

**A Chronology of Her Own:
The Treatment of Time in Selected Works of Second Wave
Feminist Speculative Fiction**

by

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I herewith declare that

A Chronology of Her Own:

the treatment of time in selected works of Second Wave feminist speculative fiction

is my own work and that all the sources I have used have been acknowledged by means of complete references.

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Abstract

Prior to the 1960s and 1970s most studies of time undertaken in the West treated it as an objective phenomenon, devoid of ideological inscriptions. Second Wave feminists challenged this view, arguing that time is not neutral but one of the mechanisms used by patriarchal cultures to subjugate women. The argument was that temporal modes, like everything else in patriarchal reality, had been gendered. Linear time was masculine because it was associated with the male-dominated public domain in which science, commerce and production took place. The natural world, mysticism, the private domain, domesticity and women were relegated to a cyclical temporality that was gendered feminine. In her paper 'Women's Time' Julia Kristeva suggests that three generations of feminism can be identified according to the attitude each takes to time. I use her hypothesis as a framework in order to examine the positions regarding time taken up by various feminist groups during the Second Wave. I identify liberal and socialist feminisms with Kristeva's first generation because they criticised the fact that women had been left out of linear time and the public domain and demanded that women be reinserted into linear time. I argue that Kristeva's second generation is represented by cultural feminists of the Second Wave who recognised an alternative women's time and suggested that women celebrate their connection with it, defying the authority of patrilinear time to dismiss 'women's experiences'. I then propose that the perspective of Kristeva's third generation may be identified in the work of six authors of feminist speculative fiction who were writing during the Second Wave; this perspective entails a synthesis of the two previous opposing viewpoints. This can be identified in these novels because the female protagonists are first empowered through their access to an alternative ('feminine') temporal space that subverts the authority of patriarchal culture embedded in linear time and then they move back into patrilinear time, claiming active roles and challenging patriarchal ideology. In this thesis I thus focus on the feminist examination of time during the Second Wave and consider how it was reflected in selected works of feminist speculative fiction written at the time. The authors discussed are Octavia Butler, Marge Piercy, Joanna Russ, Ursula Le Guin, Tanith Lee and Sheri Tepper.

Key Terms: Second Wave feminism; feminist speculative fiction; patrilinear time; women's time; Octavia Butler; Marge Piercy; Joanna Russ; Ursula Le Guin; Sheri Tepper; Tanith Lee.

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Introduction

Beginnings and Becomings

“If you knew time as well as I do,” said the Hatter, “you wouldn’t talk about *it*. It’s *him*.” (Lewis Carroll: *Alice in Wonderland*)

It can be argued that fantasy and science fiction share many features but perhaps the most salient is their ability to make the invisible visible; these genres often seem to encourage readers to confront elements of their psyches and societies that may otherwise remain unseen and unchallenged. Thus, when Carroll’s Mad Hatter, in a moment of characteristically lucid ‘lunacy’, describes time as a man the reader should consider the significance of the statement with care. Given that time is arguably the matrix within which all being occurs one wonders what the impact would be on women if this all-encompassing force were a ‘him’, and perhaps a ‘him’ that promotes a patriarchal ideology. Because time is invisible, feminists who would like to explore it may turn to the genres of fantasy and science fiction in order to do so. After all, not only does this fictional space enable them to question philosophical and scientific hypotheses previously limited by male-dominated perspectives, it is also in this arena, in which the invisible is made visible, that they may confront an otherwise unassailable opponent.

A very brief look at the history of the Western exploration of this ‘invisible assailant’, time, reveals that this particularly complex and slippery concept has been treated almost solely by great male thinkers. In looking at time, one moves through the work of Parmenides (520-430 BCE), Plato (428-347 BCE) and Aristotle (384-322 BCE) to Augustine (354-430 CE) and the male thinkers that dominated more modern times, such as Newton (1642-1727), Locke (1632-1704), Leibniz (1646-1716), Kant (1724-1804), Hegel (1770-1831) and Nietzsche (1844-1900). Nowhere is there any record of a contribution by female thinkers or a consideration of how time (and the domination of time by men) may affect women. The dominance of male thinkers continues into the twentieth century with philosophers and scientists like Einstein (1879-1955), Husserl (1859-1938), Heidegger (1889-1976) and so on. Although these men contributed invaluable insights to humanity’s understanding of time, their perspectives reflect only one side of the human experience. In this thesis I focus on the feminist struggle with time and the insights that previously silent women voiced during the Second Wave; my argument is that their exploration of time and the female experience of

time may provide a valuable and provocative counterpoint to the previously male-dominated Western exploration of time.

Because the modern feminist engagement with time emerges during the struggle for women's liberation that surfaced in the 1960s and 1970s, their exploration of time is grounded in the political, empirical and embodied experiences of women, unlike the hypotheses generated by male philosophers and scientists, most of whom describe time in fairly esoteric terms. In this period (which has since become known as the Second Wave), time came under scrutiny and, like many other supposedly 'natural' and 'neutral' phenomena, was identified as one of the mechanisms used by a 'hegemonic patriarchy' to keep 'universal woman' in her place (Mitchell, 1984; Johles-Forman and Sowton, 1989; Davies, 1990; Braidotti, 1994). As I suggested earlier, prior to the feminist investigation of time during this period, there was little consideration of the effect this phenomenon might have on women because, as sociologist Karen Davies observes: 'Examining the social construction of time is deemed irrelevant (...). [T]ime is taken for granted, it is assumed that we all know what time is and that we share a common definition. Time is genderless. It exists as objective fact' (Davies, 1990:15). In opposition to this view feminists of the Second Wave argue that time is not, in fact, genderless but very much gendered and therefore imbued with a patriarchal ideology that disempowers women (Collard, 1988; Ffeuffer-Kahn, 1989; O'Brian, 1989; Jardine, 1985; Donovan, 2001; Murphy, 2001).

The foundation of this argument is that the dominance of patriarchal culture in the West has led to the division of phenomena such as time into a set of binary oppositions, the one half gendered masculine and the other half feminine (de Beauvoir, 1953; Cixous, 1975 reprinted in Marks and de Courtivron, 1981: 96). Linear time, which dominates Western temporal consciousness, is gendered masculine because it is equated with the ordered, public, male-dominated realms of reason, commerce and science. Second Wave feminists suggest that the historical relegation of women to a private domain that is characterised as domestic, irrational cyclical and essentially un/re-productive denies women a place in the linear time of male history and production. The 'private' activities, emotions and experiences of women are not only conflated with this feminine cyclical time but are thus also comfortably dismissed as irrelevant to the project of public human endeavour, effectively silencing women until the feminist projects of the twentieth century (Merchant, 1980; Deeds-Ermath, 1989; Davies,

1990; Orr, 2006). While there is no unified Second Wave feminist position on what appears to be the dismissal of women from linear time, various Second Wave feminisms argue that linear time is complicit with oppressive patriarchal ideologies and propose counter-strategies that might enable women to defy this misogyny.

What I argue in this thesis is that the Second Wave feminist investigation and challenge of masculine time is not limited to the arenas of political activism or emerging feminist theory, but that some of the most ground-breaking insights may be found in selected novels written at the time, notably in what was then the newly emerging genre of feminist speculative fiction. I thus read the novels discussed in chapters two and three of this thesis as contributing to the Second Wave debate on time.

It is not surprising that at the same time as Second Wave feminism was gaining ground as a movement, feminist speculative fiction was emerging as a distinct subgenre of SF. The women's liberation movement affected what women could say, how they were seen and the images that were used to describe them in fiction. So, although there had been women writing what could be qualified as feminist SF and fantasy before the nineteen sixties and seventies (Mains, 2009:41; Leif-Davin, 2009:45-46), it is really during this period that speculative fiction was uncompromisingly co-opted by feminist authors and scholars (Baccolini, 2000; Pearson, 2006; Higgins, 2009). In this new fictional space feminist authors could articulate the political positions of various feminisms in a creative way and speculate about the ramifications of having feminist demands met (or not met, as the case may be). As feminist theorists Helen Merrick, Donna Haraway and Katie King argue, in this way feminist speculative fiction is as much a 'body of knowledge' functioning as an 'apparatus for the production of feminist culture' as is feminist theory or activism (Merrick, 2009:2; Haraway, 1991:162-163; King, 1994:xv-xvi). In her book *The Secret Feminist Cabal* (2009), Merrick writes that she is particularly

(i)nterested in the sociocultural, historically specific contexts that enable and inflect this process of "production". [Her] focus is on how feminist science fiction texts function not only as popular fiction but also as examples of feminist knowledge, as discourses on science and technology, and as the commerce for socio-political engagements between communities of readers, writers, fans, critics and editors. (2009:2)

This is partly the position I adopt; I focus on how the feminist speculative fiction texts I have selected act as examples of feminist knowledge, particularly in the manner in which their authors contribute to the larger Second Wave engagement with and criticism of masculine linear time. In each of the novels I discuss, the language and narrative strategies employed seem to indicate at least a cursory knowledge of and an attempt to deepen the Second Wave exploration of what it would mean for women to be able to claim or create a chronology of their own.

Because the historical moment on which I focus is that of Second Wave feminism, I acknowledge that there may be concerns regarding the terms that I use and the manner in which I use them because many that were first used during the 1960s and 1970s have since been problematised in poststructuralist feminist theory. Even the term ‘Second Wave’ has come under scrutiny in recent years. In their excellent article on the ‘Rise of the Third Wave’, Susan Archer and Douglas J. Huffman recognise the difficulty in using a term like ‘wave’ which suggests a collective because

(w)ave approaches too often downplay the importance of individual and small-scale collective actions, as well as indirect and covert acts. We also agree that there is a tendency for attention to be drawn to the common themes that unify each wave, and this often obscures the diversity of the competing feminisms that actually exist. (Archer and Huffman, 2005:58)

What Archer and Huffman introduce here is the concern many feminists have with suggesting a collective identity (Beer, 1989; Fraser, 1992; Marshall, 1994). On the one hand the problem is that this erases smaller groups of women, or women whose political agenda does not adhere to the tenets of the dominant feminist position. And on the other hand the danger is that within such rhetoric lies the seed of essentialism: that one may be suggesting different women are alike simply because they share experiences dictated by the female body. The potential ‘danger’ of essentialism is unfortunately almost unavoidable in any feminist undertaking, unless one is to do away with the category of ‘women’ completely (which is what some poststructuralist feminisms attempt). In order to counteract the possibility of an impolitic essentialism, contemporary feminist theorists acknowledge the differences (of age, race, class, ethnicity and so on) between women (Lorde, 1983; Carby, 1992; hooks, 1994; Rigby, 2001), even as they explore experiences that arguably still apply, in varying degrees, to all women. This acknowledgement of and focus on differences informs what has been

called Fourth Wave or subaltern feminism. The postmodern and poststructuralist feminisms that emerged from the mid-1980s are generally considered to constitute Third Wave feminism. The irony here is that, as Diana Fuss suggests, ‘the constructionist impulse to specify, rather than definitively counteracting essentialism, often simply redeploys it’ (Fuss, 1989:386). Following her line of thinking, one could argue that, in proposing increasing degrees of specificity, subaltern and poststructuralist feminisms merely inscribe other essentialisms: take, for example, the ‘essential’ positions implied when describing someone as an African-American, middle-class, lesbian woman from the 1980s - each of these qualifiers suggests a subject position that is redolent of a very specific history, perspective, allegiance and so on.

Having said that, the concerns Archer and Huffman raise are particularly relevant when one discusses Second Wave feminisms which often rely (especially in the early 1960s) on forging a collective identity that could rally women to a common cause (Moi, 1989; Brooks, 1997; Stansell, 2010:xvii). The terms ‘woman’ and ‘women’ appear often in this early feminist rhetoric and while they are meant to suggest that all women have something in common with Universal Woman, the argument has been made that the terms really only reflected the white, middle-class, educated and heterosexual women whose voices dominated the early movement (Carby, 1982; Sykes, 1984; Evans, 1995; Whelehan, 1995:18), resulting in the marginalisation of lesbian feminists and feminists of colour. This was acknowledged by some Second Wave feminists who were themselves aware of the structuralist Catch 22 situation in which they found themselves. French feminist Luce Irigaray admits as much when she writes in 1977: ‘Woman? Doesn’t exist’ (reprinted in Marks and de Courtivron, 1981:108). The same sentiment is expressed by Julia Kristeva who writes in 1974 that ‘the belief that “one is a woman” is (...) absurd and obscurantist’ (reprinted in Marks and de Courtivron, 1981:137); the concern these women voice is that ‘woman’ only exists because man has defined her as such. However, Kristeva goes on three lines later to admit that there is a political need for the phrase ‘we are women’ because of the common rights and goals for which all ‘women’ need to fight. When I use the term ‘women’, I therefore tend to use it as it was used during the early years of the Second Wave: with a recognition that the need to assert a collective identity for the purposes of political expediency may outweigh the problematic nature of imposing a collective identity on a group of people whose differences may well outweigh the idealisation of any common experiences. I also recognise that the need to forge a collective identity may have been concentrated at the beginning of the Second Wave in reaction to the perceived

threat of a monolithic, hegemonic patriarchy that had supposedly oppressed all women throughout history.

Having said this, while I acknowledge that some may question my return to such a controversial period in feminist history because of the essentialism that marks early activism and theory, I do so because I believe that there is something to be gained from a return to Second Wave feminisms. Although poststructuralist feminists have embraced the dissolution of the subject, dissolving unifying signs like ‘woman’ and ‘man’ (Butler, 1990; Poovey, 1988; Kanneh, 1992), this position created a flurry of heated debate in feminist theoretical circles beginning in the 1980s, when feminist post-structuralism was new, and continuing today (Delmar, 1986; Eagleton, 1996; Brooks, 1997). The primary criticism aimed at the poststructuralist deconstruction of ‘woman’ is that, while it remains a very significant theoretical tool for understanding the socio-cultural and historical forces that construct (gendered) subjects, it derails a political feminism that is still fighting for the rights of ‘women’ the world over (Barrett, 1980; Waugh, 1989). Allied to this is the argument that it may have been more important for women who had never been unified, independent subjects to discover and define what they were, however shifting and preliminary that idea might be, before deconstructing it. As Patricia Waugh argues:

if women have traditionally been positioned in terms of “otherness”, then the desire to become subjects (which dominates the first phase of post 1960s feminism) is likely to be stronger than the desire to deconstruct, decentre or fragment subjectivity (which dominates post-1960s postmodern practice and poststructuralist theory). (Waugh, 1989:360)

Arguably, this is the position many women and some feminists still find themselves in today; although the poststructuralist project to expose ‘woman’ as a fiction has theoretical value, as an academic exercise, it may mean very little to women living in the ‘real world’ who still have to navigate what it means to be ‘a woman’ in a world dominated by masculinist cultures (Millett, 1972; Alcoff, 1988; Stansell, 2010). Toril Moi’s definition of ‘feminism’ during the Second Wave thus remains a useful signpost of what to expect from these feminisms, and a cautionary warning against expecting something that was not their primary goal; she writes that

[t]he words ‘feminist’ or ‘feminism’ are political labels indicating support for the aims of the new women’s movement which emerged in the late 1960s. ‘Feminist criticism’, then, is a specific kind of political discourse: a critical

and theoretical practice committed to the struggle against patriarchy and sexism, not simply a concern for gender in literature. (Moi, 1989:117)

Her definition is a useful reminder of what to expect when returning to this moment in feminist history and a much-needed re-orientation in perspective for modern poststructuralist feminists. I would also like to propose that, allied to this political focus on women, the significance of the Second Wave moment in Western history, when people stopped to ask ‘What is “woman”?’ and ‘Can an understanding of “woman” add anything to our understanding of humanity?’ cannot be overstated. Second Wave feminisms introduced the possibility of an alternative logic to the male-dominated one that had served humanity for centuries, it destabilised the authority of the history ‘we all know’ and it proposed a set of alternative metaphors for describing the human experience. While there might continue to be problems with what these early feminists said and how they said it, the value of what they said lies in their introduction of something wholly new into Western consciousness: woman. Alice Jardine describes this process of ‘putting [woman] into discourse’ as *gynesis* and suggests that ‘the object produced by this process is neither a person nor a thing, but a horizon, that toward which the process is tending: a *gynema*...a woman-in-effect that is never stable’ (Jardine, 1985:25). Merely the act of using a term like ‘woman’ is revolutionary not only because it focuses attention on what had been erased from history but also because inherent in the term is an instability, a grasping at that which has yet to be known; focussing attention on ‘woman’ subverts the hegemonic truth of western patriarchal cultures.

I propose that the anxious reaction of some poststructuralists to the continued use of terms like ‘woman’ and ‘the feminine’ reveals an unnecessary wariness of anything but poststructuralist practice. The trick, as Diana Fuss argues in *Essentially Speaking* (1989), is to deploy these terms knowingly, rather than ‘fall into’ using them as though they have transparent and universally understood values and meanings (Fuss, 1989:387). Certainly, there is a danger in suggesting that all women share certain essential traits and that these act as indicators of ‘being a woman’, but there is also danger in the opposite extreme that suggests ‘woman’ does not exist; both positions need to be carefully navigated and negotiated by modern feminisms if ‘feminism’ is to survive at all. When the concept of ‘the feminine’ is put into play by the authors whose work I discuss in chapters three and four, I believe that it is done so knowingly, as Fuss suggests; here ‘the feminine’ is not used to describe or prescribe the essential qualities of ‘successful womanhood’, it is used to challenge and

undermine masculine authority and enable the Other to emerge and subvert existing patriarchal socio-cultural organisation.

In focusing on feminism of the Second Wave, this thesis recognises the importance of that mode of feminism in its historical moment; but it also argues that, despite its limitations, Second Wave feminism, in its boldness and polemical directness, still has something to offer in the present. This study therefore seeks to recuperate some of its polemical value in theoretical terms, but also to bring to the fore a number of works of fiction which explore and exemplify this mode of feminism, some of which have come to be considered marginal or deemed to be of lesser significance.

This brings me to the very similar problems contemporary feminisms have with the term ‘patriarchy’. This term was introduced and used simplistically during the Second Wave to mean the position of power of all men over all women and the oppression resulting from it (Millett, 1970; Waugh, 1992; Whelehan, 1995:15). ‘Patriarchy’ is a fairly under-theorised term that has received much criticism in recent feminist scholarly writing because it does not take into account the different kinds of patriarchies that operate in different social contexts and in different historical periods. In order to avoid this issue I therefore use the terms patriarchal culture or patriarchal ideology to describe the system in place at a particular time and observed to be operating among people whereby men of a certain class and race have a position of power in relation to women of the same class and race.

The only other terms that need qualification are those that apply to the fiction I discuss. In a study of science fiction (SF) and fantasy the issue of definition is thorny because each critic, author and fan seems to have attempted and/or coined his or her own definition of these terms (Bainbridge, 1986; Armit, 1991; Barr, 1993; Stockwell, 2000; LARBALÉSTIER, 2002). Although I prefer the term ‘speculative fiction’ which was introduced by feminist SF critic Marleen Barr in the 1980s (1987:xxi) to encapsulate both SF and fantasy, a brief consideration of the issue of definition is still necessary. The various definitions suggested by SF and fantasy critics all seek to delineate the boundaries between that which should be considered science fiction and everything else which is other to science fiction (fantasy, horror, supernatural fiction, myth, fairy tale). On the one hand there are critics who maintain that what sets SF apart from other fantastic literature is the fact that it uses devices extrapolated from the

physical sciences and is therefore essentially rational. These critics seem to dismiss fantasy as ‘anti-cognitive’ and ‘inimical to the empirical world’ (Suvin, 1979:8). On the other hand, there are critics who suggest that SF and other literatures of the fantastic share characteristics and that these blur the boundaries between them.

For fantasy and SF author and critic, Ursula Le Guin SF uses symbol and archetype as much as fantasy does and this is what makes them both potentially rich imaginative landscapes and modern mythologies. For her a fantastic image, like a witch or a dragon, is not at all anti-cognitive because the image relies on the cognition of the reader to achieve its purpose: the reader actively needs to attempt to unravel and understand the symbol for it to have numinous resonance. As she writes, ‘True myth may serve for thousands of years as an inexhaustible source of intellectual speculation, religious joy, intellectual inquiry, and artistic renewal. The real mystery is not destroyed by reason. The fake one is’ (Le Guin, 1989:65). This is echoed by feminist myth scholar, Estella Lauter, who writes that, ‘Myth is an aspect of our capacity to reason’ (Lauter, 1984:2). The mythic elements that can be traced in both SF and fantasy therefore demand of the reader a cognitive engagement with the text which can lead to a deep and rich psychological transformation. In this respect, as Brian Aldiss suggests, ‘we have to admit defeat in distinguishing between SF and fantasy’ (Aldiss, 2005:166). The only real difference between the two genres is thus an arguably superficial one which has to do with the enabling devices each genre uses: SF has no magic (i.e. spells) and fantasy does. But where does that leave us if we consider Arthur C. Clarke’s third law that states that ‘any sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic’ (in Kaku, 2008:3)?

Aldiss’s statement is also particularly relevant when one moves from the early Hard SF years into the 1960s and 1970s during which New Wave SF emerged. The experimentation with form during this period means that the distinction between ‘pure’, scientific SF and other fantastic forms was not necessarily adhered to, so that Hillegas can write in 1979 that ‘the two forms are not always pure – fantasy can have science-fiction elements and science-fiction, fantasy elements’ (Hillegas, 1979:2). The experimentation of this period also led to an exploration of provocative political and social ideas and so more feminist authors were drawn to the genre.

More feminist authors and scholars were drawn to SF and fantasy fandom, criticism and writing during this period and so the desire to explain what drew them to these genres became important. In 1987 feminist SF critic Marleen Barr suggested using the term ‘speculative fiction’ to ‘indicate feminist utopias, science fiction, fantasy, and sword and sorcery’ (Barr, 1987:xxi). Significantly, what she indicates is that it is very much this openness to various modes that makes speculative fiction an attractive option to feminist writers. This sentiment is echoed by feminist SF theorist Sarah Lefanu who writes that speculative fiction’s

[g]lorious eclecticism, with its mingling of the rational discourse of science with the pre-rational language of the unconscious – for SF borrows from horror, mythology and fairy tale – offers a means of exploring the myriad ways in which we are constructed as women. (1989:5)

Another advantage of the term speculative fiction is that it focuses one’s attention on the purpose of the author which is why it is an accurate descriptive term for this kind of fiction. One may have SF that is not overtly speculative (as in the pure adventures of space opera) and one may have fantasies that ‘[seem] to support the status quo’ (Bainbridge, 1986:146) and are therefore also not speculative. The texts I have selected are all speculative and I therefore choose to use this term as did Marleen Barr in the 1980s. The texts discussed here, whether SF or fantasy, are what pre-eminent SF author and critic Joanna Russ would call ‘What If Literature’ (Russ, 1972:79). Feminist speculative fiction speculates about gender, the roles women and men are required to play, how this affects the humanity of each and what alternatives can be imagined to these limiting social roles. It is this speculation that enables feminist speculative fiction to further feminist knowledge, as Merrick, Harraway and King suggest.

Given that speculative fiction seems to be particularly suited to exploring feminist concerns, it is both interesting and pertinent to reflect on why and when the first women were drawn to this genre. Although it is generally considered to be a genre dominated by both male authors and male fans (Rabkin, 1981; Sanders, 1981; Freedman, 2000), this is more apt a description of the early years of the genre than of the situation as it is now. Sarah Lefanu observes that, ‘[s]cience fiction is popularly conceived as male territory, boys’ own adventure stories with little to interest a female readership. This is true of the heyday of magazine science fiction, the 1930s and 1940s’ (Lefanu, 1989:2). The heyday of which she speaks can be extended into the 1950s, which are commonly considered the ‘Golden Age’ of SF. Although there were

women writing speculative fiction during this period, the genre was still dominated by men, not only in terms of authors but also in terms of male characters and a masculine ethos that occluded any real contribution by women (Freedman, 2000:130). The largely unsung speculative fiction written by women at this time did, however, foreshadow feminist developments that would come to the genre later. In his contribution to Robin Reid's *Women in Science Fiction and Fantasy*, Eric Leif Davin writes that even in these early years, thoughtful female authors

(e)xplored explicitly feminist social arrangements in which they envisioned egalitarian gender relations. They also portrayed strong female characters who broke out of the cult of True Womanhood stereotype to become agents of social transformation in their own right. (Leif Davin in Reid, 2009:49)

In this way early works of speculative fiction by women and feminist authors were precursors of what would be written during the Second Wave. Lisa Yaszek also observes that

[n]early three hundred women began publishing in the SF community after World War Two, and the stories they wrote both implicitly and explicitly challenged what [Betty] Friedan called 'the feminine mystique' by staking claims for women in the American future imaginary. (Yaszek, 2008:3)

The fact that many women began writing after the Second World War is not surprising. Women who had helped with the war effort now refused to be relegated once again to a limiting domestic arena. Some of the authors to whom Yaszek and Leif Davin refer are women like C.L. Moore and Alice Sheldon (James Tiptree Jr). However, although these authors made a significant contribution to the genre, their challenge to 'the feminine mystique' of which Yaszek writes did not make enough of an inroad into what remained the masculine genre of SF. In fact, it is fairly telling that many of these women published under names that are gender neutral or masculine and that one of 'James Tiptree Jr's' most well-known stories is entitled 'The Women Men Don't See' (first published in 1973).

