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Utopia, Dystopia and Gender Progress

Utopianism is a genre that has existed for as long as people have been writing stories down. The garden of Eden is an early example of this. “The first eutopias we know of are myths that look to the past of the human race or beyond death for a time when human life was or will be easier and more gratifying” (Claes & Tower Sargent 2). In short a Utopia is a dream world, one which is needed because real life is often not what people want it to be. The determination to find or create a better life and environment for oneself and others seems to be something that is inherently human. The obverse to this situation is that people are very capable in imagining how situations could be if they were at their very worst. This can best be called dystopia. Naturally, as it does in any group of several independent individuals, arrangements need to be made to optimize life to its full extent, rules need to be made in order to be able to live, and to live together in peace, though those rules may not have always been to everybody’s liking.

The twentieth century has been a century of change and turmoil, a time which seems to have been fertile when it comes to imaginative literature being written. Utopianism and dystopianism seem to have thrived particularly well. In times of trouble there is much food for thought and enough situations people wish were different or better. Survival was difficult and some forms of sacrifices were needed. Charlotte Perkins Gilman thought that, in order for humans to survive, the “male traits of aggressiveness, combativeness, and competition were essential for continual growth” (Lane, *To Herland* 5) and women got the worst of it.

Logically not everyone will have the same ideas about different subjects, causing people to think differently about how life would be better, what their utopia, their perfect

world would look like. “It is impossible to make sense of the use of a particular term such as utopia without reference to the general problem within which it is situated” (Levitas 7).

Charlotte Perkins Gilman’s *Herland*, first published in 1915, depicts an apparently perfect world, inhabited only by women who were forced to create a new society because of the geological location of the land they found themselves in. Gilman wrote in a time in which feminism, or the Women’s Movement as it was then still called, was in its heyday and she was an enthusiastic advocate of its cause. The world she creates in *Herland* seems to express the idea that the problem of the suppression of women can be solved. However, as Lane describes it in *To Herland And Beyond*, “The women’s movement ... had... undergone its own dilution by the early years of the twentieth century... Women’s reform activity focused on temperance, social purity, and suppression of vice as a way of envisioning a social movement to forge a new sense of female self reliance” (16). It seems that it is much more difficult for women to shake off the long established patterns of suppression and prejudices. They still lived in an environment that thought that women ought to stay home and look after the family (Lane, *To Herland* 13). Also, Gilman noted that the women needed to change their mindset: “we still have a long way to go to undo the legacy of weak and little women “with the aspirations of an affectionate guinea pig”” (Lane, *To Herland* 246).

Philip Dick’s *Eye In The Sky*, first published in 1957, explores the concept of dream sharing. After an accident at a factory plant called the Bevatron, several people end up in each other’s dreams. The worlds they consecutively find themselves in are each created and controlled by a different person, each world is shaped to be that person’s utopia. In the book a total of 4 dream worlds are explored. Two of the dream worlds are controlled by men, in the other two women are at the helm. Each of the four utopias eventually turn out to be dystopia for everyone subject to it. Also, each of the dream worlds eventually turns upon its own creator by different means.

Eric Carl Link quotes Richard Ohrmann to show that the problems that existed in Charlotte Perkins Gilman's time are still present after the second world war. "The contradiction that existed in post-1945 U.S. society between the belief that society [had] resolved its basic problems... and the reality of continual social conflicts over work, the family, and other aspects of life" (Link 27). This makes it seem as though there has been absolutely no progress of any kind. According to James reverberations of this should be found in twentieth century literature. "It is sometimes said that the ability of the writer to imagine a better place in which to live died in the twentieth century, extinguished by the horrors of total war, of genocide and of totalitarianism" (219). When comparing *Herland* and *Eye In The Sky*, it becomes apparent that this is not the case.

If people, both men and women, want to keep growing, the gender inequality between men and women will have to be erased. As Charlotte Perkins Gilman put it "Women, forced to lead restricted lives, retard all human progress. ... Men, too, suffer from distorted personalities by their dominance and power" (Lane, Introduction xv). People might try very hard to change things, but will need to keep going. Change takes a long time to take place, and when trying to alter the gendered perception one needs to be very careful of the already internalized perceptions of it.

