The evolution of mothering:
Images & impact of the mother-figure in feminist utopian science-fiction

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Submitted: March, 1994

A Thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the Master's Degree (MA)

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Abstract: Within the latitude of a science-fictional elsewhere and elsewhen, women can establish their own social norms and accepted praxis Where the world of patriarchy is questioned, contradicted and remodelled, so are the norms and conducts of the participants involved in 'mothering' By definition SF must incorporate the element of estrangement, hence it may eradicate boundaries which when studied from the perspective of a point-zero empirical spacetime can only be blurred, analyzed, or depicted as inevitable The modifications encountered in alternate feminist spacetimes specifically incorporate many new ideologies concerning motherhood Central to this discussion is the means by which feminist authors regard the influences of patriarchal institutions and the subsequent changes in society because of, or in spite of, these changes The male-dominated fields of technological patriarchy (reproduction and fertility "specialists") and the military, for example, are areas upon which feminist authors speculate Three feminist strategies for coping with a patriarchal social order, as seen in the works of science-fiction, are entrance into the male world and attempts to change it, competition in the patriarchal world on its own terms and total retreat from an oppressive society, accompanied by the creation of a feminist utopian otherworld These feminist spacetimes share a number of convictions Most important, conception is never an unwilled experience The "maternal instinct", is redefined as a calling which, in some cases, extends to males and non-biological mothers Traits that are salient in the child raisers are those which are mirrored by these alternate feminist spacetimes as a whole and which contribute to the definition of these societies as utopias The treatment and/or possession of children as property is frowned upon in the novels Some points of dissent amongst feminist SF authors include the existence of technology in a utopian or dystopian future for motherhood, and whether or not males are permitted and/or encouraged to participate in society as a whole and more precisely in the experience of mothering The dystopia, for its part, can thus be regarded as a warning against the encroachment of rampant patriarchal enterprises through their representation of the extrapolation of male-centred value systems

Résumé: Afin d'établir leurs propres normes et conduites, les femmes doivent oeuvrer en des temps et des espaces différents À cet époque où le patriarcat est de plus en plus remis en question, contredit et remodelé, autant le sont les normes de conduite de ceux ou celles assumant le rôle de mère La SF doit en définition intégrer le dépaysement complet, elle peut de plus donner un tout nouveau sens aux frontières actuelles Les espaces-temps alternatifs féministes offrent plusieurs nouvelles idéologies de la maternité Les points de mire de cette discussion sont certainement les regards que posent les auteurs féministes sur les influences que provoquent les institutions patriarcales ainsi que sur leurs conséquences sur nos sociétés La technologie et le militarisme, depuis toujours prédominés par les hommes, sont des domaines où les auteurs féministes n'ont pu que spéculer Nous retrouvons trois stratégies souvent utilisées dans les ouvrages de SF pour faire face a une société patriarcale soit de s'infiltrer dans le monde de l'homme et de tenter de le changer, combattre ces derniers avec leurs propres armes et se retirer totalement d'une société oppressive en recréant un nouveau monde utopique féministe Ces espaces-temps féministes ont tous en commun un certain nombre de convictions La prédominance cependant est que l'expérience de la conception n'est jamais un vécu non-consenti "L'instinct maternel" est plutôt redéfini comme étant un "appel a la maternité", quelques fois même extrapolé aux mâles et aux mères adoptives Les traits caractéristiques maternels sont reproduits au niveau de la société entière, ce qui explique que l'on qualifie d'utopique ces espaces-temps féministes Le traitement infligé aux enfants en tant que possession ou propriété est écarté de ces romans Quelques aspects divergent cependant d'un auteur féministe à l'autre concernant le futur technologique de la maternité dans une utopie ou dystopie ainsi que la question, à savoir si le mâle sera encouragé ou du moins s'il aura la permission ou non de participer activement a la société ou plus précisément à la maternité La dystopie, par conséquent, peut être un regard averti sur l'appropriation effrénée qu'exerce l'entreprise patriarcale Elle représente l'extrapolation de l'endoctrinement patriarcal

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I owe a debt of gratitude to my supervisor, Professor Sarah Westphal, who, with her otherworldly patience, brilliant insight and invaluable comments, saw this thesis through to completion with the iron fist of a scholar... in the velvet glove of a mother.

Thank you to my colleagues, Grégoire Rochon and Marlène Paquin, who provided the necessary "other dimension", for professionalism and loyalty.

To Tom Kosatsky, MD, thank you for extremely useful comments and medical contextualization.

I am also grateful to Nicholas Sloboda and Ronald Zajak for guidance and direction in the final stretch!

Last but not least, thank you to Shayne, Ripleigh, Ming and my father, Maurice LaPerrière, who never let me down and who had faith all the way.

This thesis is for my own unique, precious, brilliant mother, Mariette Cloutier (to whom I owe my verbal skills!)...

and to my little brother Mark.

INTRODUCTION
THE MATERNAL FACTOR : IMAGES AND IMPACT ON UTOPIAN FEMINIST SCIENCE FICTION

"Simple, quite simple," Mother says, gently stroking her sleeping whoofie. "Our colony will be called Cybele. Explain Minerva."

I reply: "In antiquity, Cybele was the symbol of universal motherhood. She was a Greek-Roman deity known as Great Mother of the Gods, and special emphasis was placed upon her maternity over wild nature. She was also known as Mountain Mother, and her sanctuaries were on mountains and in caves."

"Excellent," Mother says. "Simply excellent." (96)

In Daughters of a Coral Dawn by Katherine V. Forrest, Mother, a beautiful, resourceful native of Verna III smuggled to Earth by an enamoured space-crew chief produces nine daughters simultaneously, and proceeds to organize an expedition to a planet they name Maternas, to found a new, woman-only world. This maternal motif develops into the foundation of a spacetime suited to a new world for women. For this and many more authors of feminist utopian science-fiction, happiness for women is not of this world and not of this time. For them, Earth's inter-sex conflicts are too severe and too ineradicable to convey a woman-centred existence. Realism is ruled out. These writers create their alternate realities. Male centred science-fiction often espouses the notion of paternalistic deities as Original Producer. In Forrest's case, however, the cell nucleus of generations of precocious and phenomenally intelligent girls is Mother. The

almighty Mother is respected and revered by her thousands of descendants. She is both mother as spiritual deity and mother as fertility symbol and generative force

Feminist science-fiction writers have sought to understand the limitations of conventional symbolism Many would maintain, for example, that Motherhood, in Western society, has been fashioned and fabricated by men to suit a multitude of purposes The physical aspect of motherhood (i e. pregnancy, parturition, breastfeeding), although ostensibly an experience unique to women, has been appropriated by men and channelled for patriarchal experiences Non-literary evidence of this appropriation can be found in the birth ritual amongst the men of certain warlike peoples, in the metaphoricity and symbolism of the language of the military, as well as in what is fast becoming common gynaecological practice [1] As well, fabricated images of the "mother" range from Hansel and Gretel's wicked stepmother to the madonna-like perfection of June Cleaver in the 1950's television series *Leave It to Beaver* Conventional literature is replete with images such as these.

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[1] Nancy Huston, "The Matrix of War: Mothers and Heroes," The Female Body in Western Culture, ed. Susan Rubin Suleiman (London, Cambridge, MA Harvard UP, 1986) 127. Huston points out how in Celtic folk tales, the suffering specific to giving birth is often equated to that felt by warriors She cites that this may be an *a posteriori* mythologization of the "couvade" ritual, whereby feminine corporeal signs are appropriated by men through mimicry of pregnancy, labour or menstrual periods Carol Cohn takes this parallel into the twenty-first century by examining how the language of maternity is put at the service of the military in the everyday practice of defense intellectuals (Carol Cohn, "Sex and Death in the Rational World of Defence Intellectuals," Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society 12 4 (1987): 687-718) This will be examined more closely in Chapter 2 A third example is the way in which woman's capacity to conceive and give birth is being replicated by the new reproductive technologies as they are exploited by the medical establishment, a topic that will be explored in Chapter 1.

Recent research, however, reveals that motherhood was not always as negative as current media may suggest. For example, in "Myth and Matriarchy", Leah Zahler explains that, "In the hunting tradition . men were dominant and women often severely oppressed, in the planting cultures, with their myth of the killed and dismembered divine being whose death caused the growth of food plants, goddess-worship predominated, and possibly matriarchy" (27) As well, Erich Neumann's concept of the Jungian archetype of the great mother" and Friedrich Engel's theory of *Mutterrecht* have given feminist researchers, if not solid historical data, at least inspiration to establish a new ideological perspective. In articulating the need to explore this alternate view, Leah Zahler insists that "the question, especially for women artists but finally for all women who are looking for their traditions, is not, "Did matriarchy exist?" but rather, "How do we discover our feelings about it and create the tradition we need, whatever it may be?" (30). This has been answered by feminist authors who, at times, turn patriarchal society on its head, replicating its faults and inequalities within a matriarchal framework so as to point out the extent of its oppressiveness.[2] By and large however, the matriarchal societies that feminist authors have created and displaced to other spaces and times present a utopian alternative to a reality which they feel is irreconcilable to a mother-positive ideology Within the present reality, women are, by and large, the only sex to participate in child-rearing. For example, our "now-time" ideology and praxis fails to recognize child rearing as being a function separate and distinct from child-bearing.

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[2] For example, Gerd Brantenberg's Daughters of Egalia from Norway and Katherine Burdekin's The End of This Day's Business from England.

Nancy Chodorow criticizes both the bioevolutionary argument and the "maternal instinct" or "drive" theory that would join these two functions The former postulates that sexual division of labour is a primary requirement in a society where hunting is in compatible with child-rearing. According to this theory, the physiological demands placed upon the pregnant, parturient or lactating woman render her inapt for hunting, a social function which may come to be perceived as essential for the survival of the community The latter maintains that there exists a "primary reproductive drive" and "instinctual need" to mother. In short, it argues for the existence of some sort of hormonal, physiological basis for women's mothering. She concludes that through a lack of supportive evidence on either side, woman's nearly-exclusive mothering role is a product of a "social and cultural translation of their childbearing and lactation capacities [and] is guaranteed or entailed by these capacities themselves" (30) How a person parents is largely determined by that person's childhood experiences and conflicts. Through cultural dictates, women are tied to their functions as mothers through their pregnancy and lactation functions, not through any "instinct" or "drive" which pushes them into these functions Women's mothering does not exist in isolation. It is instead reproduced within a division of labour which in itself produces gender differences. Thus men and women are engendered with particular personalities, needs and capacities.

When an infant is born, it lacks the ego capacities to mediate and provide its environment. These are provided by the caretaker (usually the mother) whom the infant comes to experience as merged or continuous (primary identification) The infant only feels dependent on the mother when it feels separation frustration. Chodorow points to

the work of other psychoanalysts who maintain that infants have a primary need for contact in and of itself. This attachment develops with respect to the person who is the infant's primary caretaker. It is this attachment and the infant's growing ability to experience her as separate, for example, through the act of leaving and returning physically to the caretaker, which is a prototype for later objects experienced as separate, i.e., relationships. This permits the child to gain feelings of independence through mastery of its environment and greater equality in relationship, thus providing a solid basis for future relationships (72).

Interestingly, however, there has never been any reliable data confirming that a child must be mothered primarily by a birth mother. Rather, Chodorow maintains that the historical cross-cultural norm points to instances where children are reared by, and have formed an ongoing bond with, a small number of people, in an extended family, for example, or playmates and teachers in a daycare centre.

Such a historical concept functions as a fundamental organizing principle in the feminist SF utopias that I consider in this thesis. By postulating different spacetimes in which to define the new dynamics of parenting, SF authors show how what we have taken for granted as "normal" is but a historically-specific mother-child relationship of a particular intensity and exclusivity, as well as the infantile development that this relationship produces. What these authors have seen, as Chodorow remarks, is that exclusive mothering is not necessarily better for infants. It is, however, "better for society" (70).

Exploring the relationship of the mother and the child in more detail, Chodorow

lays the foundation for all the child's subsequent relationships. Her love for the mother is originally love without a sense of reality, as it is experienced in the early relationship as pre- or non-social. The relationship with the father, by contrast, is (in Chodorow's words) "under the sway of reality" (80). Hence, the father comes to represent culture and society to the child. Thus, to the child, social experience *is* its confounded identity with its mother. The ability to parent an infant is to a large extent the result of having experienced this kind of relationship as an infant, and being able to regress to the psychological state of this experience, in order to remain an adult. Chodorow explains how, on a theoretical level, boys *or* girls who have participated in a satisfying mother-child relationship have the emotional capacity for parenting (87).

Yet most psychoanalysts do not move analytically past the fact that the parenting capacities residing in both genders are called up only in women. The development and dynamics of the oedipal complex in the infantile period call upon and inform different psychological reactions, needs and experiences, which obliterate or limit the parental capacity in boys and extend it in girls.

Due to the dynamics of the oedipal and post-oedipal parent-child relationship, and the female infant's continuous connectedness to the mother as opposed to the male infant's separation, the basic feminine sense of self is connected to the world; the basic masculine sense of self is separate. Chodorow cites Zilboorg, who shows that the primacy of the mother-child bond may provide narcissistic and sadistic motives for the father to establish sexual control over women when he feels his primacy is threatened. Children, Zilboorg argues, awakened not feelings of tender paternity but feelings of

resentment at intrusion: "These are the deep phylogenetic roots of that hostility which even the civilized father of today harbours against his own offspring. The unconscious hostility against one's own children is well nigh a universal clinical finding among men" (123).

There exist widespread mythic exemplifications of this theory, reflecting major contradictions in male life concerning the replacement of a man by his son, and his (always to some extent) uncertain paternity. I contend that this attempt to certify paternity, while fully subscribing to the ethics and ideology of a patriarchal hierarchy, is a frequently recurring topos in feminist SF, more precisely, spacetimes depicting a feminist *dystopia.* In dystopic works of fiction, regardless of whether the father-son relationship is seen as the ultimate positive association, or whether it possesses negative connotations and must give way to the destruction of father or son, mothers of sons are perceived as breeders and carriers of the father's glory and future, his seed. Women are little more than their gestational capacity, or they are completely denigrated in their biological motherhood and quickly separated from their male offspring so as to destroy any semblance of familial contact and to avoid the possibility of a future disastrous confrontation between "natural rivals," i.e., the father, and the son who will rob him of his primacy. Novels illustrating this outlook include *The Gate to Women's Country, Walk to the End of the World* and *Swastika Night.* The first two are dealt with in this thesis.

A related issue that feminist SF writers address concerns the crucial differences between masculine and feminine personalities that emerge as products of women's mothering. These writers present arguments which parallel a theoretical psychoanalytical

foundation. For example, woman's inner object world and the affects and issues associated with it are more actively sustained than man's. This means that women experience themselves relationally (207). That is, while feminine personality is based more on retention and continuity of external relationships, boys define themselves as separate and distinct, with rigid ego boundaries. Chodorow explains: "The basic feminine sense of self is connected to the world, the basic masculine sense of self is separate" (169). This is made evident in SF as old as Charlotte Perkins Gilman's Herland (1915), where explorers chance upon an all-female society living communally, raising baby girls in extended families, or as recent as Suzy McKee Charnas' Motherlines (1978), which depicts several families of women descending from a founding Mother. Notable in McKee Charnas' novel is the nearby Holdfast society, where a military ethic reigns and the men live in perpetual fear of meeting their "sires" and having to engage in the ultimate "to-the-death" conflict. The only women present in this society are the "dams" who are kept in separate quarters, used for breeding purposes only, women both hated and feared by the men. Men tend to deny identification with their mothers and with what they understand to be "the feminine." In general terms, where the feminine identification is relational, the masculine deals more with the cultural, with the abstract role-learning as opposed to personal identification.

The male adult who resents the mother's primacy with respect to her children and her power over them also carries, internalized within his psyche, the infant's need and fear of merging with his mother. His quest for reunification with her is expressed and fulfilled in his adult life through coitus with women. However, because of the intimate

nature of the coital/return-to-the-womb bond, the man's unresolved "natural contempt" for women, and his firmly established personal boundaries, this carnal union makes problematic the very nature of heterosexual liaisons. This postulate is expressed in feminist works of SF either through the glaring absence of men from women's utopias, as in Joan Slonczewski's A Door Into Ocean, or through the use of reproductive technologies coupled with alternative societies so as to avoid the problematic power struggle understood in heterosexual conception, birth and parenting, as shown in Marge Piercy's Woman On the Edge of Time.

In creating a new society, feminist SF clearly utilizes, as a starting point, Chodorow's principle that

> ...traditional child development has often held that children need parenting from one person only. But recent research suggests that children need consistency of care and the ability to relate to a small number of people stably over time. They do not require an exclusive relationship to one person. Historically, children have rarely been cared for exclusively by a biological mother, and recent studies of day care suggest that what is important is the quality of the day care and of the time spent with parents...My view is that exclusive parenting is bad for mother and child alike (217).

In order to eliminate the demand for exclusive mothering, feminist SF writers formulate a society with a completely differentiated ethics of parenting and, hence, a remodelled means of production. The mothering of children thus unshackles the individual from

dependence on others, and servitude to the needs of the young, as this is a function not performed by one exclusive biological mother, but by a small group of people whose skills are those of parenting, and who do so as, in empirical world vocabulary, a "career." In this thesis, I will demonstrate how, in order to develop fully such a possible world, some authors distance their characters spatially (Ursula LeGuin for instance, shifts from Earth to Anarres) or temporally (Marge Piercy jumps from the twentieth to the twenty-second century).