Early female authors of SF were certainly rarer than male authors and female characters, if they appeared at all, tended to be secondary. They also tended to reflect the feminine ideal and stereotype both desired and expected of women by men at the time. In one of the first feminist scholarly critiques of SF, Joanna Russ reflects on the position of women in this early SF; she calls it 'Intergalactic Suburbia' because while this SF may be set in the future, it continued to reflect 1960s misogynist social arrangements. She writes:

One would think science fiction the perfect literary mode in which to explore (and explode) our assumptions about ‘innate’ values and ‘natural’ social arrangements (...) [b]ut speculation about the innate personality differences between men and women, about family structure, about sex, in short about gender roles, does not exist at all. In general, the authors who write reasonably sophisticated and literate science fiction (Clarke, Asimov, for choice) see the relations between the sexes as those of present-day, white, middle-class suburbia. Mummy and Daddy may live inside a huge amoeba and Daddy’s job may be to test psychedelic drugs or cultivate yeast-vats, but the world inside their heads is the world of Westport and Rahway and *that world is never questioned*. (Russ, 1972:80-81) (italics in the original)

She concludes that, ‘There are plenty of images of women in science fiction. There are hardly any women’ (Russ, 1972:91).

This situation began to change as the 1960s and 1970s ushered in both the modern feminist movement and New Wave SF. Novels and short stories of the New Wave reflected a broadening of concerns as authors began to use speculative fiction openly for political ends, exploring issues such as race and gender and controversial ideas like ‘consciousness, subjectivity, hallucination and the influence of technology on the private life’ (Stockwell, 2000:9). This broadening of subject matter was matched by the New Wave writers’ experimentation with form, which allowed for ‘stream of consciousness, rapid shift of scene through time and space and the avoidance of structured plot’ (Bainbridge, 1986:91). The new experimental energy and political consciousness of the New Wave may have been what attracted greater numbers of women, both as authors and fans, to speculative fiction. Any cursory glance at the speculative fiction written by women in the 1960s and 1970s reveals that it is overtly influenced by the ‘feminist, socialist and radical politics’ (Lefanu, 1989:3) of the time; it is thus hardly surprising that during this time considerably more ‘real women’ begin to appear in speculative fiction, certainly to far greater effect than they had in the past. As David M. Higgins writes:

The success of the women’s movement made an impact on SF in the 1970s. New Wave feminists went beyond simply questioning the sexist limitations of pulp SF formulas into more active challenges of social inequality, and further still into exploring new conceptions of power relations between men and women. (in Reid, 2009:79)

It was also during the 1970s that the first overtly feminist scholarship to do with SF was written and that the first feminist SF fanzines appeared. This burgeoning of feminist interest in speculative fiction culminated in 1977 with Wiscon, the first feminist science fiction convention (Hood and Reid, 2009:193). In the provocative new worlds being created by feminist authors of speculative fiction they extrapolated consequences of present-day sexism, and the myriad possible futures they envisioned gave readers and new authors the courage to imagine what empowered, liberated women might be like.

Carl Freedman suggests that speculative fiction suits a feminist agenda because one of the problems for feminism is its concern with the ‘ideological inscriptions of everyday life, with its imbrication of the political in the empirical and the personal’ (Freedman, 2000:132). This means that it is difficult to pinpoint sexist actions and attitudes because they are part of the accepted fabric of everyday life. Like Merrick, Haraway and King, he argues that

[f]eminist fiction would thus function as the ‘completion’ of discursive feminist theory, rather than the other way around. I further suggest that, of all the varieties of fiction, the forms of narrative art specific to science fiction – with its resources for estranging the familiar and suggesting alternatives to the given – may be particularly well suited to deal with the penetration of sexism into the quotidian world. The oppression of women is so closely woven into the fabric of daily experience that the strongest cognitive estrangements (those of which science fiction is uniquely capable) may be required in order to display such oppression as it cannot know or display itself. (Freedman, 2000:134)

Because feminist speculative fiction is able to criticise everyday reality in detail it may be able to subvert subtle (and not so subtle) monolithic patriarchal ‘truths’ and make both male and female readers acknowledge the insidious, oppressive nature of patriarchal culture. In this way feminist speculative fiction authors make a significant contribution to the general feminist project of questioning gendered identities and defying patriarchal ideologies that continue to confine women. As Raffaella Baccolini writes, ‘Themes such as representation of women and their bodies, reproduction and sexuality, and language and its relation to identity, have all been tackled, explored and reappropriated (...) in a dialectical engagement with tradition’ (Baccolini, 2000:16). Having once appropriated the genre, feminist authors were thus able to use this potent and powerful form to great effect, furthering feminist knowledge through their creative extrapolations.

My focus in this thesis is on one key characteristic found in much feminist speculative fiction: the interrogation of time, and particularly how the Second Wave investigation of time is taken up and furthered in the novels I have selected. These novels were either first published during the Second Wave (Octavia Butler's *Kindred* – 1979; Joanna Russ's *Alyx* short stories – published from 1967-1970; Marge Piercy's *Woman on the Edge of Time* – 1976; Ursula Le Guin's *The Tombs of Atuan* – 1974; Tanith Lee's *The Winter Players* – 1976) or, like Le Guin's *Tehanu* (1990) and *The Other Wind* (2002) and Sheri S. Tepper's *Beauty* (1991), reflect Second Wave perspectives on time. I argue that in these novels the authors take up the debate on women's position in and relationship to linear time that begins in the Second Wave and add their own unique insights to it.

I have chosen to analyse these novels not only because speculative fiction is an appropriate genre for feminist speculation and extrapolation but because it is also, as I suggest earlier, a genre that encourages authors and readers to challenge such 'givens' as time. Central to my purposes, then, is the idea that these novels belong both to the fairly new 'tradition' of feminist speculative fiction and to the far older SF tradition of the Time Travel Novel (or novels in which the subversion of linear time occurs). Obviously writers of feminist speculative fiction use many of the devices associated with SF to destabilise patriarchy: contact with aliens results in a radical reconceptualization of gender; and utopian visions present worlds where women live as equals with men, or (overthrowing the self-importance of masculinist culture completely) quite happily without any men at all. In this thesis I argue that some also choose to use the subversion of linear time (through time travel and other means) to enable female characters trapped in misogynistic presents to develop agency and defy the patriarchal cultures of their original times. It is this device, in particular, that I would argue allows the authors I discuss here to make a significant contribution to the Second Wave debate on time.

The subversion of linear time has been used by countless male authors of speculative fiction, from the early fiction of H.G. Wells (*The Time Machine* [1895]) and Mark Twain (*A Connecticut Yankee in the Court of King Arthur* [1889]) to the more recent writings of Robert Heinlein ("By His Bootstraps" [1941]; "All You Zombies" [1959]) and Dan Simmons (*The Hyperion Saga* [1989-1990]) to mention only a very few; (Paul Nahin produces an impressive and seemingly exhaustive overview of time travel SF in his book *Time Machines*

[1993]). Authors of speculative fiction have always seemed eager to experiment with time and the effects of temporal dissonance. The reason for this is that, if one wants to challenge accepted notions of reality, the subversion of time is a quick and effective way in which to do it. As Lucie Armitt writes:

One of the primary concerns of the science fiction writer is to challenge received notions of reality as it currently exists, and two of the most significant foundations upon which reality is based are time and language (forming the means whereby reality is compartmentalised into comprehensible units). Time as a theme has always been a focus for the science fiction writer, with time travel and disrupted chronologies being a central occupation throughout the history of the form. (Armitt, 1991:7)

Significantly, the disruption of time in speculative fiction runs far deeper than merely the use of a time travel device or a disrupted linear chronology. Temporal dissonance is woven into the very fabric of the form because there is always a tension between the ‘once upon a time’ of fantastic narrative and the ‘there will be’ of speculation. SF is also fascinating from a temporal point of view because the futures some authors describe, particularly those that have set dates in our linear chronology (*1984*, *2001: A Space Odyssey*) have now come and gone and yet the works retain their predictive future-centred visions. In this way speculative fiction narratives can become histories of past-futures-to-come. Slusser suggests that this ‘coming and going of years, leaving erasures instead of iron dates, shows us that future visions must be fluid and tentative, not monolithic’ (Slusser, 1987:10). He also suggests, in accordance with Le Guin’s view of SF as a modern mythology, that it is speculative fiction’s kinship with myth that encourages experimentation with time. He writes that the mythic visions in speculative fiction

[a]re supertemporal situations that, as they deprivilege the time line, can be seen to shape all our visions, past and future. Myth allows us to see the alpha and omega, to look beyond the limits, at either end of the chronological scale of history itself. But this mythic vision too may be a form of mirror vision: for looking into the past or the future, mythicalist man hopes to see, in his myths, his own face. (Slusser, 1987:16)

Ironically, Slusser’s particularly masculinist turn of phrase leads neatly into the reason that feminists may want to use speculative fiction’s predilection for temporal dissonance. Some feminists, like the ones I discuss, may use the subversion of linear time in speculative fiction to identify man’s face, so they can look behind it to find woman’s face. After all, for most of

history (and in most literature), “Man” is a rhetorical convenience for “human”. “Man” includes “woman” (Russ, *The Female Man*, 1994:93).

During the Second Wave some feminists identified linear time as one of the mechanisms used by Western patriarchal culture to justify its dismissal of women from the public domain and deny them autonomy. When feminist authors subvert linear time in their narratives it may therefore be to assert a women’s time and a women’s culture that encourages the celebration and validation of that which has been dismissed by patriarchal culture. Marleen Barr suggests that perhaps this is why so much feminist speculative fiction (and feminist mainstream literature) violates time restrictions (Barr, 1993:104). She also suggests that

[t]ime travel enables female protagonists to recover, rebuild, and redefine their personal feminine archetypes of selfhood. Speculative fiction’s female time travellers convey the hope that, despite the passage of hundreds of years without such feminine archetypes, real women can insist upon and achieve self-affirmation in the real world. Real women can finally make up for lost time. (Barr, 1987:57)

Certainly the authors discussed in this thesis appear to suggest that there may be subversive potential in establishing or claiming an alternative chronology, a ‘women’s time’, that enables their characters to free themselves from the oppressive patriarchal cultures described in the novels and to become something new. The female characters in the novels I have chosen to study move into this alternative temporal space and it seems to be that it is this very distance from patrilinear time that enables them to achieve the self-affirmation Barr calls for, defying masculinist culture’s attempts to define and curtail them.

In the first chapter of the thesis I very briefly acknowledge and describe the male-dominated philosophical and scientific exploration of time in the West, from the ancient Greek philosophers to the thinkers of the twentieth century. I then review the Second Wave debate on time. Using Julia Kristeva’s hypothesis in her article ‘Women’s Time’ as a frame, I argue that there are two dominant views of time during the Second Wave. Kristeva suggests that these two views belong to first generation feminists (which she identifies as the suffragists) and to second generation feminists (those of the Second Wave). According to her, the first generation demands insertion into masculine linear time and the public domain whereas the second generation defies masculine linear time and seeks to (re)create and (re)claim a separate women’s time that is cyclical and in which women’s experiences have value. In my

review of Second Wave theoretical texts that deal with time I find, however, that both generations are active during the Second Wave in which liberal and socialist feminisms argue for women's insertion into linear time and the public domain while cultural feminisms argue for the revival of a 'women's time', a feminine temporal consciousness that celebrates the embodied experiences of women and defies patriarchal culture's devaluing of them.

Although these are the two dominant positions espoused during the Second Wave, one must acknowledge that both are somewhat problematic: the demand for insertion into public time is problematic because it may leave the dominant patriarchal ideology embedded in linear time intact; and the valorisation and call for the wholesale adoption of a 'women's time' is problematic because of the unproblematic essentialism it seems to celebrate and because it, too, leaves linear time (and masculinist culture) unchallenged. In contrast to this, some authors writing at the time treat these two positions in a dialectical manner, exploring the possibilities that emerge when neither extreme is treated as absolute. In this way they seem to reflect what Kristeva describes as the 'third generation'. This third generation demands both an insertion into linear time and the recognition that women may experience a kind of 'chronology of their own' apart from linear time. While this view does not seem to have been explored very much in Second Wave theory, the novels I discuss examine just this possibility. The female characters in these novels are denied equal access to the public domain that is male-dominated and so they step out of linear time. Stepping out of patrilinear time enables them to gain access to a women's time that is often described in terms that valorise what masculinist culture has vilified and that encourages them to reclaim the agency denied women in patriarchal societies. This agency empowers them to step back into linear time independent, liberated and ready to challenge the dominance of patriarchal ideology.

Although I have previously argued for the use of the term speculative fiction to refer to both SF and fantasy, I divide my discussion of the selected fiction into chapters that deal with these two genres separately, suggesting a clear separation of the two modes even though I feel this is neither entirely possible nor desirable. The reason for my division is somewhat simplistic; although I feel fantasy and SF share enough common features to merit the use of an overarching term like 'speculative fiction', each mode, as reflected in the novels I discuss, seems to require something different from the subversion of patrilinear time. It is this different 'endgame' to do with the subversion of linear time that has led to the seemingly

generic division of my material. In the novels that are discussed in the SF chapter the focused impact of the subversion of linear time is the individual liberation of particular women. In the novels discussed in the fantasy section, however, when the protagonists subvert linear time the result is the liberation of their worlds. Apart from that the differences between the texts are (arguably) fairly small. All three protagonists in the SF chapter travel in time and two in the fantasy chapter do the same but none of the devices used to achieve this are explained in enough detail for the works to qualify as scientific extrapolation. Butler's Dana travels through time by means that remain unexplained and may even be magical but because the magic is neither explicitly acknowledged nor described as such, her story is included in the SF chapter. Although Russ's Alyx is the 'typical' s/hero of a sword and sorcery tale, because she travels in time by means of a futuristic mechanical time machine, her tale, too, goes into the SF section. The only other difference that obviously separates the SF novels from the fantasy novels is that magic is explicitly present in the fantasies.

I begin the SF chapter with a brief discussion of the tradition of literary time travel and the use to which feminist authors have put it. I also acknowledge the ground-breaking Second Wave theorising of such feminist SF critics as Marleen Barr and Joanna Russ as well as the writing of three seminal feminist SF authors of the time: Octavia E. Butler, Marge Piercy and Joanna Russ herself. I discuss Octavia Butler's *Kindred*, Marge Piercy's *Woman on the Edge of Time* and Joanna Russ's *The Adventures of Alyx* (the *Alyx* short stories were collected and published in a single volume in 1983). I have chosen to discuss Butler's *Kindred* not only because it is a classic of Second Wave feminist SF but because it deals with salient issues to do with time and the effects of male-dominated history on a woman who is doubly othered (Dana is black). This novel is considered ground-breaking because it 'emerged at the end of two decades of intense debate over the representation of African American history' (Yaszek, 2003:1054) and suggests a provocative answer to it. In this fictional space, Butler rewrites African-American history in such a way that the 'nightmarishness (...) is intensely educative in effect' (Clute and Nicholls, 1999:180) and remains so as each new generation reads this novel. Like Piercy's *Woman on the Edge of Time*, this novel is therefore an obvious choice for a thesis that deals with the harrowing effects of masculine time as explored in feminist SF. Piercy's novel is also considered a feminist SF classic and is credited with bringing innovation to the genre as a forerunner of the cult SF sub-genre, cyberpunk. In this novel, Piercy explores the effects of masculine time on women in a provocative and deeply

disturbing way. When it was released, *Lesbian Tide* reviewer Justine called the novel ‘one of the most outstanding books of 1976’ (34) because it aptly explores the female condition of ‘being neither here nor there, of being haunted by the past as well as the future’ (34). Although Piercy has since been criticised for her somewhat utopian solutions to feminist issues in this novel, her exploration of time remains provocative and is thus included in this study. Next to these two novels, Joanna Russ’s *The Adventures of Alyx* may seem a strange choice but perhaps the reason for this is that most readers are merely more familiar with Russ’s better-known works, particularly *The Female Man*. *The Adventures of Alyx* has received very little critical attention, a pity given that these stories foreshadow the experimentation and richness Russ brings to her later writing. I have chosen to include these little-known tales because of Russ’s ingenious treatment of time throughout the cycle: she layers the literary techniques used to subvert both linear time and the authority of masculinist culture in such a way that the reader continually unearths more complexities in the stories. The fact that these stories are now out of print is a real loss to feminist SF, particularly because, as Samuel R. Delaney suggests, Alyx may be one of Russ’s finest creations and, as Clute and Nicholls suggest, ‘the ease with which later writers now use active female protagonists in adventure roles, without having to argue the case, owes much to this example’ (1999:1035).

My analysis of these novels suggests that the perspectives of these three authors regarding the effects of masculine linear time on their female protagonists are similar. Butler and Piercy both explore the position of a protagonist who is doubly othered by white patriarchal culture: Dana is a black woman and Connie (Piercy’s protagonist) is a poor Hispanic woman. Neither of these women can live full lives in a society in which the dominant culture is white and patriarchal. In the short story that arguably explains Alyx’s origins, Russ describes her situation as similarly oppressive and constraining. When these female characters move out of linear time the truths to which they are exposed force them to reassess what they know of themselves and their consequent defiance of linear time empowers them to defy patriarchal ideology. In each case the protagonist claims the right to become something other than what is expected of her by patriarchal culture and this allows her to claim an active role in linear time.

The fantasy chapter begins with a brief review of the history of feminism's engagement with the genre and the qualities that make this genre amenable to being used for feminist purposes. I also consider the way time is used in fantasy, drawing particularly on the early twentieth century writings of myth scholar Mircea Eliade and the more contemporary work of speculative fiction theorists Ursula Le Guin and Brian Attebery. In this chapter I consider the treatment of time in Ursula K. Le Guin's *The Tombs of Atuan*, *Tehanu* and *The Other Wind*, Tanith Lee's *The Winter Players* and Sheri S. Tepper's *Beauty*. Le Guin, who received a Pilgrim Award in 1989 for her 'services to [speculative fiction] criticism' (Clute and Nicholls, 1999:704) is one of the most critically acclaimed authors of both fantasy and SF. I have chosen to analyse three books from her *Earthsea Series* which is one of the great classics of modern fantasy. Although these novels have generated a vast amount of critical praise (*Tehanu* won the Nebula Award in the year of its release) and attention, Le Guin's treatment of time in the novels has not yet been addressed; the analysis I undertake in this thesis is an attempt to redress this. I have also chosen to analyse Tanith Lee's *The Winter Players* not only in recognition of the contribution Lee has made to feminist fantasy but because her exploration of time in this novella is provocative and in keeping with what I identify as the Second Wave criticism of patrilinear time. Because Lee is such a prolific author, much of her shorter fiction has yet to receive critical attention, but this is by no means an indication that it lacks literary worth: her writing is full of rich, provocative symbolism and constantly explores issues pertinent to contemporary feminisms. Sheri Tepper's *Beauty* is the last novel that I analyse in this thesis. Like *The Winter Players*, *Beauty* has yet to receive the critical attention it warrants, even though it won the Locus Award for best fantasy book in 1992. This book has been described as 'Tepper's triumph' (Spencer, 1992:121) and its exploration of fairy tales, beauty, ecology and the disastrous effects of an unchallenged patrilinear culture contribute pertinent insights to the Second Wave perspective on time.

In the three *Earthsea* novels that I discuss Le Guin's protagonists are two female characters, Tenar and Tehanu. Neither of these women time travels or steps literally into the space of another temporality but Le Guin describes them in such a way that they come to embody the force of a time that is Other to the patrilinear time privileged by the patriarchal cultures of Earthsea. When they challenge the authority of linear time, forcing alternative feminine temporality to be acknowledged and experienced, Earthsea is changed forever; Tenar and Tehanu bring about the rebirth of this world. Lee's Oaive does the same for her world. Her break with linear time comes when she time travels and like the characters in the SF chapter,

is encouraged to discover her strengths and claim agency. Oaive then brings about the rebirth of her world, ending it as it was and facilitating the emergence of an entirely new reality in which men and women are equal. Tepper's Beauty also travels through time and in so doing recognises the cruel oppression displayed by patriarchal cultures throughout history. Because of this move out of linear time, which distances her enough from patriarchal ideology to allow her to both challenge it and reclaim herself, she becomes strong and independent. Although men are destroying the Earth, Beauty is the magical seed that will bring a new Earth into being. Each of these female characters thus plays a pivotal role in challenging the linear time and patriarchal ideology of her reality, to the extent that each brings about the birth of a new world in which 'women's time' is experienced alongside linear time. For this reason I have entitled the fantasy chapter 'Cosmogynesis' which recalls Eliade's term cosmogenesis (the rebirth of the world) but claims this act for women.

During the Second Wave, Mary Daly wrote in *Beyond God the Father* that 'it should be apparent, then, that for women entrance into our own space and time is another way of expressing integrity and transformation. (...) When women take positive steps to move out of patriarchal space and time, there is a surge of new life' (Daly, 1973:43). Each of the protagonists in the six novels I discuss discovers this surge of new life that begins with claiming a time/space away from the restrictions of patriarchal culture. It is the force of becoming something new, something not defined as passive and submissive by patriarchal ideology that enables these characters to liberate themselves. As Elizabeth Grosz writes, time 'is the principle of emergence and transformation, (...) the ongoing condition of becoming that enables even the universe itself to become' (Grosz, 2005:180). According to the Second Wave debate taken up in these novels, claiming a chronology of her own may therefore be one way in which a woman can take control of her own becoming and contribute to the becoming of a new world. In the feminist speculative fiction I discuss, the dynamic principle of becoming is used to destabilise patriarchal ideology and encourage speculation about the alternatives available to women. These female characters are no longer bound by static 'images of women in SF'; instead, the 'eternal force of variation' of an alternative 'feminine' time enables the myriad truths of fluid female identity to be explored.

Chapter One

A Chronology of Her Own

“The clock talked loud. I threw it away, it scared me what it talked.”
(Tillie Olsen: “I Stand Here Ironing”)

In realistic fiction no clock actually speaks; what the character hears in the constant ticking is her own muffled interior voice and she is afraid of what it says. Olsen’s line is provocative: what is it that this woman fears in the ticking of the clock? What is it that makes her throw the clock away? Second Wave feminists who take up these questions in their investigation of time suggest numerous answers, all of which are founded on the premise that clock time is patriarchal and hostile to women (Davies, 1990; Orr, 2006). Some even suggest that women should be allowed to embrace a temporality alternative to linear time, a chronology of their own that is not hostile to women. Although the attempts of these theorists to quantify the effects of masculine linear time and to describe such a ‘women’s time’ are valuable and important, the practicalities of what such a time would mean and how it would work remain elusive and difficult to theorise. I therefore propose that perhaps the most user-friendly place for Second Wave feminists to untangle this problem is in the fictional space provided by speculative fiction. My proposition is that the speculative fiction texts examined later in the thesis enable their authors to offer more intuitive insights into the Second Wave apprehension of time than feminist polemical prose may.

Because speculative fiction enables authors to make abstract concepts and problems concrete, characters can hear and see (and confront?) things that may otherwise remain nebulous: when a clock ‘talks loud’ in speculative fiction, the character can often talk back or defend herself in a tangible way. In this fiction time becomes something physical that can be distorted and subverted, enabling characters and readers to reassess what they ‘know’ about time. Like the feminist theorists of the Second Wave whose work I briefly review in this chapter, the feminist authors whose novels are discussed in this thesis defy the authority of masculine linear time, suggesting that it does not contain the whole ‘truth’ of human experience. When they describe an alternative ‘feminine/Other’ time that disrupts linear masculine time and patriarchal authority, these authors encourage readers to question the authority of linear time and the patriarchal ideology it supports.

In order to frame the critique of patrilinear time undertaken in the novels discussed in chapters two and three, it is first necessary to review the Second Wave engagement with time. Because time is a notoriously difficult construct, it is also essential to point out at the very beginning that the Second Wave examination of time focuses on the material effects of gendered time on the experiences of women (O'Brian, 1989; Pfeuffer-Kahn, 1989; Davies, 1990; Chanter, 2001). This engagement with time does not delve into the abstract fourth dimensional properties that fascinate physicists, nor does it extend into highly philosophical preoccupations; it is instead very much grounded in the everyday lived reality of women as it was explored by feminists in the 1960s and 1970s. Having said that, although none of the Second Wave feminisms I researched seems to engage directly with the philosophical and scientific perspectives generated by men throughout western history, I do need to situate these feminist criticisms of linear time in this tradition. I would therefore like to describe, very briefly and succinctly, the major trends and thinkers who have framed western considerations of time. As I describe this tradition, there are two aspects to which I would like to draw particular attention: these investigations of time rely heavily on education and intuitions drawn from experience. These aspects thus mark the reasons for the erasure of women from this field. Because women were denied education for most of western history, they could not contribute educated, informed insights of their own to this exploration of time. The male thinkers who dominate this discourse also fail to acknowledge the possibility that women's experiences may differ from those of men and may therefore generate different temporal intuitions, especially given that the activities of women were severely curtailed by western patriarchal culture. Because the male thinkers who generated this tradition assume that the experiential norm is male, women's experiences are elided. One can therefore suggest that, as complex and nuanced as these explorations of time may be, they are limited because they represent the insights of only half of humanity. The feminist exploration of time that takes up most of the chapter after this brief history is an attempt to redress this imbalance.

Going right back into antiquity, we find that the first records we have in the West that explore the nature of time are those of the early mythographers, Hesiod (c seventh century BC) and Pherecydes (c mid sixth century BCE) who describe the titan Kronos devouring his children (Hesiod, 1982:154-210). This image encapsulates the idea of time as change, as that which sets limits on phenomena and finally 'ends' in death; this thinking influenced explorations of

time for centuries. Parmenides (520-430 BCE), generally considered to be the ‘progenitor of the discipline of logic’, suggests that because we measure change and motion in order to quantify time, ‘time is unreal’ (Turetzky, 2000:10), a position also taken up by Plato (428-347 BCE). Plato’s position is that only that which remains unchanging is ‘real’; because appearances change, they belong to ‘non-being’ and therefore so must time which orders change (Plato, 1961:934). One of Plato’s contributions to western philosophy is his proposal of the existence of ‘unchanging forms’ of which all appearances on Earth are reflections. In order to explain time, he suggests that ‘time is the moving image of the unchanging forms that act as standards of goodness and beauty’ (Turetzky, 2000:17). Time, which enforces motion and change, thus belongs to the order of appearances and separates them from the order of ‘The Good’. Although Plato is the first to treat time as separate from change, it is Aristotle (384-322 BCE) who attempts the first real ‘scientific’ analysis of time. Because he suggests that the soul allows us to perceive and count time, he is the first to represent time mathematically as a line, even as he recognises that ‘while there is a succession of nows in the continuum of time, as a line cannot be made up of points, time cannot be separated into nows’ (Turetzky, 2000:23). Aristotle was followed by the Skeptics (who elaborated the idea that time does not exist), the Epicureans (who described time atoms, an idea that twentieth century quantum physicists would elaborate) and the Stoics (who emphasised time’s continuity rather than its divisibility). The next major era following Aristotle, Neoplatonism, forms the bridge between late antiquity and the Middle Ages and is marked by the work of Plotinus (205-270 BCE) (Turetzky, 2000:43). Plotinus suggests that as motion occurs in time, time is a medium, distinct from motion (Plotinus, 1991:213-232); his insistence on separating time from motion and treating time as a medium foreshadows later conceptions (such as that of Isaac Newton) of an ‘absolute time’.

In 325 Emperor Constantine convened the Council of Nicene and introduced what would become the dominance of the Christian Church in the West. The shift from classical thinking to a West dominated by the Christian Church had far-reaching consequences for the western conceptualisation of time. In its insistence on a linear narrative of fall, redemption and eternal life, Christianity foregrounds linear temporality and undermines all other conceptions of it (Lippincott, 1999). Time also becomes an aspect or characteristic of God, rather than a feature of nature as it was considered by the ancient Greeks (Turetzky, 2000:56). The most important development here, as reflected in the writings of St Augustine (354-430 BCE) is that the human soul becomes embedded in God’s time and time is conceived of in terms of

the human subject's linear struggle for salvation (Augustine, 1961:13-14). The dominance of linear time was consolidated by the division of the day into hours by Benedictine monks who wanted to regulate worship. Their desire to measure time was rooted in the Augustinian idea that if time belonged to God, to waste even a moment was a sin (Mumford, 1934:12-18). This would eventually encourage the development of more accurate mechanical clocks in the West, and the ability to measure time accurately would have a ripple effect on other areas of western society (Lippincott, 1999; Bells, 1999). For example, as early as the fourteenth century, accurate time-keeping began to affect economic organisation as labourers could be paid according to an hourly rate instead of according to output (Turetzky, 2000:69).

The ability to measure time accurately allowed more modern thinkers and scientists, like Albertus Magnus (1206-1280), John Duns Scotus (1265-1308) and William of Ockham (d 1349), to 'move considerations of time away from "soul" back to nature' (Turetzky, 2000:66) and therefore back to more abstract perspectives. In 1343, Nicholas Bonet (d 1343) introduced a 'mathematical conception of time [which] considers the successive line of time separately from all matter and movement and so conceives a single line of time, invariable and immobile' (Turetzky, 2000:67). Galileo (1564-1643), too, 'represented time geometrically by means of a line marked off in regular intervals' (Galileo, 1914:155). Sir Isaac Newton (1642-1727) would also describe time in terms of mathematics and natural laws (Newton, 1952:8), such that the inheritors of Newtonian physics could wholly separate considerations of time from theological explanations. This can be seen in the empiricism of John Locke (1632-1704) who suggested that our experience of duration roots our understanding of time (Locke, 1959:238-256) and the work of Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646-1716) who disagreed with both Newton and Locke, suggesting that time is relational and can therefore only be understood by considering how things relate to each other and not as an abstract concept (Leibniz, 1902:14-15).

However, it is really with Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) that time acquires the importance it will have well into twentieth century western philosophy (Turetzky, 2000:85). In his *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant criticises both Newton and Leibniz, suggesting that their 'accounts fail because they assume that time is a feature of things as they are in themselves, independently of our capacity to grasp them' (Turetzky, 2000:85). Kant's primary contribution to the study of time is his proposal that objects exist because we experience them, and our experience of

them has an inherently temporal aspect; nothing exists outside time. Kant focuses on how things appear in time and are then experienced rationally as being in time; his approach privileges reason and therefore ‘de-emphasises difficulties concerning the dynamic aspect of time, temporal becoming’ (Turetzky, 2000:101).

In contrast to Kant’s approach, G.W.F. Hegel (1770-1831) argues against dismissing what appears to be ‘irrational’ and suggests that one should ‘accept the contradictory nature of propositions as part of reality’ (Turetzky, 2000:101). Hegel proposes a dialectical engagement between two contradictory positions, suggesting that the space between two contradictions is dynamic and may generate the ‘truest’ insights; for him, the only real constant in nature is this dialectical structure itself. Hegel thus proposes that everything in existence occupies the space between being and nothing (two contradictory states that describe ‘being’) and is therefore always in the dynamic process of *becoming*: all phenomena appear ‘in an intermediary state between being and nothing’; ‘becoming distinguishes being from nothing in a dynamic equilibrium of coming to be and passing away’ (Hegel, 1989:44-47). He then makes this point: time is our intuitive understanding of becoming. Like Plato, however, Hegel does not see this ‘becoming’ as never-ending. He proposes that all ‘becoming’ finds rest when being is subsumed by the absolute self of Spirit (*Geist*), a notion similar to Plato’s unchanging forms.

Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900) rejects Hegel’s notion of *Geist* and proposes that there is nothing other than restless becoming. He also situates the whole of time in each moment, suggesting that the past and the future are generated anew in every present moment. Nietzsche proposes that because the world consists of forces struggling for dominance and power, each moment of becoming is an opportunity for some force to gain ascendancy; he calls this the ‘will-to-power’ and proposes that it is this tension between superior and inferior forces that generates becoming. When Nietzsche takes Hegel’s proposal to its logical conclusion, privileging becoming over other conceptions of time, he destabilises all notions of unified identities or permanent qualities and he also praises that which wins ascendancy in each moment because whatever wins the will-to-power and returns in the next moment is the ‘superman’ (Grosz, 2004).

Hegel's and Nietzsche's terms influence most twentieth century explorations of time, including those of John McTaggart. Ellis McTaggart (1866-1925), one of the pre-eminent twentieth century scholars to have tackled time. Like Parmenides and Plato, McTaggart suggests that 'time is unreal' (McTaggart, 1908:9-31) because of the contradictions that surface when one tries to quantify and qualify what one means by 'time'. McTaggart proposes two contradictory models of time, each of which spawned scientific and philosophical followings: he suggests that time can be conceived of as both an A-series and a B-series. In an A-series, each moment is characterised as past, present or future and as moving from one to the other; here change is intuited and time is dynamic because it is always in flux, shifting from one state to the next and affecting our perception of every moment as it passes. The A-series model attempts to explain our intuitive experience of becoming. In a B-series, events are static: moment *a* is later or earlier than moment *b* and events are permanently caught and solidified in that moment (like a photograph). In a B-series, time is therefore conceived of as a series of separate and distinct moments, not as a continuum of past, present and future, even if these moments are before or after one another. One of the most influential schools of thought to follow McTaggart was that of the tense-theorists, in which ontological issues to do with time were explored via the analysis of linguistic devices such as tense (Turetzky, 2000:137).

The next significant contribution to the western exploration of time, and one of the most significant contributions to twentieth century science, is Albert Einstein's (1879-1955) 'Theory of Special Relativity' in which he introduces the term 'space-time'. In contrast to other scientific theories of time which, following Aristotle, Galileo and Newton, conceived of time as a line, he suggests that events occur and are connected to each other in space and in time, and that time is thus the fourth dimension; he proposes that the 'direction from earlier to later takes the form of a space-time geodesic' rather than a simple timeline (Einstein, 1952). This conception of time seems to privilege McTaggart's B-series because each moment can be represented as a set of co-ordinates in space-time, rather than as the dynamic becoming that philosophers and followers of the A-series model prefer.

During the same period in which Einstein was developing his theory, Edmund Husserl (1859-1938) was dealing with the phenomenology of time consciousness, proposing an even more rigorous empiricism than either Locke or Leibniz had. Effectively, Husserl suggests that any

knowledge must be based on lived experience; we can only understand time as what we experience as time (Husserl, 1991:336). Turetzky writes that ‘Husserl describes an absolute time constituting consciousness. It is absolute in the sense that it includes everything immanent in experience, all intentionalities, apprehendings, and their objects as given through them’ (2000:180). Following Husserl, Martin Heidegger (1889-1976) discusses time in terms of different modes of being or *dasein* (to be here); he suggests that different consciousnesses (modes of being or *daseins*) reveal different experiences of time (Heidegger, 1982:242-245). Like Hegel and Nietzsche, he seems to privilege an A-series model of time because for him time, as perceived by *dasein*, is always in flux. The last two twentieth century philosophers I include here, Henri Bergson (1859-1941) and Gilles Deleuze (1925-1995), too, explore time in terms of experience and consciousness. Bergson explores time as ‘durée’ (the unfolding of novelty) and, at first, suggests that consciousness is *durée*. Later he conceives of time more as ‘the indetermination of things’, an idea that seems to recall the becoming proposed by Hegel and Nietzsche (Grosz, 1999, 2005). Deleuze, who refined aspects of Bergson’s theory, brings becoming very much to the fore (de Landa, 1999; Grosz, 2005); for him, ‘present moments consist of tensions continuously dividing into actual presents and the virtual past [and] within each present something new arises, a pulsation in the depths of matter becoming spread out in the past and future time’ (Turetzky, 2000:218). What Deleuze foregrounds, like Hegel, Nietzsche and Bergson, is the potential, inherent in time, for something new to emerge. The most recent definition to be offered in the western attempt to understand time is thus that of ‘becoming’, first introduced in the 1800s and still prominent now in the twenty-first century explorations of time being produced by postmodernists and poststructuralists.

What this brief history of the philosophy of time suggests is that this phenomenon remains a mystery to us and we continue to be limited by descriptions that rely on our experiences and perceptions in order to quantify and qualify what we understand by ‘time’. There rarely seems to be common thinking to do with time and a clear tension exists between empirical and intuitive responses to it. The second-wave feminist thinkers that I discuss in this thesis contribute to this by emphasising even more strongly the intuitive aspect when they offer the experiences of women as way of generating insights to do with time. Their contribution is thus both a continuation of the long debate about time and a departure from the patrilineal assumptions underlying it. During the struggle for women’s liberation in the West that emerged in the 1960s and 1970s the Second Wave feminists take a ‘common sense’ approach

to time, describing it as it is intuited through lived and embodied experience. In trying to account for the dismissal of women from public patrilinear time, the Second Wave examination of time assumes that a cyclical model of time existed prior to the assertion of linear time as the primary temporal mode in the West. This temporality reflected both the reproductive rhythms of the female body and the cycles of nature, as was appropriate to pre-industrial agrarian society. When linear time supersedes cyclical time, as industrial organisation supersedes agrarian society, women are relegated to the private realm governed by cyclical time and are 'left out of' the public arena of male-dominated industry and history (Davies, 1990; Chanter, 2001; Burchill, 2006; Orr, 2006). The women's liberation movement ushered in what would become a thorough critical investigation into various mechanisms used by men and patriarchies throughout the ages and across the globe to oppress women. As Second Wave feminisms drew attention to the dismissal of women's experiences from the grand narrative of patriarchal history, the question really became: 'Does all time belong to men?' The breadth of the subject encouraged responses from various Second Wave thinkers and activists. It also led to ground-breaking creative work by feminist authors such as the ones whose novels are discussed in chapters two and three.

It is essential to understand that, according to feminisms of the Second Wave, Western philosophical thought is organised according to a dualistic perception of reality that can be traced back thousands of years. As feminist theorist Deborah Orr writes:

With the work of Parmenides (c515-399 BCE) Western philosophy, and the culture which it both reflects and informs, began to articulate a metaphysic, a logic, and an epistemology which would systematically disadvantage women for the next twenty-five hundred years. Parmenides posited a dualistic metaphysics and a complementary epistemology organised around two and only two logically coherent possibilities, the way of 'is' and the way of 'is not'. This is the first recorded theorisation of what philosopher Karen Warren (1988) shows is the 'logic of domination' that structures western culture to this day. (2006:1)

This dualistic metaphysic leads to the division of reality into two sets of polar opposites, designated by the overarching terms 'masculine' (the way of 'is') and 'feminine' (the way of 'is not'), with the masculine being privileged over the feminine. In 1975 Helene Cixous explored the consequences of this dualism, suggesting a set of binary oppositions ('Activity/ Passivity; Sun/ Moon; Culture/ Nature; Day/ Night; Father/ Mother; Head/ Emotions; Intelligible/ Sensitive; Logos/ Pathos') and then asking the question, 'where is she?' (Cixous,

in Marks and de Courtivron, 1981: 90) The answer is that ‘she’, woman and whatever traits are considered ‘feminine’ (these terms are often being conflated in patriarchal culture), fall into the negative ‘passive’, ‘dark’, ‘irrational’ set while man stands as exemplar of the positive side of the binary.

What is significant is the Second Wave proposal that this binary logic affected the western conceptualisation of time. Sociologist Karen Davies writes that in the West conceptions of time are dominated by two temporal modes, the linear and the cyclical (Davies, 1990:19) and that each is gendered according to the experiences it privileges. Linear time is considered ‘masculine’ because it is the measurable time of events, scientific progress and economic production, in short, the public time of patriarchal control of organised civilisation. Cyclical time, the private time of reproduction, domesticity, creativity and mysticism is gendered ‘feminine’ and considered to be the ‘natural’ temporal consciousness of women. Davies argues that this gendering of time affects not only how human beings formulate their time consciousness but how their lives are shaped by that consciousness (Davies, 1990:9). The fact that women are positioned in the negative, feminine pole of the binary logic of the West affects how they relate to time and the role they may play in patriarchal societies dominated by a linear temporality that disempowers them. She argues that ‘male time may be oppressive for women and may help maintain their subordinate position in society’ (Davies, 1990:17).

Much of Second Wave feminism engages critically with the proposition of a binary opposition and the position of women in it. The one side of the debate refuses the passive ‘femininity’ forced on women and the other side actively celebrates feminine traits that were vilified by patriarchal ideology. In the Second Wave debate regarding time, much the same split can be observed. Some feminisms criticise the relegation of ‘woman’ to a cyclical, mythic and reproductive time associated with ‘nature’ and demand her insertion into the linear time of public progress (notably liberal and socialist feminisms), while others celebrate the perceived essential differences between men and women and suggest that ‘women’s time’ may hold the key to a female truth that will balance that of male patriarchal culture (a view espoused by cultural feminisms). What is noticeable during this period is the seeming paucity of writing that questions the division of time into these opposing, gendered constructs; the Second Wave debate focuses instead on the ideological and practical effects of women’s relationship to patrilinear masculine time and feminine cyclical time.

In an overview of the Second Wave examination of time it is convenient to begin with probably the best known article on the subject from this era. In her article ‘Women’s Time’, published in 1979 (and reprinted in a collection of her essays in 1986 by Toril Moi), French feminist Julia Kristeva succinctly delineates the approaches she believes feminists to have taken with regard to time. The breakdown she suggests is a useful one because it implicitly acknowledges the disparate perspectives of liberal, socialist and cultural feminists whose views are often diametrically opposed. What Kristeva suggests is that there are three generations in the feminist attitude to time. In the first generation, which she ascribes to the time of the suffragists, women ‘aspired to gain a place in linear time as the time of project and history’ (in Moi, 1986: 193). The overarching intentions of the suffragists to gain equal rights in terms of education, the right to work and the right to vote reveal a desire to be admitted to the linear time of public, political endeavour, denied women by Western patriarchy. Kristeva then identifies a second generation, chronologically equivalent to the rise of Second Wave feminism. In this phase the dominant attitude is that ‘linear temporality has been almost totally refused, and as a consequence there has arisen an exacerbated distrust of the entire political dimension’ (194). She argues that the feminist desire to assert a ‘women’s identity’ that was not prescribed by patriarchy not only demanded the

[r]ecognition of an irreducible identity, without equal in the opposite sex and, as such, exploded, plural, fluid, in a certain way non-identical, [but that] this feminism [thus] situates itself outside linear time [and] rejoins, on the one hand, the archaic (mythical) memory and, on the other, the cyclical or monumental temporality of marginal movements. (194-195)

What Kristeva argues is that, having gained to some degree the political and public aims of First Wave feminism (but being disillusioned by the limitations of that success) early Second Wave feminism turns inward to an exploration of the effect of patriarchal oppression on the private lives of women and their sense of self. This turning inward to the private aligns this feminist project with a private, cyclical temporality at odds with public patrilinear time and encourages women to assert the existence of an alternative ‘women’s reality’ which may offer them a sense of empowerment. The third generation that Kristeva identifies allows for a co-existence of the two previous generations. This new generation therefore calls for both ‘insertion into history and the radical refusal of the subjective limitations imposed by this

[patrilinear] history's time' on the 'irreducible difference' feminists may be attempting to assert.

While Kristeva's identification of these phases is helpful, it is slightly simplified. Although she briefly states that these generations may exist concurrently, she does not explore the implications of this in any detail. I propose that even a cursory glance at Second Wave feminisms reveals that all three attitudes co-exist during this period; for the purposes of this thesis it will therefore be assumed that this is the position.

Although Kristeva attributes the desire to insert women into linear time to the suffragists because of their demand for equal civic rights, this is just as applicable to both the liberal and socialist feminist agendas of the Second Wave. Briefly, the position of both in regard to time during this period is fairly similar: in each case linear time is recognised as being interwoven with the patriarchal ideologies of humanism and capitalism that deny women equality with men. In both cases the solution to this problem is the demand for access to public linear time and the refusal to be relegated to the private sphere of cyclical time and 'feminine' concerns. In this way, these two feminisms can be seen to take up the position of Kristeva's first generation.

At the same time, and in contrast to the liberal and socialist views, there are radical feminists who express a desire to reject patriarchal reality in favour of asserting a 'women's culture'. Their argument is that women may be able to empower themselves by embracing a cyclical temporality that echoes the rhythms of women's bodies and, in this way, they reflect the stance of Kristeva's second generation. These cultural feminists are, however, not a homogenous group. The various voices that contribute to this strand of feminism differ greatly in the degree to which they call for a 'woman's culture', what they see as constituting a woman's culture and what they believe the effect of such a culture would in fact be.

I propose that the third generation Kristeva describes may be reflected in the work of a few feminist authors who were writing during the Second Wave, authors like Octavia Butler, Joanna Russ, Ursula Le Guin and the others discussed later in this thesis. As I suggest in my introduction, these women write characters who step out of linear time and into an alternative chronological space (which is often described in terms that recall the gynocentric perspective

of cultural feminism) in order to liberate themselves from patriarchal culture. Having liberated themselves and claimed their right to agency, these characters step back into linear time so that they can change the existing patriarchal system. In this synthesis of the two previous positions, the creative work of these authors may therefore be seen to constitute Kristeva's third generation perspective on time.

Having very briefly outlined the opposing attitudes to gendered time that dominated Second Wave feminism it is now possible to turn to a closer consideration of each, beginning with liberal feminism (Kristeva's first generation) which developed out of the long-standing tradition of Western Liberalism. As feminist scholar Imelda Whelehan suggests, the core of liberalism is a faith in man's capacity to reason; this elevates him above the level of animals who cannot think and allows him to discern certain 'natural laws' about the constitution of human society (Whelehan, 1995:27). Man's superiority over everything else is foregrounded in this philosophy. It is also significant that 'the origins of liberal philosophy are co-existent with the rise of capitalism' (Whelehan, 1995: 27) because if liberalism is tied to capitalism it is inextricably linked with the public realm of commerce from which women are dismissed. One of the tenets of this early liberalism is therefore that women are inferior to men. Feminist historian Christine Stansell addresses the eighteenth century attitude to women in her succinct account of Jean Jacques Rousseau's position:

Rousseau's description of sexual difference was so extreme that it was as if men and women were fashioned out of different stuff altogether, with man as humanity's standard issue and woman a grace note to complement and please him. Rousseau's work cast doubt on whether natural rights and liberty even pertained to such docile, childish people. (Stansell, 2010:19)

This attitude was reflected in the denial of any but the most rudimentary education for most women, in their lack of independent legal powers, in the domination of women within the family and the fact that women could not inherit. Significantly, early liberal ideology also discerned the existence of public and private realms in society: the public being that of men, rational endeavour, economics and so on; and the private, the domestic, whimsical and irrational realm to which women were naturally suited. Women were therefore not considered to warrant the same rights as men, even if they had been intelligent enough to desire them.

With the rise of First Wave feminism and the suffragist movement there was, for the first time a female collective which publically voiced their desire for and their right to, equal civic rights; as Whelehan observes, ‘the chief aim of liberal feminism has been to accord to women the rights that men hold “naturally”’ (1995:29). Christine Stansell writes that New Woman advocates sought to claim certain masculine traits for women: ‘assertiveness, education, lofty goals, indifference to men and plain clothing (...), athleticism and physical daring, political acumen and diligence, and a penchant for adventure and travel’ (2010:149;151). Unfortunately, the position of men and masculinity as superior in liberal ideology thus remained largely unchallenged; liberal women merely wanted to be recognised as the equal of men, not to challenge the system that made men superior. As feminist scholar Judith Evans suggests, the core argument of liberal feminism was something like: ‘we deserve to be equal with you, for we are in fact the same. We possess the same capabilities, but this fact has been hidden, or these abilities have, while still potentially ours, been socialised, educated “out”’ (Evans, 1995:13). According to Kristeva’s framework, in demanding access for women to the public sphere this feminist tradition implicitly requires an insertion of women into linear time.

Although no political treatises or philosophical essays dealing specifically with liberal feminism’s attitude to time were written during the First Wave, the issue does seem to have been explored in a number of novels of the time. Patricia Murphy’s study of temporality in novels written by women or about female characters at the turn of the twentieth century investigates this. In her book *Time is of the Essence: Temporality, Gender and the New Woman*, she writes:

In protesting the female’s subordinate position within Victorian society, New Woman advocates implicitly sought to undermine what I term a veritable ‘natural order of time’. (...) Central to the ‘natural order of time’ was an unspoken but undeniable assumption: the temporal construct was shaped and reinforced by a masculinist perspective. The values associated with this temporal order were all weighted in favour of the males who determined their direction and interpretation, proceeding from a presumption of female inferiority. (...) Seemingly invisible and therefore incontestable to the dominant culture, this masculine temporal order was instead both defamiliarised and attacked by New Woman advocates who sought to identify its complicity, question its reliability and negate its authority in prescribing a restrictive female role. (Murphy, 2001:3-4)

She argues that narrative strategies such as memory, circular time and stream of consciousness associated with the female characters she considers reveal the exclusion of women from patrilinear time. These novels therefore acknowledge the New Woman's defiance of patriarchal culture and history and explore the desire for the experiences of women to be recognised and inserted into linear time and history. The creative investigation of women's time that appeared in literature at the turn of the century foreshadows the literary contribution to the debate that would also surface during the Second Wave.

Early liberal feminism's desire to have women inserted into linear time and recognised as equal to men was derived from the need to ameliorate the practical situations of women and liberal feminism continued to address these issues well into the Second Wave. The main points on the modern agenda were to attain equal pay for equal work, legislation dealing with rape and domestic abuse, access to equal education and the right to contraception and abortion. Organisations like NOW in the United States and the National Council of Women in Britain fought public battles to assert the rights of women to the public sphere. In the NOW charter, drawn up in the sixties, this sentiment is succinctly expressed: 'We do not accept the traditional assumption that a woman has to choose between marriage and motherhood, on the one hand, and serious participation in industry or the professions on the other.' What liberal feminism argued was that liberated women should be allowed access to both the public and private spheres and their 'natural' domestic duties should not be used to keep them from the workplace; for liberal feminists there was no reason why women should not be allowed into the linear time of public human endeavour.

Second Wave socialist feminists, like liberal feminists, argued against the assumption that women's duties in the private sphere (specifically reproduction) made them unable to perform in the public sphere of production. As such, they too (as must be inferred from their agenda), called for the insertion of women into public linear time and therefore echoed the views of Kristeva's first generation. Socialist feminism superseded Marxist feminism 'largely [as a] result of Marxist feminists' dissatisfaction with the essentially gender-blind character of Marxist thought' (Tong, 1989:173) and so it called for a challenge not only of oppressive class structures but also of oppressive patriarchal ideology. Capitalism and patriarchy were seen as equally to blame for the creation and maintenance of power-hierarchies that subjugated women in the West (Evans, 1995:14).

Interestingly, the emergence of the capitalist system (that oppressed both workers and women) seems to have coincided with the cultural entrenchment of patriarchal linear time. Historian Anthony Spalinger suggests that as the evolution of trade and industry became more important to early civilisations, so linear time became necessary in order to record and order this new economic system. He dates the comingling of linear time and capitalist culture to third century BC Egypt where

[t]he regulated system of timekeeping was the natural outcome of the political centralisation of the Nile Valley. The emerging bureaucracy required an effective dating system and the growing treasury needed an easy method of book keeping. The old lunar-based calendar, which had been in use before the creation of a civil calendar, was then discarded so that the state could preserve and date its records more efficiently. (Spalinger, 1999:269)

The shift to linear time which reflected the needs of a hierarchically-structured, emerging capitalist society to keep historical and economic records (Aveni, 1999:53) thus coincided with a male-dominated social structure that would subdue women throughout Western history. The domination of temporal consciousness by a linear time that was inextricably intertwined with capitalist industry would be immense; as academic and speculative fiction author Darko Suvin observes:

A triumphant bourgeoisie [introduced] an epoch-making epistemological break into human imagination by which linear or clock time becomes the space of human development because it is the space of capitalist industrial production. The spatial dimensions of even the largest feudal landowners are finite; capital, the new historical form of property – that shaper of human existences and relationships – has in principle no limits in extrapolated time. Through a powerful system of mediations infusing the whole human existence, time becomes finally the equivalent of money and thus of all things. (Suvin, 1979:73)

The dominance of linear time and capitalist ideology would thus affect all facets of human society. If time was equated with money and (in capitalist society) only those with money were important, then the poor and those who did not participate in industry were unimportant. This would obviously affect women who had been systematically excluded from the patriarchal, industrial world regulated by linear time.

Second Wave socialist feminist discourse, like that of liberal feminism, acknowledged the separation of public and private spheres and the relegation of women to the private sphere (Lovell, 1996:149). But where liberalism had attributed these two spheres to ‘natural laws’ governing human society, socialist feminism focused on these spheres as they operated under the system of industrial production. The private/the feminine was the sphere of unpaid, ‘voluntary’ domestic labour as well as rest and leisure time. This domestic labour, seen as the natural activity of women, enforced both an existence of banal passivity and the absence of women from the public sphere. The position as domestic labourer was, of course, only slightly preferable to that of commodity, the other position women were seen to occupy in this system. As Gillian Beer (following Irigaray’s argument in ‘When the Goods Get Together’) writes:

The trade that organises patriarchal society takes place exclusively among men. Women, signs, goods, currency, all pass from one man to another or – so it is said – suffer the penalty of relapsing into the incestuous and exclusively endogamous ties that could paralyse all commerce. The workforce, products, even those of mother earth, would thus be the *object* of transactions among men only. In *Capital* Marx [argued] along the same lines: ‘Commodities cannot themselves go to market and perform exchanges in their own right.’ In this passage (...) Marx alludes to women among his list of commodities, though it is not only of women he is speaking when he remarks that ‘commodities are things, and therefore lack the power to resist man. If they are unwilling, he can use force; in other words, he can take possession of them.’ (Beer, 1989:74)

In capitalist ideology women were objects that became synonymous with reproductive passivity rather than productive activity. And, as in liberalism, the one was considered far superior to the other. As Hannah Arendt so succinctly expresses it: ‘Unlike the feminine *animal laborans* who remains trapped in the cycle of labour [reproduction], *homo faber* rises above his activity, gaining mastery over his circumstances through work [production in linear time]’ (in Guenther, 2006:34). For Arendt, the man who is producing and interacting with others in the public sphere is the epitome of human development; he exists because he operates in relation to others. Because women are hidden in the private sphere, looking after the home and producing children, they do not interact meaningfully with others and so do not exist in any real sense (other than through the production of male children who will enter the public sphere). Because of this, for Arendt, women remain ‘animals’, or ‘primitives’, subject to ‘natural laws’. In contrast to this, she writes with distinct approval of *homo faber* that he

[h]as always been a destroyer of nature. The *animal laborans* [read here ‘woman’], which with its body and the help of tame creatures nourishes life, may be lord and master of all living creatures, but [s]he still remains the servant of nature and the earth; only *homo faber* [read here ‘man’] conducts himself as lord and master of the whole earth. (Arendt, 1958:139)

Arendt approves of men and public masculine activity far more than she does of women and the private activities to which they have been limited. Unfortunately, her view is fairly representative of the position masculinist culture has maintained in relation to women from the beginnings of western civilisation.

Both liberal and socialist feminists of the Second Wave thus recognised that women and women’s activities had been relegated to a private realm that was kept strictly separate from the public world governed by patrilinear industrial time. For both the solution to women’s exclusion from linear time and the public sphere was therefore the same: they both demanded that women be recognised as equal to men and that they be inserted into linear time in order to contribute to public production.

Radical feminism and one of its strands in particular, cultural feminism would suggest an entirely different approach to time. Second Wave cultural feminism can be equated with Kristeva’s second generation in which feminists reject linear time and claim a ‘feminine’ time as the ‘natural’ temporality of women. This gynocentric tradition contributed valuable innovative insights to the Second Wave investigation of time.

Although in many ways it is counterproductive (some would argue impossible) really to separate these three feminist traditions, it can be helpful because the core of each focuses the attention of the feminist scholar on different areas of contention between the feminist movements of the Second Wave and patriarchal cultures of the western world at the time. The major difference between liberal and socialist feminists and radical cultural feminists is this: while liberal and socialist feminists criticised elements of the existing system and called for their reformation, radical feminism called for a wholesale cultural revolution. Of radical feminism, Whelehan writes that, more than the two other traditions, it

[s]ummons up the spirit of the second wave, symbolising the rage of women against the shackles of male power, a rage which became channelled into numerous acts of militancy and direct action against patriarchy. (...) Radical

feminists eschewed existing political structures or male-oriented philosophies in favour of creating a space for women to lay claim to – to write, to think or speak as their feelings and personal experiences dictated. [It was an] almost wholesale departure from an older tradition of feminism. (Whelehan, 1995:67, 68)

Unlike liberal and socialist feminists, early radical feminists unashamedly focused their attention entirely on the personal experiences of women. Consciousness-raising groups sprang up across the United States and encouraged women to speak about their unique experiences as women, living in female bodies of which they had been taught to be ashamed, living in families that had forced them to curtail their dreams and forced by a heteronormative culture to deny their ‘abnormal’ desires: ‘Thus women themselves, speaking without inhibitions, were the sole repositories of truth’ (Stansell, 2010:244).

Radical feminist groups defied the authority of Western patriarchal culture because they felt no part of reality had been left uncorrupted by its patriarchal ideology that undermined women. The ‘Redstockings Manifesto’, the charter of a group based in New York, reads: ‘We cannot rely on existing ideologies as they are the products of male supremacist culture. We question every generalisation and accept none that are not confirmed by our experience’ (reprinted in Robin Morgan’s *Sisterhood is Powerful*: 1970: 535). To these radical feminists, moderate groups like NOW were seen as “‘tired liberals”, “hopelessly bourgeois”, composed of appeasers who wanted a more equal share of the patriarchal-capitalist pie’ (Stansell, 2010:234) rather than revolution.

The radical thinking that surfaced in the mid-seventies (Evans, 1995:18) encouraged an exploration and a celebration of the differences between men and women. Although this position has been criticised for possibly further entrenching the binary oppositions of male/masculine/man and female/feminine/woman, in its day it produced a vibrant body of theory variously called ‘cultural feminism, the “woman-centered school” and “gynocentrism/gynandry”’ (Evans, 1995:18). This assertion of a woman’s culture can be identified in the French feminist project of a female language, free of the ideological undercurrents of ‘men’s language’. It can be seen in the project to remythologise mythic female images (like the Medusa and the witch) so that they call up a powerful, untamed female potential rather than the monsters they had signified. It can be seen in the efforts of some feminist writers to resurrect a Goddess from the ages of pre-patriarchal history to

supplant a male God, the worship of which had arguably denied women an image of transcendence to which they could relate.

This theorising is fairly romantic and, arguably, counterproductive. It would certainly seem so to later feminists who criticised the homogenisation (and idealisation) of ‘women’s experiences’ by writers who were predominantly white, middle-class and university educated and who seemed not to acknowledge the experiences of women who were different from them. It is not my intention here to enter into the debate as to which feminist position is more useful; suffice it to say that each arose in response to the needs of its time and attempted to answer those needs. What I find useful is the gynocentric perspective of time that was produced by cultural feminists. Although they described this Other time in terms that are now considered impolitic and essentialist, I propose that this should not result in a wholesale disregard for what they said. The value of their suggestions is that they destabilised a view of time that had been largely taken for granted; although what they say is problematic for poststructuralist feminist theorists today, it provided the groundwork for the revolutionary postmodern work on time that would follow in the 1990s and after 2000. Even in the fiction I discuss, the ‘feminine time’ proposed by cultural feminists is used as a tool through which the eruption of the different, the Other, is facilitated in order to change the way these female characters relate to time and themselves in time; it is not used to suggest that all women are embedded in feminine cyclical time and should stay there. The value of the gynocentric suggestion of a ‘chronology of her own’, like other facets of the gynocentric project, lies predominantly in the fact that it creates a space from which the Other can mobilise an *initial offensive* against that which marginalised it in the first place. This initial offensive laid the groundwork for feminists that followed.

In order to understand how cultural feminism was able to propose an alternative chronology that was so very determined by ‘the feminine’, one must recognise the importance they placed on women’s experiences. Feminist scholar Ann Brooks writes that during the Second Wave cultural feminists believed that

the basis of ‘masculinist theory’ is partial, incomplete and assumes a knowledge base which is neutral; that direct experience is a necessary precondition for knowledge, and what counts as knowledge must be grounded in women’s experience; that women’s experience is systematically different

from men's experience; and that knowledge and theory are incorrect or biased to the extent that they exclude women's experience. (Brooks, 1997:33)

Because they focused so on the experiences of women, these feminists began to chart the increasing awareness of a time that was qualitatively different from that which dominated patrilinear culture. This seemingly female-oriented experience of time, which they identified and then sought to describe, was approached from various perspectives but the language used seems always to have come back to that first, primal (and supposedly undeniable) experience of the female body. It was women's monthly menses, their ability to give birth and the wisdom gained through the quasi-mystical experience of motherhood that opened women up to the experience of a time that was 'other' to that of capitalist patrilinear time. In 'Women's Time' (1979), Kristeva describes this female experience of time thus:

As for time, female subjectivity would seem to provide a specific measure that essentially retains *repetition* and *eternity* from among the multiple modalities of time known throughout the history of civilisations. On the one hand there are cycles, gestation and the eternal recurrence of a biological rhythm whose regularity and unison (...) is experienced as extra-subjective time, cosmic time and the occasional vertiginous visions [of] unnameable *jouissance*. On the other hand, and perhaps as a consequence, there is the massive presence of a monumental temporality, without cleavage or escape, which has so little to do with linear time (which passes) that the very word 'temporality' hardly fits. (Kristeva, 1986:191)

Before Kristeva suggested that women's bodies encouraged the experience of a time that was somehow cyclical and mythical, psychoanalyst and theologian Ann Belford Ulanov had suggested something very similar; in her book *The Feminine in Jungian Psychology and Christian Theology* she writes that

[f]or the feminine style of consciousness, time is qualitative rather than quantitative. We feel time as periodic and rhythmic, as waxing and waning, as favourable and unfavourable. The moon symbolises this qualitative time in its measuring of months by its own fullness and leanness. The moon cycle also represents the mysterious – and unconscious – and, in Jungian terms, feminine, rhythms of fertility, of growth, of birth, of withdrawal, of decline and death. In this sense, time is cyclical (and) each woman experiences this in the blood tides of her menstrual cycle and its attendant psychological effects. (1971:175)

It makes sense in the context of cultural feminism's focus on the differences between men and women that these theorists would express themselves in terms that are both biological

and essentialist, grounding their metaphors in images of the female body. Although Kristeva's work is never simply essentialist, there is certainly evidence that at the moment of writing that paper she uses the essentialist language and images of cultural feminism to describe the experience of this mode of time by women. What these two women suggest is that women's bodies teach them that linear time does not and cannot express the whole truth of human experience.

The awareness of another temporality that may be more 'woman friendly' was also reflected in the predominantly French feminist project to create/assert a women's language. These feminists took as their starting point Jacques Lacan's theory of language acquisition which hypothesises that the symbolic order that dominates language is governed by the paternalistic and patriarchal Law of the Father. These feminists sought to subvert the symbolic order so that a 'female language' could emerge through which women could explore their experiences without their being undermined by patriarchal undercurrents implicit in existing language structures. Examples of this are the 'womanspeak' of Irigaray and the 'écriture féminine' of Cixous (Belsey, 1989:13). This new language which they sought to create could contain completely original lexical items but it could also take the form of a rupture of the symbolic order as it exists, of acknowledging the sign as it exists and then subverting its meaning so that it could express a multiplicity not sensed before.

Pertinent to our purposes is Julia Kristeva's suggestion of a link between dominant patriarchal discourse and language, and patrilinear time. In her article 'About Chinese Women', first published in 1974, she writes that

[t]he symbolic order – the order of verbal communication, the paternal order of genealogy – is a temporal order. For the speaking animal, it is the clock of objective time: it provides the reference point, and, consequently, all possibilities of measurement, by distinguishing between a before, a now and an after. (...) There is not time without speech. Therefore there is no time without the father. That, incidentally, is what the father is – sign and time. (1986:152)

This sentiment is echoed in her later paper, 'Women's Time', when she writes: 'This linear time is that of language as the enunciation of sentences (noun+verb; topic-comment; beginning-ending)' (1986:192). When Kristeva links linear time, to which women have been denied access, to the language of the symbolic order (which has arguably silenced women

throughout Western history), she reveals how all-encompassing the erasing of women from public life has been.

Kristeva's contribution to this feminist project to destabilise the monolithic authority of the symbolic order includes her theorising of the semiotic, a fluid primordial space prior to signification in which a multiplicity of meanings exists. She writes that prior to the process of signification, in which signifiers and signified are bound together in the symbolic order, there is a space in which the 'raw material of signification' is found. She calls this space the *chora* ('womb'), after Plato's *Timaeus* (Kristeva, 1986:93). She also describes this space as maternal (*ibid*:95) and suggests that this is the pre-imaginary space in which the subject is both created and annihilated. Unlike the symbolic, the semiotic is chaotic: there is no order and no meaning is static. It is the space of perpetual becoming because nothing *is* yet. This is the feminine space that precedes the masculine symbolic order and it is in recognising this space that a woman's language replete with new meaning can begin to find its voice. Because the generative space of the semiotic is described as a womb and because it is active before, or apart from, the linear time of the symbolic and speech, it becomes evocative of that other 'women's time' of which Kristeva has spoken. What is implicit in her writing, therefore, is a suggestion that for women to create their own meaning a concurrent departure from patrilinear time may be required and this seems to be made possible through the essentially female experience of their place in reproduction.

This notion can be identified in the language Kristeva herself uses to explain the difference between the semiotic and the symbolic. She writes that the symbolic order, which rigorously demands communication (and patriarchal society) to be 'logical, simple, positive and "scientific"' (Kristeva, 1986:151) affects the position women may hold, and

[i]t is thus that female specificity defines itself in patrilinear society: a woman is a specialist in the unconscious, a witch, a bacchanalian, taking her *jouissance* in an anti-Apollonian, Dionysian orgy. A *jouissance* which breaks the symbolic chain, the taboo, the mastery. (...) A pregnancy: an escape from the temporality of day-to-day social obligations, (...) where the surfaces – skin, sight – are abandoned in favour of a descent into the depths of the body, where one hears, tastes and smells the infinitesimal life of the cells. Perhaps the notion that the period of gestation approaches *another temporality*, more cosmic and 'objective' than human and 'subjective' is just another myth. (But) *jouissance*, pregnancy, marginal discourse: this is the way in which (...) 'truth', hidden and cloaked by the truth of the symbolic order and its time, functions through women. (Kristeva, 1986:151)

What she suggests is that the language of reproduction, which has been the reason used by patriarchies to exclude women from production, provides a liminal position from which to experience and explore a ‘truth’ that is denied by patriarchy. The body that patriarchy has vilified therefore becomes the site from which to launch a resistance.

According to cultural feminism it is precisely this potential that birth and rebirth imply that challenges the hegemony of patriarchal order. Addressing this (‘biological’) potential for subversion, Lisa Guenther writes, ‘the moment of birth hovers ambiguously on the edge between time and anarchy, selfhood and anonymity, existence and nothingness’ (Guenther, 2006:1). As such it is the moment most threatening to established order. Birth suggests a new becoming which is essentially the antithesis of the symbolic order, but intrinsic to cyclical time and the semiotic. Guenther continues:

Birth refers to a past that antecedes and interrupts the remembered or represented past in which I constitute myself as an autonomous, self-possessed subject. (...) The anarchic event of my birth suggests that, however sovereign and masterful I may be, there is an aspect of my existence that does not quite belong to me but remains as the trace of this generous gift of the Other. (...) Thanks to the given time of birth, the mastery of the self remains forever incomplete. (Guenther, 2006:4-10)

Birth and rebirth allow for something new to happen, for something as yet unsignified and uncontrolled, to burst into the world with the potential to change things. Hannah Arendt suggests that ‘since action is the political activity par excellence, natality, and not mortality, may be the central category of political, as distinguished from metaphysical, thought’ (Arendt, 1958:9). Birth and becoming can therefore be considered an essential political act for women. However, it is important to note that while Arendt may be referring to biological pregnancy, what Kristeva and Guenther (and other cultural feminists who use birth as a metaphor) also mean to suggest is the fecund potential of that which has been forced to exist in the liminal spaces and the fissures that patriarchy forces women to occupy.

This sense of a liberating, vital creative space that women can gain access to because of their embodied experiences is perhaps best encapsulated in the term used by French feminists who write of a *jouissance* which erupts when women try to write from outside the authority of the symbolic order. Take, for example, the language in which Cixous describes how women

write. She also seems in this passage to offer something of an answer to Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar's question about the organ woman uses to write:

In feminine speech, as in writing, there never stops reverberating something that, having once passed through us, having imperceptibly and deeply touched us, still has the power to affect us – The Voice sings from a time before law, before the symbolic took one's breath away and reappropriated it into language under its authority of separation. The deepest, the oldest, the loveliest Visitation. (...) In woman there is always, more or less, something of 'the mother', repairing and feeding, resisting separation, a force that does not let itself be cut off but that runs codes ragged. (...) Voice: milk that could go on forever. Found again. The lost mother/bitter – lost. Eternity: is voice mixed with milk. (Cixous, 1989:111)

The question Gilbert and Gubar ask addresses the silencing of the female voice throughout history: the author is always man, a microcosmic representation of a male creator God, and the instrument with which he writes is imbued with all the phallic power of patriarchal culture; he writes with his pen-is. Women cannot use this instrument to write. They cannot assume the authoritative, authorial cadence of the masculine voice and so ask the question: 'If we write, where does our voice come from?' Cixous suggests that the authentic voice of women draws its power from an alliance with a mythic Mother figure. Again the connection is made to a time and space 'before law' in which women may be nourished by a (semiotic?) source of female inspiration imagined as maternal, as Mother.

The cultural feminist project of celebrating the female body thus introduced into theory and popular imagination the image of an effusive female creativity which is more than equal to that of men. It turned those things which had been held against women into sources of power. Their argument was that women's writing, which reflects women's reality, could be generated not only from the darkness of the cave or the womb but also from the darkneses of the fringes to which they had been relegated. From here it would issue forth and erupt, volcanically, through the crust in bright, lava-like language. The Voice of the Mother, so long considered inchoate, would now be heard for the first time, offering a counter-harmony to the masculine one held so long as 'right', 'law', 'rule' and her milk would be nourishing and rich after so long a deprivation. One is perhaps reminded of these extracts from Emily Dickinson and Marge Piercy's poems:

(from) **1677**

On my volcano grows the Grass
A meditative spot –
An acre for a Bird to choose
Would be the General thought –
How red the Fire rocks below
How insecure the sod
(Dickinson)

(from) **Apologies**

Moments
when the body is all:
fast as an elevator
pulsing out waves of darkness
hot as the inner earth
molten and greedy

(Piercy)

In linear time and defined by the symbolic order, women are peaceful, grassy spots, perfect for the twitter of birds and other innocuous, pretty creatures. What Dickinson, Piercy, Cixous, and Kristeva suggest is that the truth is the Fire rocking below, the volcanic female potential (molten and greedy) of the semiotic. As Dickinson suggests, ‘how insecure the sod’ when one is finally made aware of the lava beneath.

From a cultural feminist perspective, then, women’s time was described as cyclical, gestative and prior to or separate from masculine linear time in two bodies of argument: that which focused on women’s experience of time as dictated by her body, and that which spoke of the creation of a women’s language and women’s creativity in general. At the same time as these explorations were being undertaken, a feminist revolution was being demanded of the greatest monolith of patriarchal symbolic power in the West: Judeo-Christian myth. The dominance of a Father God embedded in a religious ideology that had all but demonised women would no longer be tolerated by radical feminists. Curiously, this challenging of Judeo-Christian ideology would reveal the same insidious presence of linear temporal consciousness as had the consideration of language.

Although the emergence of time as linear progression is arguably marked by the social shift from agrarian, seasonal, mythic consciousness to that of the city state, industry and trade, Karen Davies suggests that the moment at which people understood that biological paternity led to pregnancy was the moment at which the gradual replacement of the Mother Goddess

with a male god became inevitable (a process called ‘solarisation’, i.e. the defeat of the moon goddess by a sun god). This in turn

[g]ave way to a patriarchal revolution which was to sweep the world some 3500 years ago. This metaphysical transformation along with the emergence of Greek rational thought, where creative power was in the male brain rather than in the female womb, resulted in the collapse of the female oriented cyclical cults and the supremacy of the male concept of linear history consisting of unrepeatable events and Messianism. (Davies, 1990:22)

The solarisation of myth therefore culminated in the domination of Western mythic consciousness by Judeo-Christian ideology in which the cyclical return of feminine time (which had been represented by a Cosmic Mother figure) was replaced by the linear trajectory of eternal life. What Judeo-Christian ideology did was to suggest that all time pointed ‘toward’ something: the arrival of a Messiah. This forced myth time into a linear pattern and it forced society into a strict adherence to a patriarchal system that focussed the whole meaning of life on the moment of death, and not as a moment of transformation or possible rebirth but as one that led seamlessly into either eternal damnation or a similarly eternal bliss. As Heide Gottner-Abendroth suggests, ‘Strict, linear time (...) had its perils, for within it the idea of rebirth, which characterises all matriarchal religions, dropped away, leaving the idea of death as a definitive, horrible end’ (Gottner-Abendroth, 1984:113). Of this phenomenon, Felipe Fernandez-Arnesto writes in his essay, ‘Time and History’:

Against the beauty of a cycle, which has no beginning and no ending, Jewish sages were among those who proposed the argument that time began with a unique act of creation that inaugurated change within changelessness and time within eternity. (...) In compiling historical records, the Old Testament writers emphatically avoided cyclical formulations. (...) The prestige of Jewish scriptures within Christendom and Islam ensured that the linear model of time was inherited and re-emphasised by the most dynamic and wide-spreading civilisations of the modern world. Indeed, a Christian could not have a cyclical notion of time without lapsing into heresy. The incarnation occurred once and the sacrifice Christ made at his death was sufficient for all people, everywhere, forever. His second coming will not be a repeat performance but a final curtain-call at the end of time. (Fernandez-Arnesto, 1999:248)

It is significant that the establishment of linear time, consolidated by the authority of these patriarchal religious institutions, coincided with the dismissal of cyclical time and the beginning of the West’s well-documented history of misogyny. An elegant illustration of this is the fact that birth goes from being a sacred mystery, the domain of the Cosmic Mother, to

something filthy and ‘of woman’, the first sin that one must overcome. This is expressed succinctly in words that have been attributed in various sources to St Augustine, St Bernard of Clairvaux or St Odon of Cluny: between faeces and urine, we are born (in Grossberg, Felski and Sofoulis, 1996:467).

Julia Kristeva notes that from the point at which monotheistic culture gained ascendancy in the West, women were expected to become passive and entirely secondary to primary masculinist culture. In fact, she suggests that this is a prerequisite for monotheistic patriarchal culture and is possible because

[d]ivided from man, made from that very thing which is lacking in him, the biblical woman will be wife, daughter or sister, or all of them at once, but she will rarely have a name. Her function is to assure procreation – the propagation of the race. But she has no direct relation with the law of the community and its political and religious unity; God generally speaks only to men. (...) She is the one who knows the material conditions, as it were, of the body, sex and procreation. (Kristeva, 1986:140)

Woman thus became a vessel, a passive object used for the propagation of male children and male culture; she could neither speak to God, nor contribute to the spirituality of the male-dominated society developing around her because she was bound to the material plane by her body’s cycles. Charlotte Perkins-Gillmore, in her book *His Religion and Hers*, wonders what the world would have been like, had women contributed to the development of religion in the West. She suggests that, ‘[h]ad the religions of the world developed through her mind, they would have shown one deep, essential difference, the difference between birth and death. The man was interested in one end of life, she in the other’ (Perkins-Gillmore, 1923:49). Her statement is intriguing. If the cyclical, with its focus on birth and rebirth, had remained an important part of religious thinking, perhaps the misogyny of the West could not have been maintained.

The Second Wave challenge of monotheistic ideology allowed for the rebirth of interest in the figure of the Cosmic Mother, both as a symbol and as an alternative religious metaphor to God the Father. The emergence of neo-paganism in the 1960s and the consequential possibility of worshipping a goddess rather than a God challenged the dominance of the male-only image of Western transcendence. Starhawk, whose book *The Spiral Dance: A Rebirth of the Ancient Religions of the Great Goddess* (first published in 1979 and reprinted

twice in 1989 and 1999) is almost prescribed reading for anyone interested in the Goddess movement, writes of her experience:

The concept of a religion that worshipped a Goddess was amazing and empowering. Raised Jewish, I had been very religious as a child and had pursued my religious education to an advanced level. But as I reached young womanhood in the late sixties, something seemed lacking. The feminist movement had not yet reached its period of resurgence, and I had never heard the word patriarchy, but I sensed that the tradition as it stood then was somehow lacking in models for me as a woman and in avenues for the development of female spiritual power. (...) The Goddess tradition opened up new possibilities. Now my body, in all its femaleness, its breasts, vulva, womb, and menstrual flow, was sacred. (Starhawk, 1999:14)

She continues, saying that when she identified herself as a feminist in the 1970s and became involved in the women's movement, she felt there 'seemed to be a natural connection between a movement to empower women and a spiritual tradition based on the Goddess' (*ibid*:15). Because, like other strands of cultural feminism this too, was rooted in a celebration of the female body it offered women the opportunity to connect to a spiritual metaphor that was familiar and could transform the way they saw and valued themselves; the suggestion that the female body was something sacred stood in opposition to the Judeo-Christian tradition that had treated it as unclean and as the site of first sin.

At the same time as a spiritual revolution was being encouraged by pockets of radical feminists, the Cosmic Mother was also taking on new significance in the feminist project to re-evaluate myth. Feminist scholars who sought to reappraise and remythologise images and stories of ancient goddesses and female heroes wanted to imbue these symbols with the new feminist appreciation of female power and numinous force. It was argued that prior to this feminist enterprise, these symbols had communicated the patriarchal ideology of women as passive, seductive and irrational. (The work on female figures in myth by male authors like Erich Neumann and Robert Graves was found particularly wanting.) Jane Caputi summarises the spirit of this endeavour when she writes that

[o]ne of the most significant developments to emerge out of the contemporary feminist movement is the quest to reclaim that symbolising/naming power, to refigure the female self from a gynocentric perspective, to discover, revitalise and create a female oral and visual mythic tradition and use it, ultimately to change the world. (Caputi, 1992:425)

For the feminists who were (and still are) rewriting images and myths from a feminist, gynocentric perspective, there was and still is thus great potential for empowerment in this reinterpretation.

An acknowledgement of the symbolic power of the Great Mother is also relevant for my review of the Second Wave examination of time because she provided modern cultural feminists with an established symbolic language through which to describe a ‘women’s time’ that could challenge the authority of patrilinear time. As the Great Mother was associated with a cyclical time that predated the imposition of linear time on Western society the symbols and images associated with her could be used by feminist theorists and authors alike to call up exactly that alternative temporality. A brief consideration of these images is thus necessary here, not only for the discussion of the language used by cultural feminists but also because they are used in the novels discussed in chapters two and three. Here, these images seem to become a kind of short-hand that the authors use to signify the disruption of patrilinear time by the Other. The rich images associated with the Cosmic Mother therefore take on new, political relevance in these novels because they signify not only an alternative temporality but a challenge to patriarchal ideology that subjugates women.

There are a number of symbols and images that have come to connote the temporality associated with the Great Mother but I focus here on the ones that appear later in the selected fiction. Images that recall wombs or vessels (spaces that generate life) and tombs or graves in which the dead are buried and from which they are reborn, are used to suggest the cyclical nature of this time. Images of the waxing and waning moon serve the same purpose. The ocean and bodies of water also recall rebirth and the Great Mother because they represent the salt water of the womb from which all life springs. Snakes, spiders and their webs, owls and other night birds suggest regeneration and hidden mysteries, all the domain of the Cosmic Mother.

Snakes and spiders in particular recall darkness and the chthonic; both are poisonous reminders that death is close and inevitable and yet, because both slough their skins and emerge renewed, they also suggest rebirth. The ancient symbol of the ouroboros (the serpent with its tail in its mouth) thus reflects the Great Round and the spider recalls the Cosmic Mother’s ‘weaving’ of time and fate. Paula Gunn-Allen writes that much Native American

lore venerates the ‘Grandmother’ because ‘she is the Old Woman who tends the fires of life. She is Old Woman Spider who weaves us together in a fabric of interconnection. She is the Eldest God, the one who Remembers and Re-members (...) the Sacred Hoop of Being’ (Gunn-Allen, 1986:11). Grandmother Spider weaves us all into the web of time like the ancient Greek Fates, Clotho, Atropos and Lachesis, who endlessly weave, measure and cut time. Marina Warner quotes Isidore of Seville, who, in 636CE, wrote of these three mysterious figures:

The fiction is that there are three Fates, who spin a woollen thread on a distaff, on a spindle, and with their fingers, on account of the threefold nature of time: the past which is already spun and wound onto the spindle; the present, which is drawn between the spinner’s fingers; and the future, which lies in the wool twined on the distaff, and which must still be drawn out by the fingers of the spinner onto the spindle. (Warner, 1994:14)

These images describe the numinous force of the Spinner of Time who is not bound by linear time because she knows the furthest reaches of the past and she knows the future. For her all time is concurrent; Grandmother Spider, the Weaver knows the birth and death of each thing in creation and for her the two moments are not necessarily different events.

What is particularly important is that, inherent in these symbols of return and rebirth that describe the principle of ‘women’s time’, there is first a dying, an annihilation of what was, in order for it to be transformed. Herein is the uneasy dynamic that ‘feminine time’ reflects: the death of the self is terrifying, but it is also the moment at which personal psychological truth may become most clear. As Edinger writes, one must not forget that the Goddess is both

[t]he fertile womb out of which all life comes and the darkness of the grave to which it returns. Its fundamental attributes are the capacity to nourish and the capacity to devour. It corresponds to mother nature in the primordial swamp – life being constantly spawned and constantly devoured. In psychological terms, the great mother corresponds to the unconscious which can nourish and support the ego or can swallow it up in psychosis or suicide. The positive, creative aspects of the great mother are represented as breast and womb. The negative, destructive aspects appear as the devouring mouth or vagina dentate. In more abstract symbolism, anything hollow, concave or containing pertains to the great mother. Thus bodies of water, the earth itself, cave dwellings, vessels of all kinds are feminine. So also the box, the coffin, and the belly of the monster which swallows up its victims. (Edinger, 1968)

The symbolic language used to describe feminine cyclical time is thus evocative of chaos and primordial potential; it is anarchic and uncontrollable but always regenerative. Significantly, these images also recall for us the language used by Kristeva, Guenther, Cixous and others to describe pregnancy, birth and the semiotic.

The Great Mother therefore became absorbed into the language cultural feminists used to describe the alternative chronology they were trying to define. They identified a creative space in which women could re-imagine themselves as imbued with potential and free from the ideological prison of 'woman-as-defined-by-patriarchy'. Cultural feminists argued that it was in gaining access to this generative space that women could celebrate what they had in common and speak in reclaimed images that empowered them. Second Wave cultural feminist Mary Daly does just this when she describes the female capacity to spin a time alternative to that of the patriarchy; her language specifically draws on the images of Grandmother Spider and the Fates:

The droner's doomsday clock ticks on. Weaving our own Time/Space on the boundaries of clockocracy, Websters doom these doomers. Denouncing the destroyers, Nags announce the resurgence of female powers. Wild women will to shift the shapes of words, worlds. Naming elemental sources/forces, Sirens call women to a metapatriarchal journey of exorcism and ecstasy. (Daly, 1973: xii)

The doomsday clock counts the minutes to the nuclear destruction of humanity and the earth, measuring masculine linear time until it will run out. According to Daly, women and women's time can defy this patrilinear authority and its pessimistic destiny and in so doing, '[denounce] the destroyers': man. Daly relishes the wordplay that allows her to revitalise the image of the Crone and the Nag and assert a temporal alternative to linear time that is 'Crone-logical' (Daly, 1973:xiii).

As opposed to Second Wave liberal and socialist feminists who called for the insertion of women into patrilinear time, cultural feminists postulated the existence of an alternative 'crone-logical' feminine time. They suggested that women could gain access to this time because the biological processes of their bodies and their marginalised position in patriarchal culture predisposed them to it. The character of this alternative time was described as cyclical and regenerative because those were the qualities they associated with female fecundity and creativity in their broadest terms. As in other elements of the gynocentric radical feminist

project, implicit in their advocacy of this feminine time was a separatist agenda. Cultural feminism called women to separate themselves from men and join in the creation of a women's culture that would rival that of the patriarchal West. As such, this feminist project very much reflects the temporal stance Kristeva identifies as her second generation.

Although it is easy to become swept up in the emotional charge generated by cultural feminism, as I suggested earlier the language and the ideas of cultural feminism are fairly romantic and somewhat idealistic. They are also considered problematically essentialist by postmodern and poststructuralist feminisms. It is thus important to situate their position in the historical moment when radical feminists felt the need to defy what they believed was patriarchal culture's vilification of everything feminine and 'of woman'. The terms in which they described female experience were thus fuelled by defiant rage and filled with an almost hyperbolic passion to dispel the negative connotations associated with words like 'woman', 'pregnant', 'menstruation'. The power and emotive resonance with which they attempted to imbue these terms, and indeed all 'female experience', took on almost quasi-mystical overtones at times and this is what many later feminists have taken exception to. The first problem with the position of cultural feminists is that any celebration of the differences between men and women may make it that much easier for patriarchal culture to justify its segregation of the two sexes. The second is that their description of women's experiences as universal erases the truths of women who may have different experiences. The value of their contribution to feminism was the outspoken valorisation of 'woman', whoever or whatever she may be.

The co-existence of Kristeva's first generation (liberal and socialist feminisms) and second generation (cultural feminisms) therefore seems impossible, given that the two positions are so diametrically opposed. In the real world perhaps they could not co-exist and that is why I suggest that Kristeva's third generation, in which the two positions share a symbiotic relationship, may be identified in selected novels written during the Second Wave. It is with this in mind that I read the speculative fiction discussed in the following two chapters; these books seem to reflect the Second Wave engagement with time as it has been outlined above. In each of the novels a female protagonist is limited by the roles imposed on her by a patriarchal culture embedded in linear time and as she steps out of linear time she is enabled to defy its authority over her. The alternative time that the characters gain access to is

described in terms that recall the feminine time postulated by cultural feminism. In keeping with the second generational stance of cultural feminism it would therefore appear that the engagement with the pro-female ideology embedded in this feminine Other time is what empowers each character. This enables the female character to redefine herself in positive terms and it means that she can no longer play the role of the submissive woman expected by patriarchal culture. Each character returns to the linear time that dominates her world and demands that patriarchal culture acknowledge her new-found agency and make space for liberated, independent, strong women. In this way, the needs of Kristeva's first generation feminists are also met. These novels thus reflect a synthesis of both the pro-female ideology of cyclical time as explored by cultural feminists and the liberal and socialist need to have a change reflected in patriarchal culture and linear time itself.

Because the phrase 'pro-female ideology of cyclical time' is unwieldy and yet is central to my thesis, I have coined the term the 'chrono-matrix'. The chrono-matrix is meant to evoke all that cultural feminism attributes to cyclical time. It recalls the metaphors cultural feminists use in their explanations and explorations of a woman's culture and those used to explore the Cosmic Mother. The term is thus evocative of the womb and the grave, of death and rebirth, the eternal becoming of the subject-in-process. The chrono-matrix is also a space/time that enables female characters to undergo the cyclical return that reconfigures their relation to temporality because of its focus on becoming, change, difference. It is what enables them to challenge patriarchal ideology; as Grosz writes:

It is only our immersion in temporal becoming that enables our access to the untimely, to that which in the past was not able to be contained there, to that which is out of time enough to jar the present and to adequately disrupt it, thereby bringing about a different temporal trajectory, different modes of becoming. (Grosz, 2005:181-182)

And herein lies the crux of the matter: it is in the fact that cyclical time is a space of *becoming* that potential for resistance against the phallogocentric order lies. The symbolic order which is supported in patrilinear time is fatalistic: one's position is akin to destiny – one will be what one signifies and, in feminist terms, that means women are destined always to be/embody the passive, the inert, the idealisation of a 'femininity' that is alien to them. There is no movement, no becoming for women embedded in the symbolic order and so time may as well stand still for them. However, the feminist defiance of patrilinear time enables the

subversion of the symbolic order, allowing women to become something new. As a temporal consciousness cyclical/Other time demands openness to transformation because the subject is never static; she is always in the process of folding back in on herself, into an ever deeper understanding of being, from crescent to gibbous to full to new moon, from the dark to the light and back into the dark again. And at each return there is a new vitality, a burgeoning of possibilities, a fecund space from which and within which anything is possible.

Because much of the language I use here and throughout the rest of the thesis is reminiscent of cultural feminism, there may be concerns that my stance is essentialist. I would argue, however, that this is not the case. Neither is it my intention to suggest that the authors whose books I discuss display essentialist sympathies. Certainly authors like Joanna Russ, Marge Piercy and Ursula Le Guin would be horrified if I suggested such a thing. I therefore propose that while the suggestion of a ‘feminine time’ characterised by images and metaphors of female fecundity will most likely be considered essentialist by poststructuralist feminists, the purpose to which such a concept may be put need not be. The chrono-matrix enables an interrogation of terms like ‘woman’ and ‘women’s experience’ as they are used in patriarchal discourse because it opens a fictional space in which authors can create meanings of their own. While this thesis is limited to a Second Wave exploration of female subjectivity, it also stands to reason that the emergence of a more sophisticated postmodern fragmented female subject relies on these initial attempts to disrupt problematic terms. The initial destabilisation of such terms that began in the 1960s and 1970s is useful precisely because it encouraged further feminist investigation and debate.

The Second Wave critical examination of time thus reveals all three of Kristeva’s feminist generations. And although these positions may seem to stand in opposition to each other it would appear that Second Wave feminists, as a body, would agree with this statement:

To speak of women and time is to speak of the ultimate theft. (...) Regardless of circumstance, women are strangers in the world of male-defined time and as such are never at home there. At best, they are like guests eager to prove helpful; at worst they are refugees, living on borrowed time. (Johles-Forman, 1989:1)

What Second Wave feminists agree on is that it is time to reassess the position of women in linear time because of the insidious effects of patrilinear consciousness on women. What that

reassessment will entail and how its effects will be felt are the two points on which they disagree. In a lecture given in Holland in 1982, which was subsequently published in 1984 (and reprinted in 1993), Luce Irigaray suggests that

[p]erhaps we are passing through an era when *time must redeploy space*? A new morning of and for the world? A remaking of immanence and transcendence, notably through this *threshold* which has never been examined as such: the female sex. (Irigaray, in 1993:7) (italics in the original)

Although she equates time with men and women with space earlier in this article, her suggestion that ‘time must redeploy space’ is in no way a suggestion that men redeploy women. Instead, it would appear that Irigaray calls for a female temporal space that will change the meanings attributed to ‘woman’ in male time and patriarchal ideology. This new temporal space claimed by women would finally allow them to become something more than a construct defined by male needs throughout history. As Irigaray argues: ‘Although she needs these dimensions to create a space for herself (...) they are traditionally taken from her to constitute man’s nostalgia and everything that he constructs in memory of this first and ultimate dwelling place’ (*ibid*, 11). The claim to a process of *becoming in female time*, which affects both women’s experience of immanence (everyday life and the experience of living in a female body) and transcendence (of men’s expectations and, perhaps, of a spirituality dominated by the image and presence of a male God), must result in a ‘new morning’ for the world. I use the term cosmogynesis in my third chapter but it applies here too. As Irigaray suggests, there must be a rebirth of the world, a ‘cosmogogenesis’, but facilitated by a new understanding of reality, time and themselves of and by women and hence a cosmogynesis. This is the same sentiment expressed by Stansell, when she suggests that Second Wave radical ‘feminists saw themselves not so much as seeking power but seeking rebirth’ (Stansell, 2010:233).

Benhabib asks a salient question, one that this thesis hopes to answer:

[Judith] Butler writes “that ‘agency’ then is to be located within the possibility of a variation on repetition” (the repetition of gender performances). But where are the resources for that variation derived from? What is it that enables the self to “vary” gender codes? To resist hegemonic discourses? What psychic, intellectual or other sources of creativity and resistance must we attribute to subjects for such variation to be possible? (Benhabib, 1996: 377)

Because the chrono-matrix requires a cyclical motion within which the emphasis is rebirth and transformation, it provides just the resources Benhabib asks about; there is both repetition, and there is the possibility to ‘vary gender codes’. A movement into the chrono-matrix connects the female character with a ‘femaleness’ that is not limited by the patriarchal definition of women within the symbolic order and it thus allows the character to discover what she can become when not limited by masculinist culture. It is therefore able to ‘constitute the site of a female Imaginary, the site, that is, of identifications of an ego no longer given over to an image defined by the masculine’ (Cixous, 1996:324), because it is the time/space of the fluid, primordial source-before-the law. This space destabilises the meaning of the word ‘woman’ as much as it does patriarchal authority and it therefore changes the position of ‘woman’ in linear time and the symbolic order.

Chapter Two:

Rebirthing the Dispossessed Children of Time: Butler, Piercy and Russ

“My race is very old,” Ketho said. “We have been civilised for a thousand millennia. We have histories of hundreds of those millennia. (...) But if each life is not new, each single life, then why are we born?”

“We are the children of time,” Shevek said, in Pravic. The younger man looked at him a moment, and then repeated his words in Iotic: “We are the children of time.”

(Ursula Le Guin: *The Dispossessed*)

The histories of our ‘civilised’ Western patriarchal world also recount the events of millennia, not as many as that of Ketho’s society, but millennia nevertheless. Women are the dispossessed children of the patrilinear time in which that ‘civilisation’ is embedded and the authors discussed in this chapter challenge this disinheritance in their speculative fiction. Time travel is one of the most popular ‘what if’ devices in SF and, given the physical movement of characters back and forth in time, possibly the simplest literary device available to feminist SF authors who want to subvert patrilinear authority. In the three Second Wave novels discussed in this chapter Octavia Butler, Marge Piercy and Joanna Russ use time travel to challenge the subjugation of women in masculinist culture. Their time-travelling female characters gain access to the chrono-matrix and in each case the movement out of linear time and into an alternative temporal space facilitates a ‘rebirth’ so that the characters are able to liberate themselves from patriarchal domination. They become the children of a new time that takes them back into the past to meet their ancestors and into the future to meet their descendants in order to forge a female continuum that lends them strength. Using the dislocation from linear time as a starting point, these authors initiate a process of becoming through which their characters learn self-reliance and agency. When they are then returned to patrilinear time they defy the symbolic definition of women as passive and submissive and claim the right to act in linear time. These novels can therefore be situated in Kristeva’s third generation feminist perspective on time.

Although time travel has become almost synonymous with science fiction, it has been used as a device in literature far longer than the predominantly twentieth century genre. Before its

adoption into the new and technologically inclined genre of SF at the turn of the twentieth century the preferred method of time travel for a character was dreaming (Clute and Nicholls, 1999:1227) as in Dickens's *A Christmas Carol* (1843) and Edgar Allen Poe's 'A Tale of the Ragged Mountains' (1844). Authors had to use dreams and supernatural phenomena if they wanted to experiment with time travel. In his book *Time Machines* (1993) Paul Nahin suggests that the first story using time travel was actually written in 1733 by Samuel Madden; in Madden's 'Memoirs of the Twentieth Century' a guardian angel from the future reveals documents that show how mankind's behaviour destroys the Earth (Nahin, 1993: xiii). It was H.G. Wells who revolutionised time travel in *The Time Machine*, 'providing SF with one of its most significant facilitating devices. (...) This particular deployment of a hypothetical machine was so striking as to constitute a historic break and a great inspiration' (Clute and Nicholls, 1999:1227). Even though his time machine was really powered by nothing more than a 'suped-up' bicycle, H.G. Wells had created the first purportedly plausible time machine in fiction, presenting his readers with a science-based rationale for time travel. From this moment on time travel in SF becomes the site for scientific debates about time paradoxes and what scientific method could most plausibly allow real time travel (i.e. machine? faster-than-light motion? wormholes?).

The importance of hard science to time travel SF seems to be difficult to exaggerate. Paul Nahin, himself a physicist, says of time travel in SF that it is only 'real' time travel if a credible scientific method is used to transport the traveller to another point in time, nothing else qualifies. However, there is a small, often overlooked body of SF that deals with female characters who travel unaided through time. Nahin writes of this SF:

Transporting oneself into the past by means of sheer willpower, as in *The Time Stream* (Bell, 1931), *Time and Again* (Finney, 1970), 'The Ambiguities of Yesterday' (Eckland, FST) and *Bid Time Return* (Matheson, 1975) is out. This approach is quite often found in time-travel stories written for young women. As observed (in Friend, 1982), 'the heroines are abruptly shot into the past through their own personal upheaval during a time of extreme emotional pain and embarrassment.' Such stories (...) depend far more on romanticism than on rationality. (Nahin, 1993:9)

Although Nahin dismisses this phenomenon as unworthy of reflection in any study of 'real' time travel it is a significant anomaly. Because feminist SF authors may use time to explore different concerns from those of male authors of SF, their methods of chrono-kinesis may not

conform to Nahin's expectations but this is no *mistake* on their part. The application of 'Feminine/Other' time allows for the introduction of a different ideological entity from masculine linear time into this SF and Nahin does not take this into account. Also, while there is purportedly less science in these stories by women, it seems a little precipitate to damn them out of hand when even the most 'scientifically accurate' time travel stories by rational men about rational male time travellers must also resort to, at the very least, a smidgen of pseudo-science to facilitate the chrono-kinesis of the traveller. As prolific SF author and scientist Isaac Asimov writes:

The dead give away that time travel is flatly impossible arises from the well-known 'paradoxes' it entails. (...) So complex and hopeless are the paradoxes, (...) so wholesale is the annihilation of any reasonable concept of causality, that the easiest way out of the irrational chaos that results is to suppose that time travel is, and forever will be, impossible. (Asimov, 1984:8)

Therefore, although the physics of time travel is fascinating, in SF time travel remains primarily a facilitating device that encourages critical thinking about our world. And in terms of feminist SF it may not be the science of time travel that particularly interests the authors. In her book *Alien to Femininity* (1987) Marleen Barr suggests that what sets female time travellers apart from male time travellers is precisely this lack of dependence on technology. She argues that because science has been an arena largely controlled by men and seen as part of the patriarchal domination of the natural world and women, feminist writers may be loath to have their characters depend on too much technology. Brian Attebery too notes that 'the master narrative of science has always been told in sexual terms. It represents knowledge, innovation and even perception as masculine; while nature, the passive object of exploration is described as feminine' (Attebery, 2000:134).

According to these theorists, therefore, feminist authors who desire to liberate their female time travellers from patriarchal culture and ideology may feel that they should first liberate them from the science with which patriarchies have diminished and controlled them in the past. Barr expresses this sentiment succinctly when she writes of the female time traveller that

[s]elf-confidence, not a particular mechanical device or specific technological expertise, provides the key to her liberation (...) 'masculine' scientific knowledge does not save the day. (...) Instead of depending upon a man or a machine she is rescued by her new understanding of her own potential. In addition to travelling between two worlds she (...) also experiences an inner

journey of transcendence as she moves from dependence upon men to dependence upon herself. (Barr, 1987:44)

What Nahin dismisses as bad SF (i.e. the lack of technological detail) is what Barr identifies as the defining feature of feminist time travel SF.

However, it is important to recognise that neither his nor Marleen Barr's comments describe the entirety of feminist SF. Even during the early years of the twentieth century and the Second Wave there were female authors who refuted the claim that the 'hard sciences' were not for women. Certainly, on the one hand there is the tradition of feminist utopian SF that tends towards descriptions of worlds in which 'evil' technology has destroyed men and left women to resume peaceful lives in perfect symbiosis with nature (Sally M. Gearhart's *The Wanderground* (1985) and Suzy McKee Charnas's *Holdfast Chronicles* (1974-1999) are examples of this). But on the other hand is a body of writing in which female authors 'explore how new technologies could change social relations' (Yaszek in Reid, 2009:237). In this fiction science is not shunned but claimed and practised by authors and female characters in direct defiance of the male moratorium on women in science.

Lisa Yaszek writes in her book *The Self Wired: Technology and Subjectivity in Contemporary Narrative* that 'advanced technologies challenge conventional understandings of the human subject by transforming the body into a conduit between (rather than a barrier against) external forces and the internal psyche' (2002:1). The female author who is trying to grapple with issues of subjecthood and the female body in a world that remains dominated by patriarchal thinking and in which experience is increasingly mediated by technologies may thus find surprising support in the metaphors and devices technology can offer. While Yaszek is writing in far more recent times than was Barr, some of the fiction she addresses in *The Self Wired* is Second Wave feminist SF (she discusses Butler's *Kindred* and Russ's *The Female Man*); what she suggests is, significantly, as applicable to earlier feminist SF as to more recent feminist fiction.

In her book Yaszek acknowledges her indebtedness to the earlier work of feminist theorist Donna Haraway whose 1991 article a 'Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century' had a significant impact on feminist (and feminist SF) discourse both at the time after it. Briefly, Haraway's view is that feminists should not

long for a return to an (illusory) idyllic pre-technological ‘garden’ in which women are liberated from patriarchal ideology that has disappeared along with its child, industrial advancement. Instead she suggests that new technologies destabilise the boundaries between the organic and the machine creating the possibility for women to become hybrid beings that resist hegemonic patriarchal control. She writes that

[a] cyborg world might be about lived social and bodily realities in which people are not afraid of their joint kinship with animals and machines, not afraid of permanently partial identities and contradictory standpoints. (...) Cyborg unities are monstrous and illegitimate; in our present political circumstances we could hardly hope for more potent myths for resistance and recoupling. (1991:154)

Haraway argues that because patriarchal ideology has associated women with nature throughout history, if women assert a kinship with machine while maintaining their embodied humanity it may destabilise the binary thinking on which much patriarchal ideology relies. Much feminist SF, both before and after the publication of this article, tackles exactly this: female characters are empowered through technologies that enable them to overthrow the authority of misogynistic cultures and assert their rights to agency. Although this strategy may not be central to the novels I discuss here, there are certainly moments in which it is revealed.

At first glance it would appear that the fiction discussed in this chapter complies with Nahin and Barr’s expectations of feminist SF time travel stories because the authors do not focus on a science-based rationale for their time travel. Joanna Russ’s protagonist, Alyx, in *The Adventures of Alyx*, is transported through time by the Trans Temporal Military Authority but the device used seems to be irrelevant; Russ neither names nor describes it. In *Kindred*, Octavia Butler’s Dana just vanishes and appears in the past. Marge Piercy’s Connie Ramos in *Woman on the Edge of Time* has blackouts and travels to the future; her time travel may therefore be explained by medication, insanity or (as in Russ’s stories) a device that is neither named nor explained. However, the relationship of the characters to technology in these novels is slightly more complex than this. In *Kindred* Dana is able to tell her story because of a typewriter; this technology therefore makes it possible for her to carve out a productive space for herself in linear time. In *Woman on the Edge of Time* Connie’s present is a nightmare world in which medical technology has stripped her of autonomy but in the idyllic future Piercy describes, technologies have liberated women and men and enable them to live

in contented equality. In the later *Alyx* tales the protagonists are fully capable of using futuristic weaponry in battle and *Alyx* has obviously mastered the use of the time travel device enough to organise a rebellion against Trans Temp. Although these authors are aware of the possible dangers inherent in technology which remains in the service of patriarchal culture, they do acknowledge that it may be put to use for the purposes of feminist revolution.

This thesis focuses on how these three Second Wave feminist SF authors use the subversion of time to illustrate the oppression and enable the liberation of their female characters. H.B. Franklin suggests that ‘when one says time travel what one really means is an extraordinary dislocation of someone’s consciousness in time’ (Franklin, 1966: 360). The female characters discussed here seem to experience just that. They are cast out of linear time and forced to evaluate themselves and their realities; their dislocation in time results in a bitter recognition of their oppression and a painful cyclical process of rebirth as they come into themselves, liberated and independent. This time travel is not the adventure for men summed up by SF author Larry Niven: ‘If one could travel in time, what wish could not be answered? All the treasures of the past would fall to one man with a submachine gun. Cleopatra and Helen of Troy might share his bed, if bribed with a trunkful of modern cosmetics’ (in Nahin, 1993:21). For these female time travellers the journey is about liberation, about the dying of their old selves and old realities and being born anew: able to act and fully human. They gain access to the chrono-matrix, that alternative space-time that demands death and rebirth and the constitution of new meanings and in so doing they initiate the process of their becoming.

The first author discussed in this chapter is Octavia E(stelle) Butler (1947-2006). Butler was born in Pasadena, California. Her father, a shoe-shiner, died when she was a baby and Butler was raised by her grandmother and her mother, who worked as a maid in the houses of white people. Being poor and black and a girl in a white, patriarchal culture heavily influenced both Butler’s experiences growing up and, later, the fiction she wrote. Crossley writes:

An only child whose father died when she was a baby, Butler was aware very early of women struggling to survive. Her maternal grandmother had stories to tell about long hours of work in the cornfields of Louisiana while raising seven children. Her mother, Octavia M. Butler, had been working since the age of ten and spent all her adult life earning a living as a housemaid. (...) [Butler] observed the long arm of slavery: the degree to which her mother operated in a white society as an invisible woman and, worse, the degree to which she accepted and internalised her status. (Crossley, 1988: xii-xiii)

Butler has said that it was this recognition of the brutality of reality, of the immediate hardship and suffering of her mother that led her to find solace in stories, particularly SF and fantasy. Like other feminists she had become frustrated by the lack of stories, in other genres as well as SF that reflected the experiences of real women. In an interview, she says of her early work:

I wrote the kind of thing I saw being published – stories about thirty-year-old white men who drank and smoked too much. They were pretty awful. (...) And a slightly different problem was that everything I read that *was* intended for women seemed boring as hell – basically, ‘Finding Mr Right’: marriage, family and that’s the end of that. I didn’t know how to write about women doing anything because while they were waiting for Mr Right they weren’t doing anything, they were waiting to be done unto. (McCafferey, 1990:57-58)

By the late 1960s and early 1970s, however, the previously male-dominated genre of SF had become far more experimental and had developed an enthusiastic and influential feminist following. This change in SF allowed Butler to explore problems that had affected her personally. As a black, feminist writer, she began in her SF to address issues of race, gender and the struggle for power in relationships, particularly in cultures that deny women agency. It was with the publication of her *Patternist* series (*Patternmaster* [1976]; *Mind of My Mind* [1977]; *Survivor* [1978]; *Wildseed* [1980]; and *Clay’s Ark*, [1984) that Butler first received critical acclaim in SF circles. Since then she has won both the Hugo and Nebula Awards several times and was posthumously welcomed into the Science Fiction Hall of Fame in 2010.

The issues with which Butler is concerned are foregrounded in her 1979 novel *Kindred* which ‘at once renovates science fiction, time-travel stories, and the autobiographical slave narrative’ (Baccolini, 2000:27); (all page references in this section are from the 1988 Beacon Press reprint of *Kindred*). In *Kindred*, Butler traces the journey of Dana, a young black woman, who goes back in time to the days of slavery on an American plantation in the antebellum South. While the present in which Dana lives (1976) is more liberal than the South in 1815, Butler uses the chrono-matrix to expose the continuing legacy of slavery in the modern world. Through her journey back and forth in time Dana recognises the parallels between the subtle domination of her husband and her struggle to write creatively in 1976 and the brutal domination of the slaves and their illiteracy in 1815. What Butler suggests is

that it is only in acknowledging this oppression for what it is and confronting its legacy that Dana can be free and whole in her world. Because Butler explores the oppressive weight of patrilinear time and white, western, patriarchal history, this novel can be read as part of the Second Wave effort to destabilise the authority of patrilinear time. In the novel Dana is shifted into the temporal space of the chrono-matrix and this enables her to defy the limits imposed on her by the patriarchal legacy of slavery. When she finally returns to her own time she is scarred by the experience, but the implication is that she is strong enough to defy patriarchal racist ideology and *act* in linear time.

Tina Chanter suggests that

[t]o treat the history of slavery as irrelevant to concerns of present social justice is to attempt to divorce the past from the present, to ignore its legacy. (...) The view that slavery is in the past, and that this past has nothing to do with us, amounts to a denial that the past matters or that it has continuing effects. (...) If it seems obvious that slavery is over, and things are much better now, it is far from obvious that its cumulative effects are over, or that things are so much better that we can afford to stop thinking about it. (Chanter, 2001: 20-21)

The slavery Chanter writes about is an omnipresent force in patrilinear time but because it is supposed to ‘be over’ and ‘in the past’ in terms of linear time, there are few mechanisms for dealing with it in the present. Through her use of the chrono-matrix Butler explores the effect that the legacy of slavery can have and she exposes the parallels between slavery and the patriarchal system that exists in 1976.

Although Butler creates a rupture in linear time in order to subvert patriarchal authority, the novel itself is not particularly experimental. In *The Adventures of Alyx*, Joanna Russ continually defies linearity so that her narrative forms a series of cycles that completely overthrow masculine time and in *Woman on the Edge of Time* Marge Piercy experiments with alternate time lines caused by her protagonist’s time travelling. Butler does not experiment with time; in contrast to the other two novels *Kindred* has a very simple structure and is undeniably didactic in its purpose. There are only two temporal sites in this novel, San Francisco in 1976 and Maryland in 1815 and it is the similarities between the two that Butler emphasises. Her point is that linear time/linear history is a force that cannot be denied or changed, only the perception of the female protagonist can be altered so that she may walk, liberated, into a future that Butler does not predict in this novel.

The novel opens with the enigmatic line, ‘The trouble began long before June 9, 1976, when I became aware of it, but June 9 is the day I remember. It was my twenty-sixth birthday’ (12). Butler undermines the authority of linear time from the beginning because ‘the trouble’ of which Dana becomes aware could be one of two things. The most obvious is her first time travel experience but if this is the first time that she travels through time how could this particular ‘trouble’ have begun long before the ninth of June? The implication is that, although the incident affects her physically on this particular day, she has felt herself to be ‘unstuck’ in time before, possibly because of who she *is* in linear time: a black woman. Dana is a twice-marginalised figure; her position in linear time is thus unstable from the start because she is largely invisible to the white patriarchal authority that enforces masculine linear temporality. This is precisely what the Second Wave scrutiny of time sought to reverse. Writing in 1981, feminist literary theorist Annis Pratt suggests that

[w]omen’s fiction manifests alienation from normal concepts of time and space precisely because the presentation of time by persons on the margins of day-to-day life inevitably deviates from ordinary chronology and because those excluded from the agora are likely to perceive normal settings from phobic perspectives. (1981:11)

It would seem that Butler suggests Dana is aware of her marginal position in society and of her alienation from the patrilinear culture to which her white husband belongs. On the ninth of June, however, this awareness becomes acute. This perception of her ‘alienation from normal concepts of time’ is not entirely separate from the second thing that ‘the trouble’ could be: racism. The oppression of black women in America begins long before 1976; for Dana’s family it begins with slavery. But although she is cognisant of the facts of slavery and oppression, Dana is not sufficiently aware of the effect they have on her own life until the chrono-matrix forces her to acknowledge it.

The story itself begins with Dana and Kevin moving into their new apartment. Although there is a lot to do Kevin goes into his office and leaves the work to her because he is ‘writing’; Dana, however, observes that he may have been ‘loafing or thinking because I didn’t hear his typewriter’ (12). Kevin claims the space he needs to be creative but Dana, who also wants to write, is responsible for the housework and takes on menial jobs to earn money. His creative potential is treated as important while hers is dismissed. Dana also

describes the work she does thus: ‘I was working out of a casual labour agency – we regulars called it a slave market. (...) [We were] non-people rented (out)’ (52-53). It is significant that she glibly describes the agency as a slave market, implying that on some level she feels she is ‘sold’ to support Kevin who does not support her in equal measure. This is echoed in an early episode in the book. While she is unpacking he emerges from his office and complains petulantly that his writing is not going well. When she expects him to help her unpack, his response is significant:

“Hell, why’d I come out here?”

He gave me a look that I knew wasn’t as malevolent as it seemed. He had the kind of pale, almost colourless eyes that made him seem distant and angry whether he was or not. (12-13)

He resents having to help with menial tasks around the house and the language with which Butler describes Kevin makes the reader uneasy about the relationship between him and Dana. Butler makes Kevin’s race clear in this passage: he is ‘pale’ and ‘colourless’ and therefore obviously white. Significantly, this characteristic is described in such a way that it is threatening. Kevin’s whiteness, as much as his being male, is central to the motifs of oppression that Butler explores in this novel.

It is directly after this observation that Dana is first called into the past by Rufus Weylin. She feels nauseous, blacks out and wakes up in 1810. Rufus is a little boy drowning in a river into which Dana wades to rescue him. It is significant that the first time Dana saves Rufus’s life they both emerge dripping from the river; this symbolism is evocative of the womb of the chrono-matrix. It may therefore also not be coincidental that she saves both herself and Rufus on her birthday; on her birthday, she undergoes the first rebirth that the chrono-matrix requires of her. When Rufus’s father threatens her with a shotgun Dana blacks out again and returns to 1976 and Kevin.

When Dana later hypothesises about the causes of her movement in time she decides that it must be Rufus who ‘calls’ her to the past and any threat to her own life that ‘pushes’ her back to the future. In both cases, however, it is her life at risk because she discovers early on that Rufus (who must have bedded one of his slaves and begun her family line) is her several-times-removed great grandfather. In SF one of the most debated time travel paradoxes is ‘the

grandfather paradox': if you go back in time, you may meet your grandfather (or another ancestor) and inadvertently prevent your own birth, thus nullifying the chain of events that leads to the time travel in the first place (Kaku, 2008:220). Butler subverts the patriarchal dynamic of the paradox by making the life of the white, male, great-great-great grandfather dependent on the courage and resourcefulness of his black, female descendant. Dana saves Rufus's life five times but it is essential, particularly as Rufus grows into a cruel, selfish slave-owner, that Dana knows it is her own life that she saves. Already this is a display of agency. Even though she seems to be powerless in 1976 and is more so in the nineteenth century, in gaining access to the chrono-matrix she ultimately has the power to affect life and death.

It is significant that when Dana looks up her lineage in the family Bible it is the female names that she reads aloud; she saves Rufus's life only to save her female line. That Dana is being absorbed into a female continuum is also very much revealed by the help her female descendants give her in the past. Marleen Barr suggests that, 'speculative fiction's female time travellers (...) remind women that they should look to the past – and to the future – and view themselves as part of a female continuum' (Barr, 1987:46); the female continuum of which Dana becomes a part reveals the strength of the women in her family and her own untapped strengths. Reading the names in the Bible, she thinks to herself:

Hagar Weylin Blake had died in 1880, long before any member of my family that I had known. No doubt most information about her life had died with her. At least it had died before it filtered down to me. There was only the Bible. (...) So many relatives that I had never known, would never know. Or would I? (28)

The subversion of linear time and her immersion in the chrono-matrix enable Dana to meet her female relatives and become part of a female continuum that allows her to better comprehend her position in history and to challenge the 'destiny' patriarchal culture has in mind for her.

When she is threatened by Rufus's father in 1810 Dana returns to the future terrified. Although she is covered with mud and bruises and he saw her disappear and reappear, Kevin treats her tale with suspicion. His reaction is to patronise her and undermine her experience, and Dana submits to his suggestion that she put 'the episode' behind her; at Kevin's insistence she tries to 'wash away' what has happened:

I showered, washed away the mud and the brackish water, put on clean clothes, combed my hair. (...)

“That’s a lot better,” said Kevin when he saw me.

But it wasn’t.

Rufus and his parents had still not quite settled back and become the ‘dream’ Kevin wanted them to be. They stayed with me, shadowy and threatening. They made their own limbo and held me in it. (18)

Dana recognises the seriousness of the threat this ‘journey’ signifies; her reality has been fundamentally altered even if Kevin refuses to acknowledge it. She has entered a ‘limbo’ that contains whatever lessons or experiences she must take from the Weylins. This limbo is significant because it suggests a time/space in which everything seems to stand still, a place of indeterminacy that is actually the space of the chrono-matrix into which Dana must cycle back again and again until the Weylin threat is resolved.

Dana’s first visit to the past lasts no more than a few minutes and she is back only a few hours before her second trip begins. Although she has only been in 1976 for a few hours, Rufus has aged three or four years. Significantly, Butler’s female and male protagonists experience time differently even in terms of ‘measurable’ time. On this second trip two issues come to the fore: the brutal racism of Rufus’s time and the importance of Dana’s family. Rufus calls Dana a ‘nigger’ and, frightened, she decides to ask her ancestors, Alice Greenwood and her mother (both free women), for help. On the way she sees a slave beaten by a patrol and is physically sickened by the violence. What she has yet to recognise is that the same prejudice exists and oppresses her in her own time, it is merely more subtle.

We are told that:

Whether it was (dangerous) or not, the woman, unconscious and abandoned, was in need of help. I got up and went over to her. The child, who had been kneeling beside her jumped up to run away.

“Alice!” I called softly. She stopped, peered at me through the darkness. She was Alice, then. These people were my relatives, my ancestors. And this place could be my refuge. (37)

That Dana helps the woman and child is significant. In a white, patriarchal culture in which they are treated worse than animals, the closeness of the slaves and the connection between the female members of Dana's family ensure their survival; it is significant that Dana's immediate response to these women is that 'these people (are) my relatives (...) my refuge' (37).

Her stay in 1815 does not last long; within a few hours her life is threatened by the same patrolman who beat Alice's mother and she slips back to 1976. Kevin again listens to Dana's tale and they come to very different conclusions:

"This is getting crazier," he muttered.

"Not to me." He glanced at me sidelong. "To me it's getting more and more believable." (...) I moved closer to him, relieved, content with even such grudging acceptance. (46-47)

Dana is being drawn into the chrono-matrix and she starts to realise that her experience of time is no longer dominated by linear progression. Even though she needs her husband to support her, the most she receives from him, even as the novel progresses, is a 'grudging acceptance'. The relationship between the two of them enables Butler to explore exactly the kind of 'invisible' misogyny that Carl Freedman describes when he writes:

The crossing of oppression with domestic intimacy and mundane routine makes such oppression in some ways difficult to visualise and hence to conceptualise. (...) Sexism and the struggle against it take place literally everywhere, but thus, in a certain sense, nowhere in particular. (Freedman, 2000:132)

Dana must first acknowledge this sexist oppression for what it is in order to defy it. In 1976, Kevin considers himself to be liberal because he marries an African-American but he still patronises her and expects servile behaviour from her because she is a woman. Butler implies that both are forms of slavery and the denial of any human rights, particularly those of individual agency and dignity, should not be tolerated.

The third time Dana slips back to 1819 Kevin is touching her and is carried through time with her. In Maryland he poses as Dana's owner and the two of them fall into the routine of the Weylin plantation. This transplanting of Kevin into 1819 allows us to gauge his reaction to the times. He does protect Dana and is superficially concerned about the plight of the

slaves and yet, because he is not directly affected by the violence of the times, he is excited to be an adventurer in the past. Ironically, his words echo Larry Niven's statement about male time travellers:

“This could be a great time to live in,” Kevin said once. “I keep thinking what an experience it would be to stay in it – go West and watch the building of the country, see how much of the Old West mythology is true.”

“West,” I said bitterly. “That’s where they’re doing it to the Indians instead of the Blacks!”

He looked at me strangely. He had been doing that a lot lately. (97)

As a white man, Kevin is privileged in any time he visits. He has authority and power because it is his natural province and so there is no threat to him. Instead, he is thrilled to watch the patriarchal version of history being written. He does not criticise the version of history he knows even though he is forced to see first-hand the suffering and brutalisation of a people whose narrative has been mediated by white patriarchal historical narrative. He also cannot understand the vehemence of Dana's bitter anger because as far as he can see, her role has changed very little in 1819: she has food, a bed and her husband. Kevin slips very easily into the role of the patriarch, taking control of Dana and playing the part of the magnanimous guardian. Unfortunately, in 1819 the role is an authentic one:

Finally he said, “There are so many really fascinating times we could have gone back to visit.”

I laughed without humour. “I can't think of any time I'd like to go back to. But of all of them, this one must be the most dangerous – for me anyway.”

“Not while I'm with you.” I glanced at him gratefully. (77)

Dana must be grateful because he protects her from most of the degradation suffered by the slaves around her. However, he is only able to do so because in everyone else's eyes he owns her. This changes the dynamic between them and Dana admits that, ‘I felt almost as though I really was doing something shameful, happily playing whore for my supposed owner. I went away feeling uncomfortable, vaguely ashamed’ (97). No matter how liberal Kevin is in 1976, in 1819 he slips into the role of owner far too easily for Dana's comfort and she starts to recognise that even in 1976 he naturally assumes a position of dominance over her. Leonard astutely observes that ‘Butler uses time travel and history together as a way to highlight the fragility of twentieth century racial tolerance’ (Leonard, 2003:261). I would suggest that it is

not just racial prejudice but sexual oppression that is highlighted in the relationship between Dana and Kevin.

In the past Dana tries make Rufus more sympathetic to the slaves he will one day own but Rufus calls her a ‘nigger’, secure in the knowledge that this accurately describes her position and importance. Kevin seems to know that trying to change him is futile and he tells her that she is ‘gambling against history’ (83), implying that the patriarchal authority of linear history is unassailable. While Dana teaches one of slave children, Kevin is asked to tutor Rufus. The contrast is telling: Rufus is sullen and uninterested even though he has many books and the time to learn while Nigel is eager, enthusiastic and intelligent but has no time and steals a book from which to learn. The situation parallels Dana’s in the future. Her writing is side-lined because she does menial work and has no time to pursue her aspirations while Kevin takes his opportunities for granted. When Dana is caught teaching Nigel the whipping she receives is severe enough to send her back to the future; Kevin is left behind in 1819.

Each time Dana almost dies, her awakening in the future is a rebirth of sorts and her 1976 reality becomes less and less acceptable because she is forced to acknowledge the legacy of slavery, racism and sexism that persists in the modern, supposedly liberal world; she is still defined according to her skin colour and gender by a culture that still privileges the white and the masculine. This time when she wakes up in 1976 Dana does two significant things: she puts her own office in order and she starts to write about her experiences in Maryland. Having seen her own situation taken to the extreme in that of the slaves she values her right to tell her story. As she writes, she assumes the right to control the signifying processes that had previously limited her; she becomes something new, something not as submissive or silent. In this moment Butler’s *Kindred* claims a place in Kristeva’s third generation feminist perspective regarding time: Dana has been exposed to the chrono-materix and now she takes what she has learned and applies it to her reality and her actions will (hopefully) change patrilinear culture.

Eight days later, Dana is called back to the plantation. This fourth ‘visit’ is the most difficult and the most revealing of the six. The two worlds between which she moves have become part of a single reality for her; both are home and both are part of the person she is becoming. She says, ‘I was startled to catch myself saying wearily, “Home at last!”’ (127) This time

Dana has been called back into the past to prevent Rufus's murder. Although Alice is only marginally to blame for what happens, she is severely enough beaten that Dana needs to care for her. During this process Butler foregrounds the connection between the two women. We have already been told that Dana bears an astonishing resemblance to Alice's mother (29) but now, in a sense, she *becomes* Alice's mother. The beating Alice has received results in a loss of memory and a regression to childhood which means she literally believes Dana is her mother; Dana says, 'She called me Mama for a while' (153). Genetically, Alice is mother to Dana but now it is Dana who is mother to Alice. During the last quarter of the novel both slaves and Rufus remark on the startling family resemblance between the two women. Sarah, the cook, says that they could be sisters and Rufus, looking at both of them says, "Behold the woman," (...) and he looked from one to the other of us. "You really are only one woman. Did you know that?" (228).

The conflation of Dana and Alice is significant, particularly here where the role of the 'mother' is explored. I have briefly noted the importance of establishing a female continuum; the connection with a mother figure can play an essential part in this. Feminist theorist Mary Jacobus suggests that 'a woman (...) thinks back through her mother [and this] thinking back through her mother becomes at once recuperation and revision' (Jacobus, 1989:61). This connection with a mother can therefore facilitate a healing and self-understanding that have hitherto eluded the female character. The connection between Alice and Dana requires and allows both women to recognise something of who they are and what they are able to be and become. However, this dynamic that encourages 'recuperation and revision' is complicated in *Kindred* because Butler herself is revising the story of her mother through this novel.

In an interview with Randall Kenan, she says: 'Time travel is just a device for getting the character back to confront where she came from. (...) I spent a lot of my childhood being ashamed of what [my mother] did, and I think one of the reasons I wrote *Kindred* was to resolve my feelings' (Kenan, 1991:496). It would therefore appear that Butler, too, goes back in time through her novel in order to reconnect with her mother and understand why things happened as they did and what effect they have had on her own becoming. A girl's relationship with her mother is complex and in *Kindred*, it is only because of the relationship between the two women that Alice heals. That these two women look so similar has another, darker purpose. Apart from reflecting kinship, they reflect the one oppressive reality they

share even across time: slavery. Although Dana does not consider herself a slave Alice recognises the position.

In the last part of the novel the similarities between Kevin and the Weylin men also become pronounced to foreground the various slave-owners in the novel. Rufus asks Dana to take care of his correspondence just as Kevin treats Dana like his secretary in the future. Because Kevin has been in the past for five years Dana also notices that ‘He had a slight accent (...). Nothing really noticeable, but he did sound a little like Rufus and Tom Weylin’ (190). She also observes that, ‘The expression on his face was like something I’d seen, something I was used to seeing on Tom Weylin. Something closed and ugly’ (194). These echoes of the Weylins in Kevin worry Dana, as they should. When he first follows her to the plantation earlier in the novel, she expresses her concerns, saying

[a] place like this would endanger him in a way I didn’t want to talk to him about. If he was stranded here for years, some part of this place would rub off on him. No large part, I know. But if he survived here, it would be because he managed to tolerate the life here. (77)

Dana recognises that Kevin does not have the strength to withstand the pressures of the nineteenth century; 1824 will encourage him to express openly what exists in him, hidden and unacknowledged, in 1976.

This time Dana returns to 1976 she brings Kevin back with her. Although she has been twice whipped almost to death, twice threatened with a shotgun and once almost raped, it is Kevin who returns bitter and angry. He is consumed by his pain and behaves as though the impact of his experiences far outweighs hers, demanding her attention and throwing tantrums. When she tries to soothe him, he rebuffs her:

“Kevin...” He stalked out of the room before I could finish. I ran after him, caught his arm. “Kevin!”

He stopped, glared at me as though I was some stranger who had dared to lay hands on him. (...) I took his face in my hands and looked into his eyes, now truly cold.

“I don’t know what it was like for you,” I said. He gave me what almost seemed to be a look of hatred, then brushed past me, went to his office and shut the door. (194-195)

Kevin assumes the natural right of the white man to be more important than the black woman is, after all, both as a woman and a slave, Dana should be silent. She finally leaves him to his self-pity and, with foresight, prepares for the next trip back.

On her fifth trip into the past Dana sees how fully Rufus has become his father. He sells slaves with no regard for the families he is breaking up and has taken an unwilling but resigned Alice to his bed (and she has born a son). During this trip Alice has another baby, a girl she names Hagar. When Dana comments on the fact that the children are named after freed slaves in the Bible Alice replies, “If Hagar had been a boy, I would have called her Ishmael. In the Bible, people might be slaves for a while, but they didn’t have to stay slaves” (234). The reference to Hagar (Sarah’s slave girl in the Old Testament) is poignant because when Abraham takes Hagar to his bed she gives birth to Ishmael, the father of a nation who is thereafter considered inferior to the Israelites. Alice feels that because she is black, Hagar will always share the destiny of her namesake.

Hagar is the female ancestor for whom Dana has been waiting and, assuming that her existence is now assured, she slits her wrists and wakes up in 1976. The fact that she is confident enough to take the dislocation of time into her own hands is important because it signifies that she is no longer afraid of death; Dana knows that rebirth awaits her in the future.

Her last trip to the nineteenth century occurs only a few days later, ironically on the fourth of July: Independence Day. It is six years later on the plantation; Alice has committed suicide and Rufus is about to take his own life. However, when he sees Dana, the spitting image of Alice, Rufus decides instead to replace Alice with Dana. In this final conflation of identity Dana realises that Rufus believes he loves her, as he loved Alice. But in Rufus’s mind (much as with Kevin) love cannot be separated from ownership and control. Dana finally recognises that she is a slave; she and Alice *are* the same woman, bound to each other across time through the position they share in the symbolic order: woman and slave. If she is to regain her status as a free woman, Dana must therefore fight for it: when Rufus tries to rape her she kills him. As she spins back to 1976, however, the arm with which she stabs Rufus stays in the past and is therefore amputated. Literary critic Timothy Spaulding suggests that, ‘Dana’s body and her ancestral ties act as physical sites of the past that she must confront in order to free herself from slavery and its legacy’ (Spaulding, 2005:26). When she finally frees herself

from the slave-owner who fathered her ancestor, she is therefore physically marked as a reminder that her heritage is one of rape, slavery and pain. The narrative of slavery has been told through the lives and on the bodies of Dana and her female ancestors and it is this narrative that she must acknowledge.

Dana's act of androicide finally frees her from any sense of duty or obligation she might feel to either Rufus or Kevin. She becomes fully independent and free but must not, and cannot, forget the legacy of her family. When she denies Rufus her body, she denies patriarchal culture the right to control or own her. She claims the agency she should have by right in 1976. When she returns to the future she and Kevin stay married but her observation that 'slavery of any kind fosters strange relationships' (230) suggests that she will no longer be subjugated by anyone.

Spaulding writes that:

The postmodern slave narrative's orientation toward time grounds itself in the synchronic moment of slavery while simultaneously positing a diachronic view of time that acknowledges the past's continued resonance in the present. (...) Both literally and symbolically, Dana's movement in time illustrates the fact that the past asserts itself in a material and physical way. (Spaulding, 2005:27-29)

Dana's time travel not only alerts her to slavery's resonance in 1976, it also allows her to confront both it and the sexism that keeps her subjugated. The temporal dislocation that occurs throughout the novel sets up a situation in which Dana can distance herself from dominant patriarchal ideology and dominant patriarchal social structures and recognise that these structures limit her; when she does this she is finally able to claim agency and make an attempt to change the situation through her writing.

Like Dana, Marge Piercy's protagonist in *Woman on the Edge of Time* (1976) is doubly othered; poor and Hispanic, Connie is 'other' and thus relegated to the fringes of society. Like Dana, she too is powerless and finds herself at the mercy of the inhuman, patriarchal, white establishment of late twentieth century America. However, while Dana liberates herself by confronting the past, Connie is liberated when she moves into the future. She is uniquely receptive (almost psychic) and so 'catches' a transmission from a group of people

two hundred years into the future and begins to travel between her present and their utopian future. Like *Kindred*, this novel can be identified as part of the larger Second Wave criticism of patrilinear time because it is Connie's displacement in time that facilitates her final liberation from restrictive patriarchal culture. Like Dana, she is drawn into the temporal space of the chrono-matrix in which she undergoes a 'death' and 'rebirth' and when she returns to linear time and her own world, she is able to act and change it.

Marge Piercy is not primarily known for her SF but for the mainstream feminist fiction and poetry for which she won the Hopwood Award in 1957. She has been called a 'significant voice of US feminism' (Clute and Nicholls, 1999:631) and, as feminist literary scholar Margaret Keulen writes, 'Piercy is deeply and consciously influenced by her politics. In her mind, writing is a form of political activism because art is a part of the living society and not an abstract ideal for intellectuals' (Keulen, 1991:42). Pertinent to my consideration of feminist speculative fiction is that, although she may not be a prolific writer of SF, Piercy has made a significant contribution to the genre. *Woman on the Edge of Time* is considered to be a classic of feminist utopian SF and her novel *Body of Glass* (1991), published in the USA as *He, She and It*, won the Arthur C. Clarke award.

SF author William Gibson attributes to *Woman on the Edge of Time* the birth of the SF sub-genre cyberpunk, a school of writing that became popular in the 1980s. Cyberpunk explores a future in which 'machine augmentations of the human body are commonplace, as are mind and body changes brought about by drugs and biological engineering' (Clute and Nicholls, 1999:288). *Woman on the Edge of Time* is a forerunner of cyberpunk because it explores, in chillingly realistic terms, experiments by psychiatrists on people like Connie who are disposable. In this novel doctors insert chips into the brains of their patients and experiment with the effects of drugs on their behaviour. These medical attempts at mental, physical and emotional control are described in brutal terms by Piercy. As it turns out, the utopian future that Connie visits is only one of a number of alternative futures and, if the doctors are allowed to continue their destructive, inhuman experiments that ideal future will be destroyed.

Joanna Russ writes of feminist utopian fiction that 'utopias are not embodiments of universal human values, but are reactive; that is, they supply in fiction what their authors believe

society and/or women lack in the here-and-now' (Russ, 1981:81). If this is the case, then Piercy's utopia is a complex reaction to patriarchal authority in the modern world. In the present she describes women are limited to sex roles – wife, mother, whore – and any rebellion against that limitation is diagnosed as a mental disease and severely medicated. The authoritarian norm is represented only by white, male, heterosexual doctors and the patients, who need to be 'fixed' because they are 'other', are women (of all races) and men who are coloured or homosexual. Piercy suggests that hospitals do not actually house the mentally unstable but are places where those 'who (are) not desirable, who (catch) like rough teeth in cogwheels, who (have) no place or fit crosswise the one they (are) hammered into, (are) carted to repent their contrariness' (24). In contrast to this dystopian present the utopian future is idyllic: people are able to love whoever they choose, work is shared equally by all, the environment is cared for and hierarchical (patriarchal) government is obsolete.

Piercy's treatment of time is interesting in this novel because she shows not only how the temporal principles of the chrono-matrix are liberating for Connie when she is out of linear time but that these temporal effects are stunted and distorted (and harmful) in patrilinear time itself. For example, Piercy explores the notion of rebirth in both realities: the present (which exists in linear time) and the utopian future (which appears only after Connie has been shifted out of linear time). In the present 'rebirth' is controlled by men and is used to make the Other fit into patrilinear time and the patriarchal norm. Male psychiatrists take mental patients who, by definition, experience a reality different from the norm, shock them and bring them back from the brink of death, 'reborn'. Piercy describes this process early in the book:

They would send voltage smashing through your brain and knock your body into convulsions. After that they'd give you oxygen and let you come back to life, somebody's life, jumbled, weak, dribbling saliva – come back from your scorched taste of death with parts of your memory forever burned out. A little brain damage to jolt you into behaving right. Sometimes it worked. Sometimes a woman forgot what scared her, what she'd been worrying about. Sometimes a woman was finally more scared of being burned in the head again and she went home to her family and did the dishes and cleaned the house. (73)

This rebirth is not the same as that encouraged by cyclical time. In fact, one could argue that this is no rebirth at all. Under the auspices of the medical establishment the Other is destroyed and what remains of the person is fully enslaved by the patriarchal system.

Carol Pearson, who could have been commenting directly on Piercy's utopian vision, says that, 'violence, coupled with a desire to master others, is antithetical to a feminist utopian vision. In all cases, feminist utopias allow citizens to control their own lives. These women are free from the rape of their minds as well as their bodies' (Pearson, 1981:64). In Piercy's utopia women are free from this kind of violence and rebirth is a life-affirming process. In the utopian future mental illness and death lead either to an enriched understanding of one's humanity or a biologically refined genetic combination, both of which better the community. Nothing dies and nothing is destroyed because life itself is understood as being essentially cyclical. For Connie, it is this vision of the utopian future that gives her strength to survive in the present. Like other Second Wave feminists, Piercy criticises dominant patrilinear culture and intimates that an alternative temporal consciousness may be what is needed to oust this unhealthy patriarchal linearity.

The novel opens in El Barrio, the poor Hispanic quarter of New York City. Connie has been entertaining a 'guest' who disappears when her niece, Dolly, knocks on the door. Connie's immediate response is to doubt herself; she thinks, 'either I saw him or I didn't and I'm crazy for real this time' (1). Although Connie has been brow-beaten by the psychiatric system to the extent that she no longer trusts herself, the appearance in her life of this visitor from the future signals a rupture of patrilinear time that will help establish her experience as truth, not 'craziness'. At this point in the novel, however, she still needs to have her experience validated by someone who is not 'crazy'; when Dolly walks into the apartment, she says:

"I heard voices. Is somebody here?" Dolly looked toward the other room, the bedroom. (...) Dolly had heard her talking to Luciente; therefore he existed. [And] Dolly said the chair was warm; she had been sitting in the other chair, in front of the plate of her supper of eggs and beans. (2)

Because Connie's perceptions are validated by Dolly, Piercy establishes that Luciente is real which makes the reader inclined to trust Connie's experiences as the novel progresses.

As it turns out, Connie's 'history of mental illness' is suspect at best. An intense grief led her to drink too much and hit her small daughter, Angelina, once. This is by no means acceptable behaviour but one moment of weakness should not be enough for a patriarchal court to classify her as abnormal, prone to violent behaviour and unfit to live in normal society. This is the first time Connie is trapped by the cold medical and governmental machine and once

they have classified her, there is no hope of becoming anything other than the ‘unfit mother’, and the ‘human garbage’ patriarchy has labelled her. The court takes her daughter away from her and puts her in a mental hospital. Because this is the history of her mental illness, the reader is sceptical of Connie’s being at all mentally unstable; her ‘instability’ seems to be a normal reaction to a traumatic experience. In fact, later in the novel, Piercy describes the doctors thus: ‘These men believed feeling itself a disease, something to be cut out like a rotten appendix. Cold, calculating, ambitious, believing themselves rational and superior, they chased the crouching female animal through the brain with a scalpel’ (276). In this patriarchal world emotion is threatening and subversive and to be eradicated. Because the psychiatrists cannot understand or empathise with the experiences of their patients, they are considered abnormal, ‘female’ anomalies to be surgically removed. The cold, scientific lack of compassion that Piercy attributes to the patriarchal medical establishment in the novel is unsettling.

In fact, Piercy describes Connie’s present as wholly violent, bleak, and lonely. Men control everything and the only way for women to survive (if it can be called that) is to surrender completely to male authority. Men – doctors, pimps, husbands, boyfriends – violently assert their rights to the female body and to female creativity whether reproductive or intellectual. This power over the female body takes many forms: rape; prostitution; hysterectomy; birth control pills; and behaviour modification through drugs and invasive shock therapy. Any resistance on the part of women is considered anti-social or psychotic and they are sent to hospital to be ‘fixed’. During a Thanksgiving dinner at her brother’s house Connie looks at the women gathered in the kitchen, a wealthy wife, a well-treated prostitute and Connie herself and she realises that not one of them is a fully functional human being. They have been surgically altered and medicated to such a degree that they are nothing more than medical diagnoses: ‘We are not three women, Connie thought to herself. We are ups and downs and heavy trunks meeting in the all-electric kitchen and bouncing off each other’s opaque sides like shiny pills colliding’ (353). This is the linear present to which Connie belongs; like Dana, she has no agency in patrilinear time. Her reality is limited by what patriarchal culture expects of her and, like Dana, it is the rupture of linear time that will enable her to free herself.

When Connie fights Dolly's pimp, Geraldo, and the backyard abortionist he has brought to see to her, the two men beat her unconscious and Geraldo has Connie admitted to Bellevue, a mental hospital. In the hospital we are told that:

The doctor (did) not even (interview) her but (talked) exclusively to Geraldo, exchanging only a word or two with Dolly. (...) Man to man, pimp and doctor discussed her condition while Dolly sobbed. (...) She was a body checked into the morgue, meat registered for the scales. (9;11)

Even though Connie has been badly beaten the doctor blithely accepts Geraldo's authority. In a telling characterisation that foregrounds the ownership of women's bodies by men, Piercy describes them as speaking 'man to man, pimp and doctor'. Connie is powerless to defend herself or halt this process that will end in her institutionalisation because women are merely 'meat registered for the scales', controlled absolutely by men.

Piercy's characterisation of Connie is significant here because she refuses to submit. To everyone else she appears a beaten down, poverty-stricken, aging and uneducated brown woman but the narrator tells us that, strapped to the bed in Bellevue, 'lying in enforced contemplation, (Connie) found (...) clean anger glowing in her still' (11). She is angry when she thinks about Geraldo and all the men she has known:

He was the man who had pimped out her favourite niece, her baby, the pimp who had beaten Dolly and sold her to pigs to empty themselves in. Who robbed Dolly and slapped her daughter Nita and took away the money squeezed out of the pollution of Dolly's flesh to buy lizard boots and cocaine and other women. Geraldo was her father who had beaten her every week of her childhood, her second husband who had sent her into emergency with blood running down her legs. He was El Muro, who had raped her and then beaten her because she would not lie and say she had enjoyed it. (6-7)

Geraldo becomes an amalgamation in Connie's mind of all the men who have made her bleed and 'clean anger glows' in her in response to them. We are told that, 'Connie hated him. It flowed like electric syrup through her veins how she hated him. Her hatred gave her a flush in the nerves like speed coming on' (4). Her anger is a pure, pulsing energy that threatens Geraldo and it is the reason he must have her put away. This anger is also significant because it is the force that keeps her from submission, from surrendering to the system. Of anger, Mary Daly writes:

Since women are dealing with demonic power relationships, that is, with structured evil, rage is required as a positive creative force, making possible a break through. [Anger] can trigger and sustain movement from the experience of nothingness to recognition and participation in being. (Daly, 1973:43)

The men in Connie's present are without question characterised as demonic and her rage is the only weapon she has against them. Even though she may be helpless to defend herself against the system, as Daly suggests here, her anger sets her apart from those who have submitted to the 'experience of nothingness' and it reminds her of who she is. Connie's anger saves her from annihilation.

It is significant that her anger is described as 'electric syrup' because Connie equates sweetness with the strength of her grandmother who 'sweetened the chocolate so long ago in El Paso' (6). Connie, like Dana, is aware of the strength that runs through her female line and this is partly why she rages. She sees men destroying everything good in her world and is helpless to stop them. All she knows is that, 'every soul needs a little sweetness' (6), that female strength cannot be totally eradicated.

The language Geraldo uses to describe Connie is very interesting; he calls her 'puta', 'cunt', 'bitch' and 'witch'. These names are crude and derogatory but underlying them is the suggestion of an uncontrolled, voracious female power. This particular element of Piercy's novel reflects Second Wave cultural feminism's attempt to redefine 'monstrous' female power in positive terms. Reclaimed by feminists like Piercy and Daly, these words call up a female force that stands in militant opposition to patriarchy; 'puta', 'cunt' and 'bitch' ally Connie with the *vagina dentate*, a toothed, feral femininity that threatens to devour man. The word 'witch' also allies her with centuries of subversive female force, symbolised by reclaimed figures like Baba Yaga and Hecate. In fact, later in the novel when she is in the psychiatric hospital her best friend, Sybil, greets her: "Hi old darling! When shall we two meet again? In thunder, lightning or in rain?" (75) The reference to *Macbeth* (Act I, i: 1) implies that, like the witches in *Macbeth*, these two women will play havoc with the ambitions of patriarchal culture. Sybil knows she is a witch and recognises the same energy in Connie. The two women are thus connected through an arcane, anarchic female power that threatens patriarchal culture and which must be contained, like a toxic spill. When Geraldo

uses these terms to describe Connie, he means to contain and diminish her power but the words he chooses imply a subconscious recognition that she cannot *be* contained.

Sybil's name also connects her with the group of women in Greek mythology who were able to tell the future. This is significant because Connie, too, often knows things she shouldn't be able to. These women are both connected to sibyls and therefore to an arcane, uncontained female power. Interestingly, when Marina Warner writes of this figure, she foregrounds her capacity to subvert the authority of linear time. Warner writes that:

The Sibyl (...) denies historical difference; her words, originating in the past, apply to the rolling present whenever it occurs; however, the perceived fact of her roots in that distant past adds weight to her message precisely because it is free of the historical context in which she uttered it; she was not fettered by her historical time and place but could transcend it with her visionary skills. (Warner, 1994:71)

The sibyl defies her 'set place' in linear time because, as the human representative of the Cosmic Mother, she has a 'memory of deep time as well as foreknowledge of the deep future' (Warner, 1994:73). She therefore threatens the patriarchal ideology that demonises her, as it does the figure of the goddess and the witch, suggesting that the Sibyl knows what she does because she is the 'mouthpiece of the devil' (Warner, 1994:74). This potential to subvert both patrilinear time and patriarchal ideology is also why both Connie and Sibyl are demonised in contemporary patriarchal society. The language and symbols that Piercy uses in this novel seem to suggest not only that she is aware of Second Wave cultural feminism's contribution to the general feminist project but that she sympathises with this approach to time. She uses images that are evocative of mysterious, magical female powers and allies her protagonist with this force. In this novel, Piercy suggests that it is very much both Connie's displacement in linear time and her alliance with the chrono-matrix that will give her the strength to rebel against the patriarchal culture of her own time.

Connie's psychic abilities make her the ideal contact for the people from the future and the moment Luciente appears to her, her slow liberation from patriarchal authority begins. Luciente's name is important, suggestive as it is of 'light' and 'enlightenment'; Connie is about to have a future revealed to her that will allow her to 'see the light' about the murky domination of patriarchal culture.

Because she has no money, Connie is quickly transferred from Bellevue to Rockover State and her journey from the one institution to the other is described in terms that recall the death and rebirth of the chrono-materix. She has been heavily drugged and this causes her perception of time to slur and encourage a sense of temporal displacement. We are told that:

Moments were forever. She was mad. The drugs made her mind strange. She was caught, she was stalled. She floated trapped like an embryo in alcohol, that awful thing the Right to Life people had in that van on the street. She was caught in a moment that had fallen out of time and would never be over, never be done. She was mad. (12)

She feels that she is an aborted embryo, something that patrilinear society has thrown away. Her life has ‘stalled’; she cannot change or become something else because men refuse to let her live but this first break with linear time, even if it is drug-induced, is significant. Even though Connie believes she is frozen and aborted the chrono-materix begins to suck her into an alternative, cyclical time which will allow her to be reborn and to become something new. It is interesting that, like Dana, Connie feels this first break with linear time to be a limbo, a ‘moment that had fallen out of time’. What she intuitively understands, as Dana does, is that time no longer has a linear trajectory – it has become a generative space.

The journey to Rockover in the ambulance is described in terms that very much recall the chrono-materix; it is watery and ends with Connie being ‘swallowed’ into the underworld where grave becomes womb:

Rain drummed on the metal roof, assaulting it. Under water. She was drowning. Here she was with her life half spent, midway through her dark journey that had pushed her into the hands of the midwife in El Paso. (...) The Iron Maiden was carrying her to Rockover again. At length she saw through the blowing veil of the rain the walls she knew too well, that place of punishment, of sorrow, of the slow or fast murder of the self called Rockover State. (...) Then the gates swallowed the ambulance-bus and swallowed her as she left the world and entered the underland. (23-24)

Connie fears what is coming because she equates Rockover State with the epitome of masculine, patriarchal control over her life; here she is the aborted embryo. This time, however, something different is happening. Before, the death of the self meant exactly that, a static adoption of society’s expectations (and the death of herself) but this time the death of

the self is the move into a new state of being, supported by the chrono-materix. Connie moves first through the feminine watery element and is then swallowed by the *vagina dentate* when she reaches the hospital. This aspect of the chrono-materix as devourer and destroyer is terrifying and dangerous, but it is also powerful because it consumes the old and unnecessary and spits out only the strong and the refined to be reborn. Connie is strong enough to endure the death of her old self in order to become something new.

When she wakes up in Rockover she ‘sees’ Luciente, the man from the future, and it is interesting that she cannot pinpoint the first time he appeared to her; he evokes in her a ‘sensation of return’. She thinks to herself: ‘The first time. Was there a once? The dreams surely began with an original, yet she had the sense, the first morning she awakened remembering, that there were more she had not remembered, a sensation of return, blurred but convincing’ (25). Luciente is part of the space/time of the chrono-materix and so embodies the eternal return of which Connie, too, will become a part. He draws her into cyclical time. Piercy describes Connie’s moment of awakening and rebirth in Rockover with a characteristically rich image; we are told that ‘one of (Connie’s) braids had come unpinned and lay coiled across her throat like a warm black snake’ (25). This image deftly recalls the chthonic, regenerative powers of the chrono-materix: Connie has sloughed off one skin and is becoming anew. Piercy allies her protagonist with the Other temporal space of the chrono-materix.

Although Connie has not yet realised it, Luciente is a woman and not a man. Luciente appears uncomfortably androgynous to her because ‘he was girlish’ (32) but ‘Luciente spoke, she moved with that air of brisk unself-conscious authority Connie associated with men’ (59). This is the first time that Connie has met a woman who has agency and authority and she cannot reconcile this lack of passivity with a woman’s behaviour but Luciente will change that. It is important that the first person from the future with whom Connie interacts is a woman because the primary lesson that she needs to take from the chrono-materix, like Alyx and Dana, is the right to agency.

Although neither Connie nor Luciente travels to the future physically, the mental manifestations of their bodies are solid enough for each to experience physical sensation in the other’s time. Each time Connie moves into the future, she appears in the settlement in

which Luciente lives, Mattapoisett, and when she moves back through time she goes home to the asylum. Like Dana, Connie's movements into the future are focussed on one place, giving her the chance to delve deeply into the differences between the two times. The rupture of linear time and her access to the chrono-matrix also give Connie the opportunity to face her own pain and resolve the fears and anxieties that have crippled her in the present. As the people of Mattapoisett treat her with respect and affection she begins to recognise that it is the patriarchal system of her own time that causes her 'disease'; out of linear time and subsequently the reach of the patriarchy, her perception of herself and her understanding of reality change so that she recognises her worth and can begin to exercise her right to agency.

The most important issue that Piercy addresses as Connie moves through time is the impact that motherhood has on a character in Connie's position. In her Hispanic community the woman's role is to bear the children and care for them and almost her entire sense of self is based on the way she plays this role. Her feelings about motherhood and raising a daughter are complex because of her position in patriarchal culture.

Piercy's exploration of motherhood in *Woman on the Edge of Time* is typical of much feminist SF that criticises the fact that women are limited by their role in reproduction. In feminist utopian SF authors are able to suggest alternatives to this patriarchal arrangement. It would appear that Piercy's exploration of this issue is similar to Second Wave radical feminist Shulamith Firestone's position in *The Dialectic of Sex*. Firestone writes:

Women, biologically distinguished from men, are culturally distinguished from "human". Nature produced the fundamental inequality – half the human race must bear and rear the children of all of them – which was later consolidated, institutionalised, in the interests of men. (...) The freeing of women from the tyranny of their reproductive biology by every means available, and the diffusion of the childbearing and childrearing role to the society as a whole, men as well as women [is essential]. (Firestone, 1971: 205-206)

In Mattapoisett, Piercy solves the problem by doing away with traditional motherhood completely. Reflecting the positive impact that Haraway and Yaszek argue technology can have, Piercy describes how babies are grown in machines and when 'born' each child is given three parents who share the 'mothering', to the extent that men grow breasts in order to breastfeed. Luciente explains to Connie that

[f]inally there was that one thing we had to give up too, the only power we ever had, in return for no more power for anyone. The original production: the power to give birth. Cause as long as we were biologically enchained, we'd never be equal. And males would never be humanised to be loving and tender. So we all became mothers. Every child has three. To break the nuclear bonding. (97)

In the future no man needs to 'own' the body of a woman or judge her by either her capacity to reproduce or her success as a mother and because men share parental responsibility with women both are free to be more fully human. This truth is important for Connie because her experience of motherhood has been fraught with pain and anguish. As Dana learns that slavery is her legacy, so Connie realises that her daughter is destined to live the same life that she and her mother, and her grandmother before her, have lived. Unless the patriarchal culture in which they are embedded changes, she feels that having a daughter merely prolongs suffering. In fact, the narrator tells us:

Connie dragged herself from the bed hungover and strung out and it hit her that having a baby was a crime (...) she had born herself all over again, and it was a crime to be born poor as it was a crime to be born brown. She had caused a new woman to grow where she had had grown, and that was a crime. (...) She should have loved her better; but to love you must love yourself, she knew that now, especially to love a daughter you see as yourself reborn. (54)

Although Connie sees herself reborn in Angelina, it is not a 'rebirth' that signals the creation of a healthy female continuum. Angelina is born into a linear, patriarchal system that will treat her with the same contempt it has her mother; she will always be, like Connie, an unimportant, expendable, brown woman. As Alice tells Dana, all these women are slaves in a patriarchal culture. Connie sees that Angelina's position will be the same demeaning one she has occupied and she cannot love her daughter because she has not been able to love herself.

Piercy very pointedly foregrounds the fact that Connie's experience of motherhood is poisoned by the men around her. First, the court takes Angelina from her and then male doctors perform an unwanted hysterectomy on her, just as they did to her mother. Connie describes her mother's experience, saying, 'they took her womb in the hospital. Afterward that was a curse Jesus threw in her face: no longer a woman. An empty shell' (37). And of herself, she says

She too was spayed. They had taken out her womb at Metropolitan when she had come in bleeding after that abortion and the beating from Eddie. Unnecessarily they had done a complete hysterectomy because the residents wanted practice. She need never again fear a swollen belly; and never again hope for a child. Useless rage began to sleet through her. (37)

Connie is treated like a dog, ‘spayed’ to stop her producing more brown children unwanted by the white patriarchy. She feels the loss of her womb deeply because she no longer has any place in her community and she knows that she will never again be a mother and never be able to make up for betraying her daughter. This issue seems to be one that particularly troubles Piercy as many of her poems explore a woman’s right to her body and the children she may or may not choose to give birth to. Her poem, ‘The Sabbath of Mutual Respect’ resonates very closely with Connie’s situation:

Habondia, the real abundance, is the power
to say yes and to say no, to open
and to close, to take or to leave
and not to be taken by force or law
or fear or poverty or hunger.
To bear children or not to bear by choice
is holy. To bear children unwanted
is to be used like a public sewer.
To be sterilised unchosen is to have
your heart cut out.

In the present, Connie’s heart has been cut out and Piercy describes the patriarchy’s merciless and relentless attempt to destroy her spirit in such a way that one cannot doubt its eventual victory. In the chrono-matrix, however, Connie is given a chance for redemption. In Mattapoisett she discovers Angelina’s double in Luciente’s daughter, Dawn. For Connie, Dawn is Angelina and:

[s]he assented with all her soul to Angelina in Mattapoisett, to Angelina hidden forever one hundred and fifty years into the future, even if she would never see her again. (...) Yes, you can have my child, you can keep my child...she will be strong here, well fed, well housed, well taught, she will grow up much better and stronger and smarter than I. I assent, I give you my battered body as recompense and my rotten heart. Take her, keep her! (...) She will never be broken as I was (...) She will have pride. She will love her own brown skin and be loved for her strength and her good work. She will walk in strength like a man and never sell her body and she will nurse her babies and live in love like a garden. (133)

Dawn literally signifies the beginning of a new day and a new life; because Connie can imagine Angelina/Dawn as safe, strong and loved, she can forgive herself for what happened to Angelina in her own time and she can be proud to be born again in this child who will not be broken by men. In the temporal space of the chrono-matrix, she is healed because she becomes part of a female continuum that begins with her and leads into the future to Luciente and to Dawn. Significantly, because it is Connie's actions that lead to the future in which Luciente and Dawn exist, in a very real sense she is their direct ancestor. Carol Pearson suggests that in feminist utopian SF, 'reclaiming the self is often associated with coming home to mother' (Pearson, 1981:65) and this is very much what the chrono-matrix allows Connie: she comes home to a female continuum that mothers her, she heals the pain associated with her own failings as a mother and she knows that her daughter is now safe and healed in this alternative time.

The second issue that Connie deals with as she is drawn into the chrono-matrix is that of self-definition. In her own time she cannot create an identity that is authentic because she is already defined by her relationships with men: she is told what role to play, what position to fill and in what manner to do both. Like Dana, Connie is first defined as non-white, then as a woman and both strip her of power. The power to name oneself, to claim an identity one has forged oneself is as important in *Woman on the Edge of Time* as it is in the *Alyx* stories that are discussed later in this chapter. Like Alyx, when the children in Mattapoisett come of age they choose names that reflect their understanding of themselves. When Connie questions this, one of the children says: "You can't expect me to go through life with an unearned name, stuck on me when I wasn't conscious yet! How can I go deep into myself and develop my own strength if I don't get to find out how I am alone as well as with others?" (109). These people are similarly fascinated by the fact that Connie is saddled with surnames that signify ownership of her by various men. When they ask her what her own name is, she reveals a fragmented sense of self because she both is and is not the various women inside her:

"...in a way I've always had three names inside me. Consuelo, my given name. Consuelo's a Mexican woman, a servant of servants, silent as clay. The woman who suffers. Who bears and endures. Then I'm Connie, who managed to get two years of college – 'til Consuelo got pregnant. Connie got decent jobs and fought welfare for a little extra money for Angie (...) But it was her who married Eddie, she thought it was smart. Then I'm Conchita, the low-down drunken mean part of me who gets by in jail, the bughouse, who loves no good men, who hurt my daughter." (114)

Connie does not like any of the selves she reveals to them. Each of her names represents the acceptably downtrodden identity of a poor, brown woman in a white patriarchal world but she does not know who she is outside that system. As she walks among the people of Mattapoisett, however, she realises that, '(she) could have been respected in Mattapoisett' (208). Here she is valued and not just because she is a person from the past, a curiosity, but because she is a woman with wisdom and experience to share. The chrono-matrix offers Connie the opportunity to reject the identity patriarchy has foisted on her and acknowledge her strength. Through her relationships with the people of the future she learns that her anger, so threatening to men in her time, is the mark of a warrior and the weapon that will free her in her own time. Perhaps now her name, 'Connie', becomes evocative of a 'Con-sciousness' that has matured through suffering and self-examination.

Connie begins to realise that she is not the only one caged by patriarchal culture in her time. She recognises counterparts of people from her own time in Mattapoisett who are also free here but caged in the past. Sybil, who is 'burned' (what she calls shock therapy) as a witch in the hospital in Connie's time, has a double in Magdalena who runs the children's house in Mattapoisett. Piercy links the two characters through the witchcraft motif. When Connie asks Magdalena about her unusual name, she replies, "'It's the name of a woman burned to death for witchcraft in Germany many centuries ago. A wise woman who healed with herbs'" (129). Sybil, too, fashions herself after the wise woman-witch. Both Magdalena and Sybil are also fiercely independent and dislike sex. But where Sybil is committed to an institution for her abnormal, antisocial behaviour, Luciente says of Magdalena that the choice is simply '[her] way' (129). In keeping with Piercy's somewhat cultural feminist celebration of women's arcane power, many of the women we meet in Mattapoisett bring to mind various magical traditions. Erzulia is a charismatic black female shaman who practises voodoo. Luciente's lover, Diana, is a Moon Priestess who heals people. And White Oak and Sappho are both wise female elders to whom others turn for guidance and stability. Piercy very obviously suggests that in a society in which equality between the sexes is a given this link between women and arcane power may reassert itself naturally: Hecate becomes merely another source of feminine wisdom and power, not the demon she is in patriarchal discourse.

During her time in Rockover Connie also meets Skip, a flamboyant, creative, homosexual young man who is tortured by psychiatrists who try to ‘fix’ his ‘abnormal’ tendencies. In Mattapoisett, however, there is Jackrabbit, Skip’s counterpart. He is also flamboyant, creative and bisexual. While Skip is expected to conform to a masculine ideal that is alien to him, Jackrabbit is honoured for his fluidity and the variety he expresses. The chrono-materix exposes Connie to a world in which there is no ‘right’ way of being and this forces her to re-evaluate the strictures imposed on her and the people she knows in her own time.

It is interesting that the people of Mattapoisett, who are so much more liberated than the people of Connie’s time, seem to embrace the principal ideology of the chrono-materix in their everyday lives. Piercy seems to suggest that the lack of a rigid patrilinear social structure would encourage a far healthier way of being. This is reflected particularly in the way they approach death in Mattapoisett. In their culture, death has come to mean literal rebirth because when someone dies a new baby is created to be born nine months later; a death is thus followed immediately by new life. Sometimes even the exact genetic code of the person who has died is given to the new baby. For them no life is lost and this means that both past and future are reflected here, in their present. Rigid linearity is alien to their temporal consciousness. In fact, one of their funeral songs finishes with the lines:

We are joined with all living
in one singing web of energy.
In us live the dead who made us.
In us live the children unborn. (174)

Listening to this, Connie realises that ‘in their real future, she (has) been dead a hundred years or more; she (is) the dead who (lives) in them. Ancestor’ (174). She experiences a profound catharsis in this moment that frees her from the last vestiges of her old self, tied to patriarchal expectations. She mourns for herself, for the woman who experienced pain and suffering at the hands of men and she feels herself to be reborn. Ancestor is her new name and Mattapoisett, beautiful and free, is her legacy. Connie embraces the chrono-materix because she has always been and will always be reflected in the women who came before and will come after her. Now when she returns to her own time it is as a free woman, vital and healed and ready to fight.

However, as psychologically and spiritually liberated as Connie may be in this alternative time, in patrilinear time she is still incarcerated in Rockover and under the control of the patriarchal medical establishment. As the experiments on her brain become more invasive, she finds it difficult to contact Luciente and twice finds herself in a different future. The alternative future that she sees is one in which the mind-control and machine-augmentation with which her doctors are experimenting have become the rule. In this nightmarish world humanity is hardly human anymore. Women are bought, sold and used only for sex. Emotions have been wiped out, controlled by drugs and machine implants. Men and women are physically modified to such an extent that they have almost nothing of their own biology left, and the inhuman is valued far above anything organic. In this world, doctors are god-like creatures revered above all other castes. Ironically, when Connie first travels to Mattapoissett she is disappointed by the lack of technology and the fact that people still suffer from the same human frailties as her own time. Luciente admonishes her, saying, ““But Connie, some problems you solve only if you stop being human, become metal, plastic, robot computer”” (117). This notion that the machine is so much more valuable and useful than the human is prevalent in Connie’s present and not an idea she questions until faced with its consequences in the other future.

It becomes obvious that as the doctors begin their experiments on Connie, the utopian future is in danger. According to Luciente, the success of the doctors’ experiments is what results in the nightmarish future Connie sees. Finally the doctors seem to have managed to ‘(chase) the crouching female animal through the brain with a scalpel’ (276) as Connie imagines them doing, and remove it. Piercy suggests that this eradication of the female, the feminine, whatever it may be, leads to a male-dominated mechanised world in which the human has been compromised. This is contrasted with the world of Mattapoissett where men have been encouraged to explore their emotions and mother children and where the human is valued.

The others in Mattapoissett also impress on Connie the seriousness of the situation and the importance of her contribution to their survival:

“Yours is a crux time. Alternative universes co-exist. Probabilities clash and possibilities wink out forever.” (...)

“Are you really in danger?”

“Yes. (...) You may fail us. (...) You individually may fail to understand us or to struggle in your own life and time. You of your time may fail to struggle together. (...) We must fight to come to exist, to remain in existence, to be the future that happens. That’s why we contacted you.”

“What good can I do? Who could have less power? I’m a prisoner. A patient. I can’t even carry a book of matches or keep my own money. You picked the wrong saviour this time!”

“The powerful don’t make revolutions,” Sojourner said. (189-190)

This is the last lesson that Connie needs to take from her time traveling to and from Mattapoissett. She has always been a victim, no matter how angry she may have been but now she takes to heart Sojourner’s words. From this moment on Connie no longer thinks of herself as a prisoner in the hospital but as a sleeper agent in the enemy camp. Her time to attack will come. In the last part of the novel Connie’s struggle to free herself reflects a larger struggle; she knows she is fighting for Mattapoissett and her friends in the hospital who are undergoing the same invasive, cruel procedures she is. In a dream she imagines them all in battle with their enemies, the doctors at Rockover State Hospital (330). The war that needs to be fought in the present is against institutionalised patriarchal authority. The men in Connie’s present assume control over natural resources, over women’s bodies and minds, over the lives of all who are not white, straight or men and only resistance to them in the present can save the future.

Piercy characterises the psychiatrists as modern day Dr Frankensteins, playing with the power of life and death but understanding nothing of the consequences of their actions. As the time nears for Connie to have the controlling device implanted into her brain, the narrator tells us:

Tomorrow they were going to stick a machine in her brain. She was the experiment. They would rape her body, her brain, her self. After this she could not trust her own feelings. She would not be her own. She would be their experimental monster. (273)

Fortunately, a significant by-product of Connie’s time travelling is that the device cannot control her; because her mind is no longer firmly embedded in linear time she is protected from the doctors’ experiment. Fearing that their experiment is in jeopardy because neither the drugs nor the electrodes have the desired effect on her, the doctors remove the machine from her brain and she has a last chance to do battle. Connie’s final battle against the doctors is

layered with the images and motifs that Piercy uses throughout the novel; here they build to a climax in which she finally asserts her power and agency.

On her only trip out of the hospital since her admission, Connie steals a bottle of lethal poison from her brother's gardening business and disguises it with the label from a shampoo bottle. The fact that she uses poison against the doctors is satisfying because it is reminiscent of witchcraft; it is fitting that an herbal concoction will kill the doctors. It is also quirky that the poison is disguised as shampoo because the state of Connie's hair often reflects her sense of self. As we recall, after her first connection with Luciente Connie's hair lies like a snake on her shoulder, recalling the chthonic, cyclical potential of the chrono-materix. When she escapes from the brutal rapist, El Muro, she dyes her hair black, signifying her reclamation of herself. And when the doctors finally decide to break her in the hospital, they cut her hair off:

The cold touch of the scissors nudged her nape, her ear, with its shivery weight like a shark nosing past. With each clack of the blades, her hair fell from her, to lie like garbage on the floor. To be swept up and thrown away. (274)

Connie's hair is almost Medusa-like in its significance, recalling a subversive female potency. We therefore expect that when her hair is cut, she will lose her power but this is not what happens. Why no one thinks it is strange for Connie, now bald, to be bringing shampoo into the hospital with her is interesting. It is an ingenious detail to have her final weapon disguised as a hair product; even though she is shorn for the operation, her 'hair' remains a signifier of her power.

The third interesting 'coincidence' is that throughout the novel, poison is most often associated with men's power over women. At the beginning of the novel, Geraldo is described as having 'bad, poisoned blood' (5) and the birth control pills used to stop Dolly from having children are also called 'poison' (5). It seems that Connie turns men's own poisons against them. Her journeying in the chrono-materix has taken her frustrated, helpless anger and steeled it into a weapon. She poisons the coffee pot used by the psychiatrists, knowing as she does so that she has sacrificed herself and that she too will be killed. She also knows, however, that her battle, her part in the war to protect Luciente and Mattapoisett, has been won. We are told:

She washed her hands in the bathroom, she washed them again and again. “I just killed six people,” she said to the mirror. “I murdered them dead. Because they are the violence prone. Theirs is the money and the power, theirs the poisons that slow the mind and dull the heart. Theirs are the powers of life and death. I killed them. Because it is war.” (...) “I’m a dead woman now too. I know it. But I did fight them. I’m not ashamed. I tried.” (370)

Like Alyx, who is discussed last in this chapter, and Dana, Connie’s act of androicide is the final exercise of will that frees her. She kills the doctors, and imagines that with them, she does away with the patriarchal bureaucracy that has abused her. She accepts responsibility for herself, for a self she now controls and defines and she embraces the becoming of the chrono-matrix. When Connie allows herself to experience the return of the chrono-matrix, death becomes rebirth, and she becomes something new. Patriarchy and the linear time it privileges no longer have any authority over her.

This novel very clearly illustrates Kristeva’s third generation perspective on time. Piercy uses images that are unmistakably redolent of cultural feminism’s impassioned attempt to remythologise and reinterpret images of women as powerful. In this way her use of the chrono-matrix reflects what could be argued to be an almost a standard cultural feminist perspective on time. When Connie returns to the asylum and murders the doctors, however, she brings the strength gained through her alliance with the chrono-matrix into linear time and forcefully changes patrilinear reality. Her bond with the chrono-matrix and her intention to change linear patriarchal reality make Connie a member of Kristeva’s third generation.

Although Butler, Piercy and Russ all use the subversion of linear time to facilitate the liberation of their characters from patriarchal authority each of them does so in a slightly different way. Butler focuses on slavery in the past, on a history embedded in linear time that Dana must confront in order to defy persecution in her present. Piercy creates a utopian future, the promise of which spurs Connie into action. Joanna Russ, however, looks both to the past and the future as her protagonist, Alyx, moves in and out of both. Russ subverts linear time far more than either Butler or Piercy in an attempt to criticise what she seems to suggest will be the unchanging role of women in both the past and the future if the patriarchal system is not challenged.

Joanna Russ is arguably the most influential writer of Second Wave radical feminist SF (Clute and Nicholls, 1999:1035). She grew up in New York City, the daughter of two teachers and became first and foremost an academic known for her radical feminist ethics and openly lesbian stance. Russ's writing has had a pervasive influence on other feminist SF authors and on SF as a genre. Nicholls and Clute write:

For thirty years, Joanna Russ has been the least comfortable author writing SF, very nearly the most inventive experimenter in fictional forms, and the most electric of all to read. The gifts she has brought to the genre are two in number: truth-telling and danger. (1999:1035)

Her SF has been described as 'savage and cleansing' (Clute and Nicholls, 1999:1035) because of its defiant and sometimes bitter feminist political stance. If Joanna Russ brings 'truth-telling' to SF it is through her exposition of women's place in a society dominated by men and her vitriolic debunking of feminine stereotypes. She brings 'danger' to the genre because her experimentation with form and the resulting destabilisation of order, reality, identity and ideology can be uncomfortable to read, which is exactly what she intends. She is openly critical of patriarchal culture and her irreverent, biting humour does much to dislodge or shake up the pretensions of both men and women under this system. She won the Nebula Award in 1972 for her short story 'When It Changed', the Hugo in 1983 for her novella, *Souls* and the prestigious Pilgrim Award in 1988 for her genre-related scholarly work.

The Adventures of Alyx is a collection of short stories by Russ that follow Alyx, a female adventuress, barbarian, murderer and time traveller. These stories were published individually from 1967 to 1970 and were first published as a collection in 1983 (all page references are from the 1983 collection). *The Adventures of Alyx* appear to be fairly straightforward science-fantasy stories, each a unit and seemingly unified in linear time (until one gets to the last two stories in which the time travel is overt) but this is an illusion. Although the Alyx stories are not overtly experimental in form Russ leaves us hints and suggestions throughout the early stories that time has been disrupted and with it, Alyx's position in the patriarchal symbolic order. It is only after having read the entire collection and then revisiting the earlier stories that the reader realises that the 'natural' linear chronology he or she has imposed on the stories does not apply. Russ subtly destabilises the linear flow of the narrative and embeds her protagonist in an-other temporality; the entire Alyx cycle is an

exercise in alternate chronology, in becoming and return, in being outside linear time and so being able to defy the masculine authority privileged by linear time.

The first of the Alyx stories published in the collection is ‘Bluestocking’. Russ’s tone in the opening line already signifies a rupture in linear time because ‘this is the tale of a voyage,’ is evocative of the fairy-tale tone of a once-upon-a-time narrative. Readers settle down to listen to the tale and allow themselves to be removed from the linear time in which they themselves are embedded and to be grafted into the chronology of Alyx’s tale. This opening, recalling the time-that-is-not-a-time of mythopoeic fantasy, suggests that Alyx’s history belongs to a time that is cyclical and mythical, the time of stories, not linear histories controlled by patriarchy.

Although this story appears first Alyx is already an adult and a seasoned adventuress and the reader therefore knows that this story is not about how-it-all-began. However, Russ starts her narrative with a creation myth which undermines the authority of linear time because myths reveal information about (perpetual) beginnings. This myth tells us something of Alyx’s beginning even though she is a thirty-year-old woman. The implication is that her ‘beginning’ is not a point in linear time but something more diffuse that can be explored at any time in her story. This is particularly salient in Alyx’s case because she seems to begin anew after the events in each of the stories; Russ privileges a chronology within which return, rebirth, becoming, beginning anew are the salient motions of her female protagonist. Russ therefore introduces her ‘new’ thirty-year-old protagonist and links her with the birth of reality through this creation myth, connecting her with beginnings as a whole. In the creation myth, we are told:

It is common knowledge that Woman was created fully a quarter of an hour before Man, and has kept that advantage to this very day. Indeed, legend has it that the first man, Leh, was fashioned from the sixth finger of the left hand of the first woman, Loh, and that is why women have only five fingers on the left hand. The Lady with whom we concern ourselves in this story had all her six fingers, and what is more, they all worked. (9)

The fact that woman was created ‘fully a quarter of an hour before man’ is amusing because it is so pedantic in its specificity. It is also no mistake that measurable time begins with the creation of man; with him linear time is imposed on reality and so we measure backward

from that moment to find when woman was created. Woman, Russ implies, does not belong to the younger, pedantic, linear time of man, but to the time *before*, and when she gives up her sixth finger to man, she takes up her submissive position in man's time. However, because Alyx has her sixth finger she is like Loh before the creation of man: active, passionate, violent and outspoken. Her connection to Loh suggests that she belongs to the chrono-matrix and the hold of linear time and patriarchal authority on her is tenuous at best.

As 'Bluestocking' unfolds, we are told how Alyx came to be in the City of Ourdh. In a particularly vague temporal reference Russ writes that, 'In the seventh year before the time of which we speak' (9) Alyx came to Ourdh as a member of a religious delegation. When they are chased out Alyx stays and takes up the profession of picklock. Russ's irreverent treatment of time is effective because we are fooled by the specific measurement of 'seven years' but remain entirely ignorant of the exact date of 'the time of which we speak'. When, exactly, is this story set?

Alyx remains in Ourdh until she meets a young lady named Edarra who wants to escape an arranged marriage. Edarra is trapped in the only role allowed conventional women in linear time: commodity. Dressed up and put on display, her only purpose is to be acquired by a wealthy man. Alyx, in contrast to Edarra, is 'not much awed by the things of this world' (10) and because she subscribes to neither the superficial importance of men's trade nor the submissive role of women, she enables Edarra to escape from the system. We are told that, 'Alyx entered the employ of the Lady Edarra and Ourdh saw neither of them again – for a while' (10). Russ again undermines the fatalistic heaviness of linear time with the tongue-in-cheek aside of 'for a while'.

At this point something intriguing happens. As she goes up the gangplank of the little boat she and Edarra will use to escape Ourdh, we are told that 'Alyx ascended dreaming of snow' (12). This line is not emphasised at all; it is a short, throw-away comment that is not elaborated on at any later stage. However, in 'Picnic on Paradise' (1968), a story that we assume on first reading is set in Alyx's future, after the events of 'Bluestocking', Alyx, who has been transported four millennia into the future, exclaims "'By God! (...) I don't believe I've ever seen snow before'" (77). The implication is that the Alyx we have just met in 'Bluestocking' has already been to the future. We find out this is true when it is later revealed

that she is thirty in ‘Bluestocking’ and twenty-six in ‘Picnic on Paradise’. This is significant because the Alyx we meet in the first story is already a time-traveller and therefore already unfettered by patriarchal expectations.

The situation with Edarra would remind Alyx of Paradise (an alien planet) because there she had to guide and guard a group of people as helpless as her to safety. It is also possible that Edarra reminds Alyx of them because there is a likeness between Edarra, who begins a spoiled, vain girl and Maudey, a similarly vain and silly woman on Paradise. In fact, through her interactions with Alyx, Maudey recognises the position she occupies in her world: “‘I am a living doll,’ Maudey was saying, “‘I’m a living doll, I’m a living doll, I’m a living doll.” interspersed with terrible sobs’ (102). This doll-like role is the same one that stifles Edarra in Ourdh.

Russ consciously jumbles linear time in Alyx’s history, creating open spaces where the narrative could become chaotic and confused, but does not. Jeanne Cortiel writes thus of the lacunae in Russ’s writing:

These liberatory spaces in the interstices of patriarchy are the sites where cultural transformation can occur. This transformation does not come in the shape of a monolithic, phallic universal revolution, which would inevitably revert to old structures of hierarchy and power distribution, but as an infinite number of possible revolutions and subversions on every level of human interaction. (Cortiel, 1999:229)

Linear narrative allows us to follow protagonists and come to feel that we know them: because we know their history there is a measure of pleasant predictability about the actions they will perform. In *Alyx*, Russ subverts the predictability of a character embedded in linear time. What we are forced to acknowledge is Alyx’s ability to surprise the reader because she embodies the chrono-matrix’s principle of *becoming*. She is constantly shifting the ‘truth’ of her narrative as she remakes it, revisits it and becomes a different ‘Alyx’ each time. Her stories enact the ‘infinite number of possible revolutions and subversions on every level of human interaction.’ It is thus because she has broken free of linear time and the patriarchal ideology it privileges that she can define and assert herself and free Edarra.

Although she helps Edarra escape from Ourdh, it is some time before Edarra begins to shrug off the social restrictions binding her to the enactment of passive femininity. She is still embedded in linear time and chafes against Alyx's lack of linear direction and becomes frustrated with her: "Where are we going?" said Edarra in the dark, with violent impatience. (...) "When will we buy some decent *food*?" demanded the lady vehemently. "When? When?" (15). Edarra still needs a finite point of arrival and events against which to measure her linear progress whereas Alyx no longer measures herself in linear time. The two of them fight and in the morning Alyx cuts Edarra's hair and begins to teach her to sword fight. The haircut suggests liberation from the 'living doll' femininity imposed on her by patriarchy and the sword craft, the acquisition of agency. From this time on Edarra no longer demands to know 'when' or 'where', instead she begins to surrender to the aimless drifting on the ocean, which reflects the alternative non-linear time to which Alyx is introducing her. Edarra is now described as 'quieter, even (on occasion) dreamy' and 'meditative' (18). When Alyx contemplates the change in Edarra she stops to consider how she herself would measure up against the patriarchal feminine ideal:

"Very well, I am thirty-" (Thus she would soliloquise.) "But what, O Yp, is thirty? Thrice ten. Twice fifteen. Women marry at forty. In ten years I will be forty-" And so on. From these apostrophisations she returned uncomfortable, ugly, old and with a bad conscience. (18)

Linear time is not kind to women. In this narrative both Edarra and Alyx move beyond the thin, mean grasp of patrilinear temporality that defines women as 'too old' and they reassess themselves according to that alternative temporal space of the chrono-matrix in which 'young' and 'old' are arbitrary because time cycles back on itself eternally.

Her bond with a subversive force that defies both patriarchal authority and patrilinear time is foregrounded when Alyx is linked with Loh at the end of 'Bluestocking', as she was in the opening paragraphs. Russ writes:

Perhaps it was an intimation of the extraordinary future, or perhaps it was her own queer nature, but in the sunlight Alyx's eyes had a strange look, like those of Loh, the first woman, who had kept her own counsel at the very moment of creation, only looking about her with an immediate, intense, serpentine curiosity, already planning secret plans and guessing at who knows what unguessable mysteries. (28)

Loh '(looks) about her' with 'intense, serpentine curiosity'; she owns the authority of the gaze and her curiosity is snake-like, evocative of the Cosmic Mother before her power is usurped by patriarchy. The serpent particularly recalls the claims of the chrono-materix to the processes of death and rