared everything but needed little or no care; required no emotional investment; who listened; who locked no doors and accepted each as she was. (P 262)

Rubenstein also notes the presence of a nurturing woman image with spiritual powers in *Paradise*, namely Consolata, which of course further intensifies the contradiction between the Convent and Ruby, the town that is ruled by the "destructive values of patriarchal thinking" (Rubenstein, 2001: 127). On the contrary, through Consolata's therapy for the women in the Convent, a 'constructive' experience by which they express their former sufferings *collectively*, they get rid of their anguish and understand one another in time by her guidance. Making templates of their naked bodies on the Convent's floor, the women learn to express themselves via these figures on the floor, drawing their anguish, suffering and wishes on the paint and chalk-drawn figures. Thus, they experience something new that releases them from their prison of agonizing memories.

The tolerant attitude and a 'mother-sister' kind of intimacy offered by Consolata permeate their new home and lives. Love and understanding, which can nourish their souls, are ultimately presented by the Great Mother figure of the book. Though, in the beginning, when she is in her depressive moods, Consolata wants to 'kill' the women, later on she takes their 'babygirl wishes and dreams' and transforms them into spiritual fulfillment (P 222). Consolata's extraordinary powers, taught her by the midwife Lone DuPres, also contribute to this utopian atmosphere of the Convent. One of these supernatural powers that she practices is "stepping or seeing in," which may be explained as her skill of probing into the spirit of a person who is about to die and concentrating on the "life light" of that person so as to keep him/her alive – as she does with Mary Magna the Reverend Mother (P 247).

Another image in the book that gives it its utopian hues is the dream-like imaginary world of a woman figure called Piedade (meaning both 'piety' and 'compassion/pity') that Consolata envisions and depicts after what may be called her rather covert illumination close to the end of the book. Before the assault on the Convent, Consolata reveals a 'vision' of serenity for the Convent women, a vision like Paradise or a fairyland that is not of this earth. Her poetic narration, which is defined as "the loud dreaming," also recalls the lullaby of a doting mother:

> [S]he told them of a place where white sidewalks met the sea and fish the color of plums swam alongside children. She spoke of fruit that tasted the way sapphires look and boys using rubies for dice. Of scented cathedrals made of gold where gods and goddesses sat in the pews with the congregation. Of carnations tall as trees. Dwarfs with diamonds for teeth. Snakes aroused by poetry and bells. Then she told them of a woman named Piedade, who sang but never said a word. (P 263-264) [...]
> Piedade had songs that could still a wave, make it pause in its curl listening to language it had not heard since the sea opened. Shepherds with colored birds on their shoulders came down from mountains to remember their lives in her song [...] At night she took the stars out of her hair and wrapped me in its wool. (P 285)

Consolata, through the image of this woman that she names Piedade, seems to create a better figure of herself. Piedade manifests the absolute act of compassion for those who arrive in her domain, and thus, the welcoming embrace of the Convent is superseded by this ultimate revelation of its Mother, namely Consolata, to give way to a greater compassion of divine proportions and to the embrace – an act of tenderness – of this "idealized succoring figure" (Rubenstein, 2001: 155). The accumulation of her sagacity and insight finds its expression in this fantastic picture of an ideal (which seems to be related to her conception of divinity, prophecy, and compassion since the last word she utters before her death is "divine" [P 291]).

For the conservative *patriarchs* of Ruby, who consider every misfortunate and immoral event in their town to be a consequence of the deeds of these five women – and who claim that "there wasn't a slack or sloven women anywhere in the town" (P 8) – the Convent of Consolata is instead a home of the devil, a place of unholy deeds, of witchcraft and magic, of abortion and the house of everything that they despise – or, in other words, a foil for Ruby and the only 'Other' image that they can find in their close surroundings. For the Ruby patriarchs, the laxity of moral concerns of the Convent women turns the Convent into a "coven" of witches (P 276) where only "female malice" abides (P 4). Besides, the sexual freedom that the Convent women possess poses a certain threat to the sacredness of the family in Ruby as well. Sweeney comments that the bodies of the women are contrived by the imagination of the patriarchs as a peril; for the female body, in the patriarchal imagination, stands for the 'means of reproduction,' which, of course, is

of prime importance for a community that attempts to tamper with the life of its every single member:

> The Convent women's bodies provide a prime surface for inscribing this plethora of evils because they are *unabashedly unattached to men*. The women seal their reputation as "bodacious black Eves unredeemed by Mary" (18) [...] Flagrantly flouting the patriarchal, heterosexual norms of family values [...] they "danc[e] nasty," looking at no one but "their own rocking bodies" (157-158) [...] Like the biblical figure of Eve, whose temptation of Adam allegedly brought sin into the world [...] the Convent women embody the threat that women's bodies, sexuality, and desire on each other and on themselves. [italics mine] (Sweeney, 2004: 54)

The patriarchal control appears to be absolute in Ruby, so much so that Billie Delia, one of the Ruby girls, is labeled a 'tramp' just because she pulled down her panties in Ruby when she was three years old, an incident that stuck to her like a label. Even her mother, who gives credit to the slanders about her daughter, believes the worst about her, that she has been sleeping around with whomever she comes across, although actually Billie Delia has not even had sex with anyone. The patriarchal discourse in Ruby, supported by the feeling of divine mission and responsibility, quenches every expression of female sexuality before it becomes palpable.

The *Convent* women – unlike the Ruby men – heeding no *covenant* at all, do not pray but drink, and, what is worse, some of them have sexual affairs with some men from Ruby, including one of the Morgan twins, Deacon. Deacon, disregarding his own entanglement with Consolata – the mother figure for the four women in the Convent – deliberately, most certainly tries to exculpate himself from his adulterous affair by raising a big fuss about the Convent women's violation of every sacred and traditional value that Ruby tries to safeguard as its *raison d'être*. Although a certain intimacy exists between some Ruby women and the Convent women – as is the case with Soane Morgan (Deacon's wife), who goes to the Convent to ask for a favor from Consolata – in matters related to life, like abortion, potions for some ailments – the liaisons of some Ruby men with the Convent women are also evident – at critical moments the Ruby women – except Lone DuPres – have to ignore such bonds since their allegiance is to "patriarchal rather than alternative

communities" and to their "kinsmen" and husbands – the last being sufficiently evidenced in their surnames (Elia, 2001: 122-123).