Though Perkins Gilman and Dick published their books in different times with different morals and values, there appear to be similarities in the gendered representation of men and women. Gender appears to be a cultural construct influencing the stories. In both books situations arise in which one or some of the characters gets put into a position of power. The question arises how the men and women in both books handle that power, whether or not there will be a difference according to sex or gender.

After careful consideration of sex and gender in connection with power use or abuse, the question comes forward what might be found when comparing *Herland* with *Eye In The*

Sky. The possibility is very strongly present that the time between both publication dates is too far apart and that this will make the books too different from each other. On the other hand, if there is a connection, what is it that connects these books that are at first glance so different from each other.

Charlotte Perkins Gilman

Charlotte Perkins Gilman was born in 1860 on July 3 as Charlotte Anna Perkins (Lane, Introduction x). Through her father's side of the family she was related to Harriet Beecher Stowe. Shortly after Charlotte's birth her father left her mother, her brother and herself to fend for themselves. The difficulties she encountered so early in life continued, albeit in a somewhat different form, throughout the rest of her life. There never was much money. She needed several jobs to bring in enough money (Lane, Introduction x). Shortly after her daughter was born, a daughter by Walter Stetson, she got severe depressions and went into treatment for it. This treatment almost drove her to the edge of sanity and ultimately she left for California on her own where she restored her mental faculties and later divorced her husband (Lane, Introduction xi). Later she got married again, this time to George Houghton Gilman (Lane, Introduction xii). After some time in California she started writing and lecturing. One of her well known works is the in 1892 published *The Yellow Wallpaper* (Lane, Introduction xi), a book partly if not mostly an autobiographical story on a woman troubled by mental health issues. Another of her works that was well known is *Women And Economics*, a treatise mainly on how women are dependent on men for survival (Lane, *To Herland* 233). Charlotte was mostly a self taught woman. "She was a nineteenth-century intellectual woman" (Lane, *To Herland* 230). However, she was never really part of any group of that time. She always hovered near the edges, her ideas were simply too radical and different to fit into the main stream movements. "She sees with an uncontaminated eye and brain, because her ideas were never filtered through a conventional educational process,

pounded and bludgeoned into a form acceptable to conventional wisdom” (Lane, *To Herland* 232).

Gilman seemed to have had a rather modern outlook on issues such as gender. Her unusual way through life provided her with a set of experiences that enabled her to look beyond customs and assumptions that were taken for granted. Her choice to let her daughter live with her former husband instead of taking care of her child herself (Lane, Introduction xii), led to many people being outraged. Gilman was not happy with these reactions, but she held her ground in doing what she believed in. When someone comes from a certain background with fixed conventions, morals and values and that person is then put in a completely different environment, clashes are bound to occur. At some point Gilman seems to have started to realize that these situations hold value when it comes to learning from them. It seems that being distrustful things that are different is a very normal reaction. If it is very difficult or simply impossible to understand that which is strange, there is the tendency to at least try and dominate it. “We know how much easier it is to criticize customs other than our own, because ours seems so “natural.” A custom which has existed for unrecorded ages, which exists everywhere, and to which the individual is exposed from birth will not even be noticed” (Lane, *To Herland* 242). She seem to use this concept to her better advantage in structuring the narrative in *Herland*. If a woman from *Herland* would have been placed in the outside world, nothing much would probably have happened. Her different values and morals would probably have been ignored. However, Gilman chose to put three men, who come from a place of power and dominance, in an environment in which they have no dominance and power that equals that of others.

Herland was first published in 1915. At first it was serialized in the magazine the *Forerunner*. Gilman founded, edited, wrote for and published it herself (Lane, *To Herland* 278).

