

THE DYSTOPIAN FUTURE:
THE INFLUENCE OF CHRISTIAN FUNDAMENTALISMS IN REPRESENTATIVE
FEMINIST DYSTOPIAN SPECULATIVE FICTION, 1970 - 2000.

A Thesis Submitted to the College of
Graduate Studies and Research
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Master of Arts
in the Department of English
University of Saskatchewan
Saskatoon

By

Laura Jean Matheson

© Copyright Laura Jean Matheson, August 2007. All rights reserved.

PERMISSION TO USE

In presenting this thesis in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a Postgraduate degree from the University of Saskatchewan, I agree that the Libraries of this University may make it freely available for inspection. I further agree that permission for copying of this thesis in any manner, in whole or in part, for scholarly purposes may be granted by the professor or professors who supervised my thesis work or, in their absence, by the Head of the Department or the Dean of the College in which my thesis work was done. It is understood that any copying or publication or use of this thesis or parts thereof for financial gain shall not be allowed without my written permission. It is also understood that due recognition shall be given to me and to the University of Saskatchewan in any scholarly use which may be made of any material in my thesis.

Requests for permission to copy or to make other use of material in this thesis in whole or part should be addressed to:

Head of the Department of English

University of Saskatchewan

Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, S7N 5A5

ABSTRACT

A significant sub-genre exists within feminist dystopian speculative fiction that has recently consisted of a growing collection of works in which patriarchal theocracies have played an integral role. In Lee Killough's *A Voice Out of Ramah* (1979), Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale* (1985), Sheri S. Tepper's *Gibbon's Decline and Fall* (1996), and beyond, a growing number of feminist writers have recognized the role of religious fundamentalisms within modern patriarchies, and the role that these fundamentalisms could play in the creation of a dystopian future. For the sake of brevity, this thesis focuses on Christian fundamentalism in its various manifestations in the late twentieth century. In addition, it discusses the ideological and organizational characteristics of fundamentalisms, the role of fundamentalism, and the implications of fundamentalists' deep mistrust of both liberalism and what they call secular humanism, in feminist dystopian speculative fiction from the final three decades of the twentieth century. The current conflict between feminists and fundamentalists is exemplified by the assertion of many different varieties of Christian fundamentalists that the current state of contemporary society—one they consider to be morally depraved—is a direct result of women's emancipation. Dystopian speculations based on this assertion play an integral role in *A Voice Out of Ramah* (1979), *The Handmaid's Tale* (1985), and *Gibbon's Decline and Fall* (1996), and will be examined, in the work of these and other authors, where relevant.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

It would not have been possible to write this thesis without the aid of my supervisor, Dr. Terry Matheson, who provided significant assistance, particularly with regards to paring an overwhelming amount of material into a manageable size for a Masters thesis. In addition, I would like to thank the members of the Advisory Committee—Dr. Hilary Clark, Dr. Carol Morrell, and Dr. Diana Relke—for a wonderful defence and their very helpful suggestions for revision. I received financial assistance for this project from both the Prescott Scholarship (University of Saskatchewan, Department of English) and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada Graduate Fellowship. For the provision of materials that otherwise would have been extremely hard to find, I must thank Dr. Doug Thorpe and Dr. D. S. J. Parsons. A heart-felt “thank you” to my parents, Marj and Norm Matheson, and to my partner, Dana Madsen, for all of their support throughout this project. Finally, I owe thanks to a wonderful wee man, Walter Franklyn Matheson Madsen, whose arrival slowed my progress, but whose presence makes the completion of this thesis all the more meaningful.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PERMISSION TO USE.....	i
ABSTRACT.....	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	iii
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	iv
1 INTRODUCTION: FEMINISM, SPECULATIVE FICTION, AND FUNDAMENTALISM.....	1
1.1 Taxonomy of fundamentalisms—defining and deconstructing the f-word.....	2
1.2 Family values.....	9
1.3 The politicization of Christian fundamentalism.....	12
1.4 Fundamentalist (anti-feminist) speculative fiction.....	16
1.5 Feminist speculative fiction.....	19
1.6 Bridging the gaps—feminism, speculative fiction, and fundamentalism.....	23
2 RESPONSIBLE LIES: FUNDAMENTALISM IN <i>A VOICE OUT OF RAMAH</i>	26
2.1 Background / historical context.....	26
2.2 Is the Marahns' religion a fundamentalism or not?.....	28
2.3 The Marahn virus.....	31
2.4 Gendered hierarchies.....	34
2.5 Impact of the patriarchal theocracy upon men.....	37
2.6 The Trial and men's “responsibility”.....	39
2.7 Conclusion	42
3 NOTILE TE BASTARDES CARBORUNDORUM: FUNDAMENTALISM IN <i>THE HANDMAID'S TALE</i>	44
3.1 Background / historical context.....	44
3.2 Gilead's theocracy: fundamentalism or not?.....	47
3.3 Women as the root of all evil.....	53
3.4 Control of women's bodies.....	58
3.5 Conclusion.....	64
4 BALANCE VERSUS DOMINION: FUNDAMENTALISM IN <i>GIBBON'S DECLINE AND FALL</i> ...	66
4.1 Background / historical context.....	66
4.2 The American Alliance: fundamentalism or not?.....	70
4.3 Women as the root of all evil.....	72
4.4 Natural and unnatural behaviours.....	78
4.5 Conclusion.....	83
5 WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE? THE (DYSTOPIAN) FUTURE.....	87
6 WORKS CITED.....	95

Chapter One

Introduction: Feminism, Speculative Fiction, and Fundamentalism.

A significant sub-genre within feminist dystopian speculative fiction can be traced as far back as Christine de Pizan's early fifteenth century work, *The Book of the City of Ladies* (1405), running through the work of Margaret Cavendish (*The Blazing World*, 1666), Mary Shelley (*The Last Man*, 1826), Charlotte Perkins Gilman (*Herland*, 1915), and Katherine Burdekin (*Swastika Night*, 1937). More recently, this has consisted of a growing collection of works in which patriarchal theocracies have played an integral role. In Lee Killough's *A Voice Out of Ramah* (1979), Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale* (1985), Sheri S. Tepper's *Gibbon's Decline and Fall* (1996), and beyond, a growing number of feminist writers have recognized the role of religious fundamentalisms within modern patriarchies, and the role that these fundamentalisms could play in the creation of a dystopian future. For the sake of brevity, I intend to focus my analysis on Christian fundamentalism in its various manifestations in the late twentieth century. In addition, I will discuss the ideological and organizational characteristics of fundamentalisms, with particular reference to the Fundamentalist Project, a six-year socio-political project directed by the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, which sought to establish the role of fundamentalism, and the implications of fundamentalists' deep mistrust of both liberalism and what they call secular humanism, in feminist dystopian speculative fiction

from the final three decades of the twentieth century. The current conflict between feminists and fundamentalists is exemplified by the assertion of many different varieties of Christian fundamentalists that the current state of contemporary society—one they consider to be morally depraved—is a direct result of women’s emancipation. While feminism, speculative fiction, and fundamentalism might seem to make rather strange bedfellows, the strangeness is wearing off as more and more feminist writers speculate, with increasing trepidation, on the negative influence of religious fundamentalism on society. Dystopian speculations based on this assertion play an integral role in *A Voice Out of Ramah* (1979), *The Handmaid’s Tale* (1985), and *Gibbon’s Decline and Fall* (1996), and will be examined, in the work of these and other authors, where relevant.

1.1 Taxonomy of Fundamentalisms—Defining and Deconstructing the F-Word.

There is a certain danger in using the term “fundamentalism,” particularly at present, because it is so often misused and abused, even within the world of academia. While the terms “evangelism” and “ethno-religious extremism” can, in many instances, be used in place of the term “fundamentalism,” this problematic term is nonetheless correct for use in this examination of the roles of patriarchal religions (particularly monotheocracies) in feminist speculative fiction. Ethno-religious extremism has a much stronger focus on nationalism than does fundamentalism and can be defined, according to R. Scott Appleby, as

a powerful means of binding together racial, linguistic, class and territorial markers of

identity. In the process of 'hardening', religion provides not only the dedicated cadres of young extremists but also the public rituals and processions that bind religious and ethno-nationalist sentiments together and become occasions for intolerance and arenas of collective violence. (Appleby 109)

In contrast to this, evangelism is both “[t]he preaching or promulgation of the Gospel” (*OED*) and “[z]ealous advocacy of a cause or doctrine, proselytizing zeal” (*OED*). However, these definitions do not quite tell us enough about what evangelism means in the twenty-first century. According to Larry Eskridge, who prefers the terms evangelical and evangelicalism, these terms are used in three primary ways in contemporary society. The first of these is “to see as 'evangelical' all Christians who affirm a few key doctrines and practical emphases.”¹ The second way is “to look at evangelicalism as an organic group of movements and religious tradition” (Eskridge).² And the third is, according to Eskridge, “the self-ascribed label for a coalition that arose during the Second World War”, a group that was actually formed in reaction “against the perceived anti-intellectual separatist, belligerent nature of the fundamentalist movement in the 1920s and 1930s.”³ Thus, evangelism focuses on spreading the gospel (the “good news”) and

- 1 British historian David Bebbington approaches evangelicalism from this direction and notes four specific hallmarks of evangelical religion: *conversionism*, the belief that lives need to be changed; *activism*, the expression of the gospel in effort; *biblicism*, a particular regard for the Bible; and *crucicentrism*, a stress on the sacrifice of Christ on the cross” (Eskridge).
- 2 Within this context “evangelical” denotes a style as much as a set of beliefs. As a result, groups as disparate as black Baptists and Dutch Reformed Churches, Mennonites and Pentecostals, Catholic charismatics and Southern Baptists all come under the evangelical umbrella—demonstrating just how diverse the movement really is.
- 3 Importantly, its core personalities (like Harold John Ockenga and Billy Graham), institutions (for instance, Moody Bible Institute and Wheaton College), and organizations (such as the National Association of Evangelicals and Youth for Christ) have played a pivotal role in giving the wider movement a sense of cohesion that extends beyond these “card-carrying” evangelicals.

ethno-religious extremism on strong nationalism (with a weaker tie to religion).

In contrast to this, fundamentalism originally took its name from *The Fundamentals: A Testimony of Truth*, a series of tracts sponsored by Milton and Lyman Stewart, “two devout Christian brothers who had made their fortune in the California oil business” (Ruthven 10). These influential tracts, “written by a number of leading conservative American and British theologians, were aimed at stopping the erosion of what the brothers and their editors considered to be the ‘fundamental’ beliefs of Protestantism” (Ruthven 11). The beliefs that these tracts espoused and protected were as follows:

. . . the inerrancy of the Bible; the direct creation of the world, and humanity, *ex nihilo* by God (in contrast to Darwinian evolution); the authenticity of miracles; the virgin birth of Jesus, his Crucifixion and bodily resurrection; the substitutionary atonement (the doctrine that Christ died to redeem the sins of humanity); and (for some but not all believers) his imminent return to judge and rule over the world. (Ruthven 11)

It was Curtis Lee Laws who added the “-ist” to *The Fundamentals* in 1920 (Ruthven 12). A conservative Baptist editor, Laws declared that “Fundamentalists . . . were those who were ready to do battle royal for The Fundamentals” (Ruthven 12). It is worth noting that there is not always agreement as to what these “fundamentals” consist of: “[I]n no tradition does one find a complete consensus, even among conservatives, about what the ‘fundamentals’ of the faith really are” (Ruthven 15). Ruthven makes a number of important points about these disagreements,

including the observation that fundamentalists “are nothing if not selective about the texts they use and their mode of interpretation. They are also much more innovative in the way they interpret the texts they select than is often supposed” (Ruthven 15). Also of importance is the fact that fundamentalism can be defined as a clinging to “tradition made self-aware and consequently defensive” (Ruthven 17). The fundamentals of religion in America, whatever these are, must be defended in a world that is increasingly defined by secular humanism.

In 1987, the American Academy of Arts and Sciences funded a seven-year project that brought together prominent scholars from around the globe to study one topic: fundamentalisms. This ambitious project, while acknowledging the problems inherent within the term “fundamentalisms,” chose to accept and use this term, despite its problems, because “it is commonly accepted, here to stay, and the best term anyone can come up with for this phenomena [sic]” (Jones). These scholars discovered, through the course of their research, that fundamentalisms shared a number of family resemblances. First, “religious idealism” (Jones) serves as the foundation upon which personal and community identity are constructed. Thus, religion supercedes all other hallmarks of identity, including race, class, and gender. Second, fundamentalists “understand truth to be revealed and unified” (Jones), which means that fundamentalists see their perspective, their religious truths, as the only truths. These truths have been revealed to them as unified, as whole. To put it bluntly, in the eyes of fundamentalists, there is one, and only one, truth, and that is *their* truth. Third, fundamentalists are deliberately

provocative (or, as Jones puts it, “intentionally scandalous”); they set themselves and their beliefs up to be purposely shocking because so doing intensifies the differences, the separation, between themselves and those who are not believers. Fourth, fundamentalists “envision themselves as part of a cosmic struggle” (Jones). That is, they see themselves as members, as soldiers, in an army of God, which is locked into a struggle of cosmic proportions against the dark forces of evil.

Fifth, fundamentalists use history to their advantage, latching on to certain historical events, then reinterpreting these events in light of their own cosmic battle against the forces of evil. Sixth, fundamentalists portray their opponents as both wicked and threatening—they “demonize their opponents” (Jones). In addition to this, they tend to be overtly reactionary, opposing all types of political and social reform or “progress” that would either impede their own progress or bring into question their values and/or beliefs. Seventh, fundamentalists are “selective in what parts of their tradition and heritage they stress” (Jones). That is, they are very selective in how they portray themselves, stressing only those parts of their beliefs and/or traditions that are most advantageous to them, while conveniently ignoring the rest. Eighth, fundamentalists “are led by males” (Jones). While their religious idealism is the foundation upon which they build their identity, they are patriarchal in nature and, thus, are led by men, who are significantly higher in the patriarchal (and fundamentalist) hierarchy than their female counterparts. The ninth and final family resemblance is that fundamentalists are envious of the

power and dominance of modern secular culture (what Jones refers to as “modernist cultural hegemony”). As a result, they are determined to change or overturn the contemporary distribution of power so that it favours them over secular humanism/humanists.

The Fundamentalist Project also created another list, this one a bit more exhaustive, pertaining to defining fundamentalisms. The scholars who were involved in the project determined that fundamentalisms shared nine ideological and organizational characteristics. First of the five ideological characteristics is the idea that fundamentalists are primarily concerned with what they see to be “the erosion of religion and its proper role in society” (Jones). Thus, they are reacting against the perceived marginalization of their religion and the discrepancy between what they see to be its “proper” role in modern society and how others (that is, non-believers) see its proper role. Second, as was seen previously in the list of family resemblances, fundamentalists carefully choose which aspects of their tradition/heritage and modern culture that they accept or reject. If an aspect of modern culture—for example, technology—is perceived to be advantageous for them, they will embrace it, as is evidenced by the proliferation of fundamentalist websites. Third, fundamentalists “embrace some form of Manicheanism⁴” (Jones), which means that, in essence, they accept and willingly support some form of moral dualism, wherein morality is defined by the good/evil binary. Fourth,

4 Also referred to as Manichaeism, which can be defined as a “religious system with Christian, Gnostic, and pagan elements, founded in the 3rd cent. A.D. and widespread in the Roman Empire and Asia until the 5th cent. (surviving until the 13th cent.), based on the supposed primeval conflict between light and darkness, and representing Evil as coeternal with God; (more generally) dualism” (*OED*).

fundamentalists believe in both textual inerrancy and absolutism, which can be defined as “the dogma of God’s acting absolutely in the affair of salvation, and not being guided in his willing, or nilling, by any reason” (*OED*). Finally, fundamentalists “opt for some form of Millennialism⁵ or Messianism⁶” (Jones). The four organizational characteristics of fundamentalisms, as determined by The Fundamentalist Project (Jones), are as follows: a membership that is “elect or chosen” (Jones); explicit group definition (what Jones refers to as “sharp group boundaries”); very charismatic, yet authoritarian leaders; and specific and limited “proper” behaviours—also referred to as “mandated behavioral requirements” (Jones). These characteristics, as distinct from the family resemblances, will be used in the subsequent analysis of the texts by Tepper, Atwood, and Tepper to determine whether or not the religious groups that are portrayed in these novels are, indeed, fundamentalisms. However, prior to undertaking an analysis of fundamentalisms in feminist dystopian speculative fiction, the religious right’s much-declared focus on “family values” needs to be addressed.

5 Also referred to as Millenarianism: “The doctrine of or belief in the coming of a millennium: (*Christian Church*) the belief in a future thousand-year age of blessedness, beginning with or culminating in the Second Coming of Christ. In extended use: belief in a future golden age of peace, justice, and prosperity, typically posited on an end to the existing world order” (*OED*). Millenarianism is a central tenet of the belief systems of “such Christian groups as Adventists, Mormons, and Jehovah’s Witnesses. Belief in a one-thousand-year period of messianic rule is also found in some rabbinic texts. In the late 20th century numerous Christian and non-Christian millenarian movements arose, founded on prophecies of a future world order in which the faithful were to be rewarded” (*OED*). It appears that the widely varying and “apparently discrepant beliefs about the relationship of the Second Coming to the millennium derive from differing interpretations of the key text, Revelation 20” (*OED*).

6 Defined as “[b]elief in the coming of the Messiah” (*OED*).

1.2 Family Values

Having a family, and instilling one's values in the members of one's family, is not the same thing as having "family values." The phrase "family values" has a certain pseudo-wholesomeness that belies its emptiness. Perhaps this phrase has been deliberately left vague, without specific definition, to prevent people from objecting to it. It is a "buzz phrase" that is meant to carry with it positive emotional connotations without specifically meaning anything. If family values included, for example, equality and liberty for all, it is likely that someone, somewhere, would object to at least one of these, and thereby end up leading a revolt against family values. Thus, so long as that which deemed good and holy by the Christian Right is combined within a deliberately vague catch-phrase, the splitting that would ensue from precise definition can be avoided; "family values" seems to be one of those phrases that was developed by the religious right in an attempt to claim/develop their own language, a language that cannot be questioned by its opponents (secular humanists and feminists, among others). Just as anti-feminism became "pro-family," it seems that patriarchal moral values became "family values." The emphasis appears to focus on the so-called traditional nuclear family with its deeply entrenched patriarchal hierarchy: husband over wife, wife over children, boys over girls. Thus, the stress is on power and authority within the ordered hierarchy of the patriarchal family.

Called, among other things, "the 'submission thing'" (Hill), the central aspect of the religious right's family values is Ephesians 5:21-30.⁷ Even fundamentalists note that this passage

7 From the *King James Bible*: "Be subordinate to one another out of reverence for Christ. Wives should be

is particularly problematic, most specifically for feminists. Al Hill's sermon "The 'Submission Thing'" is worth quoting from, at length, because it exemplifies the fundamentalist point of view regarding this particular passage from Ephesians:

If the Bible is the inspired word of God, why would God have left this passage in there?

It's a source of ridicule from the secular world. It's just about the most attractive target of radical feminists and other enemies of Christianity desperate to ravage the Bible's moral and spiritual authority. The modern, secular, feminist-driven culture rails against the idea of wives submitting to their husbands in marriage: "Insane! Barbaric! Patriarchal!

Fascist!"

Now this is an interesting reaction when you consider their alternative. The secular folks promote a value system that encourages women to submit to any number of men outside of marriage. If a man wants to have sex with you, with no forethought or concern for the physical, emotional, medical, financial, or social consequences to you, let him, they say.

Let him, whoever he is, use your body for his momentary pleasure with no expectation of responsibility for the results. Women are encouraged to put themselves at the mercy of selfishness, egotism, uncontrolled anger—and then rage about the damage men do.

subordinate to their husbands as to the Lord. For the husband is head of his wife just as Christ is head of the church, he himself the savior of the body. As the church is subordinate to Christ, so wives should be subordinate to their husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ loved the church and handed himself over for her to sanctify her, cleansing her by the bath of water with the word, that he might present to himself the church in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. So (also) husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no one hates his own flesh but rather nourishes and cherishes it, even as Christ does the church, because we are members of his body" (Ephesians 5:21-30).

With the epidemic of out-of-wedlock pregnancies and single parenting—or the callous encouragement to abort—the date rape and venereal diseases—the depression, debt, and shattered self-esteem, it's clear to see why the world would be so hard on a Christian model for marriage: their worldly way works so much better than God's. And you don't have to worry about God's will. (Hill)

Using textual inerrancy as a basis, Hill encourages his primarily fundamentalist audience to embrace, rather than question, the Gospel of Paul. Reinforcing this, he spends a considerable amount of time admonishing the female members of his audience to submit to their husbands, including the following instruction:

If you will not be subject to your husband, you cannot be subject to Christ. To be subject to Christ, you must subject yourself to your husband—as you do (or should) to Christ—as the Church does (or will) to Christ. And if you will not be subject to your husband as the Bible instructs you to do, what excuse will you give God? What excuse do you think God will accept? (Hill)

Women, in the eyes of both Hill and the religious right, have a very specific place, and that place does not include emancipation, liberty, or equality.

It should not be surprising that the idea that women cannot possibly “have it all” is central to the emergence of and focus on family values. This is one of the central tenets of the patriarchal backlash—“that women's equality is responsible for women's unhappiness” (Faludi

230). Thus, more than solely “family” values, these are “conservative” and “fundamentalist” values, particularly when the intimate relationship of family values to power within the structure of the nuclear family is taken into account. Power, in contemporary society, is being taken away from the male “head” of the household, which makes the patriarchal order very nervous about its own continued viability. There is a distinct connection between this nervousness on the part of the patriarchy and the idea that the morally depraved state of American society is, according to many fundamentalists, a direct result of women’s emancipation. In addition, there is an increasing advocacy within even mainstream American society for a return to patriarchal “family values,” which cannot help but have a significant and far-reaching impact upon American society and culture.

1.3 The Politicization of Christian Fundamentalism

The Enlightenment-era separation of the two patriarchal powers/institutions of Church and State began to see a gradual breakdown in the 1970s. This decade saw, particularly toward its end, a rise in the political activism of fundamentalists, exemplified by Jerry Falwell's Moral Majority. As Karen Armstrong states, “Protestant ideologues defined the enemy as ‘secular humanism’” (270), a phrase that, at least for fundamentalists, became “a portmanteau term into which fundamentalists threw any value or belief that they did not like” (Armstrong 270). To combat the creeping encroachment of secular humanism into American culture,

fundamentalists who had previously isolated themselves, found themselves taking political action. For example:

At the beginning of the 1970s, Tim LaHaye had never suggested that fundamentalists should become politically involved, but by the end of the decade, he had come to believe that the humanists would "destroy America"⁸ within a few years, "unless Christians are willing to become much more assertive in defense of morality and decency than they have been in the last three decades." (Armstrong 274)

Fundamentalists began to mobilize, fueled by a desire to "make an impact and put America back on the right path" (Armstrong 309).

The Moral Majority, created in 1979, became a symbol for this mobilization, for those fundamentalists who "wanted to build a new conservative majority to oppose the moral and social liberalism that had entered American public and private life during the 1960s" (Armstrong 309). The Moral Majority began an intense political campaign, one that drew increasing notice. Karen Armstrong describes this campaign as "a vociferous born-again presence in public life" (313). Ronald Reagan sought and won the fundamentalist vote in 1980 (Berlet & Quigley; Diamond) and, over "the course of the next decade, militant Christians began to colonize

8 Chip Berlet and Margaret Quigley argue that, for fundamentalists, "all of the evils of modern society can be traced to John Dewey [who spear-headed the progressive education movement] and secular humanists. A typical author argued:

"Most US citizens are not aware that hard-core pornography, humanistic sex education, the 'gay' rights movement, feminism, the Equal Rights Amendment, sensitivity training in schools and in industry, the promotion of drug abuse, the God-Is Dead movement, free abortion on demand, euthanasia as a national promotion...to mention a few, highly publicized movements...have been sparked by humanism."

mainstream institutions. In 1986, Pat Robertson even made a bid for the presidency” (Armstrong 313).

The Moral Majority and militant Christians had a growing impact on American politics, which became particularly noticeable in their efforts to combat the spread of secular humanism:

Now Christian activists began to target candidates who voted the "wrong" way on the gun laws, funding for abortion clinics, or the Equal Rights Amendment. To hold the wrong views on defense, school prayer, or gay rights was to be anti-family, anti-America, and anti-God. (Armstrong 313)

The boundary between Church and State was increasingly weakened, as fundamentalists gained more and more muscle in the political arena,⁹ as exemplified by the infiltration of the Republican party by “born-again” Christians in the 1990s, which ultimately led to the takeover of Congress by a born-again Republican party in 1994 (Berlet & Quigley).

The 1990s also saw an increase in adherents to dominionism, defined by Chip Berlet as “a tendency among Protestant Christian evangelicals and fundamentalists that encourages them to not only be active political participants in civic society, but also seek to dominate the political process as part of a mandate from God.” This theology stems from an interpretation of

9 The 1990s also saw an intense quarrel between Republicans and Democrats regarding the meaning of “family values,” a quarrel that came to a head during the 1992 presidential election (Arnold & Weisberg). Berlet and Quigley provide a brief overview of the “constellation of discrete and topical beliefs” that are usually displayed by proponents of the traditional family values movement, which include “support for traditional, hierarchical sex roles and opposition to feminism, employed mothers, contraception, abortion, divorce, sex education, school-based health clinics, extramarital sex, and gay and lesbian sex, among other issues.”

Genesis 1:26¹⁰ that leads some Christians to believe, as Sara Diamond states, “that Christians alone are Biblically mandated to occupy all secular institutions until Christ returns—and there is no consensus on when that might be” (qtd in Berlet).¹¹

Christian Reconstructionism, “the most influential form of dominion theology . . . influenced both the theological concepts and political activism of white Protestant conservative evangelicals mobilized by the Christian Right” (Berlet). Reconstructionists have, according to Frederick Clarkson, “set a course of world conquest or 'dominion,' claiming a Biblically prophesied 'inevitable victory.’” It is this commitment to dominion that “is the theological principle that serves as the uniting force of Christian Right extremism, while people debate the particulars” (Clarkson).

Reconstructionism provides, to the religious right, “a comprehensive analysis, game plan, and justification” (Clarkson) that allows them to become politically active in an attempt to

10 This passage states, “And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.”

11 There are, within dominionist theology, two versions: soft dominionists and hard dominionists. Berlet discusses the tendencies of each, in detail, in the following:

Soft Dominionists are Christian nationalists. They believe that Biblically-defined immorality and sin breed chaos and anarchy. They fear that America's greatness as God's chosen land has been undermined by liberal secular humanists, feminists, and homosexuals. Purists want litmus tests for issues of abortion, tolerance of gays and lesbians, and prayer in schools. Their vision has elements of theocracy, but they stop short of calling for supplanting the Constitution and Bill of Rights.

Hard Dominionists believe all of this, but they want the United States to be a Christian theocracy. For them the Constitution and Bill of Rights are merely addendums to Old Testament Biblical law. They claim that Christian men with specific theological beliefs are ordained by God to run society. Christians and others who do not accept their theological beliefs would be second-class citizens. This sector includes Christian Reconstructionists, but it has a growing number of adherents in the leadership of the Christian Right.

carry out their dominionist plans: “Reconstructionism offers a platform that encompasses the religious and the political” (Clarkson). Reconstructionism is spreading throughout the Religious Right, in part because its

analysis of America as a Christian nation and the security of complete control implied in the concept of dominion is understandably appealing to many conservative Christians. Its apocalyptic vision of rule by Biblical Law is a mandate for political involvement.

(Clarkson)

It is this commitment to dominion that “is the theological principle that serves as the uniting force of Christian Right extremism, while people debate the particulars” (Clarkson).

Christian Reconstructionism and, by association, dominionism, have “had tremendous influence as a catalyst for an historic shift in American religion and politics” (Clarkson), a shift that is particularly prominent in George W. Bush's “War on Terror,” the current American campaign against heathen evil-doers, an influence that, “until G.W. Bush's campaign for the presidency, too many progressive-thinking Americans dismissed as just the lunatic fringe of American religiosity” (Relke Revisions).

1.4 Fundamentalist (Anti-Feminist) Speculative Fiction

Fundamentalists (and usually anti-feminist) speculative fiction grew out of the politicization of Christian fundamentalism and the breakdown of the boundary between Church

and State. One of the best early examples of this is Hal Lindsey's 1970s book *The Late Great Planet Earth*, in which he rewrites “the old premillennial ideas in racy, trendy prose” (Armstrong 274). Initially, Lindsey was like many of his fundamentalist compatriots and “saw no special role for America in the Last Days, and implied that Christians should content themselves with spotting 'signs' of the approaching End in current events” (Armstrong 274). But by the time he wrote *The 1980s, Countdown to Armageddon*, he tone had changed and he argued that, “if America came to its senses, it could remain a world power right through the millennium” (Armstrong 274). As Karen Armstrong aptly states of this period (and this type of fiction):

Fundamentalists were ready. They had an enemy to fight, a vision of what America should be that was very different from that of the liberal mainstream, and they now believed, despite all their fears, that they were powerful enough to succeed in their crusade. (274)

The same dystopian literary themes and tones would (and still do) continue to appear in fundamentalist speculative fiction, including that such as Tim LaHaye and Jerry B. Jenkins' *Left Behind* series, developing a tradition of fundamentalist speculative fiction.

A prime, and extraordinarily popular, example of Anti-feminist dystopian speculative fiction is the the *Left Behind* Series (1995 – 2004), which has a huge market share, particularly in the United States. Co-written by the notable fundamentalist Reverend Tim LaHaye and writer Jerry B. Jenkins, the *Left Behind* series tells the saga of a near future world in which the Rapture

has taken place.¹² This series has become an industry of its own, spawning the original twelve-book *Left Behind* series, a new *Rapture* series, devotional works, theological defenses of the *Left Behind* series' interpretation of Bible prophecy, true stories of how *Left Behind* changed the lives of its readers, graphic novels, a kids series, a military series, a political series, websites, movies, calendars, greeting cards, music, and audio- and e-books, among other things. There are even a twice monthly *Left Behind* newsletter, contests to meet the authors, and a prophecy club ("God's Daily Promises"). The first book in the *Left Behind* series is ranked 2, 831 in books by *Amazon.com*, with links to 1, 052 related products.¹³ The *Left Behind* empire, capitalizing upon the growing religious right in the United States, is becoming an institution within American evangelism and fundamentalism—an institution that emphasizes family values, women's "proper" gender roles, and obedience to the head of the nuclear family—an institution that is increasingly calling for the entwining of Church and State, asking the faithful to protect the Christian values of the American constitution, and to protect America, herself, from heretics, heathens, and, above all, terrorists.

12 Chip Berlet categorizes this particular series as "future narrative devoted to encouraging current salvation through a particular premillennial reading of the Bible. It's not enough to be a Christian, you must embrace a narrow and specific version of Christianity. Otherwise, you are not just going to Hell, but you will be persecuted and maybe tortured and murdered as well." What is particularly problematic, as Berlet goes on to state, is that, "As pop theology, the messages of the series and the Left Behind Prophecy Club are troubling, but as popular political ideology, they are dangerous."

13 Interestingly enough, *Amazon.ca* ranks the first book in the *Left Behind* series at 43 184 in books, with links to 296 related products. Data collected 17 June 2005 at 19:30 PST.

1.5 Feminist Speculative Fiction

In researching the history of feminist speculative fiction, I discovered that not only is there disagreement as to what should be included, but that there are also those who question whether such a tradition should, indeed, exist. Yet, regardless of whether contemporary feminist writers of speculative fiction realize it or not, they are members of a proud literary tradition, one that can be traced as far back as the fifteenth century, and one that has contributed profound works to the predominantly patriarchal literary canon. The establishment of a tradition of feminist speculative fiction is integral to the study of contemporary texts within this genre, as the history and historical evolution of a genre are as important to its study as is the historical context within which each book was written. Such a tradition establishes a continuity within the evolution of feminist speculative fiction, one that serves to buttress critiques from within the tradition of male-authored speculative fiction. Feminist speculative fiction has been around for a long time and it is here to stay, as is evidenced by the steadily increasing number of books published within this genre every year, and by their popularity. Throughout feminist speculative fiction, we see the development of a distinctly feminist dystopian imagination. Dystopias and, in some cases, utopias, are used as a means by which to deconstruct and reconstruct the patriarchal orders¹⁴ in which writers of feminist speculative fiction lived (and still live). Feminist writers of

14 The very first thing that comes to mind when asked how I define the term “patriarchy” is an image of Gwynne Dyer from *The Gods of Our Fathers*, standing in the midst of a Egyptian village, speaking about how human society was (and still is) subject to what he referred to as the rule of the fathers. While this recollection is a bit fuzzy as to exactly where Dyer was and the exact words that he used, his definition of patriarchy certainly stands out. Thus, at least in my mind, patriarchy is not solely about men's oppression of women, as some might like people to believe. It is not a fixed structure or institution, but a virus-like ideology that informs these structures

speculative fiction took a genre that is usually seen to be masculine, and appropriated it for their own purposes. Having done so, these writers discovered that this medium provides them with a perfect forum within which to speculate, all too vividly, as to what a future governed by a self-interested patriarchal order might resemble.

In the early successes of feminism, many writers in the 1970s and early 1980s saw a rosy future for both women and the world. Realizing that men, and the patriarchal order, might not be able to change, these women nonetheless saw a united sisterhood as their hope for the future. The large number of feminist utopias that were published during this time provide solid evidence of this hopeful, forward-looking stance. However, with the 1982 failure of the Equal Rights Amendment (E.R.A.), the outlook of feminist writers began to change for the worse. A number of the most dystopian of these speculations involved the resurgence of religious fundamentalism that accompanied the patriarchal backlash of the mid-1980s. Margaret Atwood, Sheri S. Tepper, and Suzette Haden Elgin were among the feminist writers whose dystopian fiction of the mid- to late-1980s included elements of religious fundamentalism. Increasingly, feminist writers looked toward the future with trepidation, with a gaze tinged not with hope, but with futility and dread. The horrors that the patriarchal order could unleash upon the world,

and institutions (Relke Revisions). Its virus-like nature means that, even when it appears to have been eradicated, it can reappear, at a moment's notice, in a new, more evolved form: "Today, we could be fooled into thinking that patriarchy is in retreat—especially now that economic globalism has significantly weakened the power of individual states. What's likelier, however, is that it's merely undergoing another major mutation as a strategy of accommodation to a vast technological mega-state . . ." (Relke Reversing). The fundamentalisms in each of these novels, while different in their conceptualization, are fueled by patriarchy because "[f]undamentalism is an ideal expression of patriarchal ideology" (Relke Patriarchy).

particularly women, became, once more, all too real, and all too possible. The number of dystopias written by feminist writers rapidly increased during this period, and has continued to do so at the dawn of the twenty-first century. Fear plays an overarching role in the majority of these novels, all of which reflect worlds that are not all that far removed from our own. We live in an age that is dominated by hate, xenophobia, and patriarchy, an age in which nuclear war (and, thus, nuclear winter) can be unleashed solely by the press of a button. Is it any wonder that feminists, particularly feminist writers of speculative fiction, look toward the future not with hope, but with fear?

Patriarchal backlashes against the gains made by women during World War II were fodder not only for feminist critics and theorists, but also for an increasing number of texts in which feminist authors of speculative fiction were able to take specific aspects of the patriarchal backlash, place these within a futuristic, fictional setting and, in so doing, expose the damaging effects of patriarchal control over women's lives. While some authors focus just on one small area of women's oppression, other writers have looked at the larger picture, often focusing on controversial issues such as women's reproductive rights (or lack thereof). As with many dystopias, feminist dystopias take an element of contemporary society, almost invariably one instituted and perpetuated by the patriarchal order, and extrapolate into the future. These writers often do not have to extrapolate very far to create a truly dystopian text. Interestingly enough, a large number of texts within the genre of feminist dystopian speculative fiction are either post-

apocalyptic (with varying scales of “apocalypse”) or take place in a world where war is not only known, but commonplace, something upon which the government appears to thrive (in an eerie parallel to our own, post 9-11 world).

Part of the problem that is faced by feminist writers is the fact that they, too, can become victims of the backlash. Flynn Connolly’s 1994 dystopia *The Rising of the Moon* was well received upon publication, yet it went quickly out of print. Now, even though the sequel is finished (and has been for some time), Connolly is unable to get it published. Even authors of prominent, often cited second wave feminist theory are having difficulty keeping their works in print. For example, Kate Millett’s well-known *Sexual Politics* (1970) was out of print for seven years before Illinois University Press picked up the rights to it. Restricting access to these texts by keeping them out of print is not the only means of controlling their distribution, but it provides still, further evidence of the attempts to control the dissemination of feminist writing, thereby keeping the metaphorical lid on feminist dissent.

While there is a certain danger involved in writing feminist dystopian speculative fiction in a patriarchal society, there is little question that such texts are not only timely and thought-provoking but also an integral part of feminist thought and history. These writers give life to the visions lurking in the nightmares of feminists; they illuminate the all-too-short distance between fact and fantasy. These authors did not wake up one morning and decide, on a whim, to write a feminist dystopia. Nothing is written in a vacuum. Each writer used elements of the

world around her and looked forward to the future, creating a dystopia out of elements that were already in existence within contemporary culture. That they were able to do so, and with such vivid and horrifying results, shows the true nature of the oppressive patriarchal order under which they and their readers lived and live, an oppression that is becoming more and more visible, more and more dangerous, at the advent of the twenty-first century.¹⁵

Who better than women, who have so often borne the brunt of patriarchal fear and rage, to prophesy about the end of the world as we know it? Through each of these books runs a common thread: the idea that the patriarchal order not only will bring about its own demise but will also wreak havoc on the human race, while at the same time destroying the world in which we live. These women are prophets of a new and terrifying age, an age that could, without question, come into existence unless the patriarchal order changes its violent, paranoid, misogynistic, xenophobic ways. These writers have declared their own “war on terror” and, through their dystopias, have harnessed the human imagination in a desperate attempt to prevent their dystopian visions from becoming reality.

1.6 Bridging the Gaps—Feminism, Speculative Fiction, and Fundamentalism

Are feminism, speculative fiction, and fundamentalism such strange bedfellows? Lee

¹⁵ A prime example of this is the 30 May 2007 verdict in the American *Ledbetter v. Goodyear Tire & Rubber Co.*, which has “dealt a near-fatal blow to our ability to use Title VII of the landmark Civil Rights Act of 1964 to remedy pay discrimination based on sex, race, national origin, and other protected grounds” (Gilchrist). In this particular case, this verdict “effectively overturns 20 years of federal court cases and Equal Employment Opportunity Commission rulings which had consistently ruled that a prohibited act of discrimination occurs each time a woman receives a paycheck that is less than a similarly situated man” (Gilchrist).

Killough, Margaret Atwood, and Sheri S. Tepper, among others, have produced works of fiction that incorporate aspects of all three of these seemingly disparate things, much to the advantage of their novels. Killough's *A Voice Out of Ramah* provides a dystopian view of a world in which those at the top of the patriarchal order use every means at their disposal, including the callous murder of the planet's male children, to maintain and perpetuate their status, all without thought for the devastation that such action wreaks upon their own society. Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale* presents a world in which the separation of Church and State has been eliminated, and the two are combined in an increasingly fruitful marriage, creating a fundamentalist, patriarchal Republic that ensures the perpetuation of sexism and misogyny, reducing fertile women to walking wombs, and threatening those women who dare to dissent with lethal Unwoman status. Tepper's *Gibbon's Decline and Fall* reveals another near future world, one in which dominion is winning the battle over balance, resulting in a world in which the Hail Mary Assumption is declared fact, and in which the ability of men to impregnate women, combined with men's complete oppression of their female counterparts, provides men with a feeling of virility that is, for them, the epitome of masculinity. Each of these novels, in its speculations, provides a warning both to feminists and to the populace at large. Contemporary society is walking a razor's edge, teetering toward dominion, toward a perpetuation and reinforcement of patriarchy, over the much more logical, balanced society, albeit a society in which the patriarchs will be forced to relinquish sole control of the reins of power.

Each of the three primary texts that will be studied integrates aspects of the tripartite focus of this project into texts that are surprisingly adept, succinct, and prophetic in their analyses of the ways in which Christian fundamentalism is having an impact upon the lives and lived experiences of countless women the world over. What makes each of these texts so compelling is that the extrapolations that are made, while conducted within the realm of fiction, do not move so far from the realities in which they were written that these realities are unrecognizable. The works were rooted in their particular social contexts and serve as stark warnings not only of what might have been, but also of what may well come to pass.

Chapter Two

Responsible Lies: Fundamentalism in A Voice Out of Ramah

2.1 Background/Historical Context

Lee Killough's *A Voice Out of Ramah* (1979), while building upon the foundation of feminist works that preceded it, takes a slightly different direction in its critique of patriarchy and theocracy. *A Voice Out of Ramah*, like many dystopias, has distinct and traceable origins in and connections to the real world.¹⁶ Killough uses the medium of dystopian speculative fiction as a means by which to critique the increasingly pernicious anti-feminist backlash of the 1970s,¹⁷ concentrating, in particular, upon the effects that patriarchy can have upon *both* sexes. Killough's text focuses on criticizing the zeitgeist of American politics and the nation's political and religious cultures, in particular the rise in the number of adherents to fundamentalist Christian faiths, which occurred in the late 1970s.¹⁸

16 As M. Keith Booker states in *The Dystopian Impulse in Modern Literature*, “the treatment of imaginary societies in the best dystopian fiction is always relevant more or less directly to specific ‘realworld’ societies and issues” (19). Dystopian fictions, particularly those that function specifically as social criticism, “are typically set in places or times far distant from the author’s own, but it is usually clear that the real referents of dystopian fictions are generally quite concrete and near-at-hand” (Booker 19). For example, on January 31 of 1978, “Pope Paul VI cautioned women to be on their guard against movements for equality that run the risk of “masculinizing” and “depersonalizing” them. Vatican observers said the Pontiff’s remarks were aimed at women’s liberation movements allegedly advocating divorce, abortion, and promiscuity” (Carabillo).

17 For example, in September of 1976, “an anti-abortion bill that redefined a “person” as “a human being from the moment of fertilization and implantation” was signed into law by Louisiana Governor Edwin Edwards. Had the law survived court challenge, it could have led to the filing of murder charges against physicians, medical support staff, and women seeking abortions, a fact admitted by the author, Senator E. Edwards Barham” (Carabillo).

18 In the United States, many believe that “the liberalizing trends of the 1960s contributed to the upsurge in fundamentalism” (Patterson).

Killough's focus on institutionalized misogyny came at a time of rising feminist and secular concern regarding the nature of religion, particularly theocracies, and the negative impact that these can have on women's lives, especially women's rights and freedoms. Her text is, in some ways, a response to the increasing backlash against feminism¹⁹ by Christian fundamentalists, Christian evangelists, and the religious right.

One of the reasons that I have focused on Killough's *A Voice Out of Ramah* is that it portrays one of the few truly fundamentalist religions found in feminist dystopian speculative fiction from the 1970s. In addition, this text focuses on the impact of a fundamentalist, patriarchal monotheocracy on both sexes. Killough's *A Voice Out of Ramah* provides ample opportunity for analysis, not only because its dystopian aspects are based in the anti-feminist ethos of the 1970s, but also because it portrays a solid, fundamentalist religious hegemony in a strongly misogynist society. It is a perfect candidate to represent the state of feminist dystopian speculative fiction in the 1970s.²⁰

19 This backlash included, amongst other, equally appalling events, the fact that, on 14 September 1972, "Pope Paul VI, spurning appeals from cardinals and feminist groups alike, barred women from even the smallest formal role in the ministry of the Roman Catholic Church. In a *motu proprio* (a decree by his own hand), the Pope ruled that though women could continue to read the Bible during Mass and perform some altar services, as local needs required, they could never claim that performing such duties was a right. 'In accordance with the venerable tradition of the Church,' he wrote, 'installation in the ministries of lector and acolyte is reserved to men'" (Carabillo). In addition, the backlash can be characterized by Billy Graham's reference, in November of 1970, to feminism as "'an echo of our overall philosophy of permissiveness' in an article in the *Ladies Home Journal*. He claimed that women didn't want to be 'competitive juggernauts pitted against male chauvinists' and that the role of wife, mother, and homemaker was the appointed destiny of 'real womanhood,' according to the Judeo-Christian ethic" (Carabillo).

20 For the reader who is unfamiliar with Killough's novel, what follows is a brief summary of its plot. In *A Voice Out of Ramah*, the reader is first introduced to Shepherd Jared Cloud Joseph as he struggles to deal with the arrival on the planet Marah of a ship from Earth, the planet from whence his people had fled six hundred years before. His conscience troubles him because Kastavian, one of the Terrans destined to visit the Gideon Temple, is male, and

2.2 *Is the Marahns' Religion a Fundamentalism or Not?*

At first glance, it is perhaps difficult to see that the Marahns' religion is a true fundamentalism, particularly because Killough identifies its historical basis as being that of “a semi-fundamentalist, neo-Anglican religious sect, male dominated, with strong back-to-the-soil

Jared knows full well that “Marah could be death for any man that set foot on her. Only a few lucky immunes survived” (Killough 2). Jared must reveal to Alesdra, the other of the two crew members of *Galactic Rose* to visit Gideon Temple, that Kastavin is likely going to die, considering that only seventeen of the original four hundred male colonists survived their first two weeks on Marah.

Not long after Kastavin's death, Alesdra inadvertently reminds Jared that his nephew, Sky's son, would soon be starting Middle School, and thus become subject to the Trial, in which the Church infects/poisons Marah's adolescent males in imitation of the original virus, long after viral resistance has been bred into the population. Alesdra states, “I hope . . . [Sky's] son is luckier than Kastavin” (Killough 45), not realizing just how integral luck really is to the survival of Marah's adolescent males. Jared's world is brought sharply into focus by this reminder, and he wonders if there might be something that he could do to save the boy. However, he soon comes to realize that this will not be possible because, as Levi tells him, “How could I save one and not the rest?” (Killough 74).

Jared decides that he must save his nephew Isaiah, but in order to do so, he not only has to spirit Isaiah away from the Middle School and hide him, disguised as a girl, with Levi's family, but he also must secretly journey to Eridu where he intends to blackmail Bishop Elias, with the help of Alesdra. His hope is that she will be able to have influence where he does not:

“He won't dare harm her because of the reprisal that might come from the ship. Then she can threaten to reveal the truth to the world unless he buys her machine and stops the Trial. He won't dare order any deaths with alien virologists coming, because they'll learn right away that we're immune” (Killough 81).

Jared is determined that he will do everything in his power to save Isaiah, and sets off across country, unaware of just how unprepared he is for survival in the wild. With the keepers, Marah's policewomen, looking for Jared, the “criminal fugitive” (Killough 112), his journey becomes increasingly difficult. Fortunately for Jared, he meets up with a group of women driving rapas, one of three species of saurians the Marahns use for livestock, to the market in Viridian.

En route, he learns a number of things about life in his society, including just how important it is that the Trial be stopped, that the truth finally comes to light. The so-called virus imposes a large number of restrictions on the lives of men, restrictions that Jared contemplates only once he is free of them:

What sights he had been missing while he was cloistered in the walls of Gibeon temple. It was annoying to think that a woman, merely man's helpmate, could see something like this anytime. She could go where she wanted, when she wanted, be alone as much as she liked. She could join a family or leave it, change jobs, change towns. She would walk cross-country like this, see such sights as these, sit down and enjoy them as long as she pleased.

Of course they were not quite *that* free; women had ties and obligations, too, but they were more free than men, their masters. Only a woman would likely be walking this trail this way, never a man. And that, he thought, wading through the phoenix blossoms, was a great pity. (Killough 117)

Jared's journey, while undertaken to save Isaiah, is very much a journey of self-discovery. It is not until Jared

and eco-conservationist beliefs” (15). Despite several somewhat liberal elements in the belief set of the original colonists, the Marahn religion has moved, over time, from semi-fundamentalist to fundamentalist, as it exhibits four of the five ideological characteristics of fundamentalisms.

First, the Bishop reveals that the Marahns are still, six hundred years after their arrival on Marah, afraid of the secular, afraid that it will somehow marginalize their religion, even within their staunchly theocratic patriarchal society.²¹ Second, selectivity is exhibited throughout the novel by the Marahn clergy. For example, in the beginning, Jared wants to rejoin his sister, from whom

meets and travels with Jerusha Teman and her sisterwives that he truly begins to understand the implications of the Church's meddling in the fates of Marah's young men, just as, once he reaches Eridu, he learns that revealing the secret behind the Trial will be much more dangerous than he had originally feared. After all, the Shepherd of the Eridu temple specifically tells Jared that his assistant, should Jared make any move to reveal any ecclesiastical secrets, “may bring you back in whatever condition you make necessary to your most efficient silencing and removal” (Killough 183).*

At the same time as Jared undertakes his journey, Alesdra works toward obtaining a meeting with the Bishop in which she will attempt to sell her shuttlebox (an interstellar matter transportation device) to the Marahns. In the process of so doing, she speaks to the Marahn clergy's Grand Council of the possibility of eliminating the virus, after which she tells Sky: “I think the women are interested. I'm not sure about the men. Living boys means less of a minority and therefore fewer privileges” (Killough 155). It is not until the end of the novel that Sky and the rest of Marah realize just how true Alesdra's statement really is. While Jared initially wants only to tell Alesdra of the true nature of the Trial, he realizes that secrets and lack of trust are what are, quite literally, responsible for the very preventable deaths of most of Marah's young men. As Jared contemplates telling Alesdra, Sky, and a number of other keepers, he thinks:

Men and women on Marah had secrets from each other. He had learned some of the women's secrets and it was a shock, but not a killing one. Perhaps it was time women learned about men, too.

. . .

“I guess it's time we stopped lying to each other,” he said. You lie by exclusion, never letting men know what you really think, and we—” He looked at Alesdra. “You once wondered why resistance to the disease hasn't bred through the population. It has. No Marahn has died of the disease for over four hundred years.”

(Killough 185 – 186)

Understandably, the women's reaction is one of horror, a reaction that threatens to tear apart the very fabric of Marahn society.

* Alesdra and Sky also pick up on this, rescuing Jared to place him in sanctuary with the keepers because, as Alesdra states, “there was danger here of Jared disappearing forever into the safety of the temple” (Killough 184).

21 When the Bishop instructs Jared regarding how he is to behave when he meets the representatives from Earth, he tells him, “[D]o not be seduced by their godless ways, but talk to them, get to know them. I need you to look into their hearts and tell me what they are . . . and what they want of us” (Killough 1 - 2).

he has been separated for many years; however, he knows that he cannot do so because he knows “too many things lesser people could not be allowed to learn, things he might give away in the heat of passion or a tender moment of sharing confidences” (Killough 4 – 5). Third, the Marahn religion exhibits moral dualism, nowhere more explicitly than in its attitudes towards the pleasant smelling, dangerously acidic Satan fruit. Jared tells Alesdra that some people, especially children, “are tempted [by the Satan fruit], but so are we all throughout our lives by dangerous things with the appearance of good, and whosoever yields will surely suffer” (Killough 42). Fourth, absolutism and textual inerrancy are an integral part of the Marahn religion. Boys die every year because God wills it so: “This [the poison] was revealed by a Divine vision. It's the Lord's will, and the boys, who serve Divine purpose by dying, are twice loved in Paradise for their sacrifice” (Killough 30). While the fifth characteristic, Millennialism and/or Messianism, is not explicitly exhibited, it could be said that Jared's confession leads to a cultural apocalypse of sorts, albeit one that was not (even though it should have been) predicted by the clergy within the male-dominated Marahn religion.

The Marahns' religion also exhibits three of the four organizational characteristics of fundamentalisms. First, there are sharp, definite boundaries between several different groups within the Marahns' religion-centred society, including those between the clergy and the non-clergy, those between men and boys, and those between adolescent boys and girls (which are the sharpest of all the boundaries within this particular society). Second, Marah is definitely subject

to an authoritarian organizational structure, one that is very clearly headed (and strictly controlled) by Bishop Elias Jamin. Third, there are some very specific behavioural requirements for the Marahn people, exemplified, for example, by the fact that watching young men die is not a man's job: Jared “was not obligated to take part in . . . [Kastavian's] deathwatch; that was a woman's duty” (Killough 27). Finally, the fourth characteristic is elect membership—while this is one that is not specifically exhibited in the novel's present, it nonetheless had to have been exhibited at some point in the Marahns' past, because each of the founding members of Marahn society was a member of the original “semi-fundamentalist, neo-Anglican religious sect” (Killough 15). While it began as a semi-fundamentalist religion, the fact that the Marahns' religion, as it stands in *A Voice Out of Ramah*, exhibits seven of the nine characteristics of fundamentalisms should lead us to recategorize it as a true fundamentalism.²²

2.3 *The Marahn Virus*

In the beginning of *A Voice Out of Ramah*, the reader, much like the citizens of the monotheocratic patriarchy of Marah, is led to believe that a deadly virus still runs rampant, one that has plagued the young men of Marah since the planet's settlement. However, both Jared and the reader soon come to the realization that this is not the case, that the high death rate amongst Marah's adolescent men has a much more nefarious source: the Marahn Church.

²² As Harriet Harris states in “How Helpful Is the Term 'Fundamentalist'?”, for the purposes of the Fundamentalist Project (and this thesis), “[g]roups that score high against this list [of ideological and organizational characteristics] . . . [are] judged to be fundamentalist” (10).

In relation to the novel's feminist themes, one might wonder what the “virus” symbolizes. At first glance, there could well be a connection between the virus and the pernicious, viral nature of patriarchy. However, it seems more likely that Killough's virus plays a role that is similar to, for example, the point that Sheri S. Tepper makes with Holyland's (from *The Gate to Women's Country*) diminishing population, or the dwindling population in Burdekin's *Swastika Night*. In each case, patriarchy itself is somehow responsible for a decline in human population (whether a result of a decrease in birth rate and/or an increase in death rate), which is interesting, especially considering the increase in birth rates that usually accompanies a move toward a patriarchal order, as detailed in Gwynne Dyer's *The Gods of Our Fathers*. It seems that the virus, in Killough's novel, provides a vehicle through which the patriarchy's inner machinations can be exposed.

In the beginning, most of the men amongst the immigrants to Marah perished from an engineered virus, designed for mammals and directed (or so it seems) specifically at the male sex. The reader's first exposure to this virus occurs when Kastavin and Alesdra become sick within hours of setting foot on Marah. While Alesdra fights to save her crewmate, it appears that the Marahns are conspiring against her, an appearance that is reinforced by the as-yet-unknown reality of the virus. As Jared tells her, point blank, she cannot return to her ship:

“You'll infect everyone. All of Marah is contaminated. Everything that breathes and doesn't die of the disease carries it: birds, saurians, reptiles, everything. You'll take it

back to your ship.” (Killough 23)

Alesdra's assessment of Marah as a “world that breathe[s] death” (Killough 23) is quite accurate.

It seems highly improbable that the Marahns would continue to suffer the devastating effects of this virus, considering both the 500 years that have passed from the time of their first landing and the fact that a certain portion of the male population appears to have some sort of immunity to the virus. It makes no sense that, as Jared states, “[a]bout ninety percent of our boys die as they reach puberty” (Killough 23). If only seventeen men from the first generation survived, they would have passed their immunity on to most of their children. Assuming that this virus' effectiveness (and, thus, immunity to it) is sex-linked, it could probably be classified as a sex-linked trait. Because of this, it seems likely that the numbers of male deaths should, in theory, be much closer to twenty-five percent in the first few generations. And, if the people of Marah paid close attention to who lived and who died, they should have been able, by deduction, to determine which females carried the susceptible gene and, thus, slowly eliminate its manifestation within their population, without even delving into the realm of antiviral treatments for susceptible young men. Thus, it is entirely believable when it is revealed that the virus is, for present day residents of Marah, a theocratically constructed and perpetuated myth.

2.4 Gendered Hierarchies

The myth of the virus reinforces a gendered hierarchy, one in which women are deemed to be the inferior sex, particularly when it comes to matters of intellect.²³ When Jared attempts to discuss, with the guards, the imminent arrival of the Terrans, he becomes frustrated when the female guards do not immediately grasp what (or, in this case, who) he is speaking about, leading him to ask himself, “Why did he bother discussing such matters with them?” (Killough 6). He thus implies that the female guards are somehow incapable of intellectual conversation. He adds to this, several paragraphs later, when he states:

He had been uncomfortable talking to [the guards]. Women were charming, delightful for banter, but not for serious conversation as there would be between himself and another man. (Killough 6)

Throughout the novel, Jared struggles with the idea that women are intellectually inferior to men. Alesdra and Sky, among others, will serve to challenge this preconception as they prove, time and time again, that women are just as intellectually capable as men. It is often education, or lack thereof, that is responsible for the women's seeming intellectual inferiority, something that

²³ Because women make up the entirety (or so it seems) of Marah's police/military, the oft-used argument that women are physically inferior to men cannot be used. Women, in essence, guard the men and keep them “safe” from any manner of danger that may manifest itself. Due to their differences in lifestyle (especially due to the protected and sedentary male lifestyle), women have, essentially, become the physically superior sex. Thus, the patriarchal theocracy has, rather cleverly, divided Marahns into two groups: brains (male) and brawn (female), each of which serves to reinforce the Church's hold on Marahn society. This binary opposition is firmly entrenched within their society, but Jared soon discovers that this binary opposition is a false one, as his journey reveals to him that women can have brains, just as men can have brawn. This critique of unfounded gender hierarchies and binary constructions/oppositions plays an integral role in the plot of Killough's novel, and provides the author with a means by which to critique these same hierarchies and constructions within contemporary North American society.

could, in this case, quite easily be remedied. As with many things within the world of Marah, women's seeming lack of intelligence is very much a construct of the patriarchal theocracy that governs the planet, as it was in the West until a few decades ago.

It serves the purposes of those in power to perpetuate the myth of women's intellectual inferiority, as it allows them to reinforce their own places of authority. Women's obedience is, on the surface, a necessary part of the social fabric of Marah. The first hint of this occurs when Alesdra confronts Jared in his garden about the virus and what she sees as the Marahns' attitude of futility the futility of treating it. The reader gets a glimpse of Jared's thoughts:

How had she found him here? he wondered. How did she dare come into his private rooms uninvited? He considered walking out but there seemed to be nowhere in the temple he could escape from her if not here. No Marahn woman would have been so disrespectful. The men of Earth must keep very poor control of their women.

(Killough 31)

Despite the fact that Alesdra is rightfully angry, Jared is preoccupied with the fact that she has stepped outside of the realm of women's "proper" gender roles. She has not followed the unwritten rule that he, as a man, must be obeyed and respected solely due to his "superior" sex. That he goes so far as to comment about Terran men's seeming lack of control over "their" women tells the reader a significant amount about Marahn society. He seems to be implying that

women are people who must be controlled, like the large (and not particularly smart) reptiles that the Marahns use for transport, which indicates a significant disregard for women's intellectual capacity.

When Alesdra accuses Jared and his society, at Kastavian's funeral, of giving up the fight against the virus, Jared is, again, appalled at her disrespect. The reader gets another glimpse of Jared's inner thoughts here:

An intake of breath told Jared the driver was listening with amazement. Rather than treat the woman to a scene of another woman being disrespectful and getting away with it, Jared fell silent. (Killough 36)

Jared is beginning to realize that, unlike the women of Marah, Alesdra is not going to follow his society's unwritten “proper” gender roles. She challenges the entire basis of these rules and, while Jared is not, at this point in the novel, quite ready to accept that, he is at least able (although unwilling) to accept that he is not going to get the respect that he feels he deserves from her—failing to realize that Alesdra's respect must be earned, and not demanded, which is the opposite to what Marah's gendered hierarchies demand. These types of attitudes result in the dehumanization of women, which serves here the purposes of the theocracy, because it allows them to discredit women's emotions; if women's emotions do not matter, the Church's alibi for the murder of the planet's male children becomes stronger. The Church can then say that women are too emotional to understand the necessity of the Trial.²⁴ Men, particularly those who are in

²⁴ The Trial is, in fact, only necessary to keep the adult male population at the right level—a level that enables the

the upper echelons of the Church's hierarchy, have a vested interest in maintaining the Trial.²⁵

2.5 Impact of the Patriarchal Theocracy Upon Men

Men's lives, too, are quite restricted by the demands of Marahn society, which is a result of the patriarchal nature of Marah and the scarcity of adult males. Killough is able, through Aaron Methuselah and the Bishop (among others), to reveal the negative impact that patriarchal fundamentalism can have on men, as well as on women. The destruction of bonds between men and boys highlights how patriarchy literally leads to an attitude, amongst men, that it is every man for himself. Most telling is Levi's and Jared's conversation about his desire to save his sister Sky's son from the Trial:

Our ancestors have done all they could to destroy the bonds between men and boys. Children take their mother's name, inherit her property. By custom women must receive seed from two men for a pregnancy. Even the words for relationships between men and boys are gone. A woman calls her sister's sons nephews and they call her aunt, but you and I can only call them our sisters' sons and they call us their mothers' brothers. (Killough 74)

Any bond that might have been possible between father and son, between men of the older

perpetuation of a theocratic, patriarchal order under which only those few clergymen at the top have any true power. In fact, the Marahn women would be outraged (as in fact happens, later in the novel) at the idea that their children are being sacrificed to maintain such an order. The excuse that women are too emotional to understand/handle the truth is a thin one, one that eventually falls apart at the end of the novel.

²⁵ Never mind the fact that they also have a very good reason—their society's potential reaction to the reality of the Trial—not to inform the rest of Marah as to what is really going on.

generations and the boys of the younger generations, has been deliberately sabotaged by the original settlers of Marah. The maintenance of bonds between boys and men is discouraged, because it could have an impact on the administration of the poison—although the excuse given is that intergenerational male bonds are discouraged because of the emotional trauma that will result when boys die from the so-called infection. Thus, as with Suzy McKee Charnas' *Walk to the End of the World*, severing intergenerational bonds allows for men in the upper echelons of society to maintain their positions of power and privilege within the ruling patriarchal order.

Plans do not, however, always go as expected, and the Marahns' ancestors' careful orchestrations to eliminate the bonds (potential or otherwise) between boys and men do not necessarily have the desired effect, as Levi states:

But in spite of it all, our ancestors were not entirely successful. Fatherhood is an attitude, an emotion, not a mere biological circumstance. The sons of my family were my sons, too, no matter whose genes they carried. (Killough 74)

Through Levi, Killough brings to the reader's attention the idea that fatherhood is a socio-cultural construct.²⁶ However, the ecclesiastical men's complicity in the Trials cannot be excused. The maintenance of a bond, however tenuous, between the generations means that, because each man has sacrificed at least one of his sons to the Lord, he feels that every other man should also bear this burden. Thus, even if a man decides that he has to expose the Church's wrong-doing, he will

²⁶ One need only look to the ability of people in the real world, whether male or female, to care for and raise as their own children who are not biologically speaking theirs.

risk the wrath and censure of every man who has sacrificed a son because, as Levi says, “having let my own sons die, I can think of nothing anyone can offer me for the lives of their sons” (Killough 74). However, it is Levi who, unwittingly or not, plants the seeds for the final rebellion when he responds to Jared's question as to whether or not he, Levi, believes the Trial to be the will of the Lord: “I believe that the practice exists, and that there is little you or I can do about it except see that until every boy can be saved, they are all treated impartially” (Killough 75).

2.6 *The Trial and Men's “Responsibility”*

Near the beginning of the novel, Aaron Methuselah says to Jared, “To be a man on Marah is a great responsibility” (Killough 28). However, it seems that this “responsibility” is really only a thinly veiled justification for the murder of thousands of young men. Methuselah speaks rather blithely about the myth of the virus, and the drug that enables the Church to perpetuate this myth, couching his entire discussion in terms of the Divine. He tells Jared,

“To be a leader, a man among men, is to bear burdens that break the body and try the soul. . . . Are you man enough to be a leader, Jared? Can you accept the will of the Lord without questioning, no matter how cruel it may seem? Do you believe that even the dying serve the Lord?” (Killough 28 – 29)

Even though he knows that Methuselah is going to share with him something that is extraordinarily important, Jared has no idea of the true nature of the ecclesiastical secret that is

about to be revealed. And, while Jared may be shocked and horrified by its nature, he comes to accept the alibi that it is done in the name of the Lord, for the protection of Marahn society.

Methuselah continues his story, telling Jared (and the reader) about the origins of the yearly Church-sanctioned murder of numerous young men. The original colonists²⁷ had been “members of a semi-fundamentalist, neo-Anglican religious sect, male-dominated, with strong back-to-the-soil and eco-conservationist beliefs” (Killough 15), so it is not all that surprising that occurrences in their daily lives (and in the world around them) are taken to be part of the Lord's plans for them. For example, the deaths of the majority of the male colonists were the will of the Lord, as “it was Divinely revealed to David Moses in the year 105 that the slaughter of men had not been punishment but was the Lord's way of revealing how we were to build our society” (Killough 29). As if that were not enough, Methuselah goes on to tell Jared, “What you have never been told before is that at the same time it was also revealed to him how to maintain the necessary male minority” (Killough 29). Confirming previous suspicions about the perpetuation of the effectiveness of the virus, he further states, “By the fourth generation the immunity of those first seventeen men had bred through the population. The disease no longer killed anyone” (Killough 29). Then, when Jared asks him what kills the young men of his planet, Methuselah reveals an ecclesiastical secret of devastating power when he responds, “We do” (Killough 29).

27 The original Marahn colonists had practically run away from Earth. In his initial contemplations about Terran visitors, Jared thinks:

A ship from Earth. Jared watched it in a turmoil of curiosity and trepidation. A ship from Earth. These were the people whose decadence and violence his ancestors had fled nearly six hundred years ago. Earth had been happy to see them go, too, or so the ancient diaries of the founders said. (Killough 1)

It is power, in the hands of a patriarchal theocracy, and the ruling elite's desire to retain power that has kept the lie of the Trial alive for almost 500 years.

Despite the deeply gender-divided Marahn culture, the vicious ecclesiastical politics, and the tightly controlled patriarchal theocracy, Jared's confession regarding the true nature of the Trial leads to a cultural apocalypse of sorts as the women of Marah (and most of the men) must come to terms with the fact that their ecclesiastical elite have been systematically exterminating ninety percent of their young men. As he heads towards the tribunal, he is asked if his confession—and the chaos that has ensued from it—has been worth it:

Around Marah hundreds of women and men had been killed. More were wounded.

Families were breaking up. Years, perhaps decades, of social change, litigation, and criminal hearings lay ahead. He personally would have to bear hatred and hostility for the rest of his life.

...

“Yes,” he said. “It's worth the price.” He had never felt such utter conviction. Marah was in chaos now, but one day a new stability would be achieved. It had to be no worse than the old one. “It's worth it.” (Killough 210)

While the very fabric of their society is being tested to its limits, the Marahns now know the truth and have the chance to do something good about it. Yes, those who are responsible, Jared included, will have to pay the price for their actions. But Jared's confession has allowed Marah

and her people the opportunity to move forward, out from under the power-hungry ecclesiastical elite who have governed for centuries, toward a new society and culture that will, hopefully, learn from the mistakes of its past, and create a society that is more egalitarian and less patriarchal in nature.

2.7 Conclusion

What, then, does a feminist reader take from this text? All too often, and with good reason, feminist writers of dystopian speculative fiction have focused mainly on the impact that patriarchal orders have upon women. The effects on men, if touched on, usually occupy a lower level of concern. Lee Killough exposes the other side of that coin, looking at how a patriarchy will go to any ends necessary to ensure that it retains power, even if that includes the sacrifice of the lives of many of the men within its realm; essentially, she emphasizes the fact that virtually no one benefits in a patriarchal society. In the specific case of *A Voice Out of Ramah*, the plot is enabled by the Marahn fundamentalist monotheocracy, which uses the idea of divine will as the ultimate alibi for the horrific ends to which it goes to maintain both men's elite status and their power. *A Voice Out of Ramah* speaks to the dangers of enforcing the patriarchal order, to saying one thing while thinking and/or doing another. The lack of challenge to the patriarchy, particularly in this case, makes it much easier for the ruling class to hide the more nefarious of its means to perpetuate and reinforce extant patriarchal power structures.

Written at a time when the pro-family movement was gaining popularity in the United States, bringing with it an increasing emphasis on family values, an emphasis that is felt even today, Killough's novel is particularly effective because it turns some traditional gender roles on their heads and questions the necessity and relevance of patriarchy in advanced (and advancing) societies. In essence, this novel shows, more convincingly perhaps than others, that a patriarchal society is not good for anyone, male and female alike.

Chapter Three

Nolite te bastardes carborundorum: Fundamentalism in The Handmaid's Tale

3.1 Background / Historical Context

Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale* speculates, all too vividly, about what might happen if Christian fundamentalists were to create their own nation state. This feminist novel provides a glimpse of a future that is a dark period, a dystopia fueled, in part, by the political and cultural climate of the early 1980s, both in America and abroad. *The Handmaid's Tale* has been well received in the literary community, and has been transformed for both screen and, more recently, the operatic stage, although the latter has received significantly more glowing reviews than the former.

The Republic of Gilead is based, in part, upon American history, in addition to including elements of more current monotheocracies, such as that of Iran in the early 1980s.

Regarding the origins of *The Handmaid's Tale*, Atwood states:

The roots of the book go back to my study of the American Puritans. The society they founded in America was not a democracy as we know it, but a theocracy. In addition, I found myself increasingly alarmed by statements made frequently by religious leaders in the United States; and then a variety of events from around the world could not be ignored, particularly the rising fanaticism of the Iranian monotheocracy. The thing to

remember is that there is nothing new about the society depicted in *The Handmaid's Tale* except the time and place. All of the things I have written about have—as noted in the "Historical Notes" at the end—been done before, more than once.

It is an imagined account of what happens when not uncommon pronouncements about women are taken to their logical conclusions. History proves that what we have been in the past we could be again. (Atwood *Notes* 392)

Atwood explicitly states that *The Handmaid's Tale* is not all that far from reality and that, with a few small mis-steps, we, too, could live in a society that parallels Gilead. Her text serves as a warning beacon, a message to the navigators and pilots of our culture—politicians and religious leaders—that we are increasingly headed toward a cultural reef upon which women's rights will be jettisoned in the name of saving the supposedly sinking ship of American society. Today, at the dawn of the twenty-first century, Atwood's warning still stands, unheeded, as George W. Bush-era American society moves closer and closer to emulating the fictional dystopian world of Gilead.

The Handmaid's Tale is the only one of many novels of the 1980s in which fundamentalism plays a role whose portrayal of fundamentalism exhibits, at least to some extent, all nine of the characteristics of fundamentalisms. In addition to this, Atwood's novel takes place in a future that is much closer to our own than, for example, Suzette Haden Elgin's *Native Tongue* trilogy, which, while near-future, contains both aliens and faster-than-light space travel. Willing

suspension of disbelief is much easier when reading Atwood's text, as she extrapolates, quite clearly, from extant aspects of society. The reader can see a clear progression toward dystopia, one that we, ourselves, could far too easily follow.²⁸

28 Atwood's novel extrapolates into the near future, to a world polluted to the point where human sterility is widespread. Here, Church and State have joined to create a fundamentalist, patriarchal Republic that ensures the perpetuation of sexism and misogyny. Women are reduced to chattel—as Wives, Econowives, Marthas, Handmaids, and Unwomen—and their worth is tied solely to their ability to bear children for the Republic.

Offred's tale speaks primarily of her daily life as a Handmaid in the household of the Commander and Serena Joy, but her story is frequently interrupted by flashbacks of the events that lead to the establishment of the Republic of Gilead. It is through these glimpses of Offred's previous life that the reader learns not only about the ideology behind the Republic, but also about how this ideology came to be so firmly entrenched within Gileadean society (and at what cost). Gilead offered, in a culture that appears to have had more than a passing relationship with fear, a sense of security, a confidence in knowing exactly what each person's role was within the new Republic. As Aunt Lydia later states, the new ideology offered, particularly for women, freedom "from," rather than freedom "to." This type of thinking might seem more than a little ironic in light of the advances that feminism had made in the time before the creation of Gilead, but we must remember that fear can be a very powerful motivator and, if offered a choice between fear and security, many will choose security, even if that choice means giving up one's freedoms; one need only look to the current restrictions that Homeland Security has imposed upon the American people in George W. Bush's era to see that a culture of fear can lead to an impressive erosion of personal rights and freedoms. However, as Benjamin Franklin stated in 1759, "They that can give up essential liberty to obtain a little temporary safety deserve neither liberty nor safety."

Once firmly established, it is astonishingly evident that, at least for women, the Republic of Gilead provides women with neither liberty nor safety. Due to their status as walking wombs, every aspect of women's lives is regulated, particularly if they are unfortunate enough to have been designated, like Offred and Ofglen, as Handmaids. Valued solely for their ability to reproduce, these women lead exceptionally restricted lives in which constant surveillance and lack of privacy are the norm. The reader learns the true extent to which these women's lives are controlled (and the dangers that are inherent within their situation) when Offred speaks of her visits to the doctor. Of all the men in the novel, he is the one who holds the most power over her, as he is the only one who can declare her to be infertile—and thus an Unwoman. Offred is faced with a difficult choice, either to permit him to have intercourse with her in a desperate attempt to get pregnant, or to refuse his offer for fear that he is a member of Gilead's secret police, attempting to solicit her in an attempt to declare her an Unwoman. Regardless of her choice, Offred is put in a difficult situation, one in which neither decision will provide her with security. In the end, the Commander's wife steps in, desperate for the baby that she herself cannot bear, and enables Offred to meet clandestinely with Nick, the chauffeur, so that she might become pregnant.

Even at the end of the novel, the reader is never entirely sure what happens to Offred after members of the Angels (who may also be Mayday members) arrive to remove her from the Commander's house. That Offred somehow survives is obvious, due to the existence of the tapes upon which her story is recorded. But the reader never learns anything of events past the moment of Offred's departure. One hopes that Mayday provided Offred with access to the Underground Female-road, providing hope in the face of a world in which it might seem that all

3.2 *Gilead's Theocracy: Fundamentalism or Not?*

While Atwood does not specifically use the term "fundamentalism" in reference to the religion of the Republic of Gilead, it is an apt descriptor. This particular speculative dystopia is fueled, in part, by misogynist fundamentalists who bear a surprising resemblance to fundamentalists from the 1980s such as Jimmy Swaggart who, while not specifically dystopian, had particularly neoevangelical leanings. Neoevangelicalism is/was a "fundamentalist revitalization movement . . . which was intended to overcome some of the particularism of its fundamentalist roots" (Hoover 41). It "came to have a peculiarly populist flavor. Stressing the interests of small business, small farmers, the 'common, working' people, neoevangelicalism was consistent with, and an important part of, the overall political shift to the right of the 1980s" (Hoover 42). This new form of fundamentalism gained new ground in the face of the so-called "'cultural crisis' of the 1960s" (Hoover 41), providing a conservative space for those people who maintained "a stern reaction against the specter of secularism and permissiveness" (Hoover 41). As part of this rightward shift, neoevangelicalism brought "a social, as well as a theological, agenda to bear" (Hoover 42) in the culture of the 1980s. While fundamentalism still served as the basis upon which neoevangelicalism was constructed, the new movement "aimed at bringing about broad religious and social reforms, . . . [and was] more palatable than the fundamentalist

hope has been lost—a most effective, if subversive, form of resistance. Atwood's tale, and its exposure of the problems inherent within a marital relationship between Church and State, is particularly prescient at present, in light of the rise both in fundamentalism in the United States (and, increasingly, in Canada) and in the number of people who firmly believe that we live in a post-feminist world.

critiques of the past” (Hoover 42) because it was not as extreme in its focus. As a result of this palatability, neoevangelicalism was able to bring to the forefront of American consciousness a range of politicized social issues, increasingly calling liberalism and secular humanism to task for their roles in the state of American society and culture, the latter being identified as morally depraved.