In short, these friendships are swept aside when the patriarchs blame the outsiders, the 'other' that *must* be causing all the problems in this 'perfect community':

> Here, the men spoke of the ruination that was upon them–how Ruby was changing in intolerable ways–they did not think to fix it by extending a hand in fellowship or love. They mapped defense instead and honed evidence for its need, till each piece fit an already polished groove. (P 275)

Thus, the Convent becomes a mirror for the bigotry of a utopia frozen in time, or better put, of a utopia that wants to establish itself outside the boundaries of earthly time and existence. The specter of the founding fathers' bitter experience of "Disallowing" haunts the Ruby men, who display their fear and hatred towards the convent women in such a way that their instinctive efforts to protect their utopia transform their town into a horrible dystopia of pure fear and hate. To preserve the purity of blood and convictions seems to be the crucial issue for Ruby like it was for the founding fathers who were rejected just because of the color of their skin. Once rejected, they resolved to stay away from the white and light-skinned blacks to transform their 'stain' to a mark of pride. The feeling of bitterness that has become permanent scars each generation as its turn comes – thus perpetuating a festering anger. Just like in a true dystopia, Ruby's ideals seem to have been converted into reactionary dogmas that stand in the way of movement and change. Thus, the hatred related to racial segregation, which the founders of Haven experienced, is reversed by "8-rock" black exceptionalism to destroy the Convent.

The Convent's alleged guilt is coupled with its inhabitants' racial impurity – four of them not-so-pure black and one white – to make them perfect scapegoats. The elders of Ruby reinterpret everything about the Convent to carry out a 'witch hunt' against this coven and to eradicate 'evil' in the name of goodness, "for Ruby" (P 18). The little fights of the Convent women are exaggerated as a threat to their community as the patriarchs of Ruby deem it extremely dangerous that these

women walk into their town and behave in an outrageous manner before the townsfolk. The noises of children that some women claim that they heard emanating from the Convent are translated into signs of illegitimate children. Their fondness for alcoholic drinks is also taken as evidence of their drunken habits. Recognizing the unnatural powers that abide in the Convent and in the women there, the patriarchs of Ruby take the Convent's presence in its different forms as a threat not only to their town but also to their 'virile' authority and status.

This accusation of women with witchery is of course a common event that abounds in the history of Europe, but in the history of black people of the United States it assumes a specific meaning related to Africa and magic as well. Needless to say, practicing magic and such forbidden knowledge has been an issue of anathema in Christianity, but it must be pointed out that among those witches there were not only so-called practitioners of 'unholy' crafts but midwives and women healers as well (Gamble, 2001: 336). In *Paradise*, Consolata, who learns about her extraordinary skills by the help of Lone DuPres acts as a healer for her Reverend Mother and as a midwife for some women of Ruby. The (male) accusations of witchcraft in its essence, of course, rely upon the rejection of women's mastery of medicine through herbal solutions. Reassessed from a wider perspective, such an attempt to exclude women – Gamble marks that women were not allowed to study medicine until towards the end of the nineteenth century – from the domain of sciences may be interpreted as an attempt to "'purify' society of women who live[d] outside patriarchal control" (*Ibid.*) – which is very much valid for the conflict between Ruby and the Convent. In fact, the patriarchal religion in its darkest shade cannot let such a community of unchecked women survive so close to its 'borders.' The Catholic reverend mother of Consolata, who appears to be the first mystical mother figure of the novel, is kept alive only by Consolata's powers, and her death removes Christianity's effect upon Connie, who then resumes her real identity as Consolata though she is now "orphaned" a second time (Rubenstein, 2001: 151). As the new mother figure of the Convent, she acts according to the dictates of a different understanding of religion that transcends Christianity instead of following its ordinances. This change also explains the reason why Consolata is named the "new

and *revised* Reverend Mother [italics mine]" (P 265) when she emerges as a Christ figure preaching and teaching – "Eat how I say. Sleep when I say. And I will teach you what you are hungry for." (P 262) – the unity of the body and the soul on an equal basis, depending upon an understanding different from that of Christianity. In a very non-orthodox manner, she preaches the equality and complementary aspects of the body and the sexual/sensual (Eve) with the soul and the spiritual (Mary) as she overcomes the conditioning of her Christian teaching and crosses out Ruby's Puritan morality: "Never break them into two. Never put one over the other. Eve is Mary's mother. Mary is the daughter of Eve" (P 263).

In fact, Consolata later on seems to dissolve into the image of a Goddess-like figure, Piedade, that she herself creates. Nada Elia also narrates Zora Neale Hurston's remarks about the black reinterpretation of white civilization so as to explain how Christianity was reshaped in the minds of African Americans to be transformed into a part of black culture:

> The Negro is a very original being. While he lives and moves in the midst of white civilization, *everything that he touches is re-interpreted for his own use*. He has modified the language, mode of food preparation, practice of medicine, *and most certainly the religion of his new country* [Elia's emphasis]. (Hurston quoted in Elia, 2001: 141).

As regards witchcraft, Macha Nightmare also emphasizes the point that it may constitute a form of "religion" that is "distinct from predominant Judeo-Christian thought" (Nightmare, 2003: 491). The patriarchs, in Jerry Bryant's words, represent "the priests of the old religion and must take action against the anti-Christ" (Bryant, 2003: 194). Thus, what the Ruby men call witchcraft in the Convent exists in a totally different context of a vibrant religion, one related to life-giving actions, like those of a mother, whereas the patriarchs' deed is one of destruction. In the beginning, before Consolata is convinced of her powers by Lone DuPres, she thinks that her Christian faith is all she needs, but she learns that to separate God's elements ("earth, air, water") is in fact "unbalanc[ing] His world" (P 244). Thus what is considered to be a blasphemous act from the patriarchs' point of view is characterized as a different interpretation of the relation between God and the

universe. Elia defines this new interpretation of the Divinity as "the eclectic fusion of religious systems [...], including the postcolonial Native American, African and Afrodiasporan communities," which comprises "trances, dances, and vociferations, and such non-Christian rituals as communal chanting, loud dreaming and collective memory" (Elia, 2001: 144).

Yet, the patriarchs' outlook and paranoia eventually necessitate this act of murder so as to perpetuate the order of Ruby, and thus the imagined menace of the 'Other' figure(s) is eliminated to reinstate the ordinary run of everyday life in Ruby. The obsession that the leading men of Ruby have – that they must keep the town in its 'pure' state – necessitates the exclusion and killing of the Convent women. The strict order made by the men of Ruby meets the rather unrestrained order created by the women of the Convent, and the outcome is a surge of violence. What justifies the terrible deed is the belief that their Ruby, their paradise or utopia must be defended at any cost. The protection of Ruby's moral values justifies the act of murder: the murder of the five women who have established a different 'paradise' that is self-sufficient – which proves that women can create their heaven without men as well – destroys their new set of notions related to morality, too. Needless to say, as it is common in all 'insular' utopias, Ruby suffers from an acute fear of change and adaptation, and while this fear may become more disturbing, as occasioned by a group of lonely women, it comes to yield a quick and easy victory for the same reason.

Bryant notes that the men of Ruby know ideals and heroism "only through the stories of their fathers and grandfathers" whereas the Convent's experience relies upon the women's shared experiences and experiments of production (Bryant, 2003: 194), which suggests that the Convent's understanding of a communal life has a sounder basis when compared to that of Ruby's. From Ruby's perspective, it seems that the solitary presence of a group of women (or 'unmarried witches') living in a convent, quite able to get along and get by *without the guidance of men and (patriarchal) religion* (Consolata in fact abandons Christianity after the death of her spiritual mother, Mary Magna, the reverend mother of the Convent) is in fact the greatest challenge that the Convent poses:

> Remembered how they scandalized the wedding? [...] it was the very same day they I caught them [two women from the Convent] kissing on each other in the back of that ratty Cadillac [...] two more [from the Convent] was fighting over them in the dirt [...] I hate a nasty woman [...] What in God's name little babies are doing out there? [...] Whatever it is, it ain't natural. Sargeant, didn't you find marijuana growing in the middle of your alfalfa? You think they got powers? I *know* they got powers. Question is whose power is stronger [...] Look what happened to Billie Delia after she started hanging around out there. Knocked her mamma down the stairs [...] Bitches. More like witches [...] Listen, nothing ever happened around here like what's going on now. Before these heifers came to town this was a peaceable kingdom. The others before them at least had some religion. *These here sluts out there by themselves never step foot in church* [...] *they don't need men and they don't God*. They meddle. Drawing folks out there like flies to shit and everybody who goes near them is maimed somehow and *the mess is seeping back into our homes, our families.* [italics mine] (P 275-276)

Thus, the central action of the book is constructed around this conflict between Ruby (a failed paradise/utopia of racial tenets) and the Convent (a utopian image of the home and the mother). As a matter of fact, the women of the Convent help the women of the town, and they are rather liberated women figures who have no intention of causing problems – and yet their mere presence in the town is enough to alarm the defenders of traditions as the formers' actions are quick to arouse suspicion in the minds of the townsfolk. Following Consolata's therapeutic ritual for the women, the nine *black* men of the town attack the Convent to kill the women (which includes at least one white girl), and in doing so, they in fact aim to destroy the foil that they themselves created. Their hatred and fear – which triggers the former – of the people in the Convent rest both upon the women's being outsiders that disturb Ruby's order and the mere fact that they are women without men. Billie Delia sums up the fears of the patriarchs by her comment, which underscores the essential quality of the Convent women as well:

> A backward noplace [utopia?] ruled by men whose power to control was out of control and who had the nerve to say who could live and who not and where; *who had seen in lively, free, unarmed females the mutiny of the mares and so got rid of them* [italics mine]. (P 308)

Megan Sweeney interprets the last parts of the book – comprising the attack and the reappearance of the women – as "troping on the biblical themes of

crucifixion, redemption, and resurrection " (Sweeney, 2004: 47). After all is said and done, the Ruby men and women return to the Convent to get the bodies of the dead women – only to find them missing. Like the meal that Consolata wanted prepared before the attack, which recalls the Last Supper in the New Testament, this extraordinary incident also calls to mind some interpretations that suggest several possible connotations such as the symbolic resurrection of the dead bodies – just like that of Christ – to be accepted into the Kingdom of Compasssion, the Land of Piedade, the enchanted place that Consolata talked about. Rubenstein, who calls Lone DuPres the Cassandra figure of the book, highlights her remarks about a possible divine interpretation of the event as a miracle (Rubenstein, 2001: 155). A significant consequence of this act of sheer violence is the realization of the fact that by this act of murder Ruby, in fact, has violated the rules and precepts of its settlement – destroying the "defenseless, the different" and thus becoming what "the Old Fathers cursed" (P 302) – and welcomed death into Ruby – which is immediately indicated by the death of a child called Save-Marie, who, as Rubenstein marks, is the first person to die "for an entire generation" (*Ibid.*). It is also suggested that this unprecedented event of murder and its consequences thus *may* also mark the end of an era in Ruby, namely the end of this paranoiac society; but the possible outcome of this terrible deed is not clearly expressed in the book. Although Deacon, who is one of the most bigoted patriarchs of the town, declares his feeling of guilt to offer an inverted image of his brother, Steward stays very much the same without any feeling of remorse. Reverend Misner, the liberal outsider of Ruby, utters the possible moral for the inhabitants of Ruby when he calls the town an "unnecessary failure" that "will be like any other country town" soon (P 306), for, he hopes, the attack on the Convent will eventually shatter the 'doomed' dreams of utopia and will 'save Ruby's soul' – 'a death that gives life,' to use an oxymoron.

The final part of the book, like a postscript to the story, depicts the return of the four women, who are of course thought to be killed during the attack. After completing their stay in the Convent, the women come back to meet their relatives who featured in their stories. With little hair no hair at all, each woman looks like a *revenant* or "a phantom presence" (Rubenstein, 2001: 156). These short episodes at

the end of the book also function as "reparations" (*Ibid.*) that enable each of them to complete an experience that was left lacking: Gigi and his imprisoned father; Mavis and her daughter Sal; Pallas and her mother Dee Dee; Seneca and her mother. The first two experiences depict some happy scenes: the first one between a daughter and a father, and the second one between a mother and a daughter. The following two are meetings that underscore the *alienation* between the mother and the daughter: The first one is between Divine Truelove and her daughter Pallas, who developed temporary catatonia upon her betrayal by her boyfriend and her own mother. Now, in turn, her mother remains inarticulate and unable to call out her daughter's name as she sees her walking through the house with her baby in her arms; the second meeting is between Seneca and her mother, who refuses to recognize her daughter.

It may be that this is a 'divine' opportunity for the women to meet their families once more to say or do what they had wanted but could not; or it may also be a token of their new immortal life to materialize as angels after reaching beatitude in the Convent; or, again, as Sweeney suggests, it may mean that after reaching beatitude by Consolata's guidance, the Convent women "continue to dwell, unvanquished, in some alternative earthly realm" (Sweeney, 2004: 47), though the last part related to Piedade's paradise indicates a rather unearthly space.

The 'epilogue-like' part of the book returns to Consolata's fantastic vision of Piedade and her world of compassion and bliss, offering the consummation of the mother image in the book, which begins with Mary Magna, develops with Consolata, and which culminates here with Piedade. After the "reparation scenes," Morrison concludes the book with a picture that emanates peace and rest for the tired souls, a final meeting with the mother in the image of a utopian and 'paradisiacal' space. This epilogue-like section also comprises various significant words and notions – which are italicized below – that pervade the novel. The transcendental and unearthly landscape of Piedade carries some overtones of piety and compassion combined in itself as well, which are intensified with certain allusions to a return to the amniotic fluid in the mother's womb, the "prenatal" home (Rubenstein, 2001: 157):

> In each hush a woman black as firewood is singing. Next to her is a younger woman whose head rest on the singing woman's lap [...] There is nothing to beat this solace which is what Piedade's song is about, although the words evoke memories neither one has ever had: of reaching age in the company of the other; of speech shared and divided bread smoking from the fire; *the unambivalent bliss of going home to be at home* – the ease of coming back to love begun.
> When the ocean heaves sending rhythms of water ashore, Piedade looks to see what has come. Another ship, perhaps, but different, heading to port, crew and passengers, *lost and saved*, atremble, for they have been *disconsolate* for some time. Now they will *rest* before shouldering the endless work they were created to do down here in *Paradise* [italics mine] (P 318).

Rubenstein's concluding remarks about the last part of *Paradise* also call to mind some questions about Morrison's novel in relation to Sargisson's definition of a 'transgressive' utopia that avoids a closure engendered by stagnant concepts and notions that relate utopia to (its) death. Although Morrison rejects being categorized as a feminist writer – neither is she an author of utopias – it is clear that in *Paradise*, the Convent functions as an alternative (matriarchal) space offering relief and compassion for those who have been smothered by an exclusionist and exceptionalist (patriarchal) utopia – though a mere contact between the two communities is enough to bring about the ruin of the Convent.

Rubenstein, in her study, quotes Morrison's critique of the dominant static and exclusionist streak in Western utopian thought, but when she interprets the last scene, in which, significantly, not a single man features, she underscores the "exclusive embrace" of a goddess in the imaginary person of Piedade and relates it to a female 'exceptionalism.' Rubenstein thus 'diagnoses' Morrison's 'failure' to overcome the utopia of "timeless, static place of female exclusivity" by this "fairy tale realm" (Rubenstein, 2001: 163), which also "belies her [Morrison's] intentions" of imagining a paradise that is not exclusive (*Ibid*.: 158):

> The final sentence suggests an Edenic space where the women (no men are mentioned) pause before resuming their tasks in the ordinary world–"the endless work they were created to do down here in Paradise" (318). In the imaginary space where maternal nurturance and filial affection are celebrated /elevated, where racial differences cease to matter, and where earthly and spiritual desires converge, even the most injured and wayward daughters may achieve a state of grace. In that paradoxical Paradise, they find themselves

> both safe and saved: at home at last in the idyllic but–in more than one sense– exclusive embrace of the Go(o)d Mother. (*Ibid.*)

As stated and discussed above, neither *Paradise* nor the Convent is a utopia in the common sense of the word, but the book rather presents the critique of a utopian ideal based upon (divine and racial) exceptionalism and exclusion in a novelized form. From a different perspective still, it may be claimed, as Sweeney does, that the Convent women's "collective efforts to generate alternative forms of literacy for reading their experiences" suggest a utopian possibility against Ruby's reading (Sweeney, 2004: 61). Although, from another perspective, the dream-like vision at the end of the book may be interpreted as a 'utopian retreat' into fantasy or a temporary relief of a '(female) exceptionalist' wishful thinking, the Convent with its "blessed malelessness" and independent "mares" still manifests an actual challenge to exceptionalist Ruby with Consolata's 'fluid' and tolerant sanctuary that is maintained by a group of women. Thus, although 'paradise' – which may be considered a certain reflection of the nostalgia and longing for a secure but lost 'home' – cannot be established "down here on Earth," there is no other place to look for it while one lives 'down here in Paradise *and* in Hell.'

CONCLUSION

Feminism, as a constituent of nineteenth-century thought and as a product of the social and economic upheavals of the *fin de siècle*, has been thoroughly altered by the multifaceted experiences of the twentieth century. It happens quite often in the realm of concepts that what is considered or called a movement or an idea goes through comprehensive changes while its name lags behind. Thus, in these very first years of a new century and a brand new millennium, it is no real surprise to see that a quick hindsight provides us with a picture of these changes not only in feminism but also in utopian thought. As the black clouds of despair are said to lamentably hover upon the horizon of our future, we think it is high time, once more, that we reckoned the process of change in the cultural climate of the past century, molded first by modernity and then by post-modernity. The challenges of a new mode of thought and living introduced by the experiences of the twentieth century bore their influence upon both feminism and utopianism, which are actually inheritors of nineteenth-century transformations, revolutions, and hopes.

