Writing a Better Ending: How Feminist Utopian Literature Subverts Patriarchy

By Kirsten Imani Kasai*

ABSTRACT. This article explores the historic role of dystopian and feminist utopian fiction in upholding or supplanting capitalist, patriarchal dominance hierarchies. Here, I will examine the following: the persistence and popularity of dystopias; the political and cultural trends that have influenced them; the reasons why feminist writers have typically excluded men from their utopian visions; the sexual objectification of women in dystopias; and the utopian/dystopian parallax. I will discuss the need for feminist writers to envision inclusive alternate futures that propose realistic, cooperative societies that counter prevailing dystopian models. This can be achieved by dismantling and reconstructing our present reality through the act of changing the stories that we tell ourselves.

Introduction

Literature is a proven medium for proposing and evaluating social change. It is a form of intellectual activism, and as radical feminist and environmentalist Lierre Keith (2012: 165) states: "The task of an activist is not to navigate systems of oppressive power with as much personal integrity as possible; it is to dismantle those systems." Feminist utopian literature has long pondered how a patriarchy-free world would look by envisioning detailed alternate realities with, or more often, without the presence of men. While the elimination of men may seem like an obvious solution, it is not tenable. Utopia must be reimagined as an inclusive paradise or ideal society, a process that raises numerous questions. What defines utopia? How have writers explored these

*Adjunct instructor of advanced literature at Southern New Hampshire University and English composition at University of the People. Author of three novels: *The House of Erzulie* (2018), *Tattoo* (2011), and *Ice Song* (2009). Interested in the socio-cultural impact of feminist, hybrid, and experimental literature. Seeks to establish a feminist vision of the future not rooted in technological alienation and destruction. Email: kik@kirsteni-manikasai.com

ideas in response to socio-political, cultural, and economic trends? Why do feminist utopias differ from those of male writers? How do utopian practices and concepts as portrayed in literature align with contemporary religious ideals, values, and traditions? Finally, can literature serve as a viable thought model for creating real-world change on a grand scale?

It is essential to understand how utopian hope was subsumed by the dystopian pessimism that now captivates the popular imagination, and why feminists periodically abandoned utopia as a literary genre and an ideal with the potential for real-world implementation. Utopian and dystopian narratives present alternate realities that reflect human hopes and fears, but reality itself is mutable and perception-based: "[R]eality is never a universal concept. … [W]hat passes for reality in any culture is the product of that culture's codes (a system of signs, whose rules and conventions are shared amongst members of a culture, and which is used to generate and circulate meanings in and for that culture)" (Beck 1998: 140).

However, story, not reality, is how humans make sense of the world and our purpose in it. Every novel, play, movie, anecdote, parable, myth, news article, joke, commercial, video clip, and television show is a story with demonstrated or inferred cause and effect, and a beginning, middle, and end. Our photographs, artworks, and music tell a story by hitting us with the emotional impact of an extrapolated event. Our dreaming brains even tell us stories while we sleep. Yet there are few realistic utopian tales of equitable, sustainable societies presented in literature, film, or the media. When assessing the possibilities of establishing a real-world utopia, it is critical to understand the political, economic, and cultural causes of this dystopian cultural shift and how feminist writers can provide more beneficial alternatives.

In this article, I will examine the reasons why feminist writers have typically excluded men from their utopian visions and discuss the need for inclusive utopias that propose realistic, cooperative societies. I will explore the historic role of utopian fiction in upholding or supplanting capitalist, patriarchal agendas and propose that contemporary feminists should publish fiction that pushes the needle further toward not only envisioning, but realizing, more peaceable possibilities, while accurately reflecting and expanding upon recent societal

gains intended to create a truly egalitarian future—a goal that I believe can be achieved by dismantling current patterns and reconstructing our future reality by changing the stories that we tell ourselves.

Heaven is Boring: Thematic Problems in Utopian and Dystopian Literature

Dystopian narratives dominate the speculative fiction bookshelves, and Hollywood loves a good end-of-the-world blockbuster. Nevertheless, achieving utopia (also perceived as nirvana, paradise, heaven, or a state of heaven on earth) is a fundamental goal of nearly every human culture or religion. We long for its attainment. Claeys (2012: xi) describes utopia as an intentional society that represents a "psychological aspiration of hope for a better state of existence in this life or elsewhere." Writers have labored over its implications since Sir Thomas More first coined the word in 1516 for his novel about a fictional island society. By 1900, writers had published more than 400 English-language utopian works and "more than a thousand others during the twentieth century" (Sargent 1976: 275–276).

Feminist utopian literature has been dubbed "social science" literature because it focuses more on relationships, social structures, and gender roles than utopic science fiction with its emphasis on technology. However, Claeys (2012) describes the utopian literary genre as human-centered. It relies on specific plot constructs: a traveler who arrives at a strange land and must learn the culture and customs of the new place, absorb its wisdom and messages, and relay this back to his or her own people. *Gulliver's Travels* (1726) by Jonathan Swift is perhaps the most well-known example (although it is also considered a work of social satire), but More's *Utopia*, H. G. Wells's *The Time Machine* (1895) and *A Modern Utopia* (1905), Austin Tappan Wright's *Islandia* (1942), and James Hilton's *Shangri-la* (1933) all follow this premise. Yet there is something distinctly colonialist, even "rape-like," about these stories, which detail the deflowering of an intact virgin world and echo the conquests of those famous explorers (such as Christopher Columbus) who ravaged an isolated society and tamed its savage inhabitants.

Metaphorically, these stories of conquest involve soul-destroying rape that renders its weakened victim spiritually shattered, riddled with disease and corruption, and unable to resist further attack. Susan Bruce (2012) contends that this theme dates back to Thomas More:

> Utopian foreign policy … appears hard to distinguish from imperialism … [T]hese colonialist inclinations are unsurprising given the ways in which Utopia is modeled, at least partly, on More's own England.

More admitted that Europe could only create its utopia by invoking Britain's colonial history instead of moving forward toward a new ideology (Kreis 2017). Rather than offering hope, these shape-shifting tales preserve the conqueror's legacy and devolve into fear-based dystopian non-resolutions.

Humanist writer Charlotte Perkins Gilman's (1915) novel *Herland*, the much-studied second entry in her utopian series, adhered to this formula. Claire Curtis (2005) affirms that Gilman's intent was to "capture the idea that every problem is solvable." Yet its 1916 sequel, *With Her in Ourland*, is a dry, lackluster novel that typifies many of the problems in utopian fiction. There is little plot, conflict, narrative tension, or character development. Pages are devoted to Herland émigré Ellador's reacting with tears to troubling scenarios in numerous global cultures while proposing verbose economic and social solutions to her husband, Van. Furthermore, Ellador's visitation to the alien universe beyond Herland's borders avoids any significant discussion of race relations, sexuality (a marriage not consummated for many months), or the role of gender equality in creating a balanced society. The novel ends with the couple living happily ever after in Herland— or at least until the arrival of the next interloper.

Utopia is an endpoint. Reaching it signals the cessation of struggle, at which point there is no more plot. Veronica Roth (2014), author of the dystopian young-adult trilogy *Divergent,* explains the problem:

> If you actually succeed in creating a utopia, you've created a world without conflict, in which everything is perfect. And if there's no conflict, there are no stories worth telling—or reading.

Dystopias that typically focus on the arrival or intercession of a stranger are popular because nearly everyone can identify with being the underdog. Luke Skywalker, the hero in the *Star Wars* film series, is a perfect example. We root for the little guy; we cheer the uprisings and rebellions that seek to level or reverse power imbalances. By empathetically siding with the oppressed rather than bowing down to invaders, we are empowered to rise up and conquer or, sometimes, to join them. The moral of the dystopian tale is one of survival, even if a single man (almost always a man) is left standing. Consider the science fiction film *Pitch Black*, where pilot Caroline Fry is fatally gored by an alien during the last scene while embracing the fugitive Riddick, who survives.

Dystopian narratives are inherently rife with conflict, and they make for more interesting stories. With their focus on peace and harmony, utopian narratives can be perceived as dull or static because readers may not anticipate or experience much action or plot, but the natural forces of chaos (dystopia) and order (utopia) are symbiotic and inseparable. Energy roils between them in an attempt to create and maintain equilibrium. We anticipate this energetic plot shift in dystopian works, less so in utopian narratives. However, both fictional premises can posit many pertinent questions about the future just by asking, "What if …?"

The Dystopian Parallax

The book *Conversations with God* states that human emotions originate from two sources: love and fear (Walsch 1996). When evaluating the idealism and pessimism of the parallactic utopian/dystopian scale, we can say that love = utopia, and fear = dystopia. Intent on rigorous social, political, and economic control, dystopias tighten the noose, amplifying bleakness in order to ratchet up the fear factor. Dystopias are patriarchy on steroids. In the United States, dystopias reflect historic fears of socialism and communism—an eradication of the individualism that has defined the character of American political rhetoric since the country's founding.

We must turn to history to understand the utopian/dystopian parallax. The Second Industrial Revolution (1880–1920) ushered in a new

era of increasingly complex and deadly warfare, weaponry, and po-
litical subterfuge. George Claeys (2012: 18) says: "[T]he twentieth cen-
tury was predominantly characterized by man's disappointment—and
even incredulity—at the perception of his own nature." This anti-uto-
pian pessimism arose in the wake of the fascist, communist, and dicta-
torial campaigns headed by Karl Marx, Josef Stalin, Benito Mussolini,
Adolf Hitler, Mao Se Tung, and others of their ilk, and the fear "that all
utopianism somehow eventuates in totalitarianism" (Claeys 2012: xi).

Radical regimes promised radical change and the fulfillment of
people's longings for some combination of security, peace, and free-
dom, achieved through ethnic cleansing or the destruction of capitalist
economies that maintain starkly divergent class systems. Echoing uto-
pian aims, the socialist-communist axis promised its supporters "abun-
dance, material comfort and security … in some indeterminate future"
(Rand [1962] 1998). These attempts to establish supposedly classless
societies resulted in catastrophic violence and distrust of anyone at-
tempting to establish a perfect society and a turning away from the
core values of utopian idealism toward dystopia's fear-based models.[1]

While insiders may observe utopia as a station of perfection to
be attained, critics of utopian literature or of real-world intentional
societies (such as lesbian or feminist separatist "womyn's land") may
view their inhabitants' peaceful existence as affected by totalitarian
controls, the exclusion of unwanted classes, genders, or citizens, or
practices of eugenics, cultural homogenization, and other nefarious
measures. This distrust of social utopia spurred the ascent of dys-
topian literature beginning with Yevgeny Zamyatin's 1921 novel *We*,
which Alexander Nazaryan (2014) aptly pointed out "was completed
on the cusp of Joseph Stalin's ascent and presciently predicted his
totalitarian model."

Dystopian pessimism of the late 20th and early 21st centuries is a
belief in the inevitability of a dark future, where technology displaces
humanity and extreme schisms of wealth and poverty define our lives.
The current prevalence of dystopic and apocalyptic writings (includ-
ing literary and genre fiction and TV/film media) is a response to the
horrors of modern warfare and the atomic bomb, which exposed us
to the potential for global annihilation, unseen at any previous point

in history. Consider it, if you will, a form of literary post-traumatic stress disorder.[2]

The parallax of the perfect/imperfect world results from a shift in viewpoint that occurs due to the position of the observer, the observed, or both. Witnessed through the cognitive distortion of pop culture's warped lens, allegorical dystopian narratives "reflect the fears and anxieties of the cultural context from which they emerge" (Warner 2002). They present a future that is a twisted, horrifying projection of reality—spoiled fruit sprung from the seeds of contemporary politics and ecological disaster. Dystopias represent a worst-case scenario to moralistic observers, the impending disaster we must strive to avoid. These bleak futures are not projections of what could be—they are reflections of our past and present. A direct response to imperialist and colonial subjugation, dystopian fear is spawned by the ruling majority's revulsion of being controlled, marginalized, and disempowered. Essentially, this is an upending of white male domination, wherein the ruling majority is subject to the same treatment it has meted out for centuries. Consequently, the purpose of feminist activism and utopian envisioning is to subvert the existing social dominance hierarchy.

On the one hand, depictions of geological and meteorological disasters represent a primitive, but healthy, fear of nature and cosmic forces. On the other hand, dystopia's projections of aliens enslaving or devouring Earthlings, the ascendance of artificial intelligence, robot uprisings, and futuristic class struggles represent the dominant culture's fears of colonial subjugation, slavery, enforced assimilation, and the eradication of indigenous heritages—the very crimes dominant groups have perpetrated throughout history against all who impede their goals. It is, at root, a culturally entrenched Oedipal complex: a tragic anticipation of karma circling back around to inflict upon us the pain we have caused others, as in the ancient Greek tragedy by Sophocles. The dominant culture is like King Laius, who feared his own predestined murder by his son, Oedipus, who is comparable to marginalized minorities. Dystopian fear arises from the knowledge of our human history of violence and oppression. As Warner (2002) concludes, the most valuable thing we can get from dystopian fiction is often not a view of what is going to happen, but of what we fear

will happen, fears we do not always express clearly or examine as much as we should.

Feminine Subversion in Dystopian Narratives

Feminist writers have been ardent imaginers of utopian societies. However, there has been a dearth of writing on the topic since the late 20th century, when dystopian visions took precedence in the popular imagination:

> [I]n the context of a 1980s America dominated by Reagan-Bush conservative politics and highlighted … by the defeat of the Equal Rights Amendment, feminist writers found it more and more difficult to see better times ahead. Of course, the writers of feminist utopias have always been aware that their positive visions were imperiled by the existing patriarchal order and have thereby often included dystopian warnings within their utopian texts. (Booker 1994)

Utopia was marginalized and labeled a liberal fantasy by conservative political factions. So, what caused this magnificent dream to languish? According to Ruy Teixeira (2017: 209–210):

> As the Left's utopian dreams faded, surging conservatives attacked vigorously. They argued that all of the Left's failings and especially its visions of a future society were attributable to their fundamentally unrealistic beliefs about human nature. People were selfish and acquisitive, not cooperative and solidaristic as the Left mistakenly believed. Therefore, the vision of society we should all strive for is a society without government and taxes where selfishness would be unleashed, and individuals could shape their own destiny free of the oppressive hand of the state. This Ayn Rand-style libertarian utopia became an inspiration to legions of conservative activists.

Concurrently, as Hollywood's power to establish social trends intensified, post-apocalyptic films such as *Blade Runner*, *Escape from New York*, *Mad Max*, *Brazil*, *The Matrix*, *Alien*, and *I, Robot* set a new standard—the dystopian future. Those films featured pharmacological or surgical forms of mind control and body modification, eloquently subservient robots, sinister artificial intelligences, ecological ruin, alien invasions, and increasingly impressive visual effects.

In *Decoding Science Fiction*, Brian Attebery notes that it is time for "a rethinking of mostly male-penned paranoid dystopias like *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*, in which tinkering with reproduction and the nuclear family leads to irrational de-individualized nightmare feminine hives" (Berlatsky 2003).

Male writers are drawn to dystopian scenarios because they are familiar projections of the present with gender roles and biases extant. Female characters in male-authored dystopic narratives are typically "window dressing"—romantic foils, sexual objects, or stand-ins for the first woman, whose womb represents a chance to rebuild the human race on a dying planet, space colony, underground, or in the uninhabited country. Consider, for example, the "Adam and Eve" or "Shaggy God" trope, C. S. Lewis's *Perelandra* (1943), and George Bernard Shaw's *Back to Methuselah* (1922).

Although these stylized, fictional rebellions have moved their heroines into positions of power, they possess power only inasmuch as allowed by the patriarchy. Dystopian women may wield weapons, but they still fight their enemies (aliens, zombies, warlords) wearing makeup, heels, revealing jumpsuits, tank tops, tight trousers, and cleavage-enhancing brassieres. Picture Violet in the film *Ultraviolet*, Alice in *Resident Evil*, or Leeloo in *The Fifth Element* (all played by actress Mila Jovovich), Electra in *Daredevil*, or gun-slinging, leather-clad (albeit spectacularly corseted) Selene in the *Underworld* film series. They are sometimes trained or designed (as cyborgs) to be weapons or assassins, but it is hard to believe these model-thin young women would have the strength required of them in their fight scenes.

Hollywood's dystopian women can be also synthetic—"gynoids" or "fembots." As stated in Donna Haraway's "Cyborg Manifesto," these flawless robo-chicks are "resolutely committed to partiality, irony, intimacy, and perversity. [They are] oppositional, utopian, and completely without innocence" (Haraway 1991: 149–181). Those characteristics render them ideal, uncomplaining, and unresisting sexual targets. This fantasy of the perfect, man-made woman encapsulates patriarchal fears and desires about women's sexuality, power, or submissiveness, beginning in 1886 with Auguste Villiers de l'Isle-Adam's novel *L'Ève Future*. Additional works include Lester del Rey's 1933 *Helen O'Loy*, Gwyneth Jones's 1985 novel *Divine Endurance*, Charles Stross's

Saturn's Children (2008), and Paul McAuley's *Fairyland* (2009). Films and television series that follow the same pattern include:

- *Metropolis* (1927),
- *The Stepford Wives* (1975 movie, based on Ira Levin's 1972 novel, exploring a patriarchal paradise of docile, robotic housewives and women's destiny to be subservient to men),
- *Westworld* (1973 movie and contemporary television series),
- *Blade Runner* (1982 movie based on Philip K. Dick's 1968 novel *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep*),
- *Cherry 2000* (1997 movie where robots replace wives),
- *Aeon Flux* (2005 movie about a woman who discovers she is the clone of another man's wife), and
- *Blade Runner 2049* (a sequel to the 1982 film, where female robots gain the ability to breed with human men to produce viable human offspring).

Why are dystopian women locked into such narrow roles, rather than presented as competent equals or matriarchal rulers? Recent research detailed in *Psychology Today* shows that "some male brains neurologically deny sexualized women humanity … objectified women are perceived as animalistic, less competent, less moral and less likeable" (Heflick 2010). This objectification extends so far as to incite terrorism. Trampling the ground that women have gained, the Internet-originating incel ("involuntarily celibate") movement—labeled a misogynist terrorist organization by the Southern Poverty Law Center—has already spawned deadly attacks in Canada and the United States. Meanwhile, so-called real dolls and child sex robots have been suggested as a cure for male sexual aggression and pedophilia (Cox 2018). When a doll named Samantha was displayed at a festival, journalist Sian Norris (2017) wrote that it was "so severely 'molested' by a group of men, it was sent home in desperate need of repair and 'badly soiled.'" Norris (2018) surmises:

> If anything, the violence done to existing sex robot models suggests that these pliant, uncomplaining fembots simply normalize aggression. Rather than providing an outlet for violent men, they offer a chance to practice.

Dehumanizing and demeaning, the sexual objectification of women perseveres in these futures because real women may pose too great a threat, and so they are eradicated through objectification. They embody masculine detachment by converting female bodies into service vehicles of work or pleasure, a process Haraway says stems from the "close ties of sexuality and instrumentality, [and] views of the body as a kind of private satisfaction- and utility-maximizing machine." In *The Souls of Cyberfolk: Posthumanism as Vernacular Theory*, Thomas Foster (2005: 103) contends:

> Sexual interest in gynoids and fembots has been attributed to fetishization of technology. … The depiction of female robots minimizes the threat felt by men from female sexuality and allows the erasure of any social interference in the spectator's erotic enjoyment of the image.

However, a sea change is happening. In young adult (YA) fiction such as Suzanne Collins's *Hunger Games* series, Veronica Roth's *Divergent*, and the flood of dystopian YA works, much of it featuring spunky, teenaged, female protagonists, who are mostly white or racially ambiguous, and cis-gendered, people of color and LGBTQ characters are still noticeably underrepresented. One notable exception has been African-American science fiction writer Octavia Butler's 1993 dystopian novel *Parable of the Sower*, wherein 18-year-old Lauren Olamina resists her preordained future of marriage and babies to leave her family's gated compound and start her own utopian community, Earthseed. More recently, authors including Tomi Adeyemi, Nalo Hopkinson, and Nnedi Okafor have been bringing Afrofuturism to the fore, while David Levithan's *Boy Meets Boy* envisions a gay-friendly utopia that defies hetero-normative expectations.

Although female writers and readers of dystopian YA fiction might resist feminist labeling, they reap the harvest of first- and second-wave feminists to personify a new definition of womanhood. *Divergent* director Neil Burger defines this trend as "a natural evolution of the women's movement. We've stumbled upon a way to explore how these young women are being empowered—to situate it in dystopic societies" (Zemler 2014). Of course, money fuels the publishing engine, and the female YA dystopian genre is a massive cash cow.

Scholastic, publisher of *The Hunger Games*, has reported more than 65 million sales of the trilogy's titles and record-level profits (Scholastic 2008). But lucrative trends persist long after public interest has waned. Literary agent Barry Goldblatt says, "[d]ystopia is pretty much dead," adding that "this doesn't mean that *The Hunger Games* won't continue to sell" (Frederick 2013).

Fortunately, Hollywood has finally begun to recognize that, even more than tightly-clad women in dystopian settings, *women themselves* are a box office draw. In the 2014 film *Ex Machina*, gynoid Ava becomes self-aware and escapes the Bluebeard-esque confines of her creator's lab to seek an autonomous, human life. Films featuring strong female leads, such as 2017's *Wonder Woman*, and all-female reboots of male-driven vehicles (2017's *Ghostbusters* and 2018's *Ocean's 8*), demonstrate not only the viability, but the profitability, of big-screen gender equality. Record-breaking box office sensation *Black Panther* (2018) featured a heavily female and predominantly black cast to become "the third highest-grossing movie of all time" (Wilkinson 2018). Even visionary pop star Bjork is getting into the game, countering the bleakness of her break-up album *Vulnicura* with the optimistic, nature-infused *Utopia* that details a "story of escape … where women break out from a society that oppresses them, steal flutes and run with their children to a new place." Bjork says: "It's really important now to be intentional. If you feel this world is not heading the right way, you have to be DIY and make a little fortress, over here to the left" (Sawyer 2017).

Movies and music have a visibility and immediacy that books often lack, but, as Liptak (2017) argues, books have an commercial advantage for Hollywood studios:

> Established popular books are a comparably faster and data-supported way for studios to develop film and TV plots … The way we watch, and the way studios distribute, television in 2017 makes it easier for producers and writers to transition a novel from the page to the screen.

It stands to reason that, as more female-centric and visionary works achieve mainstream status, the need for these stories can be met in large part by writers who will hearken back to earlier feminist aims

and focus on crafting fiction intended to change the status quo. In the meantime, feminism must be reinvigorated for the 21st century in order to reclaim its positive power as an uplifting altruistic force in both real life and literature.

Envisioning a Feminist Future

There are utopias—"perfect" societies—and then there are feminist utopias, where perfect societies are typically marked by an absence of men. Moynihan (2004: 206) has analyzed the views of Charlotte Perkins Gilman on why women's accomplishments were needed to make civilization whole:

> [Gilman] argued that women's contributions to civilization, throughout history, have been halted because of an androcentric culture. She believed that the female race was the half of humanity that was underdeveloped, and improvement was necessary to prevent the deterioration of the human race.

Because patriarchy oppresses and marginalizes women, the natural impulse in envisioning alternative futures is to imagine its opposite in narratives that commonly exclude, eradicate, desexualize, or segregate men rather than portray harmonious cohabitation and social collaboration.

Feminist writers have sought to wind back the clock on patriarchal dominance by imagining a future where the patriarchy has been overturned and men are absent or occupy subservient roles. One of the earliest recognized visions of a feminist utopia is late 14th- and early 15th-century Italian writer Christine de Pizan's *Città Delle Donne* (1405), wherein women inhabit their own city, isolated from men. "Sultana's Dream," a short story published in 1905 by Muslim feminist writer, social worker, and educator Roquia Sakhawat Hussain, flips the script on purdah by veiling the men and locking them away in harems where they can do no harm. *Herland* expands Hussain's concept, creating a female-only—albeit Aryan—country where spontaneous virgin births are a gift for the worthy and motherhood is exalted above all else.

Feminist writers have addressed inequalities by reformulating sex roles to include gender-neutrality and third or intersexed genders. Utopic citizens are sometimes asexual, as in Gilman's *Herland*, genderless as in Le Guin's *The Left Hand of Darkness* (1969), Storm Constantine's Wraeththu novels (1987–1989), and Theodore Sturgeon's *Venus Plus X* (1960), single sex and/or lesbian, in Sally Miller Gearhart's *The Wanderground* (1979), *Amonite* (1992) by Nicola Grifith, *The Female Man* (1975) by Joanna Russ, and *Houston, Houston, Do You Read?* (1976) by James Tiptree, Jr. Some have strict social arrangements with men to satisfy their sexual needs or conceive children, such as *The Gate to Women's Country* (1988) by Shari S. Tepper. This reproductive triumph of science over biology effectively removes men from participation in human life at all levels. Eradicating the sole reason that they might need a man (sexual/romantic fulfillment aside), it is perhaps the only, and ultimate, way, for women to fully reclaim their power.

In Marge Piercy's novel *Woman at the End of Time* (1976), babies are conceived in a lab and gestate in giant, mechanical wombs. They are "born" to a chosen collective of mothers (who range in age and can be female or male). The women in Leona Gom's *The Y Chromosome* (1990) reproduce via ovafusion. In Sandi Halls's *Wingwomen of Hera* (1987), reproduction is parthenogenetic. During adolescence, the genderless alien children in Mary Gentle's *Golden Witchbreed* (1983) develop into men and women, and "gender has no bearing on social roles." In contrast, Doris Lessing's *The Marriages Between Zones Three, Four and Five* (1980) suggests that men's and women's values are inherent to the sexes and cannot be changed, making a compromise between them "essential."

In an essay about Shulamith Firestone, written one year after her death, Noah Berlatsky (2013) summarizes the key idea of Firestone's 1970 book, *The Dialectics of Sex*:

> [G]ender difference (or "sex class") is rooted in biology. It is, furthermore, at the basis of all inequity, including economic exploitation and racial prejudice. Her brilliant blending of Marx and feminism, in which she sees women's labor as the prototype of all labor—that becomes not just a singular insight, but part of a conversation in which writers like Le Guin

and Russ and Gillman and Marston were actively trying to figure out how biological difference is linked to oppression, and what changing that would mean.

Radical feminists have endorsed segregation of the sexes as the only solution to eradicate the tyrannical, misogynistic violence that is, at its core, what Firestone ([1970] 2003: 3, 11, 29) labeled "a fundamental biological condition." She's absolutely right; biology is to blame. Half the world's population carries a gene that gives them an 82.8 percent higher chance of committing a violent crime. That 50 percent of the population? They're male. Neurologist and speculative fiction writer David Eagleman uses this example in his 2011 book *Incognito: The Secret Lives of the Brain* to ask how our justice, social service, educational, and healthcare systems can best treat and manage populations who are genetically predisposed to violent, predatory behaviors.

Dr. Qian Ma (2004: 12), an English professor at Roanoke College, asserts that gender inequality is "rooted in Western civilization's language, customs, philosophies and social and economic spheres." Ma (2004: 12) adds that, in the *Shuowen jiezi,* the earliest written Chinese language dictionary, the character for married woman had a patriarchal construction:

> [It] is comprised of two parts—female and broom, meaning "obedience." The character for man incorporates "field" and strength … [T]hese characters show that patriarchal sexual relations and gender labor divisions had already been established before the written language was invented.

In the eyes of the patriarchy, women and children are inferior and therefore deprived of the privileges accorded to men simply by benefit of being born male. Ma (2004: 12) writes:

> Mythological and linguistic evidence indicates that the second-class status of women is both ancient and universal … [E]vents that further the historical development of men, liberating them from natural, social, or ideological constraints, have quite different, even opposite effects on women.

But there are loopholes for women who refuse to conform. Feminists have solved this conundrum in their utopic writings by

neutralizing men, using tactics of removal, isolation, reprogramming, or disempowerment. They have also solved it by creating living spaces apart from men. Separatist womyn's lands, such as SuBAMUH (Susan B. Anthony Memorial Unrest Home) in Ohio and Umoja, a matriarchal, woman-only village in Northern Kenya, are putting theory into practice. Some women have fashioned a different sort of compromise. Albania's "sworn virgins" are women who choose to dress and behave as men in exchange for freedom from marriage, childbearing, and the stifling social roles ordained by the Kanun—a canon of law dating from the Middle Ages that states "a woman is known as a sack made to endure as long as she lives in her husband's house." Despite their masculine clothing and habits, these burneshas inhabit an asexual, genderless realm (Paterniti 2014). Neither man nor woman, they are denied the basic human rights of both genders; they are forbidden to take lovers, marry, or raise families. Yet, it is a sacrifice they are willing to make to create their own personal utopias, freed from womanhood's narrow confines.

Despite major gains and advances in women's rights, the world is still a highly dangerous place for women and girls:

> Women are largely excluded from formal peace processes. Only 1 in 13 participants of peace negotiations since 1992 were women. Women make up more than 50 percent of the global population but fill less than 20 percent of all parliamentary seats. (Do Something 2014)

Olivia Ward (2008) summarizes the fundamental problem women face throughout the world in terms of having control over their own lives:

> Putting power in women's hands is the biggest challenge for improving their lives … Whether in the poorest countries of Africa, or the most repressive of the Middle East or Asia, lack of control over their own destinies blights women's lives from early childhood.

Women are eager to get involved in policy-making and push back against strict historical exclusion from the political sphere; 2018 has seen a record-breaking number of women being elected to public office and running for seats in the U.S. Senate (Nilsen 2018). This

marks a crucial attitudinal shift in women's rights and signals an important transition towards recognizing women as competent equals. Both women and men are demanding safer, more just treatment of the world's women and girls, which will also empower men to embrace the totality of their own emotional expression beyond patriarchy's suffocating dictates.

Institutionalized misogyny and the global abuse of women bring to mind images of infant girls discarded in the streets in China, female genital mutilation (explored in Alice Walker's 1992 novel *Possessing the Secret of Joy*), honor killings, child brides forced into marriage in the Middle East and Africa, and sex tourism in Asia. Americans may think themselves more "civilized" in their treatment of girls, but a BBC report on child violence contradicts that view:

> The United States has the worst child abuse record in the industrialized world … Abused children are 74 times more likely to commit crimes against others and six times more likely to maltreat their own children. (Petit 2011)

Gilman (1898: 38–39) argued that, by comparison with other species, female humans are forced to rely more on sexual attractiveness because of the economic dependence of women on men:

> In her position of economic dependence in the sex-relation, sex-distinction is … not only a means of attracting a mate, … but a means of getting her livelihood … Because of the economic dependence of the human female on her mate, she is modified to sex to an excessive degree … [This tendency] is produced and maintained by the abnormal economic relation which makes one sex get its living from the other by the exercise of sex-functions.

According to the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, more than 2 million American women are the victims of violent assaults by men every year. Women in fundamentalist religious communities are denied education, healthcare, sexual choice, career opportunities, and, very often, a public venue to express their voices. These are the very disadvantages that feminist writers sought to overturn in their utopian fiction.

Proposing solutions to the violence that has constrained and dominated women's lives throughout recorded history is the uniting linchpin of feminist utopian fiction. "There is not one single country where women can feel absolutely safe" (Ward 2008). No wonder we women fantasize about founding cities, countries, and planets freed of patriarchy's legacy. Feminist utopias dare to imagine worlds where misogyny and violence against women is not the norm.

The Role of Ethics and Religion in Utopia

We can rewrite our stories and divert the course of culture. I suggest we revise our definition of utopia to mean active and socio-political progress with the aim of achieving balance, not perfection. We can start to define utopia negatively—by what it is not and what it does not have.

A practicable utopia engages policies that support the greatest number of its members by offering the highest standard of living attainable to its full range of citizens. Utopia shares, rather than hoards. Utopias do not have human trafficking, child abuse, terrorism, hunger, poverty, slave labor, or war. Nor do they endorse or support institutionalized aggression, ecological rape and plunder, or gross inequalities of wealth and resources. But when mired in the political swamps of patriarchy, it is difficult to dismantle and reform the very systems imprisoning us. However, as we implement utopian values and practices, we should maintain a critical eye and allow ourselves to be skeptical of what they can become to avoid the excesses of "perfection" that have tainted our conceptions of utopia. As Curtis (2005) writes:

> Three particular criticisms capture the concerns of 20th century political philosophers. First is the expectation that utopia justifies violence, second is the expectation that utopia collapses individual desires into one communal norm, and third is the expectation that utopia mandates a robotic focus on problem-solving. However, while these arguments concerning the dangers of utopia are compelling, it is also the case that when political philosophers abandon the very idea of utopia, they necessarily abandon the source of what it is to do political philosophy.

A true utopia would focus on ethics beyond the inculcations of religion. With its emphasis on exclusion, organized religion condemns

the practice of a fluid, socially applicable morality in favor of anachronistic philosophies and behavioral guidelines that breed divisiveness. Organized religion does so by ignoring the influences of our planetary warming crises, technology, advanced warfare, political states, and access to information. Again, access to education is key. In her essay "Religion and Women's Human Rights," philosopher Martha C. Nussbaum (1999: 116) writes:

> The best way to promote the role for religious discourse … is to produce active, unintimidated, educated democratic citizens. Such citizens will demand that religious discourse play a role compatible with constitutional guarantees of human equality. And this means that their role toward their own religious tradition will also be active and reflective, not merely submissive to the powerful interpreters of the moment.

Fundamental to change is a willingness to refute religious traditions that contribute to women's subjugation. This requires a shift from the sentimental attachment to misogynistic traditions to a practical realism. The Dalai Lama (2011) also reflects this view:

> The reality of the world today is that grounding ethics in religion is no longer adequate. This is why I am increasingly convinced that the time has come to find a way of thinking about spirituality and ethics beyond religion altogether.

Indeed, international systems of law, economics, and healthcare may be the future we are moving toward as cultural and linguistic barriers between nations blur and erode. Technological advances, emigration, immigration, and increasing numbers of multi-ethnic or multicultural partnerships and families are making the world smaller by greatly increasing our awareness of the struggles, challenges, and gains made by others. These are the first steps toward conceiving and regulating an equitable global society. As Antonio Cassese (2012: 410) writes:

> The point is to rethink the core of the economic system in its dual normative and institutional aspects. This reform seeks not the mirage of equality … but to make the principle of fairness the legal basis for all future discussions … so as to change a profoundly unjust system … A New International Economic Order (NIEO) is the necessary condition for

sustainable human development that is effective and it is only at this price … that utopia can perhaps finally become incarnate.

Writing a Better Ending

Women's Voices in Speculative and Utopic Fiction

Feminist utopic literature can serve as a guide for creating a workable future by giving women a platform where their voices will be heard. Marilyn Crafton Smith (1993: 66) contends: "Feminist communication requires that women not only gain access to the communication tools, but that they actively participate in the communication process." The best way to transfer ideas from utopic literature into the real world? By implementing pro-social reforms stemming from a foundation of critical thinking. But it is presently impossible to implement feminist utopias independent of gender considerations because we exist in a global patriarchy where unbalanced and corrupt values are firmly embedded in every aspect of the public and personal lives of its citizens. If matriarchies were predominant, we might arguably be having a similar conversation because elevating any particular gender, ethnicity, class, or nationality to a role of supreme authority automatically creates an entropic hierarchy. We can shift the paradigm, not by restricting the patriarchy's rights (as some feminist writers have done), but by affording everyone those same and equal rights. As Ma asserts: "Women's wrongs cannot be righted while society remains male-dominated. In this situation, the very concept of equal rights is utopian" (2004: 20). Rather than tear down the most oppressive faction, we should strive to uplift others to the same plane. For women, that will mean having the ability to choose modes of sexual expression and reproduction, to pursue personal creative and intellectual goals, to vote and hold political offices, to obtain high-quality education, and to have access to affordable healthcare, including contraception and safe abortions. Liberating the world's women and placing them in positions of power will initiate tectonic shifts that will reverberate through multiple economic and cultural strata by giving them equal participation in creating public policy. The Internet has proven to be a great leveler by presenting options and information to culturally

and socially insulated people (namely, women), who for the first time have a window on the world. Finally, they can see the imbalances between industrialized and developing countries, crave opportunities for themselves, and initiate grassroots political movements to obtain them.

Modern men are also bucking patriarchy's demands and rejecting the narrow scope of traditional values in favor of creating lifestyles that better suit their individual desires, interests, and personalities. Research by the American Psychological Association (2014) shows that "fathers' affection and increased family involvement help promote children's social and emotional development." Recent trends prove that increasing numbers of men are abandoning the emotionally stifled, distant father of earlier generations by choosing to become stay-at-home parents, commit more fully to parenting and partnership (or conscientiously choosing to remain childless), advocate for legal and cultural recognition of paternal rights, and change the negative stereotypes of fatherhood. This is due, in part, to shifts in public opinion about sexual identity and gender roles, which offer a greater breadth of gender expression to all citizens, whether or not they embrace any particular change. "Pro-feminist men feel that by modulating hyper-masculinity, and ceding a wider wedge of societal power to women, they can clear a path to male enlightenment—something good for men and women" (Barth 2018).

We *are* seeing change. This year, New Zealand's Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern gave birth while in office. She's the first female leader to take maternity leave and when she returns to work, her partner Clarke Gayford will stay at home with their daughter (Baker 2018). Stockholm and London have banned degrading and sexist advertising in public spaces. The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals aim to end child marriage by 2030.

Fiction trends reflect the fears and aspirations of an era by magnifying present concerns into a distortion. Dystopian futures are the spawn of a patriarchal present. During the feel-good Obama years, D'Addario (2014) wrote that, despite its persistent popularity, "the dystopian fiction trend is ending." But in 2016, with the U.S. presidential election looming, *The New York Times*, the *New Yorker*, and *Wired*, among others, commented on dystopian literature's resurgence in popularity.

In the wake of the election, which saw the Electoral College dismiss Hillary Clinton's sweeping, popular-vote win to elect the most unsavory of candidates, waves of political action have washed through American culture, prompting an intensity of public protest not seen since the protests against the Vietnam War during the late 1960s. The historic Women's March protested the election of an accused rapist with the largest single-day march in American history alongside 670 events worldwide that called for "gender and pay equality, LGBTQ and civil rights, affordable health care, environmental awareness, and reproductive freedom" (Rafferty 2017).

Change must come from inside the ruling majorities, too. Allyship significantly shifts socio-cultural barometers and helps movements achieve critical mass. Damon Centola, associate professor at the University of Pennsylvania's Annenberg School for Communication and the School of Engineering and Applied Science, has identified the tipping point: roughly 25 percent of people need to take a stand to create large-scale social change. According to *Science Daily* (2018): "Centola's results offer new evidence that a committed minority can change what behaviors are seen as socially acceptable, potentially leading to pro-social outcomes."

Here's an example of how a movement reaches critical mass. Reports in *The New Yorker* and *The New York Times* exposed Hollywood mogul Harvey Weinstein as a sex predator, "reporting that galvanized the #MeToo movement and set off a worldwide reckoning over sexual misconduct in the workplace" (Peltz 2018). Similarly, Moira Donegan's open-source list—"Shitty Media Men"—called out roughly 100 powerful and predominantly white men for sexual misconduct. Accusations of sexual assault and misconduct, resulting in numerous firings, suspensions, and public apologies, took down former luminaries and icons in a historic wave of accountability. Journalists Jodi Kantor, Megan Twohey, and Ronan Farrow were awarded the Pulitzer Prize for Public Service "for explosive, impactful journalism that exposed powerful and wealthy sexual predators … thus spurring a worldwide reckoning about sexual abuse of women" (Pulitzer Prize 2018).

Patriarchy has established its societies as operant conditioning chambers that reward or punish behavior that challenges its oppressive status quo. Basic behavioral conditioning experiments using rats

and Skinner boxes demonstrate this process. A rat is trained by receiving a food pellet when it presses a lever. When the rewards stop coming, the rat intensifies its reward-seeking behavior until it learns that no reward will be forthcoming, thus extinguishing the behavior. Author and former pastor Rob Bell says:

> The sense of [any institution's] own stability depends upon keeping people in their correct place even if that stability is based on dysfunction or oppression. When you move out of your "correct place" you threaten their sense of order, and [others] may very likely try to pull you back down.

Ergo, dystopias are crab pots. This is the well-known allegory of the "crab mentality" wherein live crabs, thrown into a pot of boiling water, will clamber over each other to reach the rim, pulling down any others who are nearing escape (Gilbert 2014). Political commentator Melissa Harris-Perry (2015: 60) says: "Fear shapes who [we] are as people, and, therefore, how much it shapes our political and social economic world." As the backlash against the #Metoo movement has proven: "The reaction to women gaining power will be to push them back down, even if unintentionally … The existing male power structure organizes in defense of its own continued dominance" (Alderman 2017).

Cindy Crabb (2018: 211, 212), founder of 1990s Riot Grrrl zine *Doris* and author of *Things That Help: Healing Our Lives Through Feminism, Anarchism, Punk & Adventure*, posits the pitchfork strategy as a method to "create social change and self-fulfillment." It includes five prongs: discovery and self-education; affinity groups and political collectives; direct action, protest, and community education; internal democracy and coalitions; and counter-institutions. Crabb states that marginalized groups need to learn to be "consistent and principled allies, willing to look at our own racism (or other ism), put aside purist political attitudes and discuss different experiences of power struggles."

Utopic literature can be one of the best ways to explore possible alternatives for our future. It can serve as a thought model of what *might* be—the "approximate future" postulated by chaos theory pioneer Edward Lorenz. Utopic literature can also propose solutions for initiating and sustaining real-life change. By focusing on maintaining

or strengthening the patriarchal status quo with its emphasis on climate destruction, and socio-political, economic, and gender disparity, dystopias ignore the radical global shifts in women's rights, even those occurring at a glacial pace; they do not address the necessity of altering religion's role in suppressing women's rights. Melissa Harris-Perry (2015: 57) adds: "For me, a feminist utopia is the time when our struggles, our anxieties, our challenges to overcome are based on our human condition and not on our identity."

Conclusion

Rather than exclude men from their literary utopias, feminists should explore how to incorporate the fathers, brothers, sons, and male friends we adore into our ideal futures. How will we raise boys to become peaceful men? How will we retain the uplifting spiritual messages of our religions while safely discarding damaging, misogynistic tenets and beliefs? Feminist writers are in position to provide this insight by stepping outside the constrictions of current society to fashion superior ones within their novels, short stories, and poems. Only by working together, can we counter the proactive aggression of patriarchal bullying.

Fictional space pioneers in dystopic writings have abandoned this ruined Earth to chart a course toward the stars in search of a better world and a new destiny. Science fiction writer and visionary Madeleine L'Engle (1963) says:

> A book, too, can be a star, "explosive material, capable of stirring up fresh life endlessly," a living fire to lighten the darkness, leading out into the expanding universe.

In this instance, feminist utopic literature is a star map guiding readers toward a universe of possibility. The purpose of literature is to examine and dissect *what is*, and to propose alternatives, and one function of the genre is to provoke and inspire readers to understand that change is possible and conceive of applicable methods to initiate a social revolution. "Without an analysis of … patriarchy, we remain powerless to change it" (Moore 2017).

The patriarchy must learn to follow the stars by engendering compassion and empathy for all members of its societies, not just those whom it favors by accident of gender, race, citizenship, or class. There must be solidarity among women and men, as humans striving for our collective good rather than oppositional forces vying for supremacy. Feminist writers of the utopian genre possess the unique opportunity to present alternatives that reverse the dystopian fear of technology and our rapidly changing future. Rosalie Morales Kearns, whose feminist utopian novel *Kingdom of Women* examines the use of violence against oppression, says: "We writers can at least contribute to the conversation, encouraging our readers to think more critically about the meaning of justice" (González 2017). In her 2018 Netflix stand-up special "Nanette," Australian comedian Hannah Gadsby asserts that people can get stuck in the part of their story that they focus on. It has become imperative for those of us telling our stories to shift focus—to focus on solutions to current world problems instead of merely recreating or transferring them to future and alternate realities.

Characters in utopian stories journey to places of perfection and harmony, and bring back what they have learned in order to educate and enrich their own societies. Pakistani activist and winner of the 2014 Nobel Peace Prize Malala Yousafzai says: "Let us remember: One book, one pen, one child, and one teacher can change the world" (MacQuarrie 2013). Expressed through storytelling, we can create bright and powerful new narratives that can serve as a template for citizens and politicians to conceptualize meaningful change for humanity as a single entity. Utopia is a longed-for dream. Carl Jung believed that dreams could "carry messages from the instinctive, emotional parts of the mind to its rational other half" (Rock 2009). It is time to ask: Can literature perform the same function? I believe that it can.

Notes

1. Note the astonishing similarities between those ideologies and the pecuniary bondage of indentured servants striving to pay off their debts, slaves laboring with the hope of eventually buying or earning their freedom, and the religious optimism of being rewarded after death for suffering in life. Just like Santa Claus promising to bring gifts to good children, this "carrot and

stick" idiom dangles intangible future rewards and punishments that serve as behavioral modification motivators to control the human "donkey." Ergo utopia = carrot, and dystopia = stick.

2.   My own novels *Ice Song* and *Tattoo* have dystopian elements—the homeless being shunted off in paddy wagons and dumped under bridges, streets hosed down with disinfectant, drug infestations, and societies polarized along economic and racial/ethnic lines—based less on what I imagined than what I actually encountered in downtown San Diego, California during the height of the 2008 economic crash.

References

Alderman, Naomi. (2017). "A Feminist Dystopia for the #MeToo Moment." *Huffington Post.* https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/the-power-naomi-alderman-book_us_5a20763de4b03350e0b55dfe

American Psychological Association (APA). (2014). "Today's Father. The Changing Role of the Modern Father." *American Psychological Association.* https://www.apa.org/pi/families/resources/changing-father.aspx

Asian & Pacific Islander Institute on Domestic Violence (API-GPV). (2018). *Patriarchy and Power.* https://www.api-gbv.org/about-gbv/our-analysis/patriarchy-power/

Baker, Sinéad. (2018). "New Zealand's Prime Minister Gave Birth in Office and Is Now the First World Leader on Maternity Leave." *Business Insider.* https://www.businessinsider.com/jacinda-arden-prime-minister-new-zealands-first-world-leader-maternity-leave-2018-6

Barth, Brian. (2018). "The Good Men: Inside the All-Male Group Taking on Modern Masculinity." *Guardian* June 18. https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/jun/18/the-good-men-inside-the-all-male-group-taking-on-modern-masculinity

Beck, Debra Baker. (1998). "The 'F' Word: How the Media Frame Feminism." *NWSA Journal* 10(1): 139–153.

Berlatsky, Noah. (2013). "Imagine There's No Gender: The Long History of Feminist Utopian Literature." *Atlantic Monthly* April. https://www.theatlantic.com/sexes/archive/2013/04/imagine-theres-no-gender-the-long-history-of-feminist-utopian-literature/274993/

Booker, M. Keith. (1994). "Woman on the Edge of a Genre: The Feminist Dystopias of Marge Piercy." *Science Fiction Studies* 21(3). https://www.depauw.edu/sfs/backissues/64/booker.htm

Bruce, Susan. (2012). "More's Utopia: Colonialists, Refugees and the Nature of Sufficiency." In *Utopian Moments: Reading Utopian Texts*. Eds. J. C.

Davis and Miguel Angel Ramiro Avilés, pp. 8–14. London: Bloomsbury Academic.

Cassese, Antonio. (2012). *Realizing Utopia: The Future of International Law*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Claeys, George. (2012). *The Cambridge Companion to Utopian Literature*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Cox, David. (2018). "Would Child Sex Robots Stop Pedophilia—Or Promote It?" *NBC News*. https://www.nbcnews.com/mach/science/would-child-sex-robots-stop-pedophilia-or-promote-it-ncna834576

Crabb, Cindy. (2018). *Things that Help: Healing Our Lives Through Feminism, Anarchism, Punk, & Adventure*. Portland, OR: Microcosm Publishing.

Curtis, Claire P. (2005). "Rehabilitating Utopia: Feminist Science Fiction and Finding the Ideal." *Contemporary Justice Review* 8(2): 147–162. https://doi.org/10.1080/10282580500082507

D'Addario, Daniel. (2014). "Lois Lowry: The Dystopian Fiction Trend Is Ending." *Salon* July 10. https://www.salon.com/2014/07/10/lois_lowry_the_dystopian_fiction_trend_is_ending/

Dalai Lama, H. H. (2011). *Beyond Religion: Ethics for a Whole World*. New York: Mariner Books.

Do Something. (2014). *11 Facts About Women*. https://www.dosomething.org/facts/11-facts-about-women-around-world

Eagleman, David. (2011). *Incognito: The Secret Lives of the Brain*. New York: Vintage.

Firestone, Shulamith. ([1970] 2003). *The Dialectic of Sex: The Case for Feminist Revolution*. New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux.

Foster, Thomas. (2005). *The Souls of Cyberfolk: Posthumanism as Vernacular Theory*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Frederick, Ben. (2013). "After Dystopia, What Next?" *Christian Science Monitor* November 14. https://www.csmonitor.com/Books/2013/1114/After-dystopia-what-next

Gilbert, Elizabeth. 2014. *The Crab Bucket*. https://www.elizabethgilbert.com/the-crab-bucket-dear-ones-a-few-months-ago-i-was-on-stage-with-rob-bell/

Gilman, Charlotte Perkins. (1898). *Women and Economics: A Study of the Economic Relation Between Men and Women as a Factor in Social Evolution*. Boston: Small, Maynard, and Company. https://archive.org/details/womenandeconomi01gilmgoog

González, Rigoberto. (2017). "A Country Taken Over by Women? Rosalie Morales Kearns Talks About Her Provocative New Book." *NBC News*. https://www.nbcnews.com/news/latino/country-taken-over-women-rosalie-morales-kearns-talks-about-her-n825026

Haraway, Donna. (1991). *Simians, Cyborgs and Women: The Reinvention of Nature*. New York: Routledge.

Harris-Perry, Melissa. (2015). "Interview with Melissa Harris-Perry." In *The Feminist Utopia Project: Fifty-Seven Visions of a Wildly Better Future*. Eds. Alexandra Brodsky and Rachel Kauder Nalebuff, pp. 53–59. New York: Feminist Press at CUNY.

Heflick, Nathan A. (2010). "Sexualized Women Are Seen as Objects, Studies Find Male Brain Sees Sexy Women as Non-Human." *Psychology Today* August. https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/the-big-questions/201008/sexualized-women-are-seen-objects-studies-find

Keith, Lierre. (2012). "[Unnamed article]." In *Earth at Risk: Building a Resistance Movement to Save the Planet*. Eds. Derrick Jensen and Lierre Keith, pp. 143–172. Oakland, CA: PM Press.

Kreis, Steven. 2017. "Lecture 21: The Utopian Socialists." *History Guide*. https://www.historyguide.org/intellect/lecture21a.html

L'Engle, Madeleine. (1963). *Newbery Award Acceptance Speech: The Expanding Universe*. https://alair.ala.org/handle/11213/8036.

Liptak, Andrew. (2017). "Why Hollywood Is Turning to Books for its Biggest Productions." *Verge*. https://www.theverge.com/2017/1/26/14326356/hollywood-movie-book-adaptations-2017-expanse-game-of-thrones

Ma, Qian. (2004). *Feminist Utopian Discourse in Eighteenth-Century Chinese and English Fiction: A Cross-Cultural Comparison*. Farnham, UK: Ashgate Pub. Ltd.

MacQuarrie, Brian. (2013). "Malala Yousafzai Addresses Harvard Audience." *Boston Globe* September 27. https://www.bostonglobe.com/metro/2013/09/27/malala-yousafzai-pakistani-teen-shot-taliban-tells-harvard-audience-that-education-right-for-all/6cZBan0M4J3cAnmRZLfUmI/story.html

Moore, Suzanne. 2017. "What Connects Rape in War, Domestic Violence and Sexual Harassment? Patriarchy." *Guardian*. https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2017/oct/18/what-connects-in-war-domestic-violence-and-sexual-harassment-patriarchy

Moynihan, Mary M. (2004). "'All Is Not Sexuality that Looks It': Charlotte Perkins Gilman and Karen Horney on Freudian Psychoanalysis." In *Charlotte Perkins Gilman and Her Contemporaries: Literary and Intellectual Contexts*. Eds. Cynthia J. Davis, Denise D. Knight, Gary Scharnhorst, Jennifer S. Tuttle, and Monika Elbert, pp. 194–217. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press.

Nazaryan, Alexander. (2014). "Choose Your Dystopia." *Newsweek Magazine*. https://www.newsweek.com/2014/01/24/choose-your-dystopia-245092.html

Nilsen, Ella. (2018). "A Record-Setting Number of Women Are Running for the House in 2018." *Vox* April 6. https://www.vox.com/policy-and-politics/2018/4/6/17205790/women-running-congress-house-2018-record

Norris, Sian. (2017). "The Damage to Samantha the Sex Robot Shows Male Aggression Being Normalized." *New Statesman* September 28. https://www.newstatesman.com/politics/feminism/2017/09/damage-samantha-sex-robot-shows-male-aggression-being-normalised

———. (2018). "Men Talking Up 'Sex Distribution' Still Assume Women Are Their Property." *New Statesman* May. https://www.newstatesman.com/politics/feminism/2018/05/men-talking-sex-distribution-still-assume-women-are-their-property

Nussbaum, Martha C. (1999). *Sex and Social Justice*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Paterniti, Michael. (2014). "The Mountains Where Women Live as Men." *GQ Magazine*. https://www.gq.com/story/burrnesha-albanian-women-living-as-men

Peltz, Jennifer (2018). "New York Times, New Yorker Win Pulitzer for Weinstein Scandal." *Press Democrat*. https://www.pressdemocrat.com/news/8229951-181/new-york-times-new-yorker

Petit, Michael. (2011). "America's Child Death Shame." *BBC News US & Canada*. https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-15288865

Pulitzer Prize. (2018). *The Pulitzer Prize Winner in Public Service*. https://www.pulitzer.org/winners/new-york-times-reporting-led-jodi-kantor-and-megan-twohey-and-new-yorker-reporting-ronan

Rafferty, John P. (2017). "Women's March." *Britannica*. https://www.britannica.com/event/Womens-March-2017

Rand, Ayn. ([1962] 1998). "The Fascist New Frontier." *The Ayn Rand Column: Written for the Los Angeles Times*. Santa Ana, CA: Ayn Rand Institute Press.

Rock, Andrea. (2009). *The Mind at Night: The New Science of How and Why We Dream*. New York: Basic Books.

Roth, Veronica. (2014). "Veronica Roth Talks Utopian Worlds." *Genius*. https://genius.com/Veronica-roth-veronica-roth-talks-about-utopian-worlds-annotated

Sargent, Lyman Tower. (1976). "Themes in Utopian Fiction in English Before Wells." *Science Fiction Studies* 3(3): 275–282.

Sawyer, Miranda. (2017). "People Miss the Jokes. A Lot of It Is Me Taking the Piss out of Myself." *The Guardian*. November 12. https://www.theguardian.com/music/2017/nov/12/bjork-utopia-interview-people-miss-the-jokes

Scholastic. (2008). "The Hunger Games Trilogy." *Scholastic*. https://mediaroom.scholastic.com/hungergames

Science Daily. (2018). "Tipping Point for Large-Scale Social Change." *Science Daily*. https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2018/06/180607141009.htm

Smith, Marilyn Crafton. (1993). "Feminist Media and Cultural Politics." In *Women in Mass Communication*. Ed. Pamela J. Creedon, pp. 61–83. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Teixeira, Ruy. (2017). *The Optimistic Leftist: Why the 21st Century Will Be Better Than You Think*. New York: St. Martin's Press.

Walsch, Neale Donald. (1996). *Conversations with God: An Uncommon Dialogue*, Vol. 1. New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons.

Ward, Olivia. (2008). "Ten Worst Countries for Women." *The Star* [Toronto] March 8. https://www.thestar.com/news/world/2008/03/08/ten_worst_countries_for_women.html

Warner, William. (2002). "Dystopia and Science Fiction: Blade Runner, Brazil and Beyond (or, Who's Dystopia Is It?) (or, Dystopia Is in the Eyes of the (Frightened) Beholder)." English 192. *The Digital Cultures Project*. University of California, Santa Barbara. https://dc-mrg.english.ucsb.edu

Welser Tracie Anne. (2005). *Fantastic Visions: On the Necessity of Feminist Utopian Narrative*. MA Thesis. Tampa: University of South Florida. https://scholarcommons.usf.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1909&context=etd

Wilkinson, Alissa. (2018). "Black Panther Just Keeps Smashing Box Office Records." *Vox* April 20. https://www.vox.com/culture/2018/4/20/17261614/black-panther-box-office-records-gross-iron-man-thor-captain-america-avengers

Zemler, Emily. 2014. "Why Do We Love Dystopian Stories So Much? The Cast of Divergent Explains." *Time Magazine*. https://time.com/32022/divergent-dystopian-stories-shailene-woodley-interview/