Herland is a novel about three male adventurers, Vandyck Jennings, Jeff Margrave and Terry Nicholson. The story is told through first person narration by Van. After having learned that there might be a raised plateau somewhere in the Amazon inhabited only by women, they go to explore it. Their preconceived ideas of what it must be like are all far off the point. They find a very well developed, clean, well kept and orderly country. The men get captured and are being taught as much as possible about the country and its inhabitants, and the men also teach the Herlanders about the outside world. The country came into being after a volcanic eruption, which happened around two thousand years ago and which shut off the only exit through the mountains. The few remaining men die in a short period of time, the women are left with a hopeless future. Then one of the women miraculously produces babies through parthenogenesis, the ability to procreate without having sex. The fact that this is possible gives the story a mythical and somewhat magical impression.

The overall impression *Herland* gives is peaceful. A few keywords that might describe it are cultivated, garden, civilized, quiet. The life of the Herland women is filled with study, science, and most importantly rearing their children and ensuring a good future for them. There are two different categories of force at play in the novel. The first one is the part that nature plays in the novel. A volcanic eruption, a force of nature that cannot be influenced by humans, shuts off the passage to the sea and traps the women. The eruption has created an island, which seems to be necessary for the utopian state of being to come about. The slightest interference from outside would have disturbed the way of life that Van, Jeff and Terry find at the start of the narrative.

The other category of forcing situations into a different direction is directly related to human intervention. These human interventions can be subdivided into a male and a female approach.

The women of Herland have a very peaceful approach to forcing the men to do what they want, an approach that fits in well with the peaceful garden image that Perkins Gilman portrays when the men fly over Herland the first time. They react from a confidence they were able to build up in two thousand years. After the three explorers have arrived, the women detain them by lifting them bodily into the air, without any fighting by the women.

We looked for nervousness – there was none. For terror, perhaps – there was none. For uneasiness, for curiosity, for excitement – and all we saw was what might have been a vigilance committee of women doctors, as cool as cucumbers And now here they were, in great numbers, ... apparently well able to enforce their purpose. ... Each of us was seized by five women, each holding arm or leg or head; we were lifted like children, like straddling helpless children, and borne onward, wriggling indeed, but most ineffectively. (Perkins Gilman 20-3)

Eventually the men are sedated so that they can be handled more easily. It seems that the women's approach relies on the principle of safety in numbers, which can be traced back to Gilman's idea that women possessed the "female qualities of cooperation and nurturance" (Lane, *To Herland* 5). A similar situation occurs when Terry wants to have sex with Alima, his wife. Alima does not do what he wants, which eventually drives him to distraction and he eventually attempts to rape her. His physical strength does not help him, because quite soon several other women overpower him and tie him up (Perkins Gilman 132).

What Gilman tries to do in this novel is to help bring about difference in people's way of thinking and acting that will enable growth for all of humanity. "She used her energies and her gifts in an effort to understand the world and her in it and to extend that knowledge and those insights to others" (Lane, *To Herland* 229). Charlotte Perkins Gilman has in many ways succeeded in creating a world of strong, independent women in *Herland*. The change that the Herlanders bring about in Van and Jerry show that Gilman's goal is achievable, but it will not

work for everyone, which is shown with Terry's resistance to letting go of what he is used to and to adapt to the Herland way. Gilman realized that it would take time to bring about change, and that everyone, both men and women, would need to adjust to a different way of thinking. Lane mentions that Gilman once said that there is much to do to lessen the influence of inspirational women (Lane, *To Herland* 246). What *Herland* also seems to show is that there is a need of constant self examination to make sure that there will be no regression into the old situation.

Gilman seems to have been on the right path in trying to envision a world in which men and women were on an equal footing, treating each other as people instead of as men and women. Secondary literature does not mention this about *Herland*, but at a certain point in the book it seems as if Gilman has let slip her attention. She might also have been unable to keep out certain effects of the gendered world view of the time. Since she was such an intelligent woman and saw with an "uncontaminated eye and brain" (Lane, *To Herland* 232), it seems more likely that she put in an indirect warning into the book that also "Women themselves are also active when it comes to their oppression"¹ (Delfos 138). Even though the women in *Herland* seem to be proud of their accomplishments, apparently they somehow still feel inferior to the outside world. They have a keen interest in science, in learning as much as they can. "'We want you to teach us all you can,'" Somel went on ... "And we want to teach you what is novel and useful"' (Perkins Gilman 46). However, someone with an academic mindset would not usually simply assume that, for instance, a different way of life is better than their own without having seen irrefutable proof. It shows a proper academic attitude when acknowledging that a person may know many things but that there are limits and boundaries to that knowledge. It would be rather unacademic if someone were to debase what they know and have been able to accomplish.