I will also point out how the central novum of the created spacetime is often depicted in the way these authors re-produce reproduction. On Anarres, LeGuin's fictional utopian planet, for example, human values have shifted so that pregnancy and parturition are seen as phenomenally important, and physically demanding, work. In Marge Piercy's utopian Mattapoisett, machines incubate and give birth to babies in a twenty-second century society where women have traded their "power" to create life for "no more power for anyone". In a community such as Piercy's, humans are free to partake in any kind of work which they find fulfilling, and motherhood is only one more career category. Other feminist SF authors have chosen to relocate women to different loci. In examining such strategies, I will consider how Katherine V. Forrest, Joanna Russ and Suzy McKee Charnas invent man-killing plagues, diseases or male auto-destruction so as to avoid the problematic dynamics of shifting woman-fearing values, or eradicating sexist, misogynist ones, inherited and developed over time.

No matter which type of utopian spacetime I explore, not one feminist author recreates the commonly accepted, exclusive mother-child relationship. They choose

instead to subscribe to a mode of society where, as Chodorow seems to recommend, a child is raised by a small group of people, thereby rendering obsolete the problematic present-time method of parenting which Chodorow feels is bad for mother and child alike and replaces it with an option which turns mothering into a positive experience. For instance, in Russ' Whileaway "A family of thirty persons may have as many as four mother and child pairs in the common nursery at one time" (50). Or, in McKee Charnas' Holdfaster Tent family, "Women said it was best not to let this powerful connection (between newborn daughter and mother) unbalance all the other relationships that guided the two lives" (204). Piercy successfully juxtaposes the ethics of the new parenthood as it is experienced in Mattapoisett with the need of Connie (Piercy's twentieth-century time-traveller) to prove her worth as a mother, to get and to give affection and fulfilment by (in Chodorow's terms) triangulating with Bee, a man from the twenty-second century, and the baby she is assigned to mother. The narrator describes this scene:

> "Birth! Birth! Birth!" Luciente seemed to sing in her ear. "That's all you can dream about! Our dignity comes from work. Everyone raises the kids, haven't you noticed? Romance, sex, birth, children--that's what you fasten on. Yet that isn't women's business anymore. It's everybody's" (251).

Overall, I will argue that while feminist SF writers utilize the language and tenets of feminist psychoanalysis to provide insight into issues such as why women have suffered the trials and tribulations, socially and domestically, of motherhood, these writers nonetheless extend beyond such analyses. In their extrapolations, they depict a

world freed of these strictures. For example, Marge Piercy uses a time traveller, Consuelo Ramos, as agent of a late twentieth-century maternal praxis as it is experienced by a working-class Chicana in the United States. As a woman and as a single mother in the twentieth century, Consuelo has the sole responsibility of bringing up her daughter, a task at which she fails. Piercy takes Connie into the twenty-third century where she is introduced to a society whose customs and ideology would have permitted Consuelo to fulfil herself as a woman as well as raise her daughter in a setting of compassion and support.

By contrast, in much of mainstream fiction and male science-fiction, metaphors abound in which the female experiences of conception, childbearing, and giving birth reinforce stereotypes of women's 'ultimate experience'. In fact, through the ages the maternal body has been the site of male experiential exploration, leaving women very little space in which to study, define, or question themselves in their role as mother. In recent decades, social and biological motherhood has been re-viewed, redefined and challenged in literature. Science fiction, especially feminist SF, has provided a forum *par excellence* in which to confront traditional and/or patriarchal visions of motherhood.

In order to study these restructured, woman-centred concepts of society more fully, I wish to take as my starting point the definition of SF writing as "a literary genre whose necessary and sufficient conditions are the presence and interaction of estrangement and cognition, and whose main formal device is an imaginative framework alternative to the author's empirical environment" (Suvin 8). Because this framework may be situated in an imaginary space and/or time, women-centred territories can be

explored which have, until now, remained uncharted or only obliquely studied in traditional mainstream fiction. As Marlene Barr maintains in Alien to Femininity: Speculative Fiction and Feminist Theory, "Because these [feminist] writers are not hindered by the constraints of patriarchal social reality, they can imagine presently impossible possibilities for women. Their genre is ideally suited for exploring the potential of women's changing roles" (xi).

Within the latitude of a science-fictional elsewhere and elsewhen, it is woman's prerogative to establish her own social norms and accepted praxis . And, in this setting where the world of patriarchy is questioned, contradicted and remodelled (and sometimes turned on its head), so are the norms and conducts of the participants involved in 'mothering'. By definition, SF must incorporate the element of estrangement; hence it may eradicate boundaries which, when studied from the perspective of a point-zero empirical spacetime, can only be blurred, analyzed, or depicted as inevitable. The modifications encountered in alternate feminist spacetimes specifically incorporate many new ideologies concerning motherhood. Central to this discussion is the means by which feminist authors regard the influences of patriarchal institutions and the subsequent changes in society because of, or in spite of, these changes. The male-dominated fields of religious patriarchy (organized or male-centred religions), technological patriarchy (reproduction and fertility "specialists") and the military, for example, are areas upon which feminist authors speculate.

Feminist positionality within a masculinist framework naturally subtends the interaction of the two spheres in certain areas, such as family and heterosexual

relationships, while positing the existence of parallel, yet disparate cultures. I will show that possible worlds for feminist utopists are built according to three feminist strategies for coping with a patriarchal social order. First, we encounter competition in the patriarchal world on its own terms, a solution which is also present in our empirical spacetime. The second solution is entrance into the male world and "subversive" attempts to change it. Last, and perhaps most radically, is total retreat from a society which is oppressive to women, accompanied by the creation of a feminist utopian otherworld.

Furthermore, in the chapters that follow, I will indicate how in the midst of creating or maintaining a feminist utopian society, the inhabitants of this created locus share a number of convictions. Most important, conception is never an unwilled experience, but always something which occurs in the best of circumstances. Secondly, we encounter redefinition of the controversial "maternal instinct" as a calling which, in some cases, extends to males and non-biological mothers. Infants and toddlers are raised by those "specialized" in mothering, and it is made clear that not every woman has the aptitude or the desire to mother successfully. Furthermore, traits that are salient in the child-raisers (i.e. the "mothers") are those which are mirrored by these alternate feminist spacetimes as a whole and which contribute to the definition of these societies as utopias. In fact, the novels affirm that the possibility of exploring alternative birthing and child-rearing methods (i.e. technology, oogenesis, etc.) depends on a social framework of compassion, cooperation, and community. There is emphasis on the adoptive facet of motherhood, although the privilege and mysticism of the physical birth experience is

never denied. Finally, the treatment and/or possession of children as property is frowned upon in the novels.

Some points of dissent amongst feminist SF authors include the presentation of technology in a utopian or dystopian future for motherhood, and whether or not males are permitted and/or encouraged to participate in society as a whole and more precisely in the experience of mothering. The dystopia, for its part, can thus be regarded as a warning against the encroachment of rampant patriarchal enterprises by showing how they can constitute a theoretical support to the premises of the feminist utopia through their role as a representation of the extrapolation of male-centred value systems.

In Chapter One, I will show how the medical establishment, and more precisely the area of the New Reproductive Technologies, is fast becoming one such patriarchal value-system. I will draw from works of such scholars of medical ethics as Gena Corea and Robyn Rowland in order to draw attention to the impact of the NRTs on mothers in our "real world". Secondly, I will demonstrate how feminist SF extrapolates on what is now common practice with respect to the NRTs and either incorporates it within a feminist vision of motherhood, or condemns it to different degrees.

Chapter Two will focus on another male-centred value system, that of the military. In this chapter, I will point out how values inherent in, and necessary to, a military ethics function counterproductively to the feminist utopia and even operate as major elements of the feminist dystopia, insofar as the values of war promote that which is opposite of creating life, i.e. manufacturing death.

In conclusion, I will distinguish between "hard" and "soft" SF. I will indicate the

dominant characteristics of both and how feminist visions of dys/utopia pertain to each sub-genre.

CHAPTER 1
REPRODUCING REPRODUCTION: THE NEW REPRODUCTIVE TECHNOLOGIES IN REALITY AND IN MATTAPOISETT

This chapter will examine more closely the association between motherhood and the NRTs as it is portrayed in six works of feminist utopian and dystopian science-fiction. These works are Marge Piercy's Woman on the Edge of Time, Zoe Fairbairns' Benefits, Suzy McKee Charnas' Walk to the End of the World and Motherlines, Joanna Russ' The Female Man, and Joan Slonczewski's A Door Into Ocean. I begin my argument with a brief overview of motherhood as a primary biological function accomplished by women, the new reproductive technologies as they are controlled by men, and the relationship between the two.

The reproduction of the human species has, until now, undeniably been a function accomplished by women. While the experience of childbirth is for men a discontinued process, Mary O'Brien points out how biologically reproducing children is, for women, a continuum established by what she calls the "moments of the reproductive process".[1] These are the "moments" of menstruation, ovulation, copulation, alienation, conception, gestation, labour, birth, appropriation and nurture. Anything affecting this capacity at one or several of these moments has an impact on her, be it negative or positive, and this is witnessed in the application of the NRTs, which affect female biological reproduction by interrupting it and/or modifying it at one or several moments. Although the use of this

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[1] Among these "moments", O'Brien maintains that appropriation and alienation are the only two which belong entirely to the male. Copulation and nurture are "genderically" shared moments; all of the others are uniquely women's moments.

technology is constantly monitored and, to a certain extent, guided by ethics and public opinion, it is developed and promoted by private enterprises, rendering it an commercial venture.[2]

As witnessed in newspapers, academic journals and government reports, the NRTs have immense commercial significance. The newest of the "new" reproductive technologies are presently being administered according to the postulates and financial proposals of big business.[3] Women have often stood on the sidelines with respect to the megarealms of both business and technology. Today, the NRTs threaten to make women, once more, passive recipients of technology. This technology (especially in its invasive capacity), as the tool of a patriarchal enterprise, will make woman the object of its research and development. Woman's relationship to this technology (or, as I shall show, lack of it) is taken up and fully developed and critiqued in the pages of feminist science fiction by authors who view the NRTs as salvation or condemnation

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[2] Literature on the NRTs, be it from medical journals or the pages of feminist criticism, all point to the generous grants allotted to the research and development of the NRTs from the private sector when the government fails to provide or approve funds for research, as in the case of the experimentation which led to the birth of Louise Brown It is therefore easy to contradict the claims of altruism and concern manifested by many of the pioneers of the NRTs. It is also noteworthy to mention the apparent failure of surrogacy programmes in places where it is illegal for women to be remunerated for the function of contract childbirth.

[3] Some of the "new" reproductive technologies on the market today are extrapolations of practices which women have known for centuries. One example is the "turkey baster" method of artificial insemination, is a simple process realized with simple instruments. A precursor of this reproductive technology is surrogate motherhood, encountered in the bible when a barren Rachel appeals to her handmaid, Bilhah, to bear a child for Jacob (refer to Genesis, 30.1-7).

These authors develop their views by portraying three different kinds of possible worlds. The first depicts a utopian society where the NRTs have led not only to a new possibility and ease of reproduction, but also to better conditions of child-bearing and rearing. The second, more common society is the strictly anti-technological utopia where maternal values and principles can only exist at the exclusion of all (or a large part of) technology. Lastly, SF authors may present a locus where technology acts as a social fulcrum to a *dystopia* for women.

In the first two instances, there is a fair measure of exposition and extrapolation of the technology already present in our empirical spacetime. Evidence of this can be seen by comparing the pro-technology science fiction of Marge Piercy, who largely follows the first option, with the scientific insights of Kary Mullis, a well-known biochemist. In Piercy's 1976 novel, Woman on the Edge of Time, the protagonist, Consuelo Ramos, comments on the technology of *in-vitro* fertilization, i.e., "test-tube babies" a technique which, in Piercy's probable world, has already become ordinary.[4]

> "Be guest to what I comprend was a nightmare of your age!"
>
> "Bottle babies!"
>
> "No bottles involved. But fasure we're all born from here...Here embryos are growing almost ready to birth. We do that at ninemonth plus two or three weeks. Sometimes we wait tenmonth. We find that extra time gives

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[4] *Woman on the Edge of Time* was written in 1976, nearly two decades ago, and a full two years before anyone ever witnessed the production of an actual human "test-tube baby". The birth of Louise Brown on July 25, 1978 paved the way for the NRTs to follow, technologies in development which are the focus of feminist resistance today and which Piercy describes as a "nightmare of your age".

> us stronger babies." He pressed a panel and a door slid aside, revealing seven human babies joggling slowly upside down, each in a sac of its own inside a larger fluid receptacle. All in a sluggish row, babies bobbed. Mother the machine (101).

Similarly Mullis, in an interview with Liversidge, a reporter for the magazine Omni, in April 1992, discusses artificial reproduction by cloning.[5]

> "How feasible is cloning a whole human today?"
>
> "If there weren't a law against it we could do it in an apartment. We'd have to get a woman who'd let us get some eggs. The mechanisms are fairly sophisticated on paper, but the actual manipulations you do are not hard at all. You just put a drop of this on that, do such and such, check for X, stick it back into some kind of thing, and grow it up. They make transgenetic mice now routinely. Anything you can do with a person, if a person, the Catholic church and the law allow it" (89).

Although the bottle baby of the quote from Piercy and the human clone described in the interview with Kary Mullis are situated at different stages in the gestational process, both are presented as subjects of genetic and reproductive manipulation. As far as we know, neither is yet part of our reality. Nonetheless, the cloning process being contemplated and developed by Mullis is described in 1992. The interview is between

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[5] Publication of an article on the NRTs in a pop-science magazine such as *Omni* only serves to emphasize the extent of the public's fascination with artificial human reproduction. The NRTs are becoming the realization of what had been confined to the pages of (male) science-fiction for so long.

a reporter for the magazine and Kary Mullis, a biochemist famous for his discovery and practical application of PCR, polymerase chain reaction, dubbed "the amazing DNA maker", which he later sold to a private enterprise.[6] To some, the knowledge that PCR, a product which can "diagnose genetic problems in human eggs and embryos" now belongs to a profit-oriented company causes some concern. The problematic aspect goes above and beyond any fiscal consideration. More than likely, in any corporate endeavour, the commodification of a product or service is at stake. In any discussion of human eggs and embryos, the fact is that women and their potential children are objects of barter. Whether the person is referred to as "subject", "maternal environment", "gestational medium", or a host of other clinical euphemisms, the one being dosed, cut into and extracted from is woman. Mr. Mullis' discovery is yet another foray into the exceedingly lucrative threshold of what has come to be known as the New Reproductive Technologies.[7]

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[6] In October, 1993, Kary Mullis and Michael Smith became co-winners of the Nobel Prize in Chemistry.

[7] In Canada, financial interest and ethical complications were increasing so rapidly that a committee was appointed to study the research, development and use of the New Reproductive Technologies. The Royal Commission on the New Reproductive Technologies, also known as the Baird Report, was made public on November 31, 1993, in a manner which many reporters deemed controversial. Six journalists were permitted to read the 1275-page document one day before it was made public, however, the chair of the committee, Patricia Baird, did not allow a press conference but rather allotted 15-minute private interviews. Other committee members were not at liberty to comment. The lengthy report, which was funded by the government at a cost of 28,2 million, did not give a summary of its recommendations. In general, the Baird Commission advocated the criminalization of practices such as cloning, in-vitro foetal development, human-animal hybrids, obtaining ova from a foetus, the sale of foetal tissue, sperm, and foetuses and paid maternal surrogacy. Sex selection is indicated only for serious medical reasons.

Individual feminists and woman-centred organizations have focused more and more on the presence and consequences of the New Reproductive Technologies in women's lives. Although a certain measure of success in the application of the NRTs is now part of our reality, as in the case of IVF (in-vitro fertilization), a true appraisal of the consequences can only be realized when the actual subjects (especially women) and products (for example, the "test-tube babies") are numerous enough to provide valid biostatistical inferences. Until then, it is impossible to judge the impact of these technologies from a psycho- or sociological point of view.[8] Research dealing with this topic presents the facts in an objective, academic, non-polemical manner. For example, the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women (1992) tells us that "...in the same year that Canadian government funding agencies spent 3.5 million on basic NRT research, only slightly over 400 000 was spent on public health and health services research activities related to reproductive disorders" (24). With statistics akin to these as supporting evidence, feminist authors of SF, with extrapolative license and a clear mandate to foreshadow and forewarn, lead us into their visions of the future or alternative spaces and times. Such settings thus provide the opportunity to explore "dangers" which these authors foresee, dangers which are for the most part unknown, which stops us from even attempting to imagine them. Herein perhaps lies one of SF authors' greatest responsibilities, namely, taking the consequences of the New

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[8] Even this measure of success is debatable: Linda S. Williams places it at 12.9%, Gena Corea does so at lower than 20%, and the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women provides a chart showing successes varying between 1.5 and 30% depending on the clinic.

Reproductive Technologies to their logical conclusion. In this way, SF becomes a tool of futurological research. It shows us possible and probable technological developments and their uses in a future as it might be experienced by its inhabitants. The functionalist discourse of the medocrats is of little interest to women whose empirical spacetime rarely, if ever, intersects the laboratory progress of those in control.[9] In this context, the individual lives of women seem to get crushed beneath the rampant technology machine. As Mullis says himself, "[There is] absolutely no reason to think businessmen are going to behave like philosophers. Fair is not business, and business will grow, despite nasties and crummies in your tummy, as Dr. Seuss said" (90).[10] The business of technology, unfortunately, constitutes a hegemony from which, very often, woman has been alienated. Woman's relationship to technology, for the most part, has been that of

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[9] This does not imply, in any way that women are incapable or uninterested in these sciences, or in the way they affect their bodies. However, because much of this research is conducted behind doors generally closed to the public, being considered 'classified' information, many women are not aware of these developments until they are being practised in their own backyards. And because women most likely to be used as guinea pigs are those most distanced from the academic community, it may be impossible for them to filter through the reams of bureaucracy to understand how, exactly, this new technology implicates them. Feminist SF thus translates this information into a practical and (possibly) applied form, drawing on women's multitudinous backgrounds in order to make these topics more accessible.

Gena Corea's neologism, "medocrats" is aptly used in this context, where those physicians dispensing "medical" care do so under the auspices of a lucrative capitalist venture.

[10] Mullis' statement implies resentment at the business deal by which he sold his invention and development of PCR to Cetus for $10,000 and which again changed ownership (to Hoffman-LaRoche) for 300 million dollars. This is an interesting replication of many aspects of patriarchal North American society where ethical concepts, understood and experienced by women, fail to affect men until their repercussions and outcomes translate into the language of business and finance.

passive recipient, where she is acted upon by technological and scientific change. This scientific knowledge is of itself subject to prevailing social norms and values.[11] The Western culture of technology embodies masculine values in its presentation as all-powerful and all-conquering. For example, Kathryn Strother Ratcliffe posits a "technological favouritism" which characterizes the United States health care system.

> ...it is heavily biased in favour of the use of technology to solve or to prevent medical problems; and second, there are strongly gendered values in both western technology and western medical practice that make this technological favouritism particularly problematic for women (173).

The history of science and technology, she explains, has shown how stereotypically male values such as control, distance, power, objectivity and domination are embodied within these two domains, and how these values promote invasive solutions to problems. Early writings in science and technology, she continues, incorporate sexual metaphors endowing science and technology with typical male traits while portraying the objects of science and technology as female. This use of gendered imagery, she states, "has distanced women from science and technology, but more importantly has produced a scientific and technological culture with an unbalanced value system" (174). Such values thus encourage controlling and invasive solutions to "problems" pertaining to nature and biology.

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[11] The notion of the representation of male values in technology and "hard" science-fiction will be dealt with at length in Chapter 3.

This notion of control, inherent in the NRTs, causes me some unrest in the way Marge Piercy depicts Mattapoisett as a feminist utopia. Woman On the Edge of Time, though written in 1976, is set in 2137, in the not-so-distant future. It is seen as a refreshing departure from our own present spacetime. For example, in 2137, experiences which in the twentieth century are perceived as deviant, abnormal, or perverted are shown to be, under the auspices of a remodelled social dynamic, fulfilling, life-affirming, and productive. Its protagonist, Consuelo Ramos, is incarcerated in an asylum in the 1970s where she suffers the black-outs responsible for her capacity as a "catcher', hence her mental projection from twentieth century New York to twenty-second century Mattapoisett. In Mattapoisett's quasi-pastoral setting, Connie is tempted to exclaim "More evolved!...I'd say things have gone backward!" Although technology is shown to be limited in scope, the facet of Woman On the Edge of Time that has attracted most critical comment is its portrayal of artificial reproduction.

One of the predominant characteristics of Mattapoisett (if not *the* central novum of the entire novel) is the baby-making machines, or "brooders".[12] This piece of equipment is much like the maternal body, from its aqueous environ to its "strange, contracting canal". Because of the distanciation from the flesh-and-blood maternity usually experienced by human females, "mothering" is everyone's option, and everyone who *chooses* to do so does it thoroughly. "If person didn't want to mother and you were a baby, you might not be loved enough to grow up loving and strong. Person must not

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[12]I am drawing upon Darko Suvin's definition of 'novum' as novelty or innovation, as in the definition: "...SF is distinguished by the narrative dominance or hegemony of a fictional "novum" (novelty, innovation) validated by cognitive logic" (63).

do what person cannot do" (101). Hormone injections permit men to breastfeed. This is a contentious point for Connie who, as she watches a man nursing a baby, feels robbed of her womanly birthright:

> He sat with the baby on a soft, padded bench by the windows and unbuttoned his shirt. Then she felt sick...He had breasts Not large ones. Small breasts, like a flat-chested woman temporarily swollen with milk Then with his red beard, his face of a 45-year-old man, stern-visaged, long-nosed, thin-lipped, he began to nurse...
>
> "I suppose you do it all with hormones," she said testily (134-135).

The anger which Connie feels reflects the feelings of powerlessness of a woman whose last vestiges of solace and comfort lie in her biological functions of reproduction and socially sanctioned function of nurturing. To her, this appropriation of woman's sphere by a man is nothing short of sacrilegious:

> How could anyone know what being a mother means who has never carried a child nine months heavy under her heart, who has never borne a baby in blood and pain, who has never suckled a child, who got that child out of a machine...All made up already, a canned child, just add money. What do they know of motherhood? (106)

Obviously, to Consuelo Ramos, the notion of motherhood is closely associated with its biological and parturitive elements. These are functions proper to woman, unique to woman, and which should be controlled and directed by woman.

In "Technology and Motherhood: Reproductive Choice Reconsidered", Robin Rowland points out that similarly, in the real world "...motherhood represented a power base from which to negotiate the terms of [women's] existence and survival. For many this is still the case" (513) This "power", with much of it stemming from male awe, fear and envy at the way woman can defy death by bleeding and continuing to live, and by giving life itself has bequeathed a variegated status to women.[13] And men, Rowland feels, have coveted that last of power. The notion of negotiation of power associated with the act of giving birth is one example of the conflict between men and women. Consequently, with this problematic asymmetry stemming from time immemorial and persisting until today, it is difficult to acknowledge that one hundred fifty years in the future will suffice to weaken this "control of birth" dilemma. Piercy does not deal with male-female conflictual dynamics, protracted into the twenty-second century, though, but merely postulates that ultimately, it was woman's obligation to abnegate her biological motherhood in order to ensure peace and equality in Mattapoisett, i.e. undo patriarchy:

> It was part of woman's long revolution. 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're biologically enchained, we'd never be equal. And males would never be humanized

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[13] Throughout the ages, the act of giving birth has endowed women with quasi-goddess status and it has lowered her to the nature/animal realm. Evidence of this can be found throughout literature and history. For a discussion of the "mother-of-God" figure as universal motherhood, refer to Margaret Miles, "The Virgin's One Bare Breast".

> to be loving and tender. So we all became mothers. Every child has three. To break the nuclear bonding" (105).

Piercy's use of the qualitative phrase "biologically enchained" shows her philosophy to be similar to that of Simone de Beauvoir (1949) and Shulamith Firestone (1970). For example, in Piercy's fiction and in Firestone's critical essay, both women voice their assumption that woman's oppression, in large part, stem from this biology of reproduction. In terms of modern technology, Firestone contends that

> ...a revolutionary ecological movement would have the same aim as the feminist movement: control of the new technology for humane purposes, the establishment of a beneficial "human" equilibrium between man and the new artificial environment he is creating, to replace the destroyed "natural" balance (193).

Both Piercy and Firestone feel that woman's natural self as it is expressed in her biology, hence in her capacity to give birth, has also paved the way for countless other associations which have served to "keep woman in her place". Still, while Piercy postulates the "giving up" of biological birthing, which may have included moments of pleasure, while Firestone feels that motherhood, as it is expressed in the act of biological birthing, is a negative experience:

> Pregnancy is barbaric...the temporary deformation of the body of the individual for the sake of the species. Moreover, child birth hurts. And it isn't good for you...The Bible said it: pain and travail ..Like shitting a pumpkin (198-99).

This is an echo of de Beauvoir who, twenty-one years previously, postulated the negative dimension of woman's "natural" role in procreation.

> ...contrairement à une théorie optimiste dont l'utilité sociale est trop évidente, la gestation est un travail fatiguant qui ne présente pas pour la femme un bénéfice individuel et éxige au contraire de lourds sacrifices (67).

Such a discussion of natural childbirth, i e., the biological process at the expense of women and at the exclusion of all technology, implies a more intimate connection between woman and nature, an association which has remained popular through the centuries. Sherry Ortner, for example, summarizes the association between woman and nature, as well as the tentacular reasoning issuing from it. She postulates that woman's body and its functions are more involved more of the time with 'species life' while man's physiology permits him to take up the projects of Culture more fully.

Twentieth-century North American society has typically advocated the use of technology to control nature. In general, men have been associated with this technology. The history of technology shows us that most projects involving engineering and construction have been spearheaded by men. These projects range from the most beneficial to the most detrimental, from the machinery necessary to erect a building, to instrumentation that probes the human body. It is conceivable that after conquering outer space, men would attempt to regulate inner space. Accordingly, man tries to control woman through her most natural function, that of reproduction. Where Woman creates nature, i.e., life, man creates the artificial means to control that nature. Firestone, bearing

this tendency in mind, foresees that the NRTs may be met with some confusion:

> ...often there is a more serious error: the misuse of scientific developments is very often confused with technology itself. .For, like atomic energy, fertility control, artificial reproduction, cybernation, in themselves are liberating,--unless they are improperly used (196).

It is this improper use of technology, experienced by many feminists today as a threat, that renders Woman On the Edge of Time problematic. For example, artificial reproduction is not inherently dehumanizing, but given humankind's history of the use, abuse and commodification of woman, the cultural contraindications to such a release of power are great. The research and development needed to perfect the NRTs has been and is being played out on the bodies of women who are further manipulated into their role by being persuaded that the techniques are the means to an end---a live birth.[14] Gena Corea comments upon this notion of consent, what she calls the "myth of voluntarism":

> Women are being coerced, but the coercion, which is emotional rather than physical, has been rendered invisible...The propaganda that women are nothing unless they bear children, that if they are infertile, they lose their most basic identity as women--has a coercive power It conditions a woman's choices as well as her *motivations* to choose Through a

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[14] Success rates in these clinics can be defined as whether or not pregnancy occurs in vitro, whether the fetus actually "takes" in the uterus and pregnancy occurs, whether or not a live baby was produced, etc. For a more detailed analysis of the methods of determination of success rates and applied statistics, see The Infertility Dilemma published by the Canadian Advisory Council on the status of women.

> manipulation of her anxieties, she comes to want what pharmacrats compel her to want (166 & 170).

The Firestonaeian ideal of technology as "the great equalizer" is not threatening in and of itself. It may even seem to carry the concept of birth control to its next logical extension; not only can women choose *when* to have a child, now they choose *how* they wish to enter parenthood. But were we to glance back at the effects of reproductive technology on women, we would see much angst in the wake of its advancement: the Pill, diethylstilbestrol (DES) and the intrauterine device (IUD) to name but a few.[15] Those familiar with the research and development of the phases leading to the techniques and drugs promoted today will therefore meet the NRTs with more resistance and will be less amenable to such notions.

Betty B. Hoskins and Helen Bequaert Holmes try to compromise by reconciling both sides of the debate, distinguishing the result as a "gynandrous" world:

> A gynandrous world, free of patriarchal habits...each child would be planned--as a child--and welcomed at birth as herself or himself. Roles would not be expected or applied. Technology would be appropriate, using

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[15] Complications and negative effects following use of the birth control pill have been widely documented in the medical literature. The risks women take in using the pill are often not fully understood by doctors themselves. Diethylstilbestrol (DES) is a synthetic form of oestrogen prescribed to 3 to 6 million women in the USA. Despite the fact that oestrogens are known carcinogens, the FDA approved DES in 1942 for lactation suppression and treatment of menopausal symptoms and vaginitis. An extreme example of effects of the intrauterine device (IUD) is that of the Dalkon Shield, implicated in a high number of cases of pelvic inflammatory disease and spontaneous septic abortions. Today, more than 1,570 women in the USA have lawsuits pending against A.H. Robbins, claiming that the IUD caused them illness and sterility.

> as little energy and machinery as suitable, maintaining the dignity of persons and the Earth. High technology would be reserved for crucial interventions, and the participation of those affected would be sought and fully used in the decision process (249).

This is the world of Piercy's Mattapoisett. This vision argues for the full humanity of woman; her reproductive capacities are a fraction of a whole, and not merely a commodity. This possible world created by a feminist author thus serves to illustrate feminist analysis of technology and reproduction. As Michelle Stanworth claims:

> The thrust of feminist analysis has been to rescue pregnancy from the status of "the natural"--to establish pregnancy and childbirth not as a natural condition, the parameters of which are set in advance, but as an accomplishment which we can actually shape according to our own ends .. (Strother-Ratcliff, 35)

Stanworth also claims that it is not technology as an artificial invasion of the female body that is at issue, but whether we can create the political and cultural conditions in which such technologies can be employed by *women* to shape the experience of reproduction according to their own definition.

In contrast to this vision, Zoe Fairbairns' novel, Benefits, presents a society where the birthing mother is progressively co-opted into becoming a ward of the State, used for its political agenda. The locus created by Fairbairns is an early twenty-first century extrapolation of present-time London. England is now a country in political turbulence, with its government struggling for survival. Under its strict budget cuts, one of the first

programmes under attack is welfare benefits for women. Feminism is here seen as a threat to the social order. The leading political party, known as "Family", labours under the pretence that the country's ills would disappear if only women would "buckle down to traditional role and biological destiny".

To define further the spreading political ideology of her functional world, Fairbairns parallels factions which are responsible for this anti-woman backlash to twentieth-century special-interest groups with which we are already familiar.

> Family's enemies (and it had many, most notably among feminists) were fond of equating its origins with movements of the seventies such as the anti-abortion campaigns, the racialist right and the pro-censorship lobby, and certainly it had drawn members from all these. But it was not the same as any of these (39).

This passage from the novel serves as a science-fictional metaphor for the real-time development of the recombinant gene. Genetic terminology describes a recombinant gene as being an association of two or more characteristics giving rise to a potentially dangerous or lethal trait.[16] In Benefits, Fairbairns uses the structure of the recombinant gene as a model of the "Family" party, which is an amalgamation of the most intimidating points of twentieth-century reactionary groups, giving rise to one massive threat. The

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[16] A biochemistry textbook defines it thus: "In homologous genetic recombination, the two DNA molecules interact and align their similar sequences at some stage in the reaction. This alignment process may involve the formation of novel DNA intermediates in which three or possibly even four strands are interwound...The exchange of information between two large, helical macromolecules often involves a complex interweaving of strands." Albert Lehninger, David L. Nelson and Michael M. Cox, Principles of Biochemistry (New York: Worth Publishers, 1993) 839.

parallel drawn between the two levels is very effective. Studied on a microcosmic level, the damaging effects of improper gene tampering are made tangible and apparent in offspring. Regarded on a macrocosmic level, genetic control and mishandling of the population by the Family Party produces results which are also disastrous. This parallel becomes increasingly important as the influence of technology (and the drugs involved) encroaches upon woman's reproductive freedom. The onset of this influence and control is insidious; it starts out under the guise of favouring conditions of reproduction for women of "favourable" social classes, exposing its elitist stance. The political attitude of Family is summarized in the angry speech of one of its leaders:

> Do you remember--it--seems a century ago--we used to worry about being overrun by blacks? Send 'em home, some of us said, stop 'em breeding. Who but the lunatic fringe thinks colour is the issue now--as we look at the decaying bones of our great compassionate nation, gnawed by whining, idle, dirty, anti-social *rats* of all colours...the wrong rats are breeding. Maybe we can't stop that...but we'd better make maternity a better deal for the others, or we're going to be overrun (48).

It is in this spirit that the Benefits programme is offered to women for 'breeding services'. This example from Fairbairns' fiction is an expression of what is happening in our twentieth-century reality, and is echoed in the words of real-time ethicist Dr. Joseph Fletcher:

> As things stand now, such is the moral lag between medical science and popular attitudes, there is no law requiring genetically unfortunate people to give up

'normal' sexual reproduction and turn to adoption or artificial insemination or egg transfer (Corea, 129).

Although Dr. Fletcher points to 'genetically unfortunate' people as those who have gene-linked diseases, being of the wrong race or sex is also considered 'genetic misfortune', depending on the socio-economic context. Zoe Fairbairns picks up on this and develops it in her novel. Politicians begin by handing out Benefit indiscriminately, to any woman who chooses to espouse maternity, but later on become more selective after it is shown to be too expensive, as "things are starting to get out of control." The women in this group of "undesirables" are

> ...unable to find jobs or weary of depending on oafish husbands who were increasing their families as the only way of increasing their income. Market forces! You want babies, you pay for 'em...the poor little things shot from their startled mothers under the ministrations of the new-vacuum-operated labour-aids in the great state maternity wards.... (81)

Very slowly, maternity care begins to turn into maternity control. If the State pays for a service, then it also assumes control of the means of production. Benefit is yanked from single mothers. disabled mothers, minority mothers, and lesbians, and these women are sent to 'Rehabilitation Centres' where they learn to be of use to those deemed worthy of reproduction.

In this context, where only some women are encouraged to reproduce, those seen as unworthy contribute to "overpopulation". A solution to this problem is reached when women 'agree' to be fitted with contraceptive pellets, removable upon marriage. It is

followed by

> ...the ultimate in trouble-free contraception...A small amount of contraceptive chemical had been placed in all the nation's reservoirs. The chemical had been tested for one hundred percent effectiveness and freedom from side-effects. The outward manifestations of women's menstrual cycles would remain unchanged, as would their ability to become pregnant after a short course of antidote tablets obtainable from government women's centres (188).

Fairbairns' novum although the product of a science-fictional spacetime, is not as far-fetched as one may be tempted to believe. In actuality, this means of contraception has already been proposed by Dr. Francis Crick (co-discoverer of the cell's DNA structure, of Watson and Crick fame). Dr. Crick affirms that it would not be difficult for the government to put something into the food so that nobody could have children. He speculates that the government could then give another chemical to reverse the effects of the sterilant. That way, only 'licensed childbearers' would be permitted to procreate.[17]

This manipulation of the procreative female body on a social level is in logical alliance with its physiological and genetic tinkering on the individual level. The production of the "model citizen" is much better monitored under glass. This is personified by Fairbairns' character, Astrid, who is persuaded that it is an honour to subject her body and her foetus to genetic experimentation; her unborn son will undergo Accelerated

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[17] Crick, as cited in Gena Corea, The Mother Machine (New York: Harper and Row, 1985) 28.

Rearing, complete with special oxygen treatments to develop his unborn brain.

> None of this earth-mother stuff, dining room obstetrics for her! The most sophisticated machinery in the world would help her, and the baby's engineer brain would receive stimulation from the moment his head popped between her legs...her labour was going well. She was sedated. Wires from machines sent her body into spasms at intervals...fluids dripped into tubes, cylinders disgorged their contents into Astrid's supine body, she was floating beneath the surface of thick music (194).

Lynn, the novel's protagonist, observes how Astrid is controlled and subdued by the technical process which giving birth has become, and finally realizes:

> [It's] their excuse for every kind of shit they've heaped on us: you have babies, you are the sacred mothers, the founts of life. You can't do this, you must do that because you have that special role. You have babies. You're wonderful at it. It's important. We'll leave that to you and you leave everything else to us. And now they've found they can't leave it to us. Not even that. The randomness, th--the wildness of it won't fit into their planned century (115).

Astrid is, in Corea's words, "Woman, once deified as the life-creating Goddess...now lying on a table with her mouth taped shut" (176).

As in much extrapolative SF, accelerated foetal brain development, as seen in Benefits, seems to be a technique not too far removed from foetal surgery, now widely practised today. The circle of medical technocracy will be complete in the research and

development of the mother-machine, the artificial womb. While this piece of laboratory equipment proved a boon in Marge Piercy's society of Mattapoisett, the context of Fairbairns' Benefits renders it doubtful that it would be used to the same end in that particular spacetime.

In Mattapoisett, use of the artificial womb logically follows the act of undoing the fundamental source of patriarchy, of giving up the "power", in Piercy's words, stemming from the use of the biological womb. It is therefore a step which maintains the absence of power relations between men and women, by abolishing reproductive difference. In Fairbairns' London, however, use of the "mother-machine" would serve to abolish the most limiting link in the chain of the (re)search for the "perfect" baby, i.e., woman.

In these two novels, the authors both dwell on the effects and applications of the NRTs, and yet each extrapolates to a spacetime which is ideologically diametrically opposed to the other. Interestingly, the reasons supporting the NRTs in our empirical spacetime coincide with those upheld by the politicians of Fairbairns' London.

The *moral* reasoning is that artificial wombs would obviate any need for abortion. As Christine Overall maintains in her discussion of abortion and the NRTs, women pregnant with an unwanted foetus could deposit it in any mother machine for subsequent adoption.[18] Should they subsequently choose to receive and raise the child, they would

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[18] Overall's position on the NRTs and the need for abortion stems from two postulates: no one has the right to kill an embryo/foetus, and the embryo/foetus has no right to occupancy of any woman's uterus. "If, however, it is becoming more and more possible for an embryo/foetus to survive outside its mother's body, or to be transferred successfully to the uterus of another woman who wants a child, abortion need no longer entail so much moral conflict. It could then be said that a woman may have an abortion, in the sense of expelling the embryo/foetus from her body, and the embryo/foetus may

no longer have to undergo long, messy and painful pregnancies. At this point, then, the foetus could be the object of quality control. One could then breed selectively (or even multiply) those embryos which have received a superior heredity. It could even be programmed with desirable qualities which 'society' would decide upon. Furthermore, the therapeutic reasoning is that the foetus could be observed, monitored and treated, not to mention that were a foetus to gestate in plain view and from definite beginnings, men could be certain, once and for all, of their paternity. It is also felt, maintains Gena Corea, that "the woman's womb is an extraordinarily dangerous environment" (Corea, 252). The reasons cited for this range from the stifling, crushing dangers of labour and birth in the woman's interior environment to the threats of the woman's poison-infested outer environment, including her own unreliable behaviour if she smokes, drinks or takes drugs. Corea discusses the point of view of French obstetrician Fréderic LeBoyer who

> ...refers to the woman's body as a prison that first keeps the foetus huddled in submission, and later begins, like some octopus, to hug and crush. The mother's contractions crush, stifle, and assault the foetus, pushing it into "this hell," the vagina (252).

With woman's birthing body cast as such a villain, it is little wonder then, that she would try to protect her foetus, or at least be made to feel guilty if she did not offer her body up to science.

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live. The solution could satisfy both the liberal, whose desire is to provide abortions for women who want them, and the conservative, whose aim is the preservation of foetal life. The feminist concern for women's reproductive control is not necessarily incompatible with a concern for the embryo/foetus" (79).

In considering and examining this phenomenon which is quickly integrating itself into medical and social praxis, Fairbairns extrapolates to and creates a spacetime socio-politically similar to ours. Because it is very difficult to detach fiction from the social and ideological immediacy in which it was written, Benefits may be considered a warning signal with respect to the present day research and development of the NRTs.

In a similar manner, my principle objection to the premise of Woman On the Edge of Time as a viable possible future is the argument that a collective consciousness is not formed, and does not exist, in a vacuum. The imaging of a future spacetime must take into consideration the influences, the psychological, sociological and biological factors which intersect or merely tangentially act upon a given people at a given time. The dynamics of a heterosexual society and its consequent power struggle cannot be ignored. Piercy has fast-forwarded her readers to a vision of utopia where male-female relations are exempt from the last vestiges of inequality perpetuated by a patriarchal social structure, hence we do not witness the dismantling of the old guard before being plunged into the new and improved. This is not only very important, but also the domain of responsibility of the author of science-fiction. As maintained previously, SF, by definition, has the novum as its fulcrum. If this novum *is* the premise by which the reader is inexorably led to an extrapolated locus, it must be methodically developed. That is not to say that it must be proven scientifically in a laboratory, but rather that it can be developed against a body of already accepted, or at least *existing* cognition. Fairbairns, as opposed to Piercy, shows how, under the auspices of several agents of patriarchy (bureaucracy, technocracy, religion) a "maternal ideology" can be co-opted and used to

disenfranchise women completely. By virtue of this, Benefits can be considered a feminist *dystopia*.

Because Benefits can be clearly distinguished as a feminist dystopia, the males within this created spacetime have merely moved logarithmically upward on a scale ranging from overriding patriarchy to totalitarianism. It is this "male evolution" and the ensuing relationships with women that make male-female relationships in the feminist dystopias problematic. In order to bypass this source of conflict in the creation of "perfect worlds", in the following group of novels, the "male variable" has been removed, causing a noticeable shift on every social level, especially as it pertains to motherhood.

In Suzy McKee Charnas' Walk to the End of the World (1974) and its sequel, Motherlines (1974), we follow the progress of Alldera, a pregnant free-fem escapee from the post-cataclysm Holdfast. She leaves her dystopian prison and is found, not by other free fems, but by the Riding Women, a group of strong, independent women who have lived outside the boundaries of the Holdfast since the 'Wasting', a nuclear disaster of men's making. Alldera is to serve as the mediator between the two women's societies in Motherlines, the free fems and the Riding Women, societies similar in composition but entirely disparate in philosophy and mores. The two women's camps live in different chronological proximity to the men's Holdfast society. The difference in chronological separation from the men serves as a point of departure for an explanation of the differences between the Riding Women and the free fems. As one of the male characters explains in Walk, the Wasting was explained quite simply as a "fall":

> ...the Ancients weren't overthrown; they fell down--in their understanding of their own incredible powers...Ancient science was so far advanced that they had machines to do the work of the Dirties, artificial foods and materials to replace those they had from plants and beasts, even man-made reproductive systems that would eventually have cut out the fems from their one supposed function...they were about to cut through the tie of dependence on this mortal bitch of a world altogether and become gods--not your famishing mystery-god who passes understanding and coping-with, but real, rational, deathless gods wielding real, rational power (223).

Man in this society is intent on doing away with Earth as Mother and Woman as Mother. In similar aspect, our own twentieth-century reality is reflected in the words of John Stehura, president of the successful Bionetics Foundation surrogate industry, who claims that "The genetic make-up of the woman is much more important right now because she contributes 50% to the child, but in the future, it's going to be 0%" (Corea, 215). Technology has become auxiliary and producer to the myth of single biological parenthood by the male. The biblical legend of the only-begotten-son thrives in the Holdfast society which McKee-Charnas has created, drawing on the Aristotelian principle that woman supplied the matter which the active male principle formed and molded into a human being.

> There was a theory that a man's soul was a fragment of eternal energy that had been split off the soul of his father and fixed inside his dam's body by the act of intercourse. Being alien to everything that the soul

> represented, the fem's body surrounded the foreign element with a physical frame, by means of which the soul could be expelled. Seen from that perspective, a man's life could be regarded as the struggle of the flesh-caged soul not to be seduced and extinguished by the meaningless concerns of the brute-body (118).

Practice following ideology, the female is evidently seen as an expendable tool. It is little wonder that the mentality of the free-fem clan is, though man-hating, patriarchal. The women have so recently been released from the Holdfast that they are still imbued with its values, especially those of alienation, possession and domination. The psychological portrait of these women is defined by powerlessness which, according to Adrienne Rich, "...can lead to lassitude, self-negation, guilt and depression, it can also generate a kind of psychological keenness, a shrewdness, an alert and practical observation of the oppressor--"psyching out" developed into a survival tool" (65). The child, in this society, is not seen as valuable unto herself, but rather through her alliance with a particular group and against another, as one might expect in the cliques of a hierarchical society. Alldera's body therefore has tremendous significance to this group of women unable to reproduce themselves without men.

In comparison, the Riding Women have been leading their lives separately from men since the time of the Wasting. Their existence is explained by the fact that Ancients, or "lab men" as the women call them "used females in their work, maybe because more of them had traces of the powers, maybe because it was easier to get them with so many men tied up in war."

> "And what did they do for themselves, these great witches," Alldera said, "so that they could breed without men?"
>
> "Not witches, but dedicated and intelligent women...They perfected the changes the labs had bred into them so that no men were needed. Our seed, when ripe, will start growing without merging with male seed because it already has its full load of traits from the mother. The lab men used a certain fluid to start this growth. So do we."
>
> Simple and clean, compared to rape in the Holdfast. No wonder jealousy drove the free fems to slander (61).

The Riding Women do not measure themselves, as a rule, as inferior or superior to the free fems. They do understand, however, that life in the Holdfast has shaped the free fems' vision and philosophy. They are also aware of the fems' plan to return to the Holdfast to liberate the remaining women from within. The Riding Women recognize this as unfeasible, and from then on, one source of physical conflict lies in the Riding Women preventing the free fems from executing their plan. Although Charnas does not privilege one society over another, she does make it clear that the Riding Women's society, because of its distance from males over a protracted period of time, has been able to develop a new cosmology based on its communion with nature and its (necessary) technological dimension. Indeed, this is a society in process, struggling to remain thriving and constantly open to change, not only ideologically but genetically. This is why Alldera's child is welcomed with open arms; her uncommon genetic strain will be the basis for another Motherline. Technology then, imbedded within feminist values,

becomes an integral part of society. From this perspective, it is seen as humanistic, life-oriented and non-exploitative.

A feminist perspective on technology permits us then to explore alternative ideals without seeking to control and to establish categories and ethics for its subsequent research development Joanna Russ' The Female Man postulates four different spacetimes which may be seen to represent four stages of feminist evolution, each according to a different protagonist/voice. The one which I posit as a utopia is the world of Janet, a space and time with variables not unlike those of Motherlines. Whileaway has become a woman-only society since a Plague (defined as 'The Catastrophe') destroyed all the males.[19] As a people, Whileawayan women can not feel like the second sex when only one sex exists. Hence their full humanity is a given and their chosen role of mother is not translated into a power negotiation. The actual technological making of babies is not dwelt upon, but mentioned in passing alongside other historical landmarks:

> Plague came to Whileaway in P.C. 17 (Preceding Catastrophe). and ended in A.C. 03, with half the population dead...It attacked males only. Katherina Lucyson Ansky (A.C. 201-282) was also responsible for the principles that made genetic surgery possible. (The merging of ova had been practised for the previous century and a half) (12).

Reproductive technology, to Whileawayans, is a means to an end, the necessity to keep life going. In this age of genetically manipulated children, the mother-child bond

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[19] This is an interesting contrast to the notion of the beginning of dated time as we know it according to the Judao-Christian tradition of the patriarchal Ascension, whereby time is measured with respect to the rebirth of Jesus Christ.

is no less strong than in Fairbairns' extrapolated London, or, as Luciente might say in Piercy's novel, "You think because we do not bear live, we cannot love our children . But we do, with whole hearts" (133). They love their children as well as the leisure time afforded by pregnancy and childbirth:

> Whileawayans bear their children at about thirty--singletons or twins as the demographic pressures require. These children have as one genotypic parent the biological mother (the "body-mother") while the non-bearing parent contributes the other ovum ("other mother") .Food, cleanliness, and shelter are not the mother's business; Whileawayans say with a straight face that she must be free to attend to the child's "finer spiritual need " Then they go off by, themselves and roar. The truth is they don't want to give up the leisure (49).

In the Whileawayan example, we are led to believe that "thirty relatives or so" look after the child until it goes off to school. The presence of this extended family may have a parallel function to that of the three mothers in Mattapoisett ("Every child has three To break the nuclear bonding."), or the five-mother family in the Wild ("Women said it was best not to let this powerful connection unbalance all the other relationships that guided their lives."). These three examples reveal an ideology amongst feminist writers of SF that does not toss out the intimacy of the mother-child relationship They acknowledge, however, its protracted negative impact on both the mother and the child It is easy to comprehend how its intensity may be co-opted by a manipulative third party, to serve an entirely antagonistic agenda, which is Fairbairns' premise in Benefits. On the other hand,

Russ and McKee Charnas are able to bypass this predicament by keeping men absent from both novels. It is interesting, therefore, to observe how chronological, as well as spatial, distanciation from males will affect the practice and production of motherhood.

Joan Slonczewski develops such a strategy in her novel, A Door Into Ocean. Roughly parallel to Ursula K. LeGuin's The Dispossessed, the two conflicting societies in A Door Into Ocean consist of Valedon, a war-loving planet modelled after Earth, and Shora, a planet from which males have disappeared "generations ago" and which has led to Sharers incapacity to reproduce heterosexually. Reproduction is therefore a function requiring "life-shaper assistance," consisting of parthenogenesis, as is the practice in Motherlines and The Female Man. The citizens of Shora are appropriately named 'Sharers', this designation underlying their ethical standpoint in relation to everything around them. The citizens of Shora "share" their language, their customs, their beliefs. They are willing to "share life" with anyone, even with intruding Valans hoping ultimately to colonize Shora. Although Sharers are shrewd and perspicacious, they are lacking any kind of racist or sexist bent. When Spinel, a stone-cutter's son from Valedon, is sent to Shora to acquire a trade, he is eagerly studied and observed as a 'male-freak', an appellation totally lacking subjectivity or androphobia, indicating only Shora's lack of males. As a matter of fact, Spinel is readily taken as a lover by one of Shora's women. His relationship with Lystra, the Sharer, is not subjected to any Shoran standard of normalcy. Their sexual encounters are an expression of shared desire and not seen as "natural" or unnatural. The concept of "nature" is indivisible from the whole of Shoran life.

Woman on Shora is equivalent to Nature inasmuch as she lives symbiotically with the planet, its flora and fauna. Culture on Shora is intrinsic to Nature; the two are indistinguishable. The very ethics of the people is based on humankind's conflation with the elements, hence the term 'sharing' food, or thought, or sex. Hence, woman cannot be relegated to a realm which is half of a dichotomy. Most noteworthy on Shora is woman's attitude toward birth. Slonczewski's lyrical prose is periodically interspersed with her characters' pragmatic, quasi-eschatological vision of the cycle of life and death. To Spinel, the 'malefreak' from Earth-like Valedon, the birth of his niece "...impressed Spinel, who remembered the birth of Beryl's Oolite with the door closed upon secrecy and pain." The pregnant Shoran Shaalrim describes her foetus as a

> "Strong little beast, isn't she?"
>
> Spinel looked up. "Why...beast?"
>
> "Because she is. She keeps me awake at night with kicking at my liver, and if I were at the Last Door she would still suck the last life from me...But she'll learn. And I love her, all the same" (161).

Shorans have no ego investment in the child; they bear their children out of a need for communal living and to provide bodies for the souls of the deceased. Families on Shora are similar to those on Whileaway, consisting of a biological mother, an "other-mother" and biological and adopted siblings. As in Woman On the Edge of Time and Motherlines, A Door Into Ocean constitutes a feminist utopia inasmuch as it distances woman from a spacetime which, replete with a heterosexist and patriarchal mindframe, involves so much of her energies with the positing of her cultural rights that there is no

longer any comfort or joy to be gleaned from the sphere of 'nature' which, although assumed to be her 'birthright', is co-opted when it leads to empowerment. It is an easy extrapolation, then, to a spatial or chronological locus where one of woman's most life-affirming experiences, the giving of life, can, in conjunction with technology, be used to reaffirm, as opposed to alienate, her nature-al self.

The purple thread running through each of the novels is that of the power vested in the creation of life, or the inability or coercion to do so, and, in opposition, the very tapping of the forces of nature, the reaffirmation and reempowerment of a system of values particular to woman in her choice as maternal being. One of the most important corollaries of feminist utopias is the affirmation of woman's freedom to reproduce which is integral to the utopian notion of reproduction of freedom. The decision of whether or not to have children is woman's last zone of negotiation, and the last which has not yet been totally replaced by man-made technology. Just as Piercy's parallel spacetime to Mattapoisett features 'contracties' (legally rented out prostitutes for protracted periods o time) and 'moms', women "cored to make babies all the time", today's reality features sexual prostitutes of every kind and now, under the appointment of 'surrogate mother', biological prostitutes whose bodies will incubate for rich couples.

As seen in the novels, spacetimes where this loss of reproductive freedom occurred were designated as dystopias, whereas recuperation and control of the birth process belonged entirely to the utopia. Nevertheless, every feminist utopian space-time we have visited also presents an alternative to it with a diametrically opposed ideological foundation, whether it is on a different planet, within distant boundaries, or in an entirely

distinct temporal zone. Whether it involves the warring societies of the Manlanders vs. Womanlanders in The Female Man, the fighting Valans versus the maternal Shorans, New York vs. Mattapoisett or the Wild against the Holdfast, the masculinist metaphor of war in all four utopias serves to underscore the ongoing battle between men and women. The motif of war, therefore, is of particular importance in the feminist dys/utopia, as I shall point out in Chapter 2, as it demonstrates the movement diametrically opposite to that of creating life, i.e., manufacturing death.

CHAPTER 2
GIVING BIRTH/DEALING DEATH : OF WAR AND WOMEN

In Chapter One, I indicate how the New Reproductive Technologies, as they are depicted in feminist SF, either dominate woman by turning her body and her babies into commodities, or liberate her from what was considered a limiting biological function. In the novels where the NRTs are perceived as a threat, it is not due to their existence and application per se, but rather because of the control of female reproduction which they enable.[1] In our present time, the study and debates on the NRTs focus on the technologies themselves, hence questions and issues arising from their application and practice, such as the control of life and who will be born, become secondary and diffused, relegated to the realm of ethics. It is far easier to ask scientific questions which can be answered with scientific objectivity and precision than to understand and deal with the effects of this science on the people whom it affects. A parallel can be drawn between the (non)ethics of the NRTs and military ideology: they are both born of a science where persons, and women in particular, are factored into the equation very little, if at all.[2] As man and his science attempt to control life through the NRTs, so he

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[1] It is very important to insist that these representations, as opposed to works dealing with artificial birth produced by men (eg. Philip K. Dick's Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep? or Charles Eric Maine's Alf) deal with extrapolations of technologies which are actually in practice or in development (especially as these are encountered in feminist *dystopias*) These visions therefore are largely supported by research done on the New Reproductive Technologies by feminists and/or ethicists.

[2] Cohn's essay on defense intellectuals points to very interesting uses of miliary language whereby the human subject is totally erased from consideration. To illustrate this, she points out that "mass murder" is described as "collateral damage", the landing imprint of a missile is known as a "footprint" and reciprocal bombings is known as "counterforce exchanges". The words themselves are "euphemisms, sanitized, friendly,

determines who will die through the practice of war-making. The NRTs and the control of who will be born is the technological extension of man's warrior role with its control of who will die; the catheter used to extract eggs from a woman becomes the counterpart of the gun that will deliver death to a man. This conflict is indicative of the underlying tension between men and women with respect to the creation of life. Where man does not possess the ability to reproduce so tangibly, to generate the natural, he must fabricate the artificial, the transcendant (as in war and its mysticism), while woman engenders the perishable (as in life).[3]

In this chapter I will show how the novels juxtapose maternal and military ideologies in the following manner: where women (mothers) have always been the sex responsible for the creation of life through birth, man (warriors) have attempted to control the existence of life itself through death, especially as it is dealt in war.[4] I will

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sexy acronyms". The "reality" of which they speak is a world of abstractions. The word "peace" is not part of the discourse: one speaks of "strategic stability". (Carol Cohn, "Sex and Death in the Rational World of Defense Intellectuals," Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society 12.4 (1987): 708-9.)

[3] In the SF novels I analyze in which war and its corresponding ideology are central, the words "man", "masculine" and "male" all pertain to the constructed, in-formed person who is a member of the military and who subscribes or acts according to its dictates. In the novels (as in our present space-time) the overwhelming majority of any defense establishment is male, and it is the institution which is being questioned and critiqued from a feminist constructionist standpoint, as opposed to an essentialist view.

[4] Once more using the vocabulary of the military, Cohn demonstrates how male birth and creation is expressed through the language used by defense intellectuals. The atom bomb, for example, was referred to as "Oppenheimer's baby".To Cohn, the entire history of the bomb project seems permeated with imagery that confounds man's overwhelming technological power to destroy nature with the power to create, which becomes imagery inverting men's destruction, turning it into the power to create new life and a "new" world, converting men's destruction into their rebirth. Cohn tells us "At Lawrence Livermore, the hydrogen bomb was referred to as "Teller's baby", although those who wanted to

demonstrate how militarism as masculinity is problematic to the feminist utopia. It is impossible, to feminist utopists, to reconcile the military ideology which underscores the warrior societies in the novels with a praxis of peace and cooperation encountered in a spacetime formulated by and for women.

In my study of the various textual strategies of selected utopist authors who integrate both men *and* women in their communities, I will explain how men and women's coexistence hinges upon much more than male abnegation of a praxis of aggression. Coexistence demands a total collapse of the (learned) masculine system of physical battle and conquest, and the disappearance of the (learned) feminine system of gratuitous bartering of the "power" of reproduction. Motherhood then becomes communal and unconfined. The "feminine principle" finally becomes a 'fait accompli', embraced by society as a whole. Thus, my study will consider how feminist utopian SF writers present a maternal ideology through their depiction of utopian societies, societies that forego a military ethic along with its combative nature. These utopian societies necessarily espouse what I perceive to be a maternal ideology.

I will show how, in the novels, maternal thinking rejects militaristic and abstract values. An ideology such as this one, which is focused on peace and compromise and a praxis which underscores the tangible and quotidian, cannot incorporate that which is, in principle, antithetical to all of these. Maternal thinking puts into practice a restructuring and redefinition of what has until now been perceived as "feminine activity", so that the

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disparage Edward Teller's contribution claimed he was not the bomb's father but its mother. They claimed that Stanislaw Ulam was the real father; he had the all-important idea and inseminated Teller with it. Teller only "carried it" after that.

potential inherent in maternal work and experience can be generalized and diffused, released from the sphere of domestic activity.

Maternal thinking, contrary to what the terminology may lead us to believe, does not at all seek to glorify the mother, but attempts to free her from the categories she has always fallen into, what Elizabeth Vonarburg calls "la triade· la Vierge, la Mère, la Putain." The mother is not "born" into her role. A woman becomes a mother by learning to become flexible, by embracing change. By definition she must accept "the other", and make room for it. The philosophy behind the maternal dimension of these utopias is defined by feminist critics in much the same way. Mothering work, as clarified by Sara Ruddick, as "caring labour",

> ...seen under the aspect of caring labour, is organized in terms of people's needs and pleasures and, by extension, of the needs and pleasures of any animal or plant that is instrumental in human caring or is tended for its own sake (130).

A necessary by-product of the rearing of small children, defined as maternal thinking, has often been considered incomplete, even primitive and intellectually inconsequential. For a long time, it lay buried beneath the "common sense" of patriarchy, which was so *un*common that it failed to take into account the maternal and corporeal dimension of life.

Feminist utopists juxtapose the maternal and the military and put this juxtaposition into relief in their created worlds. A "science" suffused with an ethics of care would be accessible and tolerant to all. Given our present spacetime, the only way that the moral

superiority and epistemology of this kind of ethics can be recognized and valued is by juxtaposing it to an ideology based on the abstract, such as that of the military. This juxtaposition would further serve to highlight the utopian outlook of a society which is completely reorganized and redefined along maternal principles. In this society women are freed from the oppression of a dystopian, macho existence and can strive toward a truly "brave new world" of their own making.

Feminist utopists therefore call upon women, the sex responsible for the genesis of humanity, to struggle for an ethics of peace even as we distance ourselves from a dominant military ideology. Ruddick maintains: "Mothers protect children who are at risk; the military risks the children mothers protect" (148). A woman who has become flexible in motherhood and who has guided her offspring through the adaptations of childhood can not easily make decisions which she knows will bring about the death of another. In caring for a child, she must limit the power she has over it; that is, in the interest of her relationship with the child, she must modify her expression of aggression, and the resulting bond in turn restricts aggression. This by no means implies that all mothers are intrinsically peaceful, but rather that a maternal praxis could exist as a "reservoir" for a politics of peace, if indeed this praxis could be realized on a broader social plane. Overall, feminist utopists do not feel that women should assume qualities which men, through identification with military stereotypes, have often espoused, that of emotional repression and distanciation of affect. They do not want women silenced and their skills ignored, skills allowing them to nurture, comfort and support those who have reached out for them. These authors are of the opinion that there is no necessity for women to

subsidize men's wars with the fruit of their bodies (as well as with their own bodies), in pain and confusion, while silencing the faction that struggles to create and care for life and the living. In revealing this strategy, feminist utopists, as a whole, speak out on behalf of this anti-militaristic ideology in the depiction of their imagined spacetimes As Ursula LeGuin states

> Where man-made ethics differ most radically from female morality, from what women think and feel to be right and wrong, is precisely in this area where we need a new morality: the area in which men and women differ· the area of sexuality, of conception, pregnancy, childbirth, and the responsibility for children...And yet we are still pretending that it's a "man's world", still letting that myth run us. And it's going to run us right into the ground (LeGuin, Dancing, 19).

This "new morality" would, of course, be infused with an ethics of mothering, where the praxis of "mothering", as defined by Ruddick, is "to take upon oneself the responsibility of child care, making its work a regular and substantial part of one's working life" (17), an occupation concerned with the domestic, and by extension, with the concrete and the practical.

By and large, this has been countered by men's valorization of the cultural sphere and the activities practised within it, warfare being a case in point For example, Ruddick asks, why is the destruction of life (death) and the maiming of human beings often given more prestige and attention than the creation of life (birth) and the nurturing of the person? As male valour, honour and so forth have been buzzwords in the maintenance of a male military fraternity, why can motherhood, subtending the right to a happy,

healthy childhood free of violence and strife, not be the rallying cry of peacemakers? Mothers have been acquainted with the pain of war ever since they started sending their children off to die. By extension, mothers *could* leap across social and cultural barriers, and find the empathy in their midst that could establish a framework of active resistance for a universal peace movement As feminist utopists have shown, it is possible to find in motherhood a source of our resistance, not a root of our victimization.[5]

Through the lens of science-fiction, however, it is possible to reassign values to created possible worlds, to question military ideology, to abolish it and finally to replace it with values which can be construed as "maternal". These omnipresent maternal values are presented in juxtaposition with militaristic values existing in proximity to the feminist utopian societies. I will show how these two concepts are necessarily mutually exclusive within the feminist utopian or dystopian spacetime.

This contrast is at the forefront of feminist utopian thought. By identifying the maternal/military dichotomy in specific works of feminist SF, I will show that a "maternal

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[5] In refuting this theory, Dorothy Lipovenko, in a Toronto Globe and Mail newspaper column during the Gulf War, contends that this type of assertion, "Sounds as appealing as a slice of cinnamon-flavoured apple pie, but it's just not practical (Dorothy Lipovenko, "Motherhood and War are not Mutually Exclusive, says Dorothy Lipovenko, Toronto Globe and Mail 1991). Her reason for disagreeing with a maternally-centred peace ethics are that men continue to control society, and nowhere is this more evident than in war. Furthermore, Lipovenko affirms, women assume that the female psyche rejects war because violence and aggression are not means by which women settle things. Although Lipovenko's reasons may be warranted, they seem to constitute and even greater reinforcement to feminist utopists' search for a maternal ethics of peace. Lipovenko reasons that it is a terrible mistake to let men "run the show". She states the differences between men's and women's perceptions of war as follows: "...men can admit necessity but repress emotional horror while women do the opposite: black out the political reality but confront the human damage and moral ugliness."

ideology" can exist as an alternative philosophy when extrapolated to a societal ideal. These societies function according to the three Cs: community, compassion and cooperation. The plethora of feminist utopias from the 1970s contemplated and put into practice the application of this new humanist orientation.

In my Introduction to the thesis, I showed how fictional societies can all be situated within one of three categories. In the first, woman confronts man (and the values the author feels he espouses) on his own territory. In the second, woman infiltrates patriarchal society, choosing to struggle for a better world from within, using feminist vision as her tool. Finally, in the last option, woman feels that the only way to implement her philosophy and practice is to extricate herself from male society altogether, seeing separatism as the only option. All the novels dealt with in this chapter present societies existing, or trying to exist, according to a pro-maternal, anti-military ideology.

The Gate to Women's Country aptly demonstrates this dichotomy and the conflict it engenders in the midst of a heterosexual community. The layout of Tepper's society itself is representative of how women are positioned with respect to the different facets of their environment. Women's Country (where women, children and their "servitors" reside) is situated on a hillside near the Marthatown warriors' garrison, almost surrounded by its fortifications, and slightly overlooking it The garrison is close enough to observe, but definitely peripheral to the nucleus of the women's existence, and this indeed reflects warfare in the real lives of women and mothers, sisters, and lovers of the men who do battle.

The premise for the existence of this divided society follows the pattern used in

other novels, for example the Catastrophe of The Female Man, and the Wasting of Motherlines. In The Gate it is the Convulsions in which, 300 years ago

> ...almost everyone in the world had died in a great devastation brought about by men. It was men who made the weapons and men who were the diplomats and men who made the speeches about national pride and defence. And in the end it was men who did whatever they had to do, pushed the buttons or pulled the string to set the terrible things off. And we died...Almost all of us. Women. Children (301).

After the cataclysm, Martha Evesdaughter, founder of the remaining "new race," decides that it is the men's eagerness and desire to fight which is a detriment to the human race. In a humane application of the eugenics trend, she plans a selective breeding programme whereby the traits of aggression and domination are discouraged from appearing in the offspring. Of course, the macho ethic does not perish completely. Through the indoctrination of boys sent to the garrison to be raised by their warrior fathers, the myth of the honour and glory of war and its expression of manhood is graphically and convincingly portrayed by Tepper. As the protagonist, Stavia, explains to her best friend:

> "...the penis is just a protrusion of everything else, you know. It doesn't exist independently."
>
> "Except to warriors...They must think it exists independently...Look at that great thing they have out at the end of the parade ground. It's four times as high as the Warrior and Son statues. It's like a tower!"

"They call it a victory monument," objected Stavia. It did look rather like a phallus.

"Oh for heaven's sake Stavvy. It's even got a prepuce" (59).

When Stavia finally gets the courage to ask a young warrior-to-be, he tells her;

"Blooded warriors take their oaths of honour on it. It's a symbol of shared manhood."

"Penis worship?"

"It's symbolic," he said resentfully (79).

The warriors' organ of reproduction is therefore symbolic of their "shared manhood," i e , their common identity as soldiers. The men impose a parallel between the birth and death opposition even as they reinforce its existence as a dichotomy: to them, women *earn* their existence by giving life to warrior sons who will go to war, possibly to die One task is the "duty" of woman, while the other serves the honour of the men, and the two societies live separately. The residents of Women's Country, as they are defined by the men, are valuable inasmuch as they are mothers of warriors:

It was generally agreed that they were honest and sensible about warriors' sons because it was in their own best interests to do so. Women knew the warriors protected them only because women bore them sons, so it was in the women's interest to see that sons were produced and brought to the appropriate father...Sons were the single most important thing in life to a warrior, and the women knew that. "In bearing a son for a warrior, a woman earns her life." That's the way the indoctrination for boys went.

"Your mother earned her life so" (143).

The warriors do not question this social separatism, nor are they cognizant of its origins or the explanations for its existence. They know or care very little about the history of their people, as history has become known as "women's work," and so they can not draw parallels between war and the state of devastation outside of Women's Country and the garrison. The state of affairs as it appears at that point in the novel seems to be a "reciprocal metaphorization" which portrays a perversion of maternal potential and values. In the novel, Tepper demonstrates that woman's value resides in birthing sons; mothering sons is the function which gives her a "raison-d'être", a (secondary) part to play and a fraction of the "honour" to glean for herself. In relation to our empirical world, Nancy Huston stipulates that "when suffering and danger infuse maternal fantasy, birth itself becomes a soldier's sacrifice. All women who bear children are committing, literally and symbolically, a blood sacrifice for the perpetuation of the species." Infusing parturition with the "heroic" qualifications of the warrior co-opts the very act of giving life into a semblance of battlefield sacrifice, i.e., motherhood imitates "warriorhood". This parallel does not depict masculinist maternal thinking, but rather renders the act of giving birth a mimicry of the "glory of death". Huston wonders whether men decided to confer social prestige upon labour pains so that women may partake, at least, to some extent, in the glory of battle, or whether they invented for themselves a suffering as dignified and imbued with myth and power as that of childbirth.

The women of Women's Country have determined that their obstacle to utopia is, in fact, military zeal and its influence. Unlike the societies we have dealt with previously,

Women's Country is not only in process with respect to the fine-tuning of its philosophy and mores, but it is actually striving to become a utopia by very active and determined means. It has decided how it will eradicate the "defect" which they feel this "hypermilitarism" to be, and their solution is eugenics. This is not accomplished through genetic manipulation, as we have seen in dystopian contexts and in real-time, but through breeding and selection. The novel's protagonist discovers how this was done with reindeer in the past:

> The Laplanders selected the bulls that didn't fight. They selected the bulls that didn't try to own the cows. They selected the bulls that were cooperative and gentle. They castrated the rest. We're kinder than that. We don't castrate anyone. We let our warrior bulls believe they father sons (293).

Before being sent out to mate periodically with warriors at Carnival, young girls and women are unknowingly fitted with contraceptive implants. When they return, they are medically inspected "for disease" and subsequently artificially inseminated with a Servitor's sperm, men who have chosen to live amongst the women and who are inherently gentle and, though skilled at fighting and defence, non-aggressive and non-violent. This fact is known by the Councilwomen only (the "Damned Few," as they call themselves) who are responsible for the smooth and efficacious execution of the fight against war.

Smoothly and effectively, Tepper turns on its head the very controversial and potentially dehumanizing science of eugenics to secure life for humankind. By

successfully manipulating a practice which could render the Women's Country civilization dystopic (i.e. forced breeding of sons for cannon fodder) the women can strive for a future utopia. The men they *are* producing are increasingly contributing to and choosing to live within, the society which their mothers have built. In this way, military zeal is turned against itself: women are using their maternity to produce sons, not through coercion or a sense of obligatory patriotism, as the warriors think, but rather at the service of their own ideals and visions of utopia. It is not in a momentous act or in a show of force that the women put their plan into action, but rather by a slow, determined, sometimes painful process. This is not to suggest that women no longer feel the devastating effects of war; many of the boys who are raised with the warriors decide not to return to Women's Country at age fifteen and so must go off to the front lines. When Stavia looks at her own son, she still sees "...a man's body. Fit for love. Fit for slaughter" (5). This "selective breeding" solution is the only one available to the women, at that time and in that place. As their history has proven, countless years of war have paved the way to destruction, not only of soldiers and material belongings, but of women and children's lives. Clandestine genetic elimination of aggression is therefore the only option within the novel.

Tepper indicates that the characteristics necessary to a warrior stem both from a gene pool *and* from social influence. A servitor's son may possess the sire's "gentle" tendencies, but may nonetheless succumb to pressure from his peers and the soldiers of the garrison. This cultural dimension is not dealt with in the novel however, for the women are not attempting to control reproduction and socialization in their entirety.

Rather, they use the means at their disposal to increase their chances of survival through progressive elimination of war.

Although the "experiment" is not foolproof, it achieves a measure of success. Artificial insemination and eugenics are the tools of womankind with which they are securing the possibility of a future for both men and women alike. This is possible only if a certain ideology is promoted at the expense of another, thus making motherhood inversely proportional to war. If maternal values as I have defined them become the greater part of their social ideal, while refuting the ethics of death and destruction which accompany warfare must necessarily be refuted.

Tepper does not stop at merely drawing a parallel between motherhood (and the giving of life) and war (and putting to death); she firmly replies to Huston's question about reciprocal metaphorization. The inhabitants of Women's Country are decidedly not mimicking the warrior's "lower depths" by equating childbirth to a soldier's experience, although they are letting the men believe that they are "earning their lives" by bearing sons who will serve in the men's wars. Instead, by using the very personal and particular act of giving birth, they are letting the "blood sacrifice for the perpetuation of the species", as Huston states, serve their own ideals. They are actively shaping lives to come, as well as the conditions of those lives. They do not want to partake of the *men's* glory; they are fighting just as hard for their own survival. *They* are the warriors. Their children are the weapons. Eugenics, as a tool of a maternal ideology as opposed to one of power and domination, becomes a "good reproduction" inasmuch as any ethics of care and nurture is "good for" anyone. The women's ethics is an ethics of peace. As

Ruddick defines the peacemaker:

> They resist, nonviolently, the violence of others, including their policies of bigotry, greed and exploitation. The aim of nonviolent battle is responsible reconciliation in which crimes are named and responsibility for them is assigned. All participants resist others' violence and their own temptations to abandon or assault, persisting in relationships that include anger, disappointment, difference, conflict and nonviolent battle (161 & 184).

The women of Women's Country understand the ethics of peace as it is circumscribed by maternal thinking. However, they are also aware of the obstacle to the realization of a truly utopian context for both women and men and this barrier is militarism. They must therefore reconcile as completely as possible their ideology of peace with their plan to restructure society. Within the novel, Stavia's mother effectively espouses such an ideology when she tells a dangerous warrior whom she *must* kill "We never attack merely to wound or incapacitate. If we are driven to attack at all, there is no point in leaving our opponents alive. We never kill except in self-defense" (303).

The layout of The Gate to Women's Country presents a womanist utopia struggling to grow in proximity to a militaristic society, both physically and metaphorically. Suzy McKee Charnas, by contrast, splits her two societies territorially as well as literally. The characters in both her novels also have no choice but to extricate themselves from male society altogether. Walk to the End of the World, the first novel of the series, is a dystopian work depicting a macho, militaristic, misogynistic culture, sharply distinct from the two communities of women in the subsequent Motherlines. The communities of

women in both novels are striving in different ways to cope and exist with their recent legacy of ecological destruction. The women of the utopian Motherlines, separated from men at different points in their histories, represent societies-in-process, developing, struggling, coping, sometimes failing but often succeeding in a new world which they define and shape. Their greatest concern, away from the nihilistic Holdfast, is propagating their species, reproducing themselves into a new and lasting motherline. The dominant macho ethics and consequent devalorization of woman and her biological reproductive function, in Walk to the End of the World, puts into relief the re-evaluation of her role as mother and the symbolism and extension of this role to that of saviour of humanity and the planet through maternal genesis and an ethics of nurturing in Motherlines. While the women's society is growing and evolving, the nearby men's Holdfast society is disintegrating, imploding under the weight and pressure of its self-generated militaristic indoctrination and dogma.

This premise is similar to that of Tepper's The Gate to Women's Country. Both novels depict a women's society which has re-formed itself from the survivors of post-nuclear disaster. But the old patriarchal blueprint survives in the midst of this small group of survivors in Motherlines. When the women begin to demand changes, the men accuse them of having been the cause of the Wasting, itself a "fall" in the novel's own terms. They are progressively oppressed until the nature/culture dichotomy reiterates itself and reaches its logical conclusion: the Holdfast "fems" become categorized as either biological prostitutes, where the woman is given meagre means of sustenance in exchange for her capacity to bear sons, or sexual prostitutes, where a pretty fem is kept

by a man in comparative luxury so that she may be conveniently nearby as purveyor of sexual favours ("pets"). The men are warriors and masters within their domain. Even in their use as breeders, women are regarded with disdain and disgust. The male element is pure, clean and honourable. The female element is dirty, weak and dangerous. Heterosexual liaisons are seen as repugnant and deviant: "I've done my duty in the breeding rooms," Kelmz said, "I'm no cunting pervert" (82). Birth from a woman is symbolized as a battle when man's captured soul struggles against the domination of the "physical brute-body." Naturally, hatred and fear are inextricably linked before this socially diminished animal who is nonetheless responsible for their existence.[6] This apprehension is intensified into hatred shortly after birth. Unlike the five-year-olds of the garrison in The Gate, the boy babies of Walk are handed over to the "boyhouse" soon after birth and when they leave it they are indoctrinated with a destructive and military ethics. Girl babies, for their part, are thrown into "kit-pits" where "survival of the fittest" determines who will live. In McKee Charnas' example, one notes the outcome of the absolute reduction of the sphere of motherhood to its basic biological component, i.e., pregnancy and parturition. When the total function of maternity is coopted and segmented, there no longer remains any possibility for the expression of what I described earlier as "maternal values," values which need a measure of initiative and determination by the mother. The biological bond which the mother has to her child does not constitute the entirety of the relationship, but rather serves as a starting point from

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[6] Charnas draws upon and reflects data from innumerable cultures and peoples whose myths and practices are still filled with the awe and terror of birth.

which this relationship can be established and grow. When the mother and child are separated at birth, the adoptive facet of motherhood is eliminated. In this light, one sees how motherhood, when it can develop normally, operates as process or dialogue, and not as an isolated element.

The negation of this dynamic is depicted in the life of the Holdfast fems The act of birth, far from empowering the fems, proves to be a frightening and degrading experience. Not only parturition, but its associated function of breastfeeding is also a tool of oppression to the fem. Soon after giving birth, the fems return to the "milkery" where they are expected to feed their "cubs." However, the whole scene takes on a different function:

> A bell tinkled somewhere close by. Some of the sleeping fems sat up, reaching for the swaddled cubs beside them or for the clay pitchers kept under their beds. Each of the cubs was to put to the breast for a moment only, then handed on to the nearest waking fem who had no cub of her own to start her milk. Some of the fems didn't even open their eyes as they went through the motion of what was obviously a well established routine (72).

Alldera, one of the incidental characters in Walk who becomes the protagonist of Motherlines, is spared this routine and is dismissed from serving as mother by virtue of her size and speed. She is more valuable to the men as a beast of burden than she would have been as a "dam," so she is trained to race by one of her masters. She accompanies one of the three male protagonists who goes off in search of his father, a

quest which is considered taboo, since fathers and sons must never meet so that what they believe to be the "innate antagonism" between father and son can never come to a head. Thus the Oedipal myth has endured time and nuclear disaster.

The beginning of the end of the Holdfast occurs when the son finds, identifies and murders his father. This confrontation turns into a full-blown war, with both father and son leading their followers into battle. The "nom du père", discovered, is violated; social order and the patriarchal structure are symbolically annihilated as all around them, the very physical structure of the Holdfast collapses. When patriarchy destroys itself, Alldera is then freed to venture into the Wild. Having been raped by two of the travellers after leaving the Holdfast, she is pregnant, carrying an ironic "parting gift" from the military prison which had enslaved her: her female foetus, who will start a new Motherline (in McKee Charnas' following novel, Motherlines) in the world of the Riding Women. In this society where, as Charnas says herself, "...sexism [is] carried to a logical extreme, and [where]...the inherent destructiveness of any society in which one portion of the population enslaves and dehumanises another", the role of mother is certainly not romanticized or glamorized (Lefanu, Feminism, 93). In a setting where women are sometimes forced to kill and eat their children and their peers, "Fems knew if anyone did that having been victimized was no guarantee of courage, generosity or virtue of any kind" (153). The Holdfast society embodies degradation and dehumanization and hence encompasses anti-maternal values. Not only does a lack of maternal values lead to devalorization of humanity as a whole, but the reciprocal is also true; diminishing human self-esteem paves the way for the depreciation of motherhood and its inherent values.

Bodies which are malnourished, abused and dehumanised and which are persistently on the brink of collapse, cannot lend themselves to the carrying, birthing and feeding of children. Any sense of accomplishment, merit or power that can be realized through motherhood is thus abolished.

When Alldera is found by the Riding Women in the second novel, her experience of delivery re-invests her with the power of the birthing mother. The Women's touch and encouragement places her in the midst of ritual whereby she is carrying on the noble womanly function of creating life, a tradition which has forever existed amongst women and which now welcomes her to its fold as part of a strong, resilient network where her self is restored. Alldera experiences this as she is giving birth.

> People closed around her, patting her, whispering encouragement, holding her hands firmly. Her feet were gripped and braced against the backs of people seated on the heap of bedding. .The voices of the others joined in a throaty singing. Their song took its rhythm from her breathing and reinforced it. She surged over the pain on their music. The words, which were beyond the tight centre of her attention, must have included humour. Rills of laughter erupted and were carried in the song She poured with sweat. After the first huge passage of the head she felt the cub's shape, limb and shoulder, work its way out of her. Always before she had been too frightened to feel anything but pain (25, 26).

This baby, who is a biological descendant of the Holdfast fems but socially raised as a Riding Woman, is an important intersection between the two civilizations. Although

she may biologically symbolize and acknowledge the survival and impact of the free fems, a clan which had emulated its Holdfast gaolers in a bid for survival, she must now, in her own forthcoming fecundity, look toward the future not as antagonist and victim, but as a complete, capable woman, traits apparent in the Riding Women.

Such a description reveals that Charnas portrays the feminism of the Riding Women as a non-essentialist. The women are strong because they *must* be, to ensure their survival. They can live together as a community because they have accepted each other's individuality, their qualities, faults and idiosyncrasies They worship life because they understand the ineluctability of death. Charnas' premise is that a society of women, freed from the doctrines and taboos of a military framework, could find within its very nature the potential to reinvent a whole new culture of its own. As Sarah Lefanu says, "Walk and Motherlines are essentially interrogative of character, of order, of unity. They anatomise disintegration and decay (Walk) and process and change (Motherlines)"(149).

The works of Suzy McKee-Charnas and Sherry Tepper are similar in that they posit movement away from a society centred on militaristic values. This decision to live in a separatist (or at least semi-separatist) fashion is a collective decision in both spacetimes, because the women are cognizant of the negative impact which the men's societies have on their very lives. Where in The Gate there is an uneasy truce between the men's and women's societies and a pretence of mutual respect, in Walk there is no such understanding. In both spacetimes, however, the men regard the women merely as producers of future warriors. Women are viewed as animals to be used in sexual, domestic and reproductive slavery, entirely at the disposal of the men's military ethics.

The schism between male and female societies is therefore necessary for survival.

In similar aspect, Sally Miller Gearhart's The Wanderground depicts a split as total as the one in Walk. Nonetheless, separatism is an option to the Wanderground women who have chosen to distance themselves from male society and its values. Like Russ and Charnas before her, Sally Miller Gearhart's characters do not believe that the integration of men can be profitable to a community with a truly womanist ethics at its core. Within this purely woman-centred framework, Gearhart fears contamination from aggression, violence, competition and capitalism in a society harbouring values of compassion, community and cooperation. Woman, according to Gearhart, is essentially closer to Nature. The Hill Women who inhabit the Wanderground can and must live separately from the men because of this very natur-alness, whereby they can achieve communion with the Earth and their surroundings (exterior) as well as their own and others' psyches (interior).

Sally Miller Gearhart does not shy away from strongly positing essentialism as the foundation upon which her fictional society is based. She does not, as Diana Fuss maintains, feel that she is "running the risk" of essentialism. Miller Gearhart does not simply "fall into" or "lapse into" essentialism, but instead develops this philosophy as a life-affirming strength which is the basis for the Hill Women's survival. Fuss explains it thus:

> There is an important distinction to be made, I would submit, between "deploying" or "activating" essentialism and "falling into" or "lapsing into" essentialism. [The latter] implies that essentialism is inherently reactionary-

> -inevitably and inescapably a problem or mistake. [The former] on the other hand, implies that essentialism may have some strategic or interventionary value. (20)

This is what Miller Gearhart advances in her portrayal of the Hill Women. The radicalism of their essentialism is what Fuss designates as a "political investment" of the sign "essence" and, she continues, it is predicated on the position of the subject within a given social field. The appraisal of this investment depends on the shifting and determinative discursive relations which produced the sign itself. The different "social fields" to which men and women belong are not, according to Gearhart reconcilable. Whereby man's positioning is tightly associated to culture, woman's is inextricably linked to nature. In this delicate balance where woman figures as an integral part of the ecosystem, there is absolutely no room for man-made technology. The uses for hard science are very minimal, for the Hill Women have developed their skills of telepathy and telekinesis to the point where they can heal, defend and transport themselves using their mental capacities. The encroachment of Technology is halted at the gates of the City where the men still reside with their submissive female partners. When the men "trespass" out of their city gates into the Wild, they become impotent and their weapons and technology are rendered totally useless. Gearhart draws a parallel between man's instruments of war and their instruments of (potential) biological aggression. In this case, where the men's instruments include equipment used to "tame" nature and, by extension, the Hill Women, technology can be compared to militarism. The Hill Women see the attempted domination of the planet by men as another corollary to their possession of

women, whereby earth is also Earth/Mother/Nature.

> Who is the slayer then, who slays the mother?
>
> The women answered. The Crown of Creation
>
> He is the slayer.
>
> His is the litany.
>
> We are the slain.
>
> If it moves: shoot it down.
>
> If it grows, cut it.
>
> It is wild: tame it, claim it.
>
> If it flows: a harness.
>
> It shines or burns: gouge it out.
>
> It is female: rape it (208).

Because woman is associated with nature, man's encroachment upon the Earth is equated with violence done to women. As the men try to tame the beauty and wildness of nature, so they strive to subdue women through rape. The end result will be supremacy of man and his military ethics (culture) and as a result, the death of nature/woman.

The men/warriors are discernibly in conflict with the women/mothers of the mountains. For Gearhart, the innate maternal qualities of woman make it possible for her to live in total harmony with nature. As the Hill Women maintain, men might be able to share this utopian vision. The Gentles, a group of men who want to live alongside the women (like the Servitors in The Gate) could also learn to develop these attributes. The

process, however, would be a long and difficult one, and the Women do not feel that it is their responsibility to initiate and tutor the men in these skills, notwithstanding the danger to which they may be subjecting their entire community after the men learn to use their new power. As one of the characters states:

> You'll use it, perfect it, manufacture it, package it, sell it, and tell the world that it's clean and new because it comes from a different breed of men. (194).

The Wanderground is the epitome of the feminist separatist society which has taken an essentialist stance, positing woman's "intrinsic" naturalness and extrapolating it to its logical conclusion by celebrating the most complete communion with Earth and her elements. Gearhart unfolds the image and character of the City-Warrior through his concrete and brutal language and rape of one of the Hill Women. The women's "Remember Rooms" also reveal a wealth in history through the media of the written word and film, a history which the women are determined will never replay itself. Interestingly, in opposition, the idea of the Mother of the mountains is developed allegorically, through multiple references to "our mother, the earth" and its vocabulary of maternity (to enwomb, to enfold, to encircle, to enwrap, to soothe and caress).

The structure of the series of tales is an allegory of an inverse birth. The stories progressively delve deeper and deeper, as would a spiral, leading further and further within, exploring the depths of their society, of their selves, until the final story introduces the Deep Cella, the warm and humid cavernous depths of the Earth herself where one of the characters, Fora, will be undergoing implantation in order to conceive (by ova-

merging). Gearhart shows that the birth of every baby is of tremendous spiritual importance and the child will henceforth have seven mothers to raise it Maternity, manifestedly, is ritualistic, voluntary, adoptive, never described in scientific or even realistically biological terminology, and constantly perfused with magic and spirituality As Sarah Lefanu explains, "Perhaps it is because the actuality of birth-giving is too close to danger and death that it is not allowed a place in this world of synthesis and harmony. There are no dark angels here" (67, 68). Admittedly, "mother" here is Mother-Earth/Goddess, made possible by this society's distance from the patriarchal/destructive force of the men's society.

This separatist stance is also witnessed in James Tiptree Jr.'s short story, "The Women the Men Don't See". Commenting on this vision, Sarah Lefanu states:

> ...[this] is not to say that Tiptree is suggesting that women should take the next alien spaceship out. Rather, she offers an analysis of our own world, in which women and men, caught up in all the intricate relations of social, political and economic life, become aliens to each other, precisely because those relations are affected by the power that men exercise over women (127).

The tension of gender relations in Tiptree's science fiction is a very general instance of the maternal/military dichotomy which I have been explaining, the author elucidates the general precept to depict progressively the all-too-familiar motif of the irreconcilability of woman's maternal values to a "battlefield" created by men. Similarly, in Tiptree's short story, the character of Ruth Parsons brings to light some of these

complexities

Parsons and her daughter, Althea, are on vacation in Mexico, on a charter flight en route to Chetumal with a third party, the narrator of the story. Halfway there, the Mayan pilot must make a forced landing and the three passengers, along with the pilot, are forced into collaboration to ensure their survival, while they wait for help to arrive. In the meantime, Don Fenton, the narrator, and Ruth Parsons go off together in search of water. Don learns that not only is Ruth not married, but that Althea's father has never really played any role at all in their lives. Althea Parsons is truly a living example of a product of birth by sperm donor. There is also the possibility that when Ruth and Don next see Althea, she will have become impregnated by the Mayan pilot, a choice which is entirely Althea's and which Ruth condones as being wise, given the Mayan's health and endurance, and because "The Mayas seem to be a very fine type of people." This choice falls outside the boundaries of the traditional nuclear family, and the narrator, bemused but a little shocked, sees "...generations of solitary Parsons women selecting sires, making impregnation trips. Well, I hear the world is moving their way." (p 138) Although she has opted for an alternative lifestyle, for a more "liberated" mode of mothering, Ruth Parsons (who has grown up quite happily under the same fatherless circumstances) understands the hardship of being a woman in a world of men. She explains to the protagonist:

> "Women have no rights, Don, except what men allow us. Men are more aggressive and powerful, and they run the world. When the next real crisis upsets them, our so-called rights will vanish like--like that smoke. We'll be

> back where we always were: property. And whatever has gone wrong will be blamed on our freedom, like the fall of Rome was. You'll see" (140).

When Don reiterates that "...women and men do not belong to different species Ruth. Women do everything that men do," she answers:

> "We live by ones and twos in the chinks of your world-machine...All the endless wars...All the huge authoritarian organizations for doing unreal things. Men live to struggle against each other; we're just part of the battlefield. It'll never change unless you change the whole world" (140).

Ruth Parsons, the Mother, head of perhaps a new motherline, understands the difficulty of putting forth the praxis associated with maternal thinking on this Earthly battlefield. When visiting aliens make contact with her, she negotiates her own and her daughter's, and her future grand-child's escape to another world, where they will have the possibility of starting over without exploitation and without misogyny, where Althea's baby will never know the atrocities of Earth. Anything, she feels, is better than this

Another aspect of female reproduction as anti-war agent is expostulated in Tiptree's "The Women the Men Don't See". Althea is practising selective breeding, as did her mother and her grandmother before, as do the women of The Gate to Women's Country, but carries the project one step further by (literally) alienating the child-to-be from the influences of males and their war machine. Tiptree again juxtaposes what, in her own world, her own spacetime, are factors perhaps more alienating than an extraterrestrial existence: wars without end, unseen authorities wielding untold powers in unending battles. All of these are abstract, sometimes mythical concepts geared to the

manipulation and advancement, of men, and the control and subjugation of women. For Tiptree, life on earth is but a lamentable reality for women. Contrary to Piercy, who perceives woman's biological function as her "edge" in the battle of the sexes, Tiptree feels that humans will never be equal precisely because of this "privilege", "...not because women are inferior to men, but because sex is so tightly linked to violence for human males." Ruth's reply to these obscure concepts is a concrete step in a very real direction, where the fact of female biology joins the spirituality of hope in escaping the tyranny of the male abstract.

As Tiptree herself states, "My view of sex looks at the reproduction of the race, and really trivializes intercourse. How blasphemous can you get?" (113). In The Left Hand of Darkness, Ursula K. LeGuin trivialises neither sex nor reproduction. Rather, they are at the forefront of her postulated spacetime. In my analysis of LeGuin, I shall demonstrate that in the context of a society of androgynes, sex and reproduction are the causal agents for a completely new social dynamic which pointedly underscores the military/maternity dichotomy. In this novel, planet Gethen is not the home of what we have come to define as humans. Its inhabitants are androgynes, beings having taken part in a research experiment centuries ago and left there to multiply. Gethenians are neither men nor women, but their cycle of reproduction is akin to woman's menstrual cycle, lasting 26 to 28 days, beginning with "somer", when the individual is sexually inactive, latent On the 23rd day, he remains completely androgynous until he meets a partner also in "kemmer", when the interaction and hormonal stimuli cause each partner to take on complete biological male or female attributes. "Normal individuals have no

predisposition to either sex role in kemmer; they do not know whether they will be the male or the female, and have no choice in the matter" (91). In large part the novel deals with the political and social consequences of their biology, its deterministic and culturally controlled aspects. This physiologically androgynous quality of their selves dominates practically all their relationships for centuries, and this defines Gethenian society as a whole.

The Left Hand of Darkness is mainly about Genly Ai, a human male, and Estraven, the Gethenian. They discover each other in the midst of ostracization. Genly, an ambassador from planet Hain (much like Earth) is much imbued with what we, from the vantage point of twentieth-century Earth, perceive as "typical" male values. He has come to Gethen to persuade its government to join the a confederation called the Ecumen. Although Genly Ai arrives with a political agenda, his personal life is shaken to its foundations as he gradually learns to see life through Estraven's eyes, and in the process sheds his androcentrism.

Shifting from the voice of author to that of self-critic, LeGuin insists that the work is not a prescriptive model of what humanity ought to be, but rather a representation of a society which does not favour either sex. In the novel, she eradicates the woman:mother, man:warrior associations and creates androgynes, who, by definition, are biologically able to bear children. She shows how, when the focus of *all* members of a society is shifted to a preoccupation with the reality of family/children/birth, the more abstract idea of war/death loses significance. Because every Gethenian *can* mother (as well as *become* a mother) no one is distanced from the immediacy of the domestic. The

psycho-social role of parenting, the inequality of the sexes and the depreciation of the maternal role can all be eliminated, since the "mother" of several children can also be the "father" of several more. This biologically ambiguous, intrinsically peaceful society can be better analyzed in terms of coordinates which are present in our own spacetime, for example, war.

There has never been a war on Gethen. The sundry populations on the planet have remained stable; they never move erratically, rapidly or aggressively. On Gethen, there has never existed a truly hierarchical State. The political structure resembles a communist model more than a capitalist one. What LeGuin herself calls "the feminine principle" reigns, i.e., anarchy, order without constraint, the strength of custom as opposed to brute force. The absence of social classes argues for the nonexistence of exploitation. There is no chasm between rich and poor, there is no slavery and there is no control of the world's material goods by a select class. Gethenians possess an advanced technology, but one which they develop and absorb, as opposed to letting it run rampant and constantly pushing it ahead of themselves.

LeGuin also emphasizes the absence of sex as a permanent social factor. A Gethenian is sexual in nature only about one fifth of the time, a period in which he *must* mate. Because it is a biological fact, everyone expects it and accepts it. Although LeGuin does not dwell at length on the dimension of childbearing and the education of children, it is a given that in a society where each individual has the potential of giving birth, its inhabitants will hesitate before annihilating the life which they have created. Antimilitarism and maternity thus mutually reinforce each other. Indeed, the most

disquieting and estranging sentence of the whole novel is "The king was pregnant." Here, the motifs are united in a single person: the king, product of a hierarchical cultural masculine abstraction, bonded to pregnancy, a wholly biological feminine sphere. The two thus become the unification of opposites, the equilibrium personified in every Gethenian.

Once the question of sex is resolved, LeGuin ventures into different themes But the depiction and implication of an androgynous socio-cultural dimension is by far the most intriguing and the most portentous. LeGuin does not feel that The Left Hand functions as a feminist utopia and states that ".. it poses no *practicable* alternative to contemporary society, since it is based on an imaginary radical change in human anatomy. All it tries to do is open up an alternative viewpoint, to widen the imagination, without making any very definite suggestions as to what might be seen from that new viewpoint." (LeGuin, Dancing, 16) In my opinion The Left Hand is decidedly a feminist utopia insofar as it offers a realm where maternal values and its corresponding ethics of peace can reign.

Similarly, in our own spacetime, Sara Ruddick's explication of "maternal thinking" posits a philosophy based on a praxis of peace which has been nurtured and coloured by a parent-child dynamics. Nonetheless, she feels strongly about the mutual exclusivity of the two and points to examples from around the world to illustrate her theory, such as the Argentinean and Chilean Madres and Abuelas (Mothers and Grandmothers) who band together in times of war, carry pictures of their children who have disappeared, who have "made a political point of the emotional significance of genetic continuity." Ruddick

is adamant about not romanticizing motherhood. She stresses that although the Mother is not necessarily peaceful, and that there may be some incidences of violence in her life, the qualities which she must call upon time and again (tolerance, patience, sense of justice, etc.) are not usually found on the battlefield. Militarism, in this sense, is diametrically opposed to motherhood, although SF creates an artificial, man-made bond between maternity and militarism insofar as the military's greatest resource, men/cannon fodder, is still produced by women. In this capacity, the stage has been set for most female players in the SF canon.

In fact, images abound of "mother as sacrificial lamb". Her body is put to use for the Army, churning out brave little soldiers (or in this case, brave little space-warriors) whom she dutifully sends out to do battle, heavy of heart, but with her eyes fixed upon the flag. When they are slaughtered at the front, she will at least feel that she has done her duty for the war effort. But for the major part, SF focuses on the space warrior and his trials and tribulations, a world where women are cast off to the sidelines. However, Sarah Ruddick asks:

> What is more of an "extreme physical test" than giving birth, more imbued with pain and suffering and, in the case of miscarriage, stillbirth, or the death of a baby, with loss? Or does such a test, because it is undergone only by women, not reveal absolute values? (123).

Ruddick states that perhaps these ordeals do not really count since they cannot be compared to the *real* ordeals of a male world, those of life and death in the sense of killing or being killed.

The novels I have presented in this chapter, reject the association between motherhood and war and the values that arise from this association. In doing so, they propose alternate models filled with "maternal" paradigms of understanding, paradigms which are in process or in practice, and beyond antagonistic manipulation.

The manipulation of motherhood has persisted in more ways than one, not only through our children, but through our qualifications as potential mothers, caregivers to children, nurturers of the human race. As Tepper's Septemius Bird in The Gate to Women's Country says:

> Misplaced nurturing...The biggest chink in your female armour. The largest hole in your defenses. The one thing you cannot and dare not absolutely guard against, for your nature must remain as it is for all your planning to come to fruition. You dare not change it. Still, it is hard when your own female nature betrays you into believing the ones who abuse you need you or love you, or have some natural right to do what they do (290).

CONCLUSION
FEMINIST UTOPIAS: "SOFT" TERRITORIES?

In this thesis, I have shown how the social and biological aspects of motherhood are represented in utopian and dyptopian worlds which feminist authors propose and create By virtue of its being a uniquely female accomplishment, changes and modifications in the process of producing and rearing children will necessarily affect women's lives in many ways. The inverse vision is also true: any positive or negative influence felt by women in the social or economic spheres will determine her willingness to birth children Chapter One showed how feminist authors of SF perceived the NRTs, either as a threat or as a liberating factor in her participation in society. Chapter Two, conversely, depicted how a society geared to a military ideology could never embrace the very premises upon which a utopia for women, and especially for mothers and their children, is founded For this reason, feminist utopias necessarily exist in isolation from men's societies, if these societies espouse a military ideology Because these feminist utopias reject many of the premises upon which male science-fiction societies (and even male utopias) are founded, they defy classification within the men's genres, while not wholly belonging to the realm of fantasy.

By definition, science fiction depicts the "known-to-be-known", and fantasy dabbles in magic. Fire-breathing dragons are not SF, but fire-breathing spaceships are. However, establishing definitions in the domain of speculative fiction is a lengthy and complex proposition. For instance, according to this reasoning, Jane Yolen's witch-like character, Jenna, belongs to a world of fantasy, even when she is taken to Selden Hame to learn

the ways of the woman warrior. Yet, Joanna Russ' warrior-for-hire, Alyx, belongs to science-fiction, although on her journeys she encounters the odd sorcerer well-versed in black magic (Russ, The Adventures of Alix). Clearly, definitions do not always distinguish genres clearly.

Writing varies even within a particular genre For instance, many critics stumble with the hard vs soft science fiction debate. It has been more difficult to pin down differences between the two, even though they range from the obvious to the subtle. For example, in examining the difference between "hard" and "soft" science-fiction, David Clayton examines the confusion connected with the term "hardcore"

> Thinking back to the expression "hardcore" we might be tempted to envision... a paradigm in which the complementary term would be "laid back" or "mellow". But this is already too figurative, as well as too facetious, a level of discourse Should not "hard" suggest first of all the material resistance of the natural environment, a resistance to be overcome in order for scientific research to take place? And overcome by what, if not correspondingly "hard" traits. tenacity, resolve, fortitude (61)

In showing the problems of establishing a reductive definition, Clayton inadvertently creates new areas of contention For instance, if a possible world is "laid back" or "mellow" is it necessarily excluded from the realm of hard SF? And if its inhabitants demonstrate tenacity, resolve, fortitude, then is such fiction adequately classified as "hard"?

As well, Clayton fails to consider that these traits may not serve to "overcome the

material resistance of the natural environment" but rather to permit the inhabitants to live in harmony and synchrony with their surroundings. In other words, Clayton ignores feminist values within SF, as explored in this thesis. That is, he considers neither the inclusion of such values, into so-called "hard" science-fictional spacetimes, nor the disenfranchisement of narratives within this SF subgenre To complicate further Clayton's reductive stance, "hard" SF can be sundered into ESF, or Engineering Science Fiction, which further explains the technological, and SSF, or Science Science Fiction, which deals with universal or even cosmological implications of natural phenomena. Given this problem of contemporary genre classifications, I will consider the need to redefine "hard" SF in light of the analyses of various feminist SF in this thesis.

One outstanding example of the necessity of this reclassification is the premise of Katherine V. Forrest's Daughters Of A Coral Dawn, which depicts the technological considerations of relocating a woman's civilization to another planet. For example, the passenger restraint system, used as nuclear fusion, propels people into hyperspace. In addition, Forrest even presents cognitively acceptable modified life forms such as a green-eyed variation of the tylosaurus. This creature possesses the rudimentary hypnotic powers of the reptilian species They use this power to threaten the women astronauts' safety As a result, Forrest calls upon the women's "hard" tenacity, their resolve and fortitude.

Aside from technical considerations, Daughters also dwells on other aspects of this interplanetary location, including the sacrifice of leaving lovers and families behind on Earth, the sexual and emotional self-discipline required of the ship's captain during

her assigned period of leadership, and finally, the dynamics of family and relationship in an alien environment Thus, Daughters possesses an element glaringly absent from most male SF: the dimension of human relations Expounding on the need to incorporate human qualities in SF, Joanna Russ, observes that

> ...in order to concentrate on the adventures and special effects, we simplify politics, economics, history, personality, morality, and human relations (which otherwise tend to get badly in the way, just as they do in life) But drama--and fiction--is what happens to people, i e , fiction **is** politics, economics, history, personality, morality, and human relations (Russ, "The Image of Woman in SF", 253).

According to Russ, effective feminist science fiction must not simply harbour a spaceship, expound on a mechanical subplot, or oppose "man and nature" It must not neglect the human aspect, especially if it deals with matters of family and non-dominating emotional relationships. Currently, SF does not address women's concerns such as these and experiences any more than, for example, Madame Bovary, Moll Flanders or Little Women. Practically speaking, SF, has always been a genre geared to the interests of adolescent boys who then "move on" to more "serious" literature by the time they reach adulthood [1] Feminist science fiction, therefore, has the potential to infiltrate men's space stations and netherworlds and neutralize the all-too-common detrimental images of women encountered there, such as the (male) scientist's beautiful

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[1] This can be attested to by the attendance at science-fiction conventions, "gaming" sessions and fanzine subscription lists.

(but not too bright) nubile daughter, the astronaut's long-lost, still-suffering, beautiful wife, or the intergalactic space-prisoner's brave, and beautiful, sister. Such fiction can also address feminist concerns and interests and, in the process, create a distinct sub-sub-genre, one inviting fresh thought and reflection on empirical spacetime by questioning the very definition of "science," and its impact on our lives [2]

Contemporary criticism of science fiction also omits women's interests. Consider, for example, David Brin's definition of hard SF. For him, essentially, such fiction deals with

> ...the portrayal of what might happen. In this way it is a little like playing what-if games with the future--excluding what we know to be impossible. (9).

Decidedly, Brin's definition is problematic on two counts. First, "the portrayal of what might happen" covers a vast amount of fiction, including the realm of speculative literature in general. For instance, Katherine Burdekin, in 1937, embodied one type of speculative literature in asking "what might happen if the anti-semitic ideology of the then-strengthening Nazi regime were to develop into misogyny, against **all** women as a natural extension of the Kinder-Küche-Kirche ideal?" Later, in 1969, Ursula LeGuin explored a wholly different type of speculative fiction with her question, "What might happen if a human male landed on a planet of biological and intellectual androgynes and

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[2] However, in creating such a subgenre, there is a risk of herding this brand of narrative into a science-fictional feminist ghetto.

had to deal with an individual as a person, as opposed to a male or a female?"[3] Finally, in 1975, Joanna Russ created yet another twist on speculative literature with her question, "What if all men died and women were left to take charge, and care, of the planet?"

The second difficulty with Brin's definition involves his terminology: "...what we know to be impossible." In themselves, "to know" and "[the] impossible" are terms of inestimable analytical richness in both critical writing and in any possible world of science fiction. Women's "ways of knowing" through the centuries have been both acclaimed and severely punished. In SF, feminist authors explore skills honed by telepaths or psychics, skills once regarded as witchcraft, but which, though not yet accepted as "sciences," are being seriously studied and documented. In short, SF leaves out important ways of knowing.

Brin feels that "there is a widespread feeling that hard SF has seen better days." If, by "better days," he is referring to the distinct separation and segregation of genres, the beautiful blonde technicians on Alpha-3, technicians who did not have small children, or the depiction of the beautiful green-eyed alien queen, a woman not practising parthenogenesis, then perhaps we should not mourn the passing of this epoch. In extending beyond such clichéd visions, feminist SF writers have shown birthing centres on Alpha-3, and a green-eyed alien queen ova-merging with the violet-eyed alien queen. As I have attempted to show in this thesis, more and more, mothers are now everywhere

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[3] Even though LeGuin's The Left Hand of Darkness won both the Hugo and Nebula awards, her narrative is not considered "hard" SF. Perhaps this is the case because of her overwhelming interest in the androgyne as opposed to the gyropod.

in SF. Traditional motherhood, future motherhood, single and communal motherhood are all contemplated. Babies are escorted from flesh and blood wombs, and from metal and glass birthing machines. Whether hard or soft, ESF or SSF, mothers are crossing over into all subgenres. Feminist SF writers, as I have presented in this analysis, are exploring a dialogic stance that women have attempted to articulate through time: nurturing humanness into technology.

Appendix A

This research deals with images of motherhood reappropriated by feminist authors to show the potential inherent in this biological and social function. However, it is interesting to note how the appropriation of motherhood, both biological and social, is not a recent phenomenon In this Appendix, I will show how woman's reproductive powers were problematic to a strong patriarchal culture in the early Middle Ages and how the functions of birthing and nurturing infants were co-opted to serve a (patriarchal) religious agenda. From here, a parallel can be drawn between the control of motherhood by religion, to its present-day regulation and domination by what has become a twenty-first century religion, technology.

In examining this particular instance in the historical origin of the displacement of women, I will consider, principally, the unruly influence of religious myth in society where men often develop images of woman. For instance, Caroline Walker Bynum describes how images of the "holy-mother/provider" can be found in Cistercian writings of the Middle Ages Developed not by or for women, these first images of mother-Jesus flowered in the twelfth-century works of men. They used explicit maternal imagery to describe God and Christ, usually described as male. Motherhood and the womb, understood in religious metaphors, consequently became symbols of fertility, security and union as opposed to separation, suffering and sacrifice. The theme of the church as virgin mother remained popular, expressing perfectly the concept of a virgin entity, expanding its influence and guidance over its "children" and converting them to the right path (127) This suggested the association between instruction and pastoral

responsibility, and maternal nursing Overall, four basic and attributive stereotypes of the mother characterize religious doctrine: she is generative (the foetus being made of her very matter), sacrificial in generation (labour pains), loving and tender (through love of her children) and nurturing (feeding her offspring from her body)

Ironically, the popularity of this maternal imagery did not reflect an actual increase in respect of women by men In medieval society, motherhood was still viewed as a more lowly relationship between mother and child, the biological fact of pregnancy was viewed with horror and disdain The fact was that the men who popularized maternal imagery had renounced the family and given up the company of women It is also interesting to note that males associated themselves with nursing, pregnant or birthing mother images in order to express a power. References to motherhood by men generally associate the tender bonding between mother and child with the soul's relationship to God. The symbolism of the maternal male takes on even greater significance upon discovering that such men were either medieval authority figures or male figures from the Old or New Testament in the capacity of leaders or teachers

An example of man's appropriation of woman as mother and benefactor occurs in early Renaissance culture in Tuscany. Margaret Miles explains that

> ...a visual image repeatedly depicted may be assumed to have popular attraction for people of its original culture. This attraction may relate to its ability to address the strong anxieties, interests, and longings common to all or most people of that society. Second, in addition to its general

> attractiveness, a visual image presents a range of messages specific to individuals in particular life situations (196).

In applying Miles' analysis of visual images to specific religious images, it becomes apparent that, to the medieval viewer, an exposed breast did not necessarily symbolize sexuality, but also comfort and nourishment, especially during a period of chronic malnutrition and anxiety over food supplies. Images of the Virgin with one bare breast thus served the dual purpose of lauding, and controlling, woman-as-mother's awesome power to nourish. This duality demonstrates the quandary of a culture dominated by patriarchal values, threatened by women.

The image of the nursing Virgin was a constant reminder to women to try to emulate the mother of God. But even as women were permitted to identify with the biological femaleness of the mother of God, which embodied the power to conceive, nourish, shelter, and sustain human life, the Virgin's exalted submissiveness, humility and sacrifice were put forth and emphasized to prevent women from actually recognizing their maternal "power". Consequently, while men were encouraged to identify with the male Christ, women's identification with the Virgin was actively discouraged through the Church's verbal teachings on the unbridgeable chasm between the perfection of the Virgin and the sullied, imperfect daughter of Eve Overall, fourteenth-century religious imagery sends both "visual messages that acknowledge woman's power over life and death, and verbal messages that deny the identification of actual women with the powerful Virgin" (207)

Naturally, partial nudity in religious paintings may have created a tension between erotic attraction and spiritual meaning. Many critics recognize that visual depictions of a nude (especially female) body are never so totally devoid of sexual association that they become a perfect religious metaphor. Likewise the subliminal libidinal innuendo may work on another level to intensify the devotional message of a painting The two influences, the religious and the erotic, must be in perfect harmony so as not to lapse into mere sensuality. Subsequent religious union with God could therefore have been seen as quite physical (in the uterus or at the breast) and this leads us into a form of male sexual desire, the need to play at the breast and to enter into the female body

Appendix B

Although the feminist utopias presented in this thesis deal principally with works written in the last three decades, it is interesting to gain a general overview of important influences in preceding years These developments of universal magnitude were felt and internalized differently by male and female authors, and this, in turn, was represented in their works of SF.

Although British and North American feminist political interests at the beginning of the early twentieth century were divergent in many ways, the ideology presented in both British and American utopias were very much alike inasmuch as they dealt with matters of the Earth and of the home. While male authors were space and time travelling in distant futures and on far-away planets, women in Britain dealt with questions of domestic politics, secularism, and domestic arrangements, and American feminists dwelt more on the religious and communal, in present or near-future rural settings. In Britain, women were showing how biology, as destiny, led to utopia by asserting woman's "moral leadership" through her "innate values" and reproductive physiological advantage. British feminist egalitarianism implied scientific equality, which in turn indicated the means of controlling the sex and number of their children.

American authors, by contrast, did not share this essentialist stance. Science, to them, was important inasmuch as it permitted them to control their reproduction. Because of the American religious fervour of the epoch, writers were positing pre-Christian spacetimes where there was no need to confront Christianity and its multitudinous prescriptions and taboos. Suffrage, a momentous concern to British

women, did not seem to strike any militant chords in American authors, although the camaraderie and cooperation this conflict fostered between women was stressed for both British and Americans.

The period between 1900 and 1950 was, for women on both continents, five decades of concern for their reproductive rights and freedoms. Where feminist utopian literature is sparse during this period, dystopias from both American and British authors question and extrapolate issues of eugenics laws and birth control. The genre reflects social and political change echoing the concerns of the American ERA and the British Sex Disqualification Act. Even with the absence of a clear-cut political target, fear of the right wing was much more pervasive than fear of the left, even though the American horror of socialism was but a few decades away.

Feminist SF of that period could be classified as utopian, where ideal circumstances pointed to woman's control over her sexuality and reproduction, where only specially trained women could choose to mother, anti-utopian, which demonstrated how attempts to remove woman's reproductive control were outwitted, and dystopian, where women were faced with absolute loss of reproductive decision-making While the U.S. was becoming a widening world due to its involvement in international politics, women now found themselves in a narrowing sphere with respect to feminist concerns. While American feminists were associated with left-wing politics and became symbolic of disorder, British women were perceived as an oppressed class in a totalitarian state. British authors were depicting the future as they saw it in dreams as opposed to extrapolations of their hope. The nature/culture debate raged on, depicting the city as

the seat of civilization as opposed to the barbarian countryside The city represented the feminist hope of revitalizing, rather than doing away with, the world they knew. Although Charlotte Perkins Gilman's Herland is a significant exception, parthenogenesis was not the norm in British feminist utopias, and the mythic associations of motherhood popular today were all but absent, as woman's biological act of giving birth was seen as an inconvenience to be dealt with through technological progress. Indeed, the complete ideation of woman as nature was perceived as a dystopian fear. It is during this period that the technology debate was most divergent between the British and American cultures. While American feminists waxed more and more technophobic, to the British, science in the area of reproduction was seen at the least as laughable, and at the most as inadequate.

Drawing on a novella by Joanna Russ, Nan Bowman Albinski calls the 70s the decade "When It Changed" for feminist SF authors. In both numbers and tone, feminism is shown to be the most important social movement, represented by the number of feminist utopias portrayed. As a reaction to war in the 60s, men were publishing dystopias while women drew from its related peace activities and shifting social norms writing utopias which put into relief classless, ecologically-minded societies. The characters within these societies are sexually permissive, not to break taboos and to flaunt social order, but to separate sex from questions of ownership, reproduction, and hierarchy, and to show the difference between "having" and "sharing". The double standard of sexual morality was attacked from all sides and homosexuality was presented as one of two orientations in androgynous societies, or as a given in

separatist or woman-only communities. Apparently, horror at socialism was quickly being replaced by socialist values, and the religion and Christianity of the early 1900s gave way to the spirituality and mythic beliefs of matriarchal religions The god of technology and progress was now making room for human-centred skills such as telepathy

Two very distinct categories emerged, that of the separatist (usually but not always) lesbian community, where woman's reproductive functions are celebrated, and where woman's biology destined her to be equated with nature and to find her power within it. In the androgynous culture, men and women live in a shared blend of natural and cultural values. For example, Sally Miller Gearhart's The Wanderground is set in a separatist spacetime where woman lives in communion with the Earth In "The Deep Cella", a chapter from the novel, the mysticism and ritual of the implantation of the egg within the womb is personified through Fora's descent into a dark, humid cave There, she will experience "implantation" and egg-merging to be the "fleshmother" to the child who will have six other adoptive mothers, the "sevensisters" By contrast, Dorothy Bryant's The Kin of Ata Are Waiting For You depicts parturition as the inevitable outcome of careless and immature heterosexual coupling. Birthing is done in the midst of a number of people, for "Giving birth is a very hard thing. We all try to help" (149)

And yet, the inhabitants of Ata, in times of conflict, go to the "hol-ka", a cave-like niche where one "go[es] naked back into our mother" to "come out reborn and begin again" (70) Overall, attitudes regarding nature shifted in the 1970s. male civilization is now equated to the "new barbarianism." The city has now become symbolic of authoritarianism and male control, aspects which are blatantly absent from utopias, such

as LeGuin's anarchist Anarres in The Dispossessed and pervasive in dystopias such as Suzy McKee Charnas' Walk to the End of the World, a novel thematically reminiscent of Katherine Burdekin's early twentieth-century Swastika Night Both authors extrapolate from the central political dystopian notion of polarization of nature and culture. Not only are these dystopias alienated from the natural world, but they are also rigidly hierarchical, totalitarian, sexually repressive and militaristic

In these works, the military industrial complex is associated with fundamentalist patriarchy and religious beliefs. Accordingly, male rule is always associated with violence. Laws are formulated to keep women "in their place", having been made scapegoats for the world's ills. This theme is common to James Tiptree Junior's "Houston, Houston, Do You Read?," Charnas' Walk, and, very recently Margaret Atwood's The Handmaid's Tale Within these dystopias, boundaries are very clearly established between social classes, age groups, and especially between males and females and their respective gendered roles Although the women of Atwood's novel, set in the twenty-second century Republic of Gilead, are sharply segregated by social function (housekeepers, chaperons, wives, childbearers), barriers are crossed when one of the breeders gives birth The women then come together in a congratulatory show of (very temporary) solidarity. It is this crumbling of frontiers between women that is the foundation of all feminist societies

Thus, the "other," a concept much analyzed in the SF, takes on various personifications, including an interplanetary alien, a Black or Chicana woman, or a diversified life-form. These "others" lose their differences and "freakishness," though they

never relinquish their uniqueness and special attributes Their integration into the social web is complete and unquestioned. Along with room for free expression of sexuality and closeness to nature, there is tolerance for individual differences This is indeed the depiction of Nancy Chodorow's (psychoanalytical) basic feminine sense of self, which is connected to the world and where girls' experience of self contains flexible and permeable ego boundaries, while boys define themselves as separate and distinct, with rigid ego boundaries.

Appendix C

The representation and analysis of the new reproductive technologies in works of feminist science-fiction draw on real-time occurrences which can be summarized as follows:

Infertile women (or women whose husbands are infertile) are, in a great majority, those who will be experimented upon, often in a very preliminary stage of genetic and biological research, by the medical practitioners. This definition of infertility is an elusive one at best In North America, a couple is considered infertile if they have been trying to get pregnant for a year, without success, while the European standard is two years. The more drastic the definition, the more pressured women will be into fulfilling their 'social duty'

Although the focus on the NRTs should not preclude the consideration and development of preventive measures and alternatives to technology, such as adoption or fostering, governments have been massively funding most areas of artificial reproduction and virtually ignoring the preventive programmes.[1]

Social ramifications of the NRTs in ethically complex areas (for example, of maternal surrogacy and the ensuing implications for as many as three mothers and two fathers) are not being brought to the forefront in publicized discussions and debates on the NRTs. What is being discussed is the legal status and right of the parents and the

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[1] Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women, The Infertility Dilemma: Reproductive Technologies and Prevention (Ottawa: Canada,, 1990) 2. This source gives epidemiological data on infertility, its treatment as opposed to its prevention, as well as budget figures allotted to both domains.

issue of payment for reproduction. Few of us are unfamiliar with the Mary Beth Whitehead case.

Current feminist criticism of the NRTs focus on a reinforcement and extrapolation of a patriarchal approach to medicine, including the further medicalization of pregnancy and birth, and the commodification of reproduction. This last issue of commodification is of particular consequence to women who do not fit the criteria for those entitled to the 'benefits' of the NRTs, as they more than likely will be targeted for their 'breeder' capacities. Joseph Stehura, the founder of the genetic research company "Bionetics" states: "Once embryo transfer is developed, the surrogate industry could look for breeders--not only in poverty-stricken parts of the United States, but in the Third World as well. There, perhaps one tenth the current fee could be paid women" (Corea 215). As a rule, the NRTs are offered to white, heterosexual, married, middle-class women, and, if they are from Australia, English-speaking.[2] The NRTs involved in this debate have received much publicity and are quite well-known. AID and AIH stand for artificial insemination by donor, and artificial insemination by the husband IVF, in-vitro fertilization ("test-tube babies") enables the embryo to develop in a so-called test-tube and can then be transferred to the 'maternal environment' for further gestation. The situation where

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[2] Michel Dongois, "Nouvelles techniques de reproduction: "Il faut démédicaliser le débat et le rendre social," L'Actualité Médicale 14.21 (1993): 8. Following the Royal Commission on the New Reproductive Technologies, Dongois interviews Catherine Desjardins, and president of the ethics committee of the Institut de médecine de la reproduction de Montréal. Dr. Desjardins comments on the recent decision to limit the available technologies in Canada to married couples (this excludes homosexual couples) by stating "In a society where single-parent families have become a social phenomenon, we had to ask ourselves whether we wanted to contribute to this situation. We felt that we did not."

a woman chooses to birth a child for a couple is known as maternal surrogacy. Many combinations and modes of payment are possible, but the most common occurrence is that of a healthy, young, carefully screened white woman carrying a child for the aforementioned couple. The fee paid, in general, is ten thousand dollars to the mother and fifteen thousand dollars to the agency. This system has numerous unclarified legal ramifications such as custody rights of both biological and social parents, biological parents' obligations, if any, to the child, etc. Other technologies which have been practiced for so many years that they are no longer debated or considered new are amniocentesis, the more recent chorionic villi sampling and ultrasound.[3] This has been used for detection of genetically-linked or sex-linked diseases and sex determination, followed by abortion in the case of a 'deficient' foetus.[4] Ectogenesis, or the "mother-machine" is another technique, which, while it has not been perfected, would permit the development of the artificial placenta. Researchers claim that this equipment would be used to keep younger and younger neonates alive. Its development is making great strides. Parthenogenesis, or asexual reproduction where the female egg is duplicated without fertilization by sperm. This method produces only female offspring. It has not yet been tested on humans. As I have shown, in feminist science-fiction spacetimes, this is the option most often depicted. From the earliest examples, such as Charlotte P.

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[3] Ultrasound, for example, has become so popular that it is now considered "family entertainment" in Canada. For $49.95, Derek Kirkham, an ultrasound technician, produces 10 minute ultrasound videos for expectant parents which can be shot right in the mother's home.

[4] The word "deficient" is highly subjective; in India, for example, out of 8000 foetuses tested, 7997 were female.

Gilman's 1915 Herland, where parthenogenesis is achieved by "allow(ing) the child-longing to grow within her 'til it worked its natural miracle", to Shoran ova-merging requiring "life-shaper" assistance, science-fictional parthenogenesis has permitted women to recuperate birth and reproduction in alliance with technology.

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