By 1980, neoevangelicalism could “claim the loyalty of all three major presidential candidates, along with entertainers and entrepreneurs, athletes, and beauty queens” (Martin Marty, in Hoover 18). Indeed, it “had evolved into a broad-based, multi-million-dollar political organization, or group of organizations” (Hoover 19), denoting the development of a new and powerful conservative, religious right:

Most prominent among these groups were The Religious Roundtable and The Moral Majority—organizations committed to forwarding an agenda of “traditional values” in politics. While the full extent of their impact on politics is not clear, such organizations have played important roles in all general elections since the 1980s. The newly politicized evangelicals found forceful allies in the secular new right and a champion in Ronald Reagan, while he and other conservative politicians found in these groups steadfast support for a new social agenda. (Hoover 19)

Ever savvy to the impact of new communication technologies, neoevangelicalists recognized that “[e]lectronic media have been at the center of the resurgence of religious and social

consciousness since the 1960s” (Hoover 19 – 20). Its spokespersons, exemplified by Jimmy Swaggart of the *Jimmy Swaggart Telecast* and Pat Robertson in the *700 Club*, among others, took advantage of the opportunity that television offered, using the medium as a tool in “shaping the consciousness of participants in the movement, and . . . [in] convincing the American public that the country . . . [was] in the midst of great cultural and religious change” (Hoover 19 – 20).

Television is an extraordinarily influential medium, one that allows religious broadcasting not only to “have an influence on all religious institutions in America, even outside its fundamentalist and evangelical roots” (Hoover 21), but also to have considerable “influence on American culture itself” (Hoover 21).

The Republic of Gilead clearly displays three of the ideological characteristics of fundamentalism—selectivity, moral dualism, and absolutism/inerrency—while also displaying less solid evidence of reactivity to marginalization and Millennialism/Messianism. Selectivity plays an integral role in the Republic of Gilead, which has, much like the society of Orwell’s *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, begun to change culture *and* history to reinforce the patriarchal order’s world view.²⁹ Offred states, after looking at the churchyard with Ofglen, “They haven’t fiddled

29 In *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, Winston Smith questions this, at least to some extent, when he states that “it was only four years since Oceania had been at war with Eastasia and in alliance with Eurasia. But that was merely a piece of furtive knowledge which he happened to possess because his memory was not satisfactorily under control” (Orwell 36). Like Gilead, the Party changes its own culture and history as it deems necessary:

The Party said that Oceania had never been in alliance with Eurasia. He, Winston Smith, knew that Oceania had been in alliance with Eurasia as short a time as four years ago. But where did that knowledge exist? Only in his own consciousness, which in any case must soon be annihilated. And if all others accepted the lie which the Party imposed—if all records told the same tale—then the lie passed into history and became truth. “Who controls the past,” ran the Party slogan, “controls the future: who controls the present controls the past.” And yet the past, though of its nature alterable, never had been altered. Whatever was true now was true from everlasting to everlasting. It was quite simple. All that was needed was an unending series of

with the gravestones, or the church either. It's only the more recent history that offends them" (Atwood 39). Within Gilead, moral dualism is basic and blatant, at least on the surface: those who are true believers in the Republic and its theocracy are good; those who do not believe are evil and are thus deserving of punishment, usually death. In practice, however, this distinction becomes rather murky as, for example, the Commander plays *Scrabble* with Offred. Textual inerrancy is an integral aspect of Gileadean society—the Handmaids as surrogates,³⁰ Paul's sermon on women's dress/behaviour³¹—particularly with regards to those aspects of the Bible that the Republic has selected as being of integral importance to its rule.

While there is solid evidence that Gilead displays all three of these characteristics, it also displays evidence, at least to a certain extent, of the last two characteristics of fundamentalism: reactivity to marginalization and Millennialism/Messianism. The marginalization of the Puritanical Christianity upon which Gilead is based was definitely a

victories over your own memory. "Reality control," they called it: in Newspeak, "doublethink". (Orwell 37) While Atwood does not specifically state that the Republic of Gilead is following this same protocol, it seems rather likely, especially in light of Offred's comments. And, as the Party slogan states, "who controls the present controls the past" (Orwell 37), making it much easier for the Republic to remove from its society the taint of feminist thought.

30 The use of surrogates is Biblically sanctioned, as referenced in the first epigraph of *The Handmaid's Tale*, from Genesis 30:1–3:

And when Rachel saw that she bare Jacob no children, Rachel envied her sister, and said unto Jacob, Give me children or else I die.

And Jacob's anger was kindled against Rachel; and he said, Am I in God's stead, who hath withheld from thee the fruit of the womb?

And she said, Behold my maid Bilhah, go in unto her; and she shall bear upon my knees, that I may also have children by her. (Atwood *i*)

31 In 1 Timothy 2: 9-10, Paul admonishes women to "adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array. But (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works." The Commander at the Prayvaganza specifically repeats this passage, reminding the "white-veiled girls" (276) who will be given in marriage to the home-coming Angels, that they must adhere to the Republic's idea of "proper" gender roles.

contributing factor in the development of the Republic of Gilead. However, it also appears that Gilead is reacting against what it perceives to be the marginalization of the traditional male, of the patriarchal nuclear family. Whether or not the Republic of Gilead exhibits this particular characteristic of fundamentalisms is somewhat unclear. We know that the Republic came into being as a result of an unspecified catastrophe, after which “they [members of the soon-to-be Republic] shot the president and machine-gunned the Congress and the army declared a state of emergency. They blamed it on the Islamic fanatics, at the time” (Atwood 217). This could imply that the members of the Republic believe that they are living in the millennium that precedes the return of Christ to the Earth, but there is no solid evidence of this possibility, as there are only vague and ambiguous references to it in the text. It can thus be argued, based upon the preceding evidence, that Gilead’s religion displays four of the five ideological characteristics of fundamentalisms, with questionable exhibition of Millennialism/Messianism.

The Republic of Gilead also displays all four of the organizational characteristics of fundamentalisms: elect membership, sharp boundaries, authoritarian regime, and behavioural requirements. First, the higher one’s rank within the Republic of Gilead, the more secure one’s membership is within the Republic’s faith.³² Second, there are sharp boundaries between believers and non-believers. In the beginning, the only non-believers who were allowed to escape were the Jews, referred to as the “Sons of Jacob” (Atwood 251). After that, conversion was

32 In the beginning those of higher rank were fairly secure in their membership in Gilead’s faith, but the “Historical Notes” indicate that this changed as the Republic aged, with true believers persecuting even those of high rank for failing to adhere to the tenets of the faith (Atwood 383 – 385).

essential, with evidence of non-conversion carrying the penalty of death or, in lesser circumstances, relegation to the Colonies. Third, the organization of the Republic of Gilead appears to be authoritarian in nature. At the Republic's inception, a number of things happened, most of which involved the restriction of citizens' rights: "Newspapers were censored and some were closed down, for security reasons they said. The roadblocks began to appear, and Identipasses" (Atwood 218). Voices of dissension were silenced, and freedom of speech became an historical artifact. Finally, strict behavioural requirements were implemented, which focus primarily upon women. The Handmaids are instructed by Aunt Lydia, who says, "Modesty is invisibility" (36), and all women are forced to adhere to a strict, extraordinarily modest code of dress, to prevent them from tempting men to revert to their baser, more sexually-predatory nature. The religion of the Republic of Gilead is, thus, a fundamentalism, one based upon the Abrahamic Christian tradition, and one in which misogyny plays a profound role. As Atwood has stated, early American Puritanism played an integral role in her formation of the Republic of Gilead and its religion. *The Handmaid's Tale* exhibits an almost Puritanical fundamentalism, one that entwines elements of a previously existing fundamentalism with modern patriarchal attitudes and culture, culminating in the profoundly misogynist society and religion of the Republic of Gilead.

3.3 *Women as the Root of All Evil*

Atwood points out that it suits the purposes of both fundamentalists and the patriarchal order to point towards the beginning, to Eve's original sin. Doing so makes things much easier for men in a patriarchal society, particularly one that is fundamentalist, because this enables the patriarchs (and all of their male underlings) to say that everything is women's fault, regardless of where the true blame really lies. Perhaps it is just a convenient excuse, or perhaps it is the selectivity of Scripture, but it seems that woman-blaming was something that was well established, even in the Bible.

Women's historical transgressions, particularly their involvement in feminism, are said to be one of the primary reasons that the Republic of Gilead was created. While men's nature is discussed at length throughout the book,³³ it is women who must pay the price, women who were the catalyst for the creation of the patriarchal, misogynist republic within which they live.³⁴ According to the Commander, in his attempt to justify himself (and the Republic) to

33 There are numerous examples of what Gilead perceives men's nature to be, including Aunt Lydia's admission that all men are obsessed with sexual intercourse, that they are "sex machines . . . and not much more. They only want one thing. . . . It's God's device. It's the way things are. (Atwood 180). At Jezebel's, where he has smuggled Offred for an illicit evening of companionship, the Commander expands upon this theme when he states, "you can't cheat Nature. . . . Nature demands variety, for men. It stands to reason, it's part of the procreational strategy. It's Nature's plan" (Atwood 298). Thus it appears that Gilead's and her citizens' perceptions of men's nature are really just a means by which to ensure that which the Republic has need of—in this case, future citizens—is that which is fulfilled by men's fulfillment of their natural inclinations.

34 The Republic of Gilead is constructed upon a strict gender and class hierarchy. Men, even the most lowly, are placed above women on the hierarchical scale. While the Wives might like to think that they supercede the Aunts, the Aunts are above the Wives within the gender hierarchy due to their role as enforcers—they are a sect of female Angels, for lack of a better comparison. The Aunts and Wives are followed by the Marthas, Econowives, and Handmaids. Of these last three, it is unclear as to which outranks the others, because the status of the Handmaids is still open to interpretation. As Offred states, "Things haven't settled down, it's still too soon, everyone is unsure about our exact status" (Atwood 15). From the division of the groups of women at the Prayvaganza and Salvaging,

Offred: “The problem wasn’t only with women, he says. The main problem was with the men. There was nothing for them anymore.” (Atwood 263). He goes on to state that:

There was nothing to work for, nothing to fight for. We have the stats from that time.

You know what they [men] were complaining about the most. Inability to feel. Men

were turning off on sex, even. (Atwood 263)

Women’s emancipation and women’s increasing independence were supposedly ruining the lives of men, especially those who believed in and supported the patriarchal order. What option did they have but to take extreme action against these misguided, Godless feminists?

Aunt Lydia further reinforces these ideas when she discusses an Unwoman documentary with the Handmaid trainees. She is filled with indignation, primarily at feminist women, for demanding equality, and blames them for the evils that befell them. According to her, proper, modest women who blindly follow the orders of the patriarchal Republic will have “freedom from” these evils:

Imagine, said Aunt Lydia, wasting their time like that, when they should have been doing something useful. Back then, the Unwomen were always wasting time. They were encouraged to do it. The government gave them money to do that very thing. Mind you, some of their ideas were sound enough, she went on, with the smug authority in her voice of one who is in a position to judge. . . . [but] they were Godless, and that can make all

it seems likely that the Handmaids outrank the Marthas, who appear to be almost on par with the Econowives. However, despite the different classes of women, even the lowest of men stands head and shoulders above women in the misogynist, patriarchal Republic of Gilead.

the difference, don't you agree? (Atwood 148)

It is this very Godlessness, combined with their gender, that allows the Republic to treat them as it does; Godlessness is, in essence, a license for the mistreatment of any woman deemed to be Godless. The feminists' (the Unwomen's) ideas that are not acceptable, those that do not reinforce the status quo, are denounced as the ideas of Godless heathens, effectively silencing any possible voices of dissension.

Even women's current transgressions are blamed on their base, female nature. These transgressions, too, are viewed by the government as crimes against the Republic, and their only possible punishments are declaration of Unwoman status, followed by indenture at Jezebel's or transport to the Colonies. Handmaids appear to be the ones who sin the most, a fact that the Republic likely connects to their lack of morality and base, sinful nature—after all, they would not have become Handmaids if they had been moral in their lives prior to the Catastrophe. One of the most feared transgressions that a Handmaid could effect is escape, either in life or in death. It is these transgressions that receive the harshest of punishments, as escapees are stealing valuable resources—their wombs and, thus, the future of the Republic—from the patriarchy, thefts that cannot and will not be tolerated. Thus, Moira's escape earns her indenture at Jezebel's, a life that is, in essence, just as restricted³⁵ as that of Offred and the other Handmaids.

35 On the surface, Moira appears to have more freedom. But she has lost both "freedom from" and "freedom to," whereas Offred has "only" lost "freedom to." While there are certain things to which Moira has access that Offred does not, they are the type of things that would be offered to the condemned, with the full knowledge that the women at Jezebel's have nowhere to go but what Moria calls "the boneyard" (Atwood 314). As she tells Offred, "The Aunts figure we're all damned anyway, they've given up on us, so it doesn't matter what sort of vice we get up to, and the Commanders don't give a piss what we do in our off time" (Atwood 314).

Unlike in *Walk to the End of the World*, in *The Handmaid's Tale* women are not specifically portrayed as the root of all of the Republic of Gilead's problems; however, they are definitely portrayed as being the root of all their own perceived problems, in addition to playing an integral role in the downfall of pre-Catastrophe society. That is, the misogyny inherent within the Republic of Gilead is presented as being the fault of no one but women themselves.

In *The Handmaid's Tale*, the Commander in charge of the Prayvaganza reveals the extent to which the citizens of Gilead appear to blame women for their problems. He lectures the women of Gilead, reminding them of their proper place within society. Even though one might think that the marriages of the twenty Angels to their new chattel would be a time of celebration, he speaks of women's lesser place, of their lesser value:

'Let the woman learn in silence with *all* subjection.' Here he looks us over.

'All,' he repeats.

'But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence.

'For Adam was first formed, then Eve.

'And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in transgression.

'Notwithstanding she shall be saved by childbearing, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety.' (Atwood 277)

At the Red Centre, the Handmaids' unworthiness, their taint, is drummed into them in the daily Testifying. When Janine speaks of her gang rape and subsequent abortion at the age of fourteen, there is no sympathy for what she was forced to endure. This is reinforced by the almost ritual chanting that follows a Handmaid's Testimony:

“But *whose* fault was it? Aunt Helena says, holding up one plump finger.

Her fault, *her* fault, *her* fault, we chant in unison.

Who led them on? Aunt Helena beams, pleased with us.

She did. *She* did. *She* did.

Why did God allow such a terrible thing to happened?

Teach her a *lesson*. Teach her a *lesson*. Teach her a *lesson*” (Atwood 88 – 89)³⁶

This lesson, this retribution from God, is a reminder that women are unclean, impure, and full of the taint of original sin. The only thing that will save these women, their only hope for salvation, is to bear a child for the Republic.

36 Testimony, especially that involving self-incrimination and the acceptance of one's sinful nature, is a commonplace practice in the world of fundamentalism. A prime example can be seen in Jerry Falwell's *If I Should Die Before I Wake*, in which a young woman renounces the evils of her abortion, and vows to step into the light of Falwell's fundamentalism and save the life of her second child. Her testimony and acceptance of her sinful nature provide the means by which she “chooses life over death, joins God's plan, and the hidden meaning of things and events will begin now to infill her” (Harding 297). But her public voice, much like that of Janine, is mitigated by the fact that Falwell (like Aunt Lydia) has “created the grounds upon which she speaks, even as she embodied the landscape upon which he acted” (Harding 304) to create the Liberty Godparents Home for unwed mothers.

3.4 Control of Women's Bodies

The Handmaids are not allowed time to mourn for the loss of their former lives. Their entire worlds have been turned upside down, just so that they can provide a healthy womb for their patriarchal society. According to the Historical Notes at the end of the novel:

Men highly placed in the regime were thus able to pick and choose among women who had demonstrated their reproductive fitness by having produced one or more healthy children, a desirable characteristic in an age of plummeting Caucasian birthrates.

(Atwood 378)

Women of the new Handmaid class are no better than slaves to their patriarchal overlords. In reality, they are little more than broodmares, a fact that the rather misogynist Historical Notes seems to miss entirely when its author states, rather nonchalantly, “What male of the Gilead period could resist the possibility of fatherhood, so redolent of status, so highly prized?”

(Atwood 388). The implication seems to be that the sole value of women is as wombs, nothing more.

The Republic of Gilead appears to be obsessed with fertility, but only female fertility—it appears to be sacreligious to imply that infertility is something that can equally afflict both sexes.³⁷ Offred matter-of-factly tells the reader:

37 When Offred undergoes her monthly medical exam, the doctor is actually bold enough to speak of the possibility of male sterility. While involved in his examination of her, he says:

“Most of those old guys can’t make it anymore . . . Or they’re sterile.”

I almost gasp. He’s said a forbidden word. *Sterile*. There is no such thing as a sterile man anymore, not officially. There are only women who are fruitful and women who are barren, that’s the law. (Atwood 75)

The intense focus on fertility has to be directed solely at women as yet another means by which to keep them under

We are for breeding purposes: we aren't concubines, geisha girls, courtesans. On the contrary: everything possible has been done to remove us from that category. There is supposed to be nothing entertaining about us, no room is to be permitted for the flowering of secret lusts; no special favors are to be wheedled, by them or us, there are to be no toeholds for love. We are two-legged wombs, that's all: sacred vessels, ambulatory chalices. (Atwood 171)

Atwood puts it even more bluntly when Offred discusses Gilead's intense focus on fertility, and the Republic's institution of conditions to increase the number of births per capita:

. . . fertility in Gilead is at a premium. Fertile women, women who can reproduce, are prize objects for those in power. And as is the case in which prize objects are Cadillacs and you want to have as many Cadillacs as you possibly can, so too when the prize objects are fertile women, then you want to have as many fertile women as possible. (Atwood 396)

This extreme focus on fertility not only dehumanizes women, but also ties them, irrevocably, to the tyranny of motherhood, ensuring that any fertile woman will be forced to bear children. In an age of declining birthrates, fertility is a central aspect of the Republic of Gilead, an aspect of women's lives that needs to be both controlled and regulated by the fundamentalist patriarchal order.

control. To admit that men, too, might suffer from infertility would be to admit that someone other than a woman could be at fault for failure to conceive, and in Gilead's strict patriarchal monotheocracy, that idea can never be entertained.

Ritual rape is one of the means by which this control and regulation occurs, notably in the Ceremony in which the Commander services the Handmaid, who lies entwined with his wife. The Ceremony is a means by which the Handmaids can be tied, irrevocably, to their biology. But the Handmaids, even more so than the other women of the Republic, are already very controlled, so the Ceremony is just one more layer of reinforcement for the status quo. What is most important to the Republic of Gilead is reproduction—producing the next generation of Gileadean citizens, who will not know anything else, any other way of life, and will thus be much easier to manipulate and control.

The Ceremony itself is Biblically sanctioned, as mentioned in both the epigraph (Genesis 30:1–3) and the Commander’s pre-Ceremony reading from the Bible. Offred describes the Ceremony in bleak, starkly impersonal terms. She spends a significant amount of time concentrating on details, seemingly to avoid thinking about what is actually occurring. Her position between Serena Joy’s legs is a reminder that Serena Joy is in control “of the process and thus of the product. If any” (Atwood 116). The Ceremony is duty, not recreation. Offred describes it as anything but arousing:

What’s going on in this room, under Serena Joy’s silvery canopy, is not exciting. It has nothing to do with passion or love or romance or any of those other notions we used to titillate ourselves with. It has nothing to do with sexual desire, as least for me, and certainly not for Serena. Arousal and orgasm are no longer thought necessary³⁸; they

38 No longer necessary for the woman, but that is obviously not the case for the man.

would be a symptom of frivolity merely, like jazz garters or beauty spots: superfluous distractions for the light-minded. Out-dated. It seems odd that women once spent such time and energy reading about such things, thinking about them, worrying about them, writing about them. They are so obviously recreational. (Atwood 116 – 117)

The Ceremony is “serious business” (Atwood 117), especially for Offred, whose very life depends upon conception. If she conceives and carries a healthy baby to term, she will be guaranteed that she will never be classed as an Unwoman: “she’ll never be sent to the Colonies, she’ll never be declared Unwoman. That is her reward” (Atwood 159). If she does not conceive, there is always the possibility of being declared Unwoman and sent to the Colonies, to her death.

The men of the Republic of Gilead, particularly doctors, have considerable control over the bodies of the womenfolk. When the Handmaids are indoctrinated at the Red Centre, they are told that this control is not control, but freedom:

There is more than one kind of freedom, said Aunt Lydia. Freedom to and freedom from.

In the days of anarchy, it was freedom to. Now you are being given freedom from. Don’t underrate it. (Atwood 31)

This “freedom from” means not only freedom from rape and domestic violence, but also freedom from the onerous chore of decision making, especially shown in the regulation of the bodies of the Republic’s Handmaids. Offred states, “I am taken to the doctor’s once a month, for tests: urine, hormones, cancer smear, blood test; the same as before, except that now it’s obligatory”

(Atwood 73). The Gileadean medical establishment appears to have a complete understanding of female physiology and anatomy, but it neglects the male counterpart, particularly with regards to reproduction. Every testable female reproductive function is tested, to ensure that an Unwoman is not being allowed the (relative) privileges of a true woman. But, going back to the idea of original sin, it is only the female who is held responsible for sterility and malformed fetuses, even though the male contributes half of the baby's genetic makeup. That being said, the threat of being declared Unwoman is enough to keep the women in the Republic from publicly questioning men's role in the falling birth rate.

Unwoman status is something with which the Republic consistently threatens its Handmaids. When the doctor offers to attempt to impregnate Offred, she refuses, but very, very carefully. She knows the power that this one man holds over her future, and says:

I must leave the impression that I'm not offended, that I'm open to suggestion. He takes his hand away, lazily almost, lingeringly, this is not the last word as far as he's concerned. He could fake the tests, report me for cancer, for infertility, have me shipped off to the Colonies, with the Unwomen. None of this has been said, but the knowledge of his power hangs nevertheless in the air as he pats my thigh, withdraws himself behind the hanging sheet. (Atwood 76)

While the doctor is not likely very high in the religious hierarchy of the Republic, he still holds tremendous power over the lives and futures of many women. One word, one falsified test, and

his displeasure with any one of them can manifest itself in a very heinous form: death. What is very, very telling about this society is Offred's conversation with her Commander about how things became the way that they are. According to the Commander, the problem was that there was nothing for the men, "nothing to work for, nothing to fight for" (Atwood 263). The need to replace that nothingness led to the development of the Republic of Gilead. While the Commander does not speak, specifically, about how the lot of women has changed, the final portion of his conversation is rather telling:

You can't make an omelette without breaking eggs, is what he says. We thought we could do better.

Better? I say, in a small voice. How can he think this is better?

Better never means better for everyone, he says. It always means worse, for some.

(Atwood 264)

The men of Gilead have solved one of their largest problems. Now, there is plenty for them to do with women because they have gained complete control over women's bodies.³⁹

³⁹ Atwood's fictional conception of a world in which patriarchal Christian fundamentalism has taken control over women's lives sadly is not all that far off the mark. A prime example, and one that recently caused an uproar in the U.S., is the case of Melissa Ann Rowland. Rowland, 28, was charged with murder on March 11, 2004, because one of the twins that she was carrying died two days prior to its January 13th birth, after she "allegedly ignored medical warnings to have a Caesarean section to save her twins" (Associated Press). The implication seems to be that, if doctors (and, by extension, society) do not like the outcome of a pregnancy, they can second-guess the choices (major medical or otherwise) that the mother made during her pregnancy. What the Utah District Attorney's office is, in effect, trying to do is make the moral obligation to protect one's children enforceable under criminal law. In other words, if a pregnant mother does not exhibit the "proper" level of care and respect for the foetus inhabiting her body, she will either be forced to comply with the "proper" level of care, or face criminal charges. Who will decide the proper level of care? Doctors, we must remember, in western society are predominantly male, and lawmakers are also predominantly male and, under G. W. Bush, increasingly conservative. Male control over women's bodies is already here, and has been for quite some time. If things continue to develop in the manner that

3.5 Conclusion

Offred's story serves as a stark, spoken warning that penetrates the fog of the patriarchal order. She reminds the reader that the things we take for granted were, in the not-too-distant past, privileges, not rights, which can be as easily taken away as they were given, particularly under a fundamentalist, patriarchal order. Atwood, like Killough, also reminds us that both sexes suffer under patriarchies such the Republic of Gilead, although women, as opposed to men, bear the brunt of these patriarchies' oppression.⁴⁰ Offred reminisces about the past, saying:

It's strange to remember how we used to think, as if everything were available to us, as if there were no contingencies, no boundaries; as if we were free to shape and reshape forever the ever-expanding perimeters of our lives. (Atwood 284)

The gains of the feminist movement, while presently manifest, are all too fragile. One need only look to the challenges that feminists face today in the United States to see this fragility—the erosion of abortion rights, the rise of Covenant marriages, and the desire by fundamentalist Muslims to enforce *sharia* law on North American soil. Atwood's novel, much like Killough's

the Rowland case suggests that they will, it seems more and more likely that Atwood's patriarchal, fundamentalist dystopian society will become manifest in some form or another.

40 However, the suffering of the men, while much less significant than that of women, has very real consequences. In Gilead, the Guardians diligently attend to their duties, in hopes of future reward: "They think . . . of doing their duty and of promotion to the Angels, and of being allowed possibly to marry, and then, if they are able to gain enough power and live to be old enough, of being allotted a Handmaid of their own" (Atwood 27). The problem is that, within a patriarchal order such as Gilead, men who are not patriarchs present a threat to the ruling patriarchs. They must be controlled, just as in the Holdfast, and put into dangerous situations (i.e., fighting on one of the Republic's many fronts) to thin out their ranks so that they pose less of a threat to those in power.

and many others from the last decades of the twentieth century, warns of the fragility of feminists' accomplishments and of the ease with which these accomplishments can be erased and obliterated.

The society that is presented in *The Handmaid's Tale* relies heavily on religious fundamentalism, which serves as a means by which Atwood can emphasize its dystopian nature. Even today, women's lives are still very much tied to what Firestone called the tyranny of reproductive biology, a biology that is, increasingly, coming under the control of a misogynist, patriarchal society. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the U.S., where abortion law (particularly the *Roe v. Wade* case) and foetal rights are gaining more and more attention from the government. Western society is slowly becoming more and more like the dystopias envisioned by Atwood and her contemporaries, and women are slowly losing many of the rights that feminists, particularly those of the second wave (involved in the struggle over abortion and access to birth control), fought so hard to gain. Western society is not—quite yet—a dystopia, but we would be wise to heed Atwood's warnings if we wish to prevent ourselves from sliding further into dystopia.

Chapter Four

Balance versus Dominion: Fundamentalism in Gibbon's Decline and Fall

4.1 Background / Historical Context

Sheri S. Tepper's 1996 novel *Gibbon's Decline and Fall* focuses on balance and dominion more than any other theme. The fundamentalist American Alliance, led by L. S. Webster, is focused on the patriarchal oppression of women, masquerading as Christian family values. Tepper, no stranger to the rise of dystopian speculative fiction as a means of social criticism, portrays American society as fast approaching a battle, not between good and evil (as fundamentalists might like the general populace to believe), but between balance and dominion. Sophy's song, written for one of the Decline and Fall Club's early show and tells, provides an excellent example of the attitudes that Tepper criticizes:

*Men show us their roads across the land,
which they have built straight and wide,
where their tollgates stand on every hand
controlling the countryside;
And the gates, they say, are the only way,
for women to save their souls,
and when we ask why, the gatekeepers cry*

that we've got to pay their tolls
to keep us demure, to keep us pure,
to keep us at duty's call,
for we never can be as good as a man
since we were the cause of his fall. (Tepper 324)

These sentiments are not unfamiliar, particularly in light of the change in the American political climate that has taken place in the ten years that have followed the writing of this novel. While Webster and his minions epitomize evil in Tepper's novel, these fictional personages reflect a far more pernicious fact—they represent an actual undercurrent within contemporary American society, especially amongst the religious right, which aspires toward the total dominion of men over women. What is so frightening about this particular novel is how eerily accurate she is in her extrapolations.

Since Tepper first wrote *Gibbon's Decline and Fall* in 1996, the American political climate has shifted much further to the right. Despite the mediating influence of Bill Clinton's two terms in office, the Bush dynasty has managed a startling erosion of women's rights. Since 2000, there have been significant (and all-too-effective) challenges to American abortion laws,⁴¹ Roe's "confession" that she should never have taken her case to court (and never have had an

41 These include the much-publicized and much-decried American "Partial-Birth Abortion Ban Act of 2003, "which focused on banning (and thus criminalizing) abortions "as early as 12 to 15 weeks in pregnancy. It . . . outlaw[ed] abortions that doctors say are safe and among the best for women's health in the second trimester." (Planned Parenthood).

abortion),⁴² the September 11, 2001, attack on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon (and the resultant xenophobic American war on terror), and increasing attempts to prevent not only a woman's right to refuse medical treatment (even if 9 months pregnant), but also increasing foetal rights (often to the detriment of those of the mother). These erosions, along with many others in the same vein, reflect, in part, the increasingly pernicious influence of the religious right in political matters in America. While the U.S. Supreme Court has, to date, stood its ground and refused to allow politics and religion to mix (i.e., the Terry Schiavo case), G. W. Bush's push for a larger Republican (and thus conservative) presence in the American judiciary system is viewed with increasing trepidation, as vacant seat after vacant seat is filled by a conservative, evangelical or fundamentalist representative.⁴³ The America of *Gibbon's Decline and Fall* is, unfortunately, only a few steps removed from the America of 2007.

Tepper's text was chosen for analysis here, with some difficulty, from a field of particularly prescient texts focusing on fundamentalisms, primarily because of the explicitly Christian fundamentalist American Alliance. While many of the fundamentalisms in the texts of the 1990s are very well-developed, there is, in this decade, a shift in feminist speculative fiction toward incorporating Islamic fundamentalism, particularly toward the latter half of the decade.

42 In 1997, Roe (now revealed to be Norma McCorvey), renounced the infamous *Roe v. Wade* decision. After becoming "a child of God, a new creature in Christ" (Pavone) in 1995, Roe spent several years "working with the pro-life activist organization Operation Rescue" (*Roe No More*). She then decided to form a pro-life ministry of her own, focusing on "speaking out publicly on the abortion issue from a Christian/pro-life perspective" (*Roe No More*) and "working as a catalyst to assist other pro-life organizations" (*Roe No More*).

43 For example, in July of 2005, President G. W. Bush nominated the ultra-conservative DC Circuit Court Judge John Roberts to fill the Supreme Court vacancy left by retiring Associate Justice Sandra Day O'Connor, whose moderating voice will be sorely missed.

Tepper's text is also being used because it is not part of a series—there are a number of pertinent books from the 1990s that are the middle or final volumes of series that span a decade or more.

There is considerable material with which to work in *Gibbon's Decline and Fall*, much more than can be easily dealt with in one short chapter. Thus, this chapter provides a brief analysis, plus direction for further research, particularly into the opposition between the monotheocracy's male god and Sophy's pantheon of female goddesses; again, dominion versus balance.

Del Rey, the publisher of *Gibbon's Decline and Fall*, gives the following brief summary of the novel's plot:

In 1959, a group of six young women meet as college freshmen, forming a bond that will last a lifetime. One of them possesses a dazzling and unearthly beauty, but Sophy, as they call her, is always mysterious about her background. When she is threatened one night they rally to her aid, and then and there they swear a pact to stay friends forever.

Fast forward to the year 2000, when strange events are unfolding around the world. A ruthless politician is amassing a terrifying, fanatic power base. The suicide rate has gone through the roof. And the global birth rate has suddenly plummeted to nearly zero.

Something evil is threatening the world, and only these six extraordinary women can stop it. But Sophy has been missing for years, and they soon realize that unlocking the secret to her disappearance will be the key to the survival of humanity.

Central to the plot of *Gibbon's Decline and Fall* is the infanticide trial of fifteen-year-old Lolly

Ashaler, being prosecuted in order to make an example of her as the “fine, pure instincts of motherhood betrayed, a young mother corrupted by too much freedom” (Tepper 53). The American Alliance, much like the Religious Right, believe in Tepper refers to as the Hail Mary Assumption, which involves the assumption that “a woman is only a vessel, and once that sperm's in there, it's holy!” (Tepper 144). This is often combined, as is the case in Tepper's novel, with the idea that motherhood, in humans, is somehow instinctive, an idea that Carolyn and the rest of the DFC actively refute with evidence from both primate and human behaviour in stressful situations. There is little question that Lolly Ashaler's situation was stressful, not only because of her family history, but also because of the situations under which she became pregnant and gave birth. For a young woman of Lolly's background, a woman who has barely learned to be human, it is unfortunate, but not unexpected, that she is “totally ignorant of mothering” (Tepper 346). After all, as Ophy testifies, “She was not mothered as a child. Her own mother acquiesced in her sexual abuse; her mother's boyfriend gave her a venereal disease; the pregnancy was caused by a gang rape” (Tepper 346). In light of this, where was she to have learned care and nurturing? Where was she to have learned how to be a mother?

4.2 The American Alliance: Fundamentalism or Not?

The American Alliance exhibits, to one degree or another, all five of the ideological characteristics of fundamentalisms. First, the Alliance and its counterparts are reacting against

what they see to be the marginalization of religion in a society that appears to value secular humanism, and even (horror of horrors) women's equality, more highly than organized religion. This reaction is not only to the perceived marginalization of religion, but also to the perceived marginalization of men, of the male patriarch(s), and of the nuclear, patriarchal family; the Alliance is, in essence, reacting against the marginalization of patriarchy itself. Second, the American Alliance exhibits selectivity, emphasizing what it finds convenient, what best suits its purposes, of its history and belief system. Members like Jagger are without question misogynist, even though they do not come right out and say so. Third, there is distinct evidence of moral dualism within the American Alliance, as members of the American Alliance and those who adhere to traditional family values and mores are deemed good; everyone else, especially if female, is evil. Fourth, the American Alliance and its members believe in the absolute validity of its fundamental tenets, without question: there is no room for dissension. Finally, the American Alliance believes so firmly in the coming end (Millennialism) that they are more than willing to speed up its arrival.⁴⁴

The American Alliance exhibits all four of the organizational characteristics of fundamentalism, particularly emphasizing authoritarian organization and strict behavioural requirements. First, if one is a member of the American Alliance, one will be one of the chosen few who will survive (but only if one is male). Otherwise, one is doomed to die, which reveals

44 A fact that lends credence to interpretation of Webster as an Antichrist figure, particularly when a number of the elements of the Millennialist narrative of Armageddon find their way into Tepper's text.

that the American Alliance has a very select, elect membership. Second, sharp boundaries exist between the saved and the unsaved, but most prominently between men and women (and are thus directly linked to behavioural codes). Third, the American Alliance's authoritarian organization centers on Webster. He *is* the organization, a queen (or, in this case, king) bee, surrounded by a hierarchy of male drones. The organization is rigidly authoritarian, as *all* actions must be sanctioned or specifically approved by Webster.⁴⁵ Finally, the most obvious characteristic of fundamentalisms that is displayed by the American Alliance is that it mandates behavioural requirements, which seem to apply only to women. Women *must* return to traditional roles and behaviours, with dire consequences should they fail to so do.

4.3 *Women as the Root of All Evil*

The American Alliance, like many fundamentalist groups, portrays women to be the root of all evil. In essence, this organization is dedicated to the preservation of “the American Way of Life against attacks by inferior peoples, feminists, liberals, perverts, welfare cheats, lesbians, humanists, civil-rights activists, environmentalists and anyone else who had no respect for Tradition” (Tepper 46). However, feminists and lesbians are not its only specifically female

45 Webster appears, in many ways, to function as either an alien or a devil figure, which has caused readers some problems. Why does Tepper feel that it is necessary to introduce such a figure in a novel that is otherwise not overly focused on elements of hard science fiction? This is likely due to her focus on the idea of patriarchy as being an unnatural formulation. What better way to treat this than to introduce an unnatural figure as its cause? After all, doing so provides more than adequate metaphorical reinforcement of the idea of patriarchy's unnatural origins. The vague/confusing mixture of alien/devil is a vivid way of stressing how alien these values are to the smooth functioning of a just society. What happens to women in Tepper's society—and in many aspects of contemporary North American society (not to mention elsewhere and elsewhere)—is arguably evil.

targets. As Mike Winter, Hal and Carolyn's friend from the FBI, writes to tell them, the American Alliance is much more than it appears, and much, much more misogynistic than an initial glimpse at its policies might imply:

The Alliance has always avowed patriotism in public and kept its real agenda quiet. This changed during the [1991] Gulf War when female American soldiers suddenly appeared in Saudi Arabia. Nobody said boo to the U.S. so long as Kuwait was endangered and the missiles were incoming, at least not officially, but Arab clerics made no secret of being incensed at seeing females driving trucks, running around bare-faced within spitting distance of the holiest sites of Islam. Subsequently, according to our sources, a number of high-ranking imams held some ultrasecret meetings at which it was decided their sacred way of life could be preserved only by putting women back in their place, once and for all, or words to that effect.

. . . Information moves across borders too easily these days, and if they wanted their own women suppressed, it would be necessary, ultimately, for all women in the world to live by the same rules. [. . . B]oth the Muslim states and the Vatican joined the Alliance, which has covertly opposed women's rights for years. (Tepper 377 – 378)

But what, exactly, is the American Alliance's motivation for such misogyny? Why the need to oppress women? Part of the problem lies in the fact that many fundamentalists, like the American Alliance, blame women's emancipation and the equal rights movement for the morally

depraved state of contemporary American society. Revoking women's rights, rolling the clock back to the Tenth Century, does not seem like such a bad thing to them, particularly because it means that the perpetuation of the patriarchal order will be ensured. The American Alliance is creating an anti-feminist backlash like no other, one that has been preceded by a smaller backlash that bears a surprising resemblance to that which is occurring in America right now.

The fuel for this fire appears to come primarily from the Christian idea of women's original sin. A prime example of this type of thinking is illustrated by Aggie, who firmly believes "it was women's fault—if not proximately, then through original sin. All the daughters of Eve shared the same guilt, the guilt of disobedience. Only one woman in history had been perfectly obedient" (Tepper 133). Even when women, like Sophy's friend Sarah, are beaten by abusive husbands, it is their fault, not that of the man. Aggie's views are, unfortunately, not all that uncommon. Like many (or, likely, most) of us, she has internalized the beliefs of the patriarchal society in which she lives. More than anyone else in the novel, Aggie embodies what happens when we internalize patriarchal ideals regarding women's "proper" gender roles. As a nun, and later abbess, within a patriarchal religious order, Aggie is far more brain-washed than the rest of the Decline and Fall Club. Considering the extent to which Christian fundamentalists harp upon the idea of Eve's sin, it is not surprising to find that even ordinary women, who are not subjected to the extreme rigors of life within patriarchal convent walls, would come to believe in their own sinful nature.

There seems to be an obsession within the Church, and the overarching patriarchal order, with the idea that women are inherently evil and, thus, must be punished (in addition to being saved through the process of childbirth⁴⁶), their behaviour and actions controlled so that they do not corrupt men further than they already have. From this stems the idea that things are always women's fault, even if the true blame lies much more obviously elsewhere.⁴⁷ It is not difficult for the Church (and the patriarchal order) to blame women, who are already fallen, impure, and naturally much more sinful than men, for everything bad that happens to them.⁴⁸

This disturbing tendency is revealed in both Jagger and the press' response to the death of Lolly's baby. Not only has she killed her baby in cold blood, she has maliciously destroyed humanity's future:

According to some editorial pages and some talk shows, Lolly had killed not just a baby

46 The idea that women can only be saved or cleansed of original sin by the pain of childbirth originally comes from 1 Timothy 2: 13 – 15, which states: “For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression. Notwithstanding she shall be saved in childbearing, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety.” This is later expanded upon by Origen who, “like Augustine after him, supposed that there was an **inherent pollution and sinfulness in sexual union, the means by which sin entered the world**. A woman's pains in childbirth were in themselves clear evidence of the sinfulness of the original act!” (Humphreys).

47 Even in contemporary society, this is often the case. One reason that many women give for refusing to report rape is not only the humiliation that they will be subjected to during the course of the trial, but the assumption among many members of our patriarchal society that she must have done something to deserve it, something to incite the rapist, something that led the rapist to believe that it was permissible to commit the rape.

48 These types of backlash are formulated against women even when there is no direct connection to negative events, even when these events do not (at least, not obviously) have a negative impact upon the patriarchy. The Fifteenth Century tendency to blame witches (women) for the ills that befell men has been translated into a contemporary (yet no less pernicious) tendency to blame women (in general) or feminists (more specifically) for many of the ills of modern society. There does not need to be a direct causal relationship; the “word” of the patriarchal order is more than enough to provide “proof.”

 * And, really, that is what this is—a backlash—reinforcing women's “proper” place in the private sphere, without influence on the public (male) realm of society.

but “the future of mankind.” The Santa Fe paper editorialized that “the current desperation of humanity” had been Lolly’s fault, she had committed “the final sin,” had added “the spiritual last straw” to the sin burden of mankind. While “the current desperation” was undefined, Sodom and Gomorrah were mentioned in passing, along with the Flood. Carolyn saw a coordinated effort in all this, no doubt on Jagger’s behalf. Seemingly, even if the world died tomorrow, Jagger intended to stand with one foot atop the corpse declaring himself victorious. (Tepper 260 – 261)

This sort of reportage is not really all that far removed from reality—see, for example, the uproar over the Rowland case. In this particular instance, Jagger personifies the patriarchal order, Webster’s American Alliance. However, the idea that the actions of one lowly uneducated woman could have such impact on the fate of humanity is rather preposterous, were it not for the fact that Lolly’s supposed role in the death of her child is consistently linked to the Fall, to Eve’s sin, to woman's original sin.

While Carolyn and Ophy are both incredulous, they do not discredit the power of the patriarchal order to wreak havoc on Lolly’s life, casting her as a convenient scapegoat, moving the focus away from men’s failings (that is, the rape that resulted in the child’s conception) and toward women’s much more heinous crimes. As Carolyn says,

“Lolly has so offended God by killing her child that God is punishing the entire human race by withholding babies. This time it won’t be by flood, or by fire. It’ll

just be extinction. Which, if you're an environmentalist, must seem like divine retribution. Maybe the Gaia hypothesis has some truth to it."

...

"I suppose the guilt can be wiped away by blood sacrifice," Ophy growled.

"That may be the reasoning behind Jagger's going for murder one with the possibility of the death penalty. He wants to prove she intended all along to kill the baby.

She's to be the scapegoat: If we spill the blood of this bad, bad woman, God will relent."

(Tepper 261)

The key word in the preceding passage is definitely "scapegoat." As Carolyn says to Ophy, if Lolly is made to pay for her crimes (especially since these are supposedly crimes against the whole of humanity), then perhaps God will relent; but it is unlikely that the patriarchal order will do so. There is a special place in hell for women who kill their own children, one that encompasses both a living hell (one in which her society shuns her, while at the same time attempting to make her life as horrible as possible) and a hell that she will supposedly inhabit in the afterlife.⁴⁹ It is to this hell that Jagger wants to send Lolly, regardless of the role that her society has played in the death (and conception) of her child. Lolly is to be the scapegoat, even though her society bears at least as much of the burden of blame as does she.⁵⁰ The woman,

49 Even if she does not believe in the idea that she will spend her afterlife in hell, her detractors definitely do. Plus, her sinfulness (and the fact that she has violated the Hail Mary Assumption) mean that she makes an effective scapegoat. As Jagger says to Swinter, "[T]his little bitch baby killer, she's a symbol of everything that's wrong with our country. I mean, when women forget their duty and their place, that's the end, right?" (Tepper 149).

50 The way in which Tepper has crafted this scene suggests that whether or not the infant was stillborn is not of consequence—at least, not for her purpose of social criticism. What Tepper appears to be aiming to critique is the

being in transgression, must shoulder the responsibility and blame, accepting, without question, the punishment that the patriarchal order deems to be necessary for sin.

4.4 Natural and Unnatural Behaviours

Apologists for patriarchy, particularly in the Western world, focus on the natural and unnatural—more specifically, on what is “natural” for men, and what is “unnatural” for women. This is done solely to reinforce the patriarchal order. Tess, a parthenogenic saurian masquerading as a human female, tells the Decline and Fall Club:

The planner, the persecutor, simply turned evolution around and defined human females in ape terms. As, for example, in matters relating to reproduction: Women would prefer to be healthy and have healthy children, so the wise woman would choose when to bear and when not to bear. The enemy of women, however, does not care whether women and children are well and healthy. Your enemy makes men look at females as male apes look at them, as a source of fuck. He focuses all eyes on what is natural to the proliferate ape.

(Tepper 395 – 396)

Within a patriarchal order, it seems natural for men to want to have sex, to want to propagate the

Hail Mary Assumption, itself, and the refusal of patriarchal society to provide poor, uneducated mothers with the means with which to become good mothers. Much more effort is put into the pro-life movement, but this movement views its responsibilities to be over as soon as the infant takes its first breath. There is no provision of pre-natal or post-natal care, no provision of the resources to provide parenting classes to mothers whose only role models may well have lacked essential parenting skills, no assistance to ensure that frightened first-time mothers have someone to turn to in times of trouble. The only concern of the pro-life movement is ensuring that the child is born and it is this that Tepper is critiquing—the idea that, once born, the mother will “naturally” be well-prepared for the important task of parenthood.

species, without any regard for the consequences to mother or the offspring. Sex is the male's unequivocal right, something to which women have no choice but to acquiesce (and even that is not always necessary).

In addition to this, Tepper posits that control of human reproduction by women is not deemed to be natural by the patriarchal order. Men must have control over the reproductive process, not women. Thus, men have wrested control of it away from women, deeming birth control and abortion to be unnatural and, therefore, unsanctioned by the patriarchal order. As Tess tells the members of the Decline and Fall Club:

. . . you were told not to control your reproduction because control is unnatural—which, of course, it is. Wise, but unnatural. All wisdom is unnatural. Microscopes are unnatural. Dialysis machines are unnatural. The internal-combustion engine is unnatural. Heart-lung machines are unnatural. Aspirin and antibiotics are unnatural. Thought is unnatural, or at least highly unusual, and many of your religions limit it as much as possible! Do not think, they say. Simply believe. But gracious me, in your world fucking is natural, everything does that, so your enemy defines it not as an animal trait to be dealt with, but as a natural law . . . (Tepper 396)

In thus defining sex, patriarchy deems it to be a divine right, given to man by the Father God. Most things that attempt to prevent men from exercising this right when and where they wish are unnatural; however, there are laws (however feeble) against rape, incest, etc. Dissent is not an

option, whether overt or covert, because men's divine rights (and there are a number of them) are not things to be trifled with, as many a poor female wretch has discovered.

Tess elaborates upon the idea of divine right, revealing its true connections to the animal world. Many of the things that man deems to be his divine right (sex at will, arming oneself, the oppression of women) are not natural. But, as the patriarchy has defined them as such and, as dissent is not permitted, it is taken for granted that these are divine rights, as the patriarchy (which gets its "ideas" from the Father god) cannot be wrong. Tess tells the Decline and Fall Club that, if chimps have a natural capacity for violence,

. . . then the tendency of an ape to pick up a stick must be built into custom and religion, not as an animal trait to be overcome but as a divine right! Listen to your countrymen proclaim the right to bear arms. Look at the world of paranoid militias and fanatical terrorists. Listen to your national rifle group, listen to rapists and wife beaters and men in the sex trade. The mind behind the persecution of women simply takes man's chimp nature and reflects it back to him, putting the imprimatur of natural law on bestial behaviour. (Tepper 396).⁵¹

Why does this happen? Power, both over men (as leaders) and women (as total dominion). The founders of patriarchy, and those who nurtured it through its infancy into adulthood, recognized

51 This echoes Gwynne Dyer's discussion of the origins of war, wherein he speaks of Jane Goodall's 1973 discovery "that the chimpanzee troop she was observing in Gombe National Park in Tanzania actually waged a kind of war against neighbouring bands" (Dyer 70). While chimp warfare does not resemble that of modern man, "it *is* warfare, in the sense that it is purposeful and calculated" (Dyer 71). The parallels between the behaviours of humans and chimpanzees (and Jessamine's apes in Tepper's novel) are unmistakable, especially in light of Tess' discussion of the canonization of ape behaviour in men.

the need for a common, universal enemy. As Tess rather bluntly tells the Decline and Fall Club:

If you wish to lead men, you tell them that your power or religion or whatever will allow men to do just what they want to do. You want to rape women? Our God allows that.

You want to kill homosexuals? Our God approves that. You want to force women to bear your children? Our God insists upon it, and upon your shooting anyone who would help her do otherwise! You want to have eight children? Or a dozen? Fine! Our God says that it's just wonderful. And when the children die of hunger or neglect, when the very earth fails under the weight of humanity, that is God's will. (Tepper 396)

Even today, this is exactly what happens. This explains the successful oppression of women by the Taliban; the successful move to repeal abortion laws in the U.S.; the strong cases against mothers like Rowland; and in the novel, Tepper's shy Lolly must become a blood sacrifice to save the future of humankind.

In giving men a common enemy, the patriarchal order has unified them. In times of trouble (that is, in times wherein women need to be reminded of their place), the patriarchal order need only remind men that women are usurping men's place within the world, remind them that women are taking away from them that which is rightfully theirs. Thus, as Tess explains:

. . . if one wants to control men, one canonizes the ape nature of men. One makes one's cause the protection of apishness, or, as men would say, liberty! Let every ape be as apelike as he wants! Civil liberties means liberties for each ape to do as he pleases, and

civility be hanged. As for the enemy, one provides men with the best enemy possible, an enemy so different it cannot be absorbed, so necessary it cannot be totally destroyed, and enough weaker than the alpha ape that she is easy to steal from, to disrespect, and to abuse. (Tepper 397)

This common enemy—women—is found in every human society, and makes a very convenient scapegoat, particularly if it is of a lower class or different race than the dominant members of the patriarchal order. Everything, at least according to the patriarchy, comes together neatly. Tess cautions:

. . . since the abuse of woman as enemy (which is quite natural) can itself result in mindless procreation (which is also quite natural), it all fits together nicely. You are a man, you feel violence, which feeds your lust and anger—why, then, commit rape. You may do it violently or you may threaten or seduce. You may do it yourself, with your own organ, or you may do it at several removes, by making laws that allow rapists to walk freely. You wish to further violate the woman or women you have raped? Then insist she may not abort. You may do this by attacking a doctor outside a clinic or you may do it at several removes, by making it unlawful for abortions to be provided to any woman. You wish to continue violating her? Then persecute her if she does not care properly for the offspring that results from an act she did not want and a pregnancy she did not accept.

(Tepper 396 – 397)

Even in contemporary society, or perhaps *especially* in contemporary society, women are the common enemy of men, particularly those who attempt to prevent and sometimes succeed in preventing men from doing what is “natural,” be it rape or some other form of violence against women. Women are the scapegoats, the means by which the patriarchy can distract those who are not in power, to prevent them from realizing that they, too, are victims of the patriarchal order (albeit, not to the same extent as are women).

4.5 Conclusion

Of all the ideas that feminist readers can take from this book, the fallacy of the Hail Mary Assumption is likely the most important. It is the entire reason that Lolly is put on trial for the death of her child, but she (and women like her) should not be held responsible because, even though she knew she was pregnant, that neither automatically makes her a good mother, nor automatically makes her think of the baby as her child, despite the fact that she gave birth to it.

As Jessamine tells Jagger,

Her *body* gave birth to it. Our bodies do a lot of things we don't want or intend them to. We catch the flu, but that doesn't make us experts on infectious diseases. We break out in hives, but that doesn't make us allergists. When a girl gets raped, why do we believe that being pregnant makes her an expert on childbirth and parenting? It's ridiculous.”

“She was a mother! She had to take care of it!”

...

“No,” Jessamine said at last. “That rule was made by men. Men have no experience of childbirth or pregnancy; few of them have experienced rape, but they believe their seed is somehow so important that women must not only submit to it but also honor and serve it impeccably. Men make laws saying so. Notwithstanding, the law can’t make a woman accept a pregnancy she hasn’t wanted and agreed to. She may choose to accept it, of her own will, but merely being impregnated doesn’t make a mother. It never has.” (Tepper 354 – 355)

Despite everything that patriarchal society forces upon women, it still cannot reach into women’s minds and *make* them accept an unwanted pregnancy no matter how much it might like to, nor can it force them to become good mothers, just by virtue of having given birth. The Hail Mary Assumption is a fallacy, one that has been and continues to be perpetuated by the patriarchy for its own purposes (quite likely as yet another means by which to gain at least some measure of control over reproduction), but it is a fallacy nonetheless.

In their lust for dominion over women, Webster and his minions have created a breeding chamber, full of tier after tier of pods, all containing women capable of reproduction. These women are selected for obedience, denied an education, and are prepared solely to be a very controlled means by which the American Alliance can safely propagate itself and its

members. The goal of the Alliance is to create life without the aid of women, to have a society in which women become truly disposable. The pods, like something out of *The Matrix*, are a means to an end: the creation of male offspring and the perpetuation of the patriarchal order. Tepper's text thus serves as a dire warning, speaking out against the erosion of women's reproductive rights in the Western world, an erosion that echoes the greater erosion of women's reproductive rights elsewhere in the world. First, women in the U.S. lost the right to "partial birth" abortions; next, it will be challenges to women's right to have abortions, at all, likely citing the father's right to have a say in the life (or termination) of *his* unborn child. Webster and his minions are not the only ones who are obsessed with reproduction and control of women's bodies and, while they are only fictional representations, their actions serve as warning beacons of what is yet to come, should the American political climate continue in its current direction.

Even now, women are often portrayed solely as walking wombs. The body of a pregnant woman becomes public property, and the potential mother who does anything with that body that could be construed as not being in the best interests of the unborn child is looked upon with increasing displeasure.⁵² Women who have the occasional glass of wine during their pregnancy are denounced. Women who take drugs during their pregnancy are locked up and forcibly subjected to detoxification programs. In the future, will pregnant women who have led "unhealthy" lifestyles—be it unconventional food, questionable activity levels, or even forgetting

52 The increasing movement towards forcing pregnant mothers to adhere to medical advice stems, in part, from the fact that so doing is "part of a deliberate move to get fetal 'personhood' recognized in [American] law, as part of an effort to roll back abortion rights, in particular, the Supreme Court decision of *Roe v Wade* in 1973" (Hewson).

to take their vitamin supplements—be subject to the rule of the fathers, to the iron fist of the patriarchal state? We cannot predict what the future might hold, but Tepper's eerily prescient extrapolation of the state of American politics leads this particular feminist to believe that there may well be some measure of truth to the patriarchal threat against the autonomy of pregnant woman, particularly in a society that lends far too much credence to the myth of the Hail Mary Assumption.

Chapter Five:

Where do we go from here? The (Dystopian) Future.

Recent pro-fundamentalist, anti-feminist speculative fiction, such as the *Left Behind* series, epitomizes the attitudes that have led the United States, in recent years, to declare a xenophobic war on terror. The horrible deaths of thousands of people in New York City on September 11, 2001, have been used as justification for what George W. Bush calls a “war on terror.” The United States has increased security, often at the cost of civil liberty and personal freedom. Freedom of speech is being eroded while Americans increasingly ignore the very laws that are supposed to keep the international community in check. International law, the Geneva convention regarding prisoners of war, and the sovereignty of foreign nations are being ignored as G. W. Bush and his allies move against these terrorists. In this political climate, a climate in which women’s rights are consistently being eroded, it is hard to look at works such as those of Charnas, Atwood, and Tepper and *not* see their prophetic nature. Unfortunately, in contemporary North America, the fictional portrayals of dystopian futures are becoming far too close for comfort. American fundamentalism, represented by the religious right and its current power within the White House, is beginning to overtake the progress of equality and secular humanism as the United States engages in a war *of* terror, against heathen fundamentalist terrorists —“islamo-fascists,” as the Right calls them. Xenophobia is becoming commonplace and,

combined with an increasing American demand for oil and other natural resources, is (and was—in 2003) an extraordinarily good excuse for a “pre-emptive” strike against “terrorists” who may or may not have weapons of mass destruction. How long will it be before these common enemies are eliminated and under control? How long will it be before the Americans’ need for dominion shifts from the other (as defined by religion, race, and nationality) to an other (as defined by sex) that is much, much closer to home?

These “what if?” questions are not all that far removed from those asked by other writers in the sub-genre of anti-fundamentalist feminist fiction. Given the current state of American politics, critical studies of these and other pertinent books in this growing sub-genre is, as Diana Relke states, “not only advisable but urgent” (Patriarchy). Following is a brief selection of a number of texts from the last three decades of the twentieth century within this particular sub-genre that are deserving of critical attention, particularly with regard to control over women's bodies, especially in terms of reproduction.

Suzette Haden Elgin's 1969 short story, “For the Sake of Grace,” is one of the first examples of a feminist author using dystopian speculative fiction as a means by which to critique fundamentalism. In this story, Jacinth, the protagonist, wants nothing but to become a Poet, but she must risk the fate of her aunt Grace—lifelong solitary confinement—should she fail to pass the examinations for the overwhelmingly male position of religious Poet. The Islamic fundamentalism in this story is a theocracy that is quasi-benevolent, at least in the minds of the

men, but they appear to fail to understand that women are people, too. As one of the first examples in this tradition, and one of the very few in which Islamic fundamentalism plays a central role, this text is deserving of critical analysis, particularly regarding fundamentalists' reactions to women who wish to step outside of their "proper" gender roles.

Suzy McKee Charnas' 1974 novel, *Walk to the End of the World*, provides a dystopian view of a post-apocalyptic future in which the patriarchal idea of women's original sin is extrapolated to the point that women have completely lost their status as human beings, reduced by a fundamentalist, patriarchal society to their reproductive organs, and relegated to the status of grunt labour (at best) and scapegoats (at worst). A transmogrification and bastardization of pre-Wasting Christianity, the Holdfast men's religion is based in part upon the Hold Book of the Ancients and its central theme: "by challenging his Father's authority . . . the Son drew down on himself the rightful anger of the Father" (Charnas 83). In today's increasingly reactionary world, fear and patriarchal misogyny often go hand-in-hand, with the religious right blaming women's emancipation for the moral void that masquerades as contemporary family values. Charnas extrapolates misogynist fundamentalism into the future and reveals to the reader exactly why it is that we need to fight the deformation of equality that is caused by blind allegiance to both patriarchy and fundamentalisms

Suzette Haden Elgin's 1984 *Native Tongue* and 1987 *Native Tongue II: The Judas Rose* are both significant contributors to the anti-fundamentalist tradition in feminist speculative

fiction. The first book in Elgin's *Native Tongue* trilogy introduces the reader to a world in which trade between the planets has made linguistics of great importance. The women of the linguistic Lines have used their skills to develop a language of their own—Láadan—that could well serve them as a means of liberation from the patriarchy that is inherent within their society. The second book in Elgin's *Native Tongue* trilogy describes the efforts of the women of the Lines to release Láadan into the world, chronicling the nascent effects of the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, showing how a patriarchal order can be subverted from within, even if that order is bordering on monotheocracy. This series is significant because Elgin spends time chronicling the impact that a rigid monotheocracy—whether that of the United Reformed Baptist Church or that of the Roman Catholic Church—can have, how these effects might be subverted, and what effect subversion of these might possibly have.

In Claudia J. Edwards' 1987 novel *A Horsewoman in Godsland*, two cultures clash, one of which is overtly patriarchal and very religious. Adelinda is forced into a battle, both physical and mental, against the Bishop An-Shai, who desires, above all, her complete submission to him, and who will do anything in his power to attain it. The Bishop's religion centers around the idea of a four-fold, or Quadrate, god, and his people spend so much time occupied with the production of food (and other goods) for the Church that there appears to be little time for culture amongst the lower classes. This text is of particular interest because the Initiates of the Quadrate God are very secure in their place within the Church, likely because they

have had to profess that they do not believe in the Quadrate God—a punishable offense for all others—in order to become members of the upper echelons of the Church!

In her 1988 novel, *The Gate to Women's Country*, Sheri S. Tepper focuses on men's nature in a negative light, as something that needs to be controlled through genetic selection. The women of Women's Country select against men's inclination toward violence in their breeding program. While they send male children, at the age of five, to the Defenders, each mother hopes that, at the age of fifteen, her son will return to the Gate to Women's Country, having realized that his place is with the women and servitors, rather than with those whose sole occupation is to wage war. This novel is deserving of analysis, particularly with a focus on Women's Country's attempts to control men's nature, to remove the baser elements in order to create a more peaceful and much more stable society.

M. K. Wren's post-apocalyptic 1990 dystopia *A Gift Upon the Shore* provides yet another critique of patriarchy. This book, not for the faint of heart, paints a vivid picture of two women, Rachel and Mary, who are struggling to survive the aftermath of nuclear war. They eventually encounter the fanatical Flock, who deem blasphemous the very books that Rachel and Mary are trying to protect. The Flock's religion is very patriarchal and focuses on the Second Coming and survival. Much like *Walk to the End of the World*, Wren's novel provides a post-apocalyptic perspective of what might happen under a charismatic fundamentalist leader, and the impact that increased value on successful human reproduction might have.

Flynn Connolly's disturbing 1993 novel, *The Rising of the Moon*, extrapolates a future in which Ireland becomes very insular, governed by a blatant patriarchy that is reinforced by mandatory adherence to the State's religion: Catholicism. Women's rights have been dramatically and dangerously eroded, and it is only through vigorous resistance that these can be regained. Controlled by men, Ireland's State religion is based primarily on Irish Catholicism as it would have existed in Jonathan Swift's era; no dissent is permitted. Ireland exists as a very blatant and particularly well-established monotheocracy, but it faces considerable underground resistance. Big Brother may not be watching, but the Church and State definitely are. Connolly's novel provides an interesting perspective on the interaction between the rest of the world and an intensely misogynist monotheocratic nation-state.

Octavia Butler's 1993 novel, *The Parable of the Sower*, provides the reader with a view of an increasingly unstable dystopian future, a world in which one's status can change instantly from *have* to *have-not*. Yet even in this world there is the promise of a new life and the promise of a new faith: Earthseed. Religion is, for some, a duty because of its emphasis on the necessity of faith. Lauren's compound's religion is basically Baptist, but has become fundamentalist in reaction to the decreasing stability of the world that surrounds it. It is much more benevolent than most of the other varieties of fundamentalism that appear in other works of feminist dystopian speculative fiction. The residents of the compound aren't quite prepared to accept the reality of the world that surrounds them. One point of interest with regards to their

religion is the fact that God is, in a number of ways, a means by which the compound's adults can scare children into doing what the adults want them to do.

In addition to these, there are an increasing number of works in which Islamic fundamentalisms play a central role, including Gael Baudino's *Water!* series (1995 and 1996) and Louise Marley's *The Terrorists of Irustan* (1999). Baudino's series centers on three separate faiths, two of which are patriarchal fundamentalisms: the religion of the Righteous States of America (a neoevangelist Christian fundamentalism) and the rather misogynist Islamic fundamentalism of the Three Kingdoms. She focuses, in part, on the lengths to which members of religious patriarchies will go to preserve the status quo, particularly in a monotheocracy that is secretive, reactionary, and obsessed with rules and control. Along the same vein, Marley's *The Terrorists of Irustan* extrapolates from the rise of Islamic fundamentalism in the East to a world in which women are nothing more than chattel. Zahra, given the means by which to heal, is prevented from doing anything to stop the abuse of women—she is powerless to carry out her role as healer. Her initial silent act of terrorism has far-reaching consequences for a society that has forgotten that women hold a certain measure of power, even when it appears that it has been entirely stripped from them. Both Baudino's and Marley's works are of significance because they reveal means by which careful, planned subversion can undermine overtly misogynist patriarchal monotheocracies.

These novels, along with many others that are not mentioned here, strengthen the

argument that anti-fundamentalist feminist fiction truly constitutes a tradition within the genre of speculative fiction. That so many different authors, throughout the last three decades of the twentieth century, found fundamentalism important enough to give it a central role in their works, reveals that concern over the impact of fundamentalism and the growing impact of the Religious Right is not relegated to a small minority of hysterical feminist writers. This concern has grown of late, with both Karen Traviss' *City of Pearl* series and well-known author David Weber's new *Off Armageddon Reef* series. Critical attention to these and other texts is of increasing urgency, particularly given the current political climate as the United States heads towards yet another presidential election.

Works Cited

“9 women to be ‘priests’: Group face excommunication from church.” *The Vancouver Province*. Monday, July 25, 2005: A30.

“absolutism.” *The Oxford English Dictionary*. 2nd ed. University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon, SK. 27 May 2005. <<http://www.oed.com>>

Appleby, R. Scott. *The Ambivalence of the Sacred: Religion, Violence, and Reconciliation*. New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 1999.

Andre, Claire, and Manuel Velasquez. “Forcing Pregnant Women to do as They’re Told: Maternal vs. Fetal Rights.” *Issues in Ethics*. Vol 1 (Winter 1988). 3 August 2005. <<http://www.scu.edu/ethics/publications/iie/v1n2/pregnant.html>>

Armstrong, Karen. *The Battle for God*. New York: Ballantine Books, 2000

Arnold, Laura W., and Herbert F. Weisberg. “Parenthood, Family Values, and the 1992 Presidential Election.” *American Politics Research* 24 (1994): 194 – 220.

Atwood, Margaret. *The Handmaid’s Tale*. 1985. Toronto: Seal, 1998.

- - -. “Notes for Further Thought.” *The Handmaid’s Tale*. 1985. Toronto: Seal, 1998.

Baudino, Gael. *Water! 1: O Greenest Branch!* New York: ROC, 1995.

- - -. *Water! 2: The Dove Looked In!* New York: ROC, 1995.

- - -. *Water! 3: Branch and Crown*. New York: ROC, 1996.

Berlet, Chip. “The Christian Right, Dominionism, and Theocracy.” *PRA PublicEye.Org: The Website of Political Research Associates*. 30 May 2007. <http://www.publiceye.org/christian_right/dominionism.htm>

Berlet, Chip, and Margaret Quigley. “Behind the Culture War to Restore Traditional Values.” 28 May 2007. *The Public Eye Magazine* 6 (1992). <<http://www.publiceye.org/magazine/v06n1/culwar.html>>

Booker, M. Keith. *The Dystopian Impulse in Modern Literature: Fiction as Social Criticism*. Contributions to the Study of Science Fiction and Fantasy, Number 58. London: Greenwood Press, 1994.

Burdekin, Katherine. *Swastika Night*. 1937. New York: The Feminist Press at CUNY, 1980.

Butler, Octavia E. *The Parable of the Sower*. New York: Aspect Books, 1995.

Carabillo, Toni, Judith Meuli, and June Bundy Csida. *The Feminist Chronicles*. 4 August 2005. <<http://www.feminist.org/research/chronicles/chronic1.html>>

Cavendish, Margaret. *The Blazing World and Other Writings*. 1666. Ed. Kate Lilley. New York: Penguin Classics, 2005.

Charnas, Suzy McKee. "A Big Woman's Book." *Suzy McKee Charnas*. 4 August 2005. <<http://www.suzymckeecharnas.com/New.html>>

- - -. "New on the Website." *Suzy McKee Charnas*. 1 June 2005. <<http://www.suzymckeecharnas.com/New.html>>

- - -. "e: [*FSF-L*] Slave and Free (1)." *FeministSF-Lit Listserv*. September 23, 1999. 1 June 2005. <http://www.geocities.com/Area51/Comet/1304/archives/bdg_slaveandfree.txt>

- - -. "Re: [*FSF-L*] Slave and Free (2)." *FeministSF-Lit Listserv*. September 23, 1999. 1 June 2005. <http://www.geocities.com/Area51/Comet/1304/archives/bdg_slaveandfree.txt>

- - -. *Walk to the End of the World*. New York: Ballantine Books, 1974.

Clarkson, Federick. "Theocratic Dominionism Gains Influence." *The Public Eye Magazine* 8 (Spring 1994). 31 May 2007. <<http://www.publiceye.org/magazine/v08n1/chrisre1.html>>

Connolly, Flynn. *The Rising of the Moon*. New York: Del Rey, 1993.

- - -. *Danu's Green Shore*. Unpublished.

de Pizan, Christine. *The Book of the City of Ladies*. 1405. Ed. Grant Brown. New York: Penguin Classics, 2004.

Diamond, Sara. "On the Road to Political Power and Theocracy." *PRA PublicEye.Org: The Website of Political Research Associates*. 30 May 2007.
<http://www.publiceye.org/eyes/sd_theo.html>

Dumars, Denise. "Interview. Altered Lives, Altered Loves: Tiptree Award Winner Suzy McKee Charnas." *Cinescape*. September 22, 2000. 1 June 2005.
<http://www.cinescape.com/0/Editorial.asp?aff_id=0&this_cat=Books&action=page&obj_id=24381>

Dyer, Gwynne, Host. *The Gods of Our Fathers. The Human Race* series. Dir. Anne Henderson. Videocassette. Bullfrog Films, 1994.

-- -. *War: The New Edition*. 1985. Toronto: Random House Canada, 2004.

Edwards, Claudia J. *A Horsewoman in Godsland*. Terra Alta, WV: Headline Books, 1988.

Elgin, Suzette Haden. "For the Sake of Grace." *The Norton Book of Science Fiction*. Ed. Ursula K. LeGuin and Brian Attebery. New York: WWNorton, 1994. 211 – 230.

-- -. *Native Tongue*. 1984. New York: The Feminist Press at CUNY, 2002.

-- -. *Native Tongue: The Judas Rose*. 1987. New York: The Feminist Press at CUNY, 2002.

-- -. *Native Tongue: Earthsong*. 1993. New York: The Feminist Press at CUNY, 2002.

Eskridge, Larry. "Defining Evangelism." *Institute for the Study of American Evangelicals*. 1995. 27 May 2005. <http://www.wheaton.edu/isaef/defining_evangelicalism.html>

Faludi, Susan. *Backlash: The Undeclared War Against American Women*. New York: Anchor Books, 1992.

Falwell, Jerry. *If I Should Die Before I Wake*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1986.

"Federal Abortion Ban Trials." *Planned Parenthood Federation of America, Inc*. 2 August 2005. <<http://www.federalabortionban.org/>>

Gilchrist, Liz. "Supreme Court Moves Backward on Equal Pay." *National Organization for Women*. May 30, 2007. 30 May 2007.

<<http://www.now.org/issues/economic/070530equalpay.html>>

Gilman, Charlotte Perkins. *Herland*. 1915. New York: Pantheon, 1979.

Harding, Susan Friend. *The Book of Jerry Falwell: Fundamentalist Language and Politics*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 2000.

Harris, Harriet A. "How Helpful is the Term 'Fundamentalist?'" *Fundamentalisms*. Ed. Christopher H. Partridge. London: Paternoster Press, 2001. 3 – 18.

Hewson, Barbara. "Is it murder to refuse a Caesarean?" *AIMS Journal*. Vol 16 (Spring 2004). 3 August 2005. <<http://www.aims.org.uk/Journal/Vol16No1/murderToRefuse.htm>>

Hill, Al. "The 'Submission Thing.'" 2002. 27 May 2005. <<http://www.openbibleministries.com/09submission.html>>

Hoover, Stewart M. *Mass Media Religion: The Social Sources of the Electronic Church*. Newbury Park; Beverly Hills; London: SAGE Publications, 1988.

Humphreys, Kenneth. "SIN – Drowning Humanity in Guilt and Fear." *Religion – The Tragedy of Mankind*. 2004. 4 August 2005. <<http://jesusneverexisted.com/sin.html>>

Jefferson, Thomas. *Jefferson Writings*. Ed. Merrill D. Peterson. NY: Literary Classics of the United States, Inc., 1984.

Jones, Steven. "Fundamentalism." *The Religious Movements Homepage Project @The University of Virginia*. 1998. 25 May 2005. <<http://religiousmovements.lib.virginia.edu/nrms/fund.html>>

Killough, Lee. *A Voice Out of Ramah*. New York: Del Rey, 1979.

"Letters: Lesbians Don't Deserve This Much Attention." *Science Fiction Weekly*. Issue 112 (June 7, 1999). 4 August 2005. <<http://www.scifi.com/sfw/issue112/letters.html>>

Lindsey, Hal. *The Greatest Works of Hal Lindsey: The Late Great Planet Earth/Satan Is Alive and Well on Planet Earth*. New York: Inspirational Press, 2005.

Lynn, Barry L., ed. "Why Separate Church and State?" *Americans United for Separation of*

Church and State. 25 May 2005. <<http://www.au.org/site/PageServer?pagename=issues>>

“Manichaeism.” *The Oxford English Dictionary*. 2nd ed. University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon, SK. 27 May 2005. <<http://www.oed.com>>

Marley, Louise. *The Terrorists of Irustan*. New York: Ace Science Fiction, 1999.

Matheson, Laura. “Janua Diaboli: Unearthing the Historical Context of the *Malleus Maleficarum*.” Unpublished seminar paper.

McCorvey, Norma. *Roe No More Ministry Homepage*. 2 August 2005
<<http://www.leaderu.com/norma/index.html>>

McMillan, Stephanie. “A Conversation with Flynn Connolly.” *Two Eyes*. Issue 3 (Spring 2001). 2 August 2005. <<http://home.earthlink.net/~twoeyesmagazine/issue3/flynn.htm>>

“Messianism.” *The Oxford English Dictionary*. 2nd ed. University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon, SK. 27 May 2005. <<http://www.oed.com>>

“Millenarianism.” *The Oxford English Dictionary*. 2nd ed. University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon, SK. 27 May 2005. <<http://www.oed.com>>

Millett, Kate. *Sexual Politics*. Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2000.

“Mother who wanted to avoid Caesarian scar charged with murder.” *The Sydney Morning Herald*. March 12, 2004. 16 July 2005.
<<http://www.smh.com.au/articles/2004/03/12/1078594547149.html>>

Orwell, George. *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. New York: Penguin, 1990.

Patterson, Margot. “The Rise of Global Fundamentalism.” *National Catholic Reporter: The Independent Weekly*. May 7, 2004. 24 October 2006.
<http://ncronline.org/NCR_Online/archives2/2004b/050704/050704a.php>

Pavone, Frank. *Priests for Life*. 2 August 2005.
<<http://www.priestsforlife.org/news/prooesenators.htm>>

Pope Paul VI. *Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith: Declaration on Procured*

Abortion. November 18, 1974. 3 August 2005.

<http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_19741118_declaration-abortion_en.html>

“President Bush Nominates Right-Wing John Roberts to Supreme Court.” *Feminist Majority Foundation: Working for Women’s Equality*. August, 2005. 3 August 2005.

<<http://www.feminist.org/courts/>>

Prown, Katherine, and Stephen L. Cochran. “Reclaiming the Rights of Birthing Women: A Primer.” *Birth Policy Resources*. 2 August 2005. <<http://www.birthpolicy.org/ican05.htm>>

Relke, Diana M. A. “Reversing the Field: Father-Figure/Mother-Ground and the Reproduction of Patriarchy.” 2000. 29 May 2007. <<http://www.usask.ca/wgst/journals/repro-patriarchy.htm>>

- - -. Memo on Patriarchy and Fundamentalism. 25 May 2007.

- - -. Memo on Thesis Revisions. 25 May 2007

Reynolds, Sheri. *The Rapture of Canaan*. New York: Berkley, 2003.

- - -. “The Rapture of Canaan by Sheri Reynolds.” *Sheri Reynolds*. 17 June 2005.

<<http://www.sherireynolds.com/rapturecanaan.html>>

“Romanian Woman Gives Birth at 66: Romanian hospital officials say a 66-year-old woman in Bucharest has given birth to a baby girl.” *BBC News: Online*. January 16, 2005. 3 August 2005.

<<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/4179057.stm>>

Ruthven, Malise. *Fundamentalism: The Search for Meaning*. New York: Oxford UP, 2004.

Shelley, Mary Wollstonecraft. *The Last Man*. 1826. Ed. Morton D. Paley. New York: Oxford University Press, 1994.

Stewart, Lyman and Milton Stewart. *The Fundamentals: A Testimony of Truth*. 1917. Ed. Reuben Archer Torrey. Los Angeles: Baker Books, 2003.

“Suzy McKee Charnas: *Walk to the End of the World*.” *Strange Words*. 4 August 2005.

<<http://www.strangewords.com/archive/walkto.html>>

Tepper, Sheri S. *Gibbon's Decline and Fall*. New York: Bantam Spectra, 1997.

- - -. *The Gate to Women's Country*. New York: Bantam Spectra, 1989.

"The Bishop of Bountiful." *CBC News: The Fifth Estate*. January 15, 2003. 3 August 2005.
<<http://www.cbc.ca/fifth/polygamy/>>

Traviss, Karen. *Ally*. Toronto: Harper Collins Canada, 2007.

- - -. *City of Pearl*. Harper Collins Canada, 2004.

- - -. *Crossing the Line*. Harper Collins Canada, 2004.

- - -. *Matriarch*. Harper Collins Canada, 2006.

- - -. *The World Before*. Harper Collins Canada, 2005.

Weber, David. *Off Armageddon Reef*. New York: TOR, 2007

Wren, M. K. *A Gift Upon the Shore*. New York: Penguin, 1990.