¹ "Vrouwen zijn zelf ook actief in hun eigen onderdrukking" (Delfos 138).

“There!” triumphed Alima. “One or two or no children, and three or four servants. Now what do those women *do*?” We explained as best we might. We talked of “social duties,” disingenuously banking on their not interpreting the words as we did; we talked of hospitality, entertainment, and various “interests.” All the time we knew that these large-minded women whose whole mental outlook was so collective the limitations of a wholly personal life were inconceivable. “We cannot really understand it,” Ellador concluded. “We are only half a people. We have our woman-ways and they have their man-ways and their both-ways. We have worked out a system of living which is, of course, limited. They must have a broader, richer, better one. I should like to see it.” (Perkins Gilman 98)

As a reader it is possible to see a fundamental flaw in the reasoning of Ellador, a flaw that Van also notices. It seems here that Ellador thinks and assumes that the outside world must be broader and richer simply because there are both men and women. It shows a very submissive and meek attitude that is usually encouraged in women within the traditional gender division. “Ideals of service and sacrifice to children, parents, and spouse have often been thought to render liberty for women irrelevant and women’s search for individual rights “selfish”” (Kessler-Harris 7). This attitude shows a lack of pride in their achievements, achievements they do not realize are very remarkable and positive. Not to mention that on several occasions throughout the narrative the explorers tell about how much worse the outside world is.

Philip K. Dick

Philip Dick was a very prolific writer of science fiction stories and novels. Perhaps his best known work was *Do Androids Dream Of Electric Sheep?*, made into a film under the title *Blade Runner*. A few other stories written by him that have been made into film are, for example, *Total Recall*, *Minority Report* and *A Scanner Darkly*. At the moment *Total Recall* is being filmed for the second time. Philip Kindred Dick was born in Chicago on December 16

1928. He had a twin sister, but she died shortly after their birth (Link 3). His sister's death follows him around for the rest of his life. Throughout his life he suffered from several anxieties, had strange visions and was bothered by paranoia. These mental disorders were not helped at all by the fact that he grew up during a few quite turbulent periods in American history. He was still young when World War 2 took place. After that came the Cold War and the fear for communism, which was fuelled by McCarthy who made searching for communists into something resembling a witch hunt. Philip Dick's paranoia was further increased by a visit from the FBI, asking him whether he would spy on his students for them, to see if they had any communist tendencies (Link 5).

He always struggled to earn enough money to live on. His literary career was a difficult one, main stream success failed to come and after a brief period in which he did not write at all he focused solely on science fiction (Link 5). It is difficult to find scholarly articles on Dick's work, despite the fact that "science fiction criticism has become pluralistic with a vengeance" (699) as Gary Wolfe puts it. In recent years science fiction seems to have become a much more popular subject for scientific scrutiny. However, it is still rather difficult to find sufficient academic secondary literature on his work. The themes he uses, such as fear, destruction, chaos, death and decay, which might possibly be inspired by his phobias and anxieties, seem to be an important part of his estranging representation of the world in his books.

Of the academic reviews that can be found, there is next to nothing that can be found about *Eye In The Sky*. This dystopian novel seems to have been overlooked. The fact that it was never made into film might contribute to this, since those works that were made into films became much more popular and received attention. That does not mean that this novel should go unnoticed. It has some remarkable things to say. It gives a fairly good impression of

what the era of American history must have felt like under the influence of McCarthyism, especially to someone already bothered by anxieties and phobias.