As the material conditions of the last century, coupled with a new perspective offered by the recent intellectual developments, called for a radical questioning of many established values and beliefs of the dominant Western conventions, critical intellectual perspectives have also been diversified by the emerging schools of thought – such as deconstruction, New Historicism, etc. – all of which have tried to offer alternative ways of reading Western history, philosophy and sociology, just to name a few domains among many others. The 'dawn' of these intellectual trends was, in a way, the materialization of the needs of restructuring the world order so as to rewrite the power relations and history (or 'histories'), with a new post-Keynesian economics, speeding up of everyday life, changes in gender roles, shaping of a new version of world hegemony called 'globalization,' and the so-called repudiation of the grand narratives, which include the major intellectual traditions that constitute what is usually defined as Western civilization.

As regards feminism, the literary works that are discussed and analyzed in this study surely reflect how one of the foremost social movements of the first decades of the twentieth century has slowly evolved since the nineteenth century to give birth to different tendencies and trends. While feminism's social core has also been altered by the transformations in the infrastructure of the new global milieu and economy, some greater and novel concerns in feminist theory, such as the rise of the so-called 'third-world feminism,' made their presence felt in intellectual circles. In the particular example of 'third-world' feminism, this new tendency of bifurcation was an eventual outcome of the process of decolonization, which actually attests to the fact that feminism has recently been in relation with the repercussions of different political developments as well. As stated in the example above, this new 'branch' of feminism – or 'third-world feminism' as one branch among many different and loosely united 'feminisms' – should be perceived as an outcome of a recent ramification in feminist thought as well as a product of the convergence of different superstructural shifts that have just found their proper place on the global scene.

In addition to these ramifications, feminism has also assumed a different attire, one that is sophisticated and philosophical, with the rise of the Francophone feminists like Irigaray, Kristeva and Cixous, who have contributed immeasurably to the recent perspectives in feminist thought. This alternative tradition, whose roots can be traced back to Simone de Beauvoir, enriched the critical heritage of feminism, opening up new vistas to a movement that seemed to experience some kind of halt during the 1940s. Thus, the interpolation of feminism with the Francophone theories of philosophy and psychoanalysis gave birth to an immensely diverse set of possibilities and methods that rejuvenated the women's movement, which had been molded by some practical and social concerns in the beginning.

The challenge posed by the postmodern era, although it has also provided many tools and methods that feminism has made use of to tackle the domination of patriarchy, was to keep this 'grand' movement and concept called feminism intact while many women from the non-Western parts and cultures of the world objected to the standards set by white Western women. The eventual consequence of this process has been the flowering of different 'feminisms' that refuse to be identified with other

groups, though they acknowledge some shared points and feel themselves associated with what is usually called 'feminism,' which seems to serve as an umbrella term nowadays. Another striking example, which is not related to nationality or race but to sexuality, is lesbian feminism, which comes up with a radically different understanding of the basic concepts of the women's movement – like the category of 'woman' – so much so that it is usually hard to put this branch or the others into a single category called 'feminism,' since creating such a unified concept or movement that can be defined as 'intact' has recently proven to be quite problematic.

Utopianism, as another concept and streak of thought in Western philosophy and literature, has gone through an ordeal like the one feminism did, too. The traditional role of literary utopias as didactic narratives, a role that was crystallized during the Enlightenment, has superseded all other functions that have been related to them throughout the history of utopian thought. This fact has given way to an understanding that equates the term utopia with a didactic blueprint that is meant to be put into practice.

The twentieth century, modernity and post-modernity, all with a rapid pace, witnessed the advent of 'actual utopias' – as in the example of the Soviet experience – followed by a series of literary dystopias. Coupled with the disillusionment of two hellish wars, both intellectuals and writers became wary of the insufficiency of traditional utopias while the norms and conventions that many believed to be deeply rooted were uprooted one by one in this new age of transformations. Literary utopias, which had been equated with perfection emanating from a superior mind and with a proscriptive attitude, had to be re-evaluated and redefined to meet the demands of this new age that challenged many of the dogmatic views. The passive role of the reader being taken for granted, it is not mistaken to call many traditional utopias 'conservative' since these doctrinaire works either compare an idealized community with the flawed society of the author's time so as to offer a critical perspective or challenge the established order directly to prove that the perfect one *must* replace the 'imperfect' one. These didactic and 'closed' narratives were quite influential until the post-modern conceptions of plurality, diversity, and open-endedness claimed their dominance over former traditional utopias, which are

nowadays considered to be the totalitarian ancestors of a new generation of utopias. In fact, it may be asserted that this new generation of utopias has banished the former conception of utopia at the risk of running towards the dissolution of the concept of utopia itself. The bifurcations in feminism, which have resulted in the creation of different adaptations of feminist thought, in a way, seem to have run a similar course with the transformations in utopian thought.

The purpose of the present study has been to trace the footprints of feminist utopian thought as it sheds its skin to rejuvenate itself within the framework of contemporary theories and ideas. The history of the convergence of utopian and feminist theories, at least for the United States, should begin with Charlotte Perkins Gilman's *Herland*, which may be cited as the first 'mature' example of feminist utopias not only in the United States but also in the world. The most remarkable name before Gilman is Annie Danton Cridge, whose *Man's Rights*, with its ironic narrative of sardonic tone that relies upon a reversal of gender roles, and with its fundamental feminist demands, cannot be said to constitute a completely structured alternative society – at least one with as many details as it can be found in *Herland* – since it only offers glimpses of critical worlds as they are observed from a feminist's perspective. Yet, it is only in comparison with *Man's Rights* that Gilman's true achievement can be comprehended, for when Gilman wrote *Herland*, she not only carried the former efforts to write a feminist utopia further but also took them from fanciful fragments to the level of a formalized and unified genre.

One may claim that *Herland*, which was preceded by some feminist examples including Gilman's "A Woman's Utopia," which is also examined in the present study, exhibits many dominant traits of nineteenth-century thought, feminism and theories. Yet, if it is our wish to study the course that feminist utopias have taken since the burgeoning days of the genre, there is no better place to choose as a starting point than *Herland*. Its maturity consists in its ability to combine the widespread notions and theories of the nineteenth century, such as race and evolution, with Gilman's feminist outlook *in a complete ideological and systematized* way. In other words, *Herland*, with the alternative female society it illustrates, may be defined as an example of what Ernst Bloch calls "docta spes," or educated hope, and not mere

wishful thinking for feminist utopias. The ‘impossibility’ of creating such an all-female society, which rests upon a biological unfeasibility – at least for today if not for tomorrow – extracts nothing from the vigor of Gilman’s utopia if one does not insist on the view that every utopia is meant to be lived out. Although it is marred with racism, Gilman’s work actually employs this idea to redefine the relationship between the sexes and comes up with an ideological amalgam that gives birth to an all-female race/sex. As stated above, Gilman’s utopia, with its fusion of nineteenth-century theories and traditional literary devices of utopia, such as defining a ‘close-ended’ and isolated ‘no-place’ with a nearly perfect order – and without men, too – delineates the typical example of how feminist theory can be situated within the boundaries of traditional utopias to express critical concerns about patriarchy and its alternatives.

The nineteenth century’s impetus carried the imagination of feminist utopia writers on the wings of promises and progress until the infernal fires of the world wars shook the foundations of Western civilization at its roots, melting those wings. Until the 1940s, the demands of women’s rights movements in the Western world were usually concentrated on the urgent and practical needs of women such as the right to vote, equal rights, equal job opportunities, etc. What shifted the focus and brought new topics to the global agenda were the world wars and the ensuing questioning of values and traditions both in Europe and in the United States. Although wars have always been ‘the concern of men,’ many women have been directly or indirectly affected by their consequences, which became much more obvious after two wars on a global scale.

The great disillusionment of the post-war period, of the 1940s and 1950s, gave birth to a mood of depression and also of restitution, which generated a prevalent negation of the notion of visualizing a utopia. Instead, some writers and thinkers, among whom there were women too, changed their bearing towards what can be called ‘realistic’ and ‘practical’ concerns such as preventing future wars in the world – which sounds like ‘another utopian ideal.’ The vast devastation of values, economies, and ideals seems to have put off some issues like women’s rights movements until the restoration of the pre-war state. This recession in American

feminism was further aggravated by the post-1920s search for further objectives, following the acquisition of the right to vote.

The 1940s and '50s have been defined as the unfruitful period of Western utopian literature, since there was a sharp decline in the number utopias written during these decades. The same fact may be said to be valid for feminist utopias as well, although some (women) writers like Gertrude Short, with their watchful observations, tried to compose works that would serve as critiques of the post-war Western world. Short's *A Visitor from Venus* cannot be categorized as a proper feminist utopia, since there is no real detailed description of an alternative (female) society. On the other hand, Short's ideas and criticism as regards patriarchy, wars, and democracy reflected from the viewpoint of two Venusites fulfill the critical function of a utopia. In addition to these points, Short also revives the long-established view of equating women with peace and men with war, which appears to be an essentialist view about the sexes, though there is some sense in it, too. Finally, it should be stated that *A Visitor from Venus*, which is included in Kessler's study of feminist utopias, was written by a comedienne who had the notion of criticizing both men and wars as parts and perpetuators of a greater system called patriarchy.

The mood of the 1960s and '70s was entirely different, as the former despondency of the post-war era drew to a close, yielding its place to a process of revitalization. The rise of a vigorous search for a new set of values in morality, sexuality, and politics revived the dormant utopian potential in the Western world. Sometimes this potential was coupled with contemporary political movements and ideas such as Marxism and anarchism to demand more than that could be practically achieved – which was described as "to demand the impossible." The convergence and cross-fertilization of ideas, such as Marxism and feminism or feminism and ecological thought, brought forth some new approaches in social theory – which was Marxist feminism or ecological feminism in this particular case. The concrete demands of this new generation were augmented by the new philosophical and psychoanalytical methods that were put into use in the critique of patriarchy as well.

The Anglo-American feminist tradition, which was rather centered upon practical matters, was introduced to the theoretical and philosophical inquiries of the

Francophones, to names like Luce Irigaray, Hélène Cixous and Julia Kristeva and to their inspirational perspectives. Thus, enriched by these contributions, American feminism probed deep into linguistic and psychoanalytical theories, a process which would eventually open up new vistas for American feminist studies.

In the light of the latest social and political studies, and in accordance with the post-war distrust of totalitarian left and right, utopian thinkers of this new era adopted a libertarian approach in their visions for a better future. Although the 1960s marked the beginning of a new period of such attempts, it was actually the 1970s that bore the real fruit, which explains the reason why this decade has been dubbed the 'the golden age feminist utopias.' The new understanding in utopian literature advocated and disseminated the ideas of 'open-endedness in utopias' – a notion that also constitutes a part of what Lucy Sargisson calls 'transgressive utopianism' – against 'didactic utopias.' It is also possible to observe the very same trends in the new generation of feminist utopias which amalgamate these new concepts and critical perspectives to fashion a new frame of mind for (feminist) utopias, one that favors open-endedness (against close-endedness), dynamic structures (against being frozen in time) and novel narrative devices (against the common didactic tone) different from those employed by Cridge, Gilman or any earlier utopia writer.

The first example of this new generation of utopias that is examined in the present thesis, Ursula Le Guin's 'ambiguous utopia,' *The Dispossessed*, reveals the utopian thinking and ideals of its writer not within a strictly feminist context but within the greater framework of power relations between the sexes and between the individual/citizen and the state. Placing her subject matter and characters in a science-fiction novel – thus achieving a *seemingly* temporal and spatial break with the contemporary world – Le Guin in fact explores and compares the structures and manifestations of patriarchy in three different realms and positions – on an anarchist planet, in a state-run socialist system and in a capitalist country – as they are observed in the family, the state, language, education, sexual relationships and private property. Instead of trying to extract the issues related to feminism from the intricate web of social relations, Le Guin tries to analyze them within the greater

framework of the patriarchal state and power relations, which also allows her to question the conventions of traditional utopian narratives as well – such as abundance and perfection. Her contribution to the framework of a new feminist perspective on utopia, one that is critical of traditional utopias with their static and 'non-temporal' existence in a perfect state, seems to surpass her 'direct' contribution to feminist studies *per se*.

Marge Piercy's *Woman on the Edge of Time*, another utopia written in the 1970s, focuses on feminist concerns and issues more directly. As an activist of the era, revealing the diffused power of patriarchy in a different way from that of Le Guin, Piercy indeed underlines the different manifestations of patriarchal authority in mental asylums, state bureaucracy, and sexual relationships – among many other contexts. Placing sexual abuses and gender injustices within a strictly social and economic framework – her protagonist, Connie, is a poor Chicana who is mistreated by nearly every (male) figure of authority – Piercy compares the imaginary world that her character finds in a far away utopia – away both in space and time, unlike, for example, Gilman's utopia which is only geographically distant – with her contemporary realities so as to present a critique. Just like Le Guin, Piercy too offers different aspects of this utopian world with an approach that goes beyond common stories about a perfect society with an ideal system. One may claim that Piercy's picture of the contemporary world gives the impression of being the 'perfect dystopia' itself, and yet, when she reveals many facts and details about the utopian world that her protagonist discovers, it becomes clear that what is about to be accepted as a society without conventional gender roles, sexual oppression, private property, pollution, metropolises, and the state, actually has to pay a certain price to exist: war. Piercy, quite skillfully, creates her utopia in stark contrast to her contemporary world and to another dystopia that exists in the future, one that seems to fight the people of Connie's envisioned utopia. What we may take as an already horrible present, when left all alone without any checks and measures, Piercy suggests, one day may turn out to be a horrible dystopia that we cannot even imagine at the moment. Thus, Piercy does not only picture the *possibility* of a sexless and liberated utopia or a feminist's dream realized in the form a successful novel; she

also emphasizes the fact that for every (feminist) utopia there is also a possible (anti-feminist) dystopia lurking in the shadows, waiting for our negligence to rear its ugly head. In terms of narrative techniques, it is also worth underlining the fact that from a didactic narration of an ideal world, Piercy's and Le Guin's works move towards the 'novelization of utopia,' which, as stated above, may either be seen as a renovation or rejuvenation of the literary utopia or as a gradual repudiation of the genre. One thing that is for certain is that the same tendency of merging the novel and the literary utopia, this time with a totally different narrative tone and technique, may be observed in the work written by Joanna Russ, too.

Russ's extraordinary feminist utopia, *The Female Man*, as another example from the '70s, incorporates science fiction, postmodern narrative techniques, irony, and a feminist utopia juxtaposed with a belligerent anti-male utopia/dystopia. Like many late twentieth-century utopias that are discussed above, Russ's work presents its utopia as embedded within the novel's plot but her ways are inventive and playful. The four female figures of the book, as parts of a divided female subject, actually represent four different latent identities/faces of the same implied woman. Through the literary device of employing interrelated but different subjectivities/characters, Russ enables her narration to reflect four separate women with different mindsets as they take a journey from a different version of the United States to a utopia and then to a dystopia. Dealing with the rising backlash against feminism, issues related to language, sex, work, education, sexuality and the means to reach a possible feminist utopia, Russ utilizes the merging of four female narrative voices in order to study the reactions of a compliant librarian and an intellectual but subdued academician as they meet a woman from an all-female utopia – one that is reminiscent of *Herland* – with a different set of values, and a fourth woman who is a member of a man-hating all-female dystopia that preaches violence against the male sex. Russ's narrative strategies, which carry the reader between an aggressive itch against patriarchy and an all-female society's detachment from men, finally fuse all the female voices in the book to impart to the reader the fact that the seemingly contrasting lives of the four women, whose lives make up a single woman's different selves, are in fact convergent and intertwined. With its plot and narration of a

feminist utopia and of an anti-male and unsympathetic feminist utopia/dystopia, *The Female Man*, although it shares some features with its contemporaries, appears to be a particularly innovative example among feminist utopias, since it also exemplifies the paradigmatic changes both in narrative techniques and in the (revelatory) function of (feminist) utopias, especially when compared to those that were prevalent in Gilman's time and before.

The revolutionary demands of the 1960s and the Post-War quest for a better world kept the utopian imagination running for about two decades, during which a boom in feminist utopias manifested itself. Yet, the decline of utopianism by the 1980s, which was related to the return of a derogatory interpretation of the idea, may be explained with reference to diverse political and societal transformations to which feminist utopias were subject as well. The rise of neo-conservatism in the United States and the birth of the New Right – as an inescapable reaction to the New Left of the 1970s – were the most momentous events that influenced the new framework of politics, economy, and social restructurings. The end of history was proclaimed, and the liberal market economy in the form of capitalism was hailed as the highest achievement of the human mind in the domain of economics. As this sounded like some 'sort of utopia' – with ultimate final goal humanity finally attained (!) – and as the 'infamous grand narratives' of the Western world were scrapped one by one, the utopian mind was judged as irrelevant and even misguided.

Likewise, the Backlash against feminism, as a part of this conservative ideology of the post-1970s period, developed a discourse that rejected many of the basic precepts and struggles of the women's rights movement and even accused some feminists of preaching their extremist and irresponsible demands that messed up many women's lives. Blaming the women's rights movement for the problems of American women, the Backlash eventually inhibited the maturing of consciousness among women. Coupled with this discouraging development, utopian feminism also experienced a distrust of utopian ideals, which pervaded the intellectual character of the era. Now that the obituary of utopian theory was in the papers, some claimed that feminism had to relinquish this anachronistic approach and deal with problems that were close at hand. Besides, the self-styled 'universal' principles of Western

feminism were questioned and redefined by various non-Western movements, which, of course, made it even harder to imagine a utopia that would satisfy or appeal to many different feminist groups with different ideas and ideals. Since each feminism-affiliated group – or 'micro-feminisms' as splinter groups within the 'greater' feminism – has been developing its own theory and policy, it is likely that their utopias, if they are ever written, will reflect their own particular and proper concerns and dreams rather than the greater framework of traditional feminism.

As discussed in various parts of the present study, the postmodern reorganization of modern notions and modes of living has altered many aspects of the Western way of life in ways that could not be foreseen back in the nineteenth century. Although the decline of the utopian imagination – which is a 'by-product' of this new postmodern condition – that the last decades have witnessed seems to have blocked our vision, it is slowly moving away to relinquish its reign to a new understanding of utopian thinking and literature, one that has eventually transformed many of its inherited traditional aspects, such as its reliance on dichotomies/binary oppositions. Meanwhile, as scores of terms and concepts like 'cyborg' and 'cybernetics' introduce notions that challenge conventional sexual and gender roles, new feminist utopias are usually written in the guise of science fiction and fantasy. Equipped with new ideas coming from different feminist groups and numerous cultures too, the new feminist utopian imagination also seems to have aligned itself with the narrative strategies of the novel, which, of course, has become the most popular genre of our times.

Among the surfacing subgroups of feminism in the United States, some are relatively recent – e.g. lesbian feminism – while some claim a history going back to the first decades of the Republican Era. Black feminism, as both a part of the greater African-American culture and as a distinct and unique issue of African-American women that goes back to the very first decades of the nineteenth century, constitutes one of the most important lineages of the age-old feminist struggle in the United States. As one among many recent 'micro-feminist' movements in the United States, it has contributed many works in many different genres and succeeded in developing a detailed framework and theory. As one of the most eminent figures

among the female African-American writers, Toni Morrison, who is also a winner of the Nobel Prize, follows the footsteps of this tradition in one of her latest novels, *Paradise*, to fuse it with the utopian longing that is embodied in the book by the search of four desperate women for a lost home and for a compassionate mother. Introducing the utopian space of the Convent in which the women take refuge, Morrison presents her idealized mother figure, Connie, and the order she establishes in their common 'home.' Wrought by the combination of feminist values and black culture, Morrison's novel reworks some basic concepts of black feminism like 'sisterhood' to mold the utopian space of the Convent, which she accentuates by placing it against Ruby, the strict patriarchal town that stands for a twisted neighboring 'utopia.' Peopled by three-dimensional characters from ordinary life, the novel still succeeds in creating an extraordinary convent that offers a utopia – though it is not similar to Gilman's rather traditional form or to others that adhere to the common revelatory function of traditional utopias – for the four women who seek shelter in a cruel world.

Morrison's *Paradise* depicts only one of the roads that feminist utopian thought has taken in the last two decades of the twentieth century. The discovery and reconstruction of a feminist utopian tradition is actually a twentieth-century phenomenon, and it does not constitute a convention as old as the greater utopian tradition due to the hindrance of many well-known facts related to the subjection of women. Yet, during this relatively short tradition, many elemental changes have taken place since *Herland*, such as the change in priorities of problems and issues in relation to the changes on the societal level, the move towards greater novelization in narrative strategies, and the practice of employing what Sargisson calls 'transgressive' narrations instead of binary oppositions in matters of sex and gender. The incredibly swift shift from the traditional to the modern and from the modern to the postmodern has of course made it very difficult for us to adjust our rather reluctant-to-change expectations and dreams to the high-speed, rapid demands that affect not only the modes of production and consumption but also our habitual manners of thinking and imagining as well. The point that utopian thought has reached in the pages of Western history may be defined in relation to the

consequences of this change, consequences that favor the triumphant immediate over the imaginable alternative. The feminist movement, with its myriad-shaped struggles in different parts of the world against various forms of injustices and inequalities, retains its power although the central/Western conception of the movement cannot hold its claim on universality anymore.

The power of 'the principle of hope,' which can be inferred from historical observations, is not likely to wane but to assume new forms, surviving under different guises. In fact, this principle relies on the human being's ancient longings, such as freedom, equality, justice, abundance, etc. Feminist utopian thought has also relied upon similar principles like equal rights, equal pay, which look like relatively attainable goals when compared to, for example, two very problematic issues like equality and freedom. Yet, in the recent state of feminist thought, the latest changes that have exerted their influence upon the women's right movement(s) have also broadened the perspective of feminist imagination and thus the spectrum of demands, so much so that the possible corollaries of the new feminist utopian thought even include a complete replacement of the greater patriarchal system and changes that aim to 'rewrite' the male sex and normative ideas about sexual differentiation, i.e. heterosexuality, as well.

The future of feminist utopian thought indeed relies on its capacity to incorporate these new theories in gender and sex studies – like the ones that imagine the contingencies of a sexless society – and to renovate its literary devices and narrative qualities so as to appeal to different minds that always feel the pressing need for imagining a 'better' world not only for women but, through the amelioration of women's condition, for all sexes as well. The ongoing search for a utopian horizon in feminist thought is thus not feminism's concern only; it has indeed become a greater responsibility of utopian feminism to imagine a framework that may challenge patriarchy, which has incarcerated not only women but, in fact, men as well. Since the common betterment of society has always relied on the betterment of conditions under which women have lived, it should not be surprising to claim that feminist utopianism may now carry the standard of utopian thought into the twenty-first century as a greater project that has transformed its struggle from a strictly anti-

patriarchal woman-oriented Western approach into a new one that attempts to transgress the dominant sexual categorizations (and thus heterosexuality), one that voices different questions and problems of different women (from all around the world), and one that tries to offer challenging alternatives to patriarchy. Although alternatives to the social, economic, and philosophical 'norms' of our times are scorned in the present state of affairs, feminist utopianism, if it can follow its streak of development towards becoming an alternative voice, may in fact ripen and bear its fruits under the new material conditions of the twenty-first century; for the last two centuries witnessed the birth of an organized feminist movement, and now, this matured movement, welcoming contributions from miscellaneous fields of studies and from different cultures of the world, may present a new theory of utopian thought that may herald the advent of a different perspective in utopianism.

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