Eye In The Sky is narrated through the protagonist Jack Hamilton. It is about a group of people who, during their visit to the new Belmont Bevatron plant, a proton beam deflector, which sounds very much like a particle accelerator, find themselves in the middle of an accident when something goes wrong with the installation. The group of people that get caught up in the accident end up in each other's dreams. In each dream world one person of the group is determining all the rules that govern that dream and rules it similar to a dictator would a country.

The structure used for writing this narrative is written is very clear. The story has six different segments, each of which is sectioned of quite sharply from the other. Each segment deals with its own subject. The first part consists of chapter one and two, dealing with the introduction to the rest of the narrative. Segment two contains chapters three to nine and are about the first dream world, ruled by Arthur Silvester. Segment three is about Edith Pritchett's world and is covered in chapters nine to thirteen. Section four is about Joan Reiss's world, encompassing chapters thirteen and fourteen. Chapter fifteen and the first half of chapter sixteen turn out to take place in Charlie McFeyffe's dream world, though at first it was assumed that it was Marsha's fantasy, because at the start of the novel she was being accused by McFeyffe of being a communist. The last half of chapter sixteen appears to be about what happens after everyone has been released from the dream worlds. They seem to have returned to reality, only it never becomes clear whether or not the group really is back. No more extremely odd events are taking place, but on the other hand what is happening seems suspiciously like what a dream world would look like to Hamilton, the third person narrator and protagonist throughout the book. This apparent questioning of reality and whether or not perceived things really do exist, is something that is typical of Dick's style of writing. It can,

for instance, also be found in *Do Androids Dream Of Electric Sheep?*, in which the protagonist Rick Deckard thinks he sees and meets Wilbur Mercer, the central figure of the religion in the book (183).

Dick, as a male writer, shows in his work the progress society has made when it comes to the gendered division of society and what role men and women play in it since the start of the twentieth century and the heydays of what is now called feminism. *Eye In The Sky* seems to show that Dick thinks that men and women are more equal and that they can be equal in how they react to things in everyday life, in their ambitions and in how to make things go their way.

Something that really catches the eye once everyone is inside the dream worlds, is how in each and every one of those worlds some kind of force is used to make the rest of the group comply and cooperate with the world view and ideas of the person in charge. This is something that appears to be inherently human, as Martine Delfos mentions in *Verschil Mag Er Zijn*. “There appears to be no other species which is as active and creative in trying to control its environment and to shape it according to its own wishes as humans are with each other, but also using this against each other. In both war and peace”² (202). Needless to say that the things that happen in the narrative would never be able to happen in the real world, but as an experiment to see what might, happen it is rather fascinating to see to what extent people would keep on going to enforce their ideals and ideas on other people.

The traditional gender division is a good starting point to see what effects this brings to light. The traditional gender division starts with the basic division of male and female, and the subsequent differences that are described and prescribed to these two sexes. Men are thought to be more aggressive, should earn the living for the entire family. Men are the crux

² “Er bestaat geen soort die zo actief en creatief bezig is om zijn omgeving onder controle te krijgen en die te vormen naar zijn eigen wensen als mensen met elkaar, maar ook tegen elkaar. In oorlog en vrede” (Delfos 202).

of the family. Women on the other hand are supposed to be more passive, take care of home, hearth and children.

When looking at the structure of the book, it appears that Dick wrote indiscriminately when it comes to a gender division. The structure is such that apart from the introductory segment, the amount of chapters per segment becomes less with each segment. The end of each consecutive world is speeded up because of the knowledge and experience gathered in the previous worlds. The lessening of chapter length is in no way linked to the sex of its ruler. When including the sixth segment of the book as a dream world, it is a man that eventually gets only half a chapter for his world. It appears that in *Eye In The Sky* a strict and clear distinction cannot be made between men and women when given the power to rule over others. It is not, as might be expected from established gender ideas that women, being the more timid and quiet of the two, would not abuse the power; and that men being more aggressive and having more fighting spirit would do so immediately. “Men and women use their abilities and prospects differently. It is a matter of behavioral preference”³ (Delfos 140).

The real difference seems to lie with the outward results from their longing to make the world a better place, with how they enforce their will onto others. “That night, as Dick lay in bed, a voice woke him. The voice explained to him that the turtle would find its way back to the ocean – at least, as far as the turtle knew. The voice said that the turtle had been supplied an alternate reality – a subjective reality – in which she truly believed she was in the ocean swimming freely” (Link 2). In a way each of the dream world rulers thinks he is truly supplying the rest of the group with a reality that really is the best for them all, but as the turtle will die on dry land, so will the rest of the group get frustrated with a world they cannot influence and in which everything is done in a way they cannot agree to and they ultimately

³ “Mannen en vrouwen gebruiken hun mogelijkheden niet op dezelfde manier. Er is sprake van voorkeursgedrag” (Delfos 140).

will die, metaphorically speaking, if they do not do something about the situation that is not good for them.

Dick shows that men and women use the same sort of tactics in trying to control a situation, that both men and women will use violence if necessary just to keep their world of perfection in place; meanwhile everyone is trying to keep others in the dark about the true nature of the situation. "Around him, listless white-collar workers smoked and read the comics and discussed sports. Hunched over in his seat, Hamilton moodily considered them. Did they know they were distorted figments of somebody's fantasy world?" (Dick 122). Women are shown to be as capable of nastiness as men are, though they use it differently.

Arthur Silvester's world is determined and shaped by his personal view on religion and this is also his tool to make people do what he wants. Damnation is really possible and this way he inflicts pain and makes people fearful and tries to keep them from acting.

Edith Pritchett also tries to keep people under control through fear. She abolishes everything she is annoyed with. She makes the women's genitals disappear (Dick 118) and puts trousers on a horse (Dick 123). At first she seems to act from a genuine sense to want to do good. Hamilton's wife does not even mind that she cannot have sex anymore, because for her it takes away a certain pressure (Dick 142-3).

Joan Reiss thinks she has recreated the real world for everyone, but she betrays herself by mutilating Hamilton's cat. "The thing on the floor was Ninny Numbcats. He had been turned inside out. But he was still alive; the tangled mess was a still-functioning organism" (Dick 186).

At first the wrong assumption is made about who is in charge of the last dream world. At the start of the book, Hamilton's wife Marsha is accused of being a communist and since the world is a communist one the connection seems logical. However, the amount of violence present in that world seems disproportionate to her mild tempered character and to the kind of

manipulation used in the other women's worlds. Eventually it turns out to be Charlie McFeyffe, the man who accused Marsha of communism, who is in charge. It is ultimately also this violence that knocks him from his place of power.

Making a comparison between Philip Dick and Charlotte Perkins Gilman and their works of fiction is not something that is done easily. There are several things that need to be considered comparing these novels. Apparent differences in the intrinsic nature of the genre in which their work is written seems to complicate a comparison initially. Another factor that plays an important part is the difference in time in which Perkins Gilman and Dick published their books, the difference in the spirit of that particular age.

Comparing Dick and Gilman

There are differences and oppositions in utopian and dystopian literature. A simple definition from the *Oxford English Dictionary* explains dystopia as "An imaginary place or condition in which everything is as bad as possible". Utopia is defined as being "A place, state, or condition ideally perfect in respect of politics, laws, customs, and conditions." It is also referred to as being impossible to achieve, though there are examples like Marxism that have tried to achieve a Utopian state of being. Utopia is also a matter of someone's point of view. What might be seen as perfect by one person, can be seen as extremely disagreeable by someone else, for instance Terry in *Herland*, while on the other hand Jeff eventually completely conforms to the Herland point of view and seems to become happy with this new way of life: "he had become so deeply convinced of the almost supernatural advantages of this country and people" (123). In depicting a utopian or dystopian narrative the approach is usually to emphasize the point of utopianism or dystopianism. In *Herland*, the fact that the Herland overall situation is a dystopia for Terry is acknowledged; and that the narrator Van at first does not understand it, but eventually acknowledges its apparent superiority, after a process that takes up the better part of the book. This tips the balance in favor of utopia. In

Eye In The Sky, once everyone is inside the dream worlds, it becomes clear that each of those dream worlds is only a utopia to its creator and to no one else, firmly establishing the narratives dystopian nature.

However, while their subjects are different, the approach to how to go about narrating it is rather similar. The devices that are being used in the story to keep the situation of utopianism or dystopianism in place show similarities, which is in itself not very surprising since utopia and dystopia each appear to be two sides of the same coin. In both *Herland* and *Eye In The Sky* the importance of sex to men is portrayed the same. Women do not seem to be very bothered by sex in both *Herland* and *Eye In The Sky*. The women seem to use it as a means to exercise power by refusing to have sex with men, which is done consciously in *Eye In The Sky*. In *Herland* the women don't use it as a weapon consciously, but do seem to exercise power by denying sex. The men on the other hand seem positively obsessed with it, and become rather frustrated when they are denied the possibility of having sex, not counting whether that it was intended to be just for the enjoyment of it or for actual procreation. The men seem to use sex as a means to enforce their power and dominance. Terry tries to use it to submit Alima to him. "Terry put in practice his pet conviction that a woman loves to be mastered, and by sheer brute force, in all the pride and passion of his intense masculinity, he tried to master his woman" (Perkins Gilman 132).

Hamilton tries and succeeds in manipulating Silky into pitying him and wanting to oblige him by having sex with him (Dick 145-7), only to come up short when she is erased by Edith Pritchett. "The girl's voice faded out. And in his hand, the presence of her small, dry fingers ebbed into nothingness. Shocked, he spun and squinted into the darkness. Silky was gone. She had dimmed out of existence" (Dick 147).

In looking at both novels what comes forward quite strongly and clearly is that all the characters use the same sort of tactics, though both sexes have a tendency to show a

preference for a certain type of force and use it quite often. As Delfos mentions, people simply have a behavioral preference towards a certain type of behavior (140), indicating that eventually men and women are much more alike than what popular thought would suggest. There is no specific gendered difference that is biologically determined, it seems to be solely the effect of social convention.

Taking these usages of power into account, and taking a step back to take a wider look at the matter, it seems that it is also indicative of something else. Since before the start of the twentieth century people have been fighting for a more equal treatment of women. Charlotte Perkins Gilman was no exception to this, though she approached the matter entirely in her own way. She envisioned a better future, one without all the stereotypes and in which men and women were treated as equals, as people.

However, the changing of gendered ideals and prejudices would turn out to be a rather long and difficult fight. “The women’s movement ... had ... undergone its own dilution by the early years of the twentieth century. ... White women’s reform activity focused on temperance, social purity, and suppression of vice as a way of envisioning a social movement to forge a new sense of female self-reliance” (Lane, *To Herland* 16).

It seems that, in the long run, her efforts have contributed to the fact that the general situation for women became better. It has helped to make a start in evening out the chances between men and women, to make a start at erasing the cultivated differences that evolved throughout the ages. In Gilman’s time women did not have much to say about anything, especially after marriage. “The differences in the education of the average man and woman are great enough, but the trouble they make is not mostly for the man; he generally carries out his own views of the case. The woman may have imagined the conditions of married life to be different; but what she imagined, was ignorant of, or might have preferred, did not seriously matter” (Perkins Gilman 121).

Eye In The Sky, published forty-two years after *Herland*, shows that part of what Gilman fought for took hold in society, though it had not taken hold completely. Jack Hamilton, protagonist of *Eye In The Sky*, has married the girl he met at college. He does not seem to be bothered in the least by the fact that his wife is interested in more than children or keeping house. “Marsha is interested in everything. She’s an intelligent, educated person. She has all day to find out about things. Is she supposed to sit at home and just’ – Hamilton groped for words – ‘and just dust off the mantel? Fix dinner and sew and cook?’” (Dick 7-8). Marsha is a house wife and does not pursue a career, despite the abundance of time she has free at her disposal. The most important bit seems to be that Hamilton encourages and supports his wife in trying to develop herself. It is implied that another female character, Miss Reiss, had an education and she certainly has a career, indicated by the fact that she asks Hamilton and Marsha whether they bought a piece of artwork “from us” (Dick 31). Dick himself, at some point in his career, helped out his wife in her jewelry business (Link 5), showing his progressive attitude towards female self reliance.

Conclusion

The twentieth century has been very eventful and turbulent, several wars, social upheavals and political changes have caused much misery. James thinks that because of all this writers will have lost the ability to create positive works of fiction (219). James is proven wrong, however, since times of turmoil have often produced great utopian writers. One of the most important characteristic of a utopia is that it is about someone’s dream of a perfect world and looks at the world from an optimistic point of view. Charlotte Perkins Gilman wrote and published such a utopian novel, *Herland*, in 1915, around the start of the twentieth century. The women’s movement was very active in trying to change people’s ideas that women were incapable to act, which was then not only a social constraint but also legally recorded. It was a movement bent on changing the gendered inequality that existed between men and women in

Western society. Charlotte Perkins Gilman was an ardent advocate of the cause of the women's movement. She published *Herland* in 1915 in a time when the women's movement was strong. It is a book that expresses her idealized image of how society should and could be; and what possible approach could be taken to bring this ideal about. In *Herland* Gilman created a world governed by women, a peaceful society of motherhood and learning. After the men arrive they need a long adjustment process in which they learn how to function within that peaceful world. With this Gilman emphasizes that a society where people are treated equally will work better than the man dominated world she grew up in.

Gilman realized that it would take a long time for people to adjust themselves to a new way of thinking, since the gendered ideas and ideals have become so thoroughly embedded in Western society throughout time. Ohrmann, as quoted by Link, seems to confirm this supposition by stating that after the second world war the "continual social conflicts over work, the family, and other aspects of life" (Link 27) had not improved. However, Philip Dick's *Eye In The Sky*, published in 1957, proves Ohrmann wrong. Despite that Gilman and Dick do not seem to have much in common, Dick's novel does show that Gilman's dream for a more equal society started to come true sooner than she probably expected it to happen. Better still, it had even already started to take root in men's minds within half a century after publication of *Herland*. Even in a dystopian novel, a mode of writing that deals with a rather negative view of the world, James is proven wrong again. Dick created a protagonist, Hamilton, who met his wife at college and does not mind it that she has more interests in life than keeping house. Dick showed a similar progress with a more equal gender attitude by helping his wife in her jewelry business. The fact that this change in gendered thinking has taken place in a man's thinking forty two years after Gilman published *Herland*, shows a remarkably fast progress and promises more for the future. It shows that despite everything

that went wrong in the twentieth century, there was still positivity and progress to be seen in fiction.

Another remarkable point that may be noticed by comparing these two novels is that, except for how people think about gender, it becomes visible that the basic behavior of people has not changed in such a short period of time. In the use or abuse of power and force, men and women turn out to differ very little. In both novels the men and the women are found to deploy the same type of tactics to achieve or keep their status quo. Manipulation appears to be one of the most frequently used tactics, by both men and women. In both *Herland* and *Eye In The Sky* men and women use sex as leverage; men by forcing women to have sex and women by refusing to have sex with the men. As Delfos mentions in *Vershil Mag Er Zijn*, men and women have a behavioral preference (140). Men seem to be more inclined towards physical solutions to their problems, but also make use of psychology. For women it appears to be the other way around, they have a stronger preference for psychological approach but will also use physical force if necessary.

In fighting the gender representation of both men and women, in trying to get rid of inequality in both the private sphere at home and in the public sphere, for instance at work, the presentation of people is still mostly divided in images of men and women. Gilman was correct in depicting the inhabitants of Herland as people and letting them treat the adventurers as people instead of men, as Jeff notices at one point. ““They don’t seem to notice our being men,” he went on. “They treat us - well – just as they would one another. It’s as if our being men was a minor incident”” (Perkins Gilman 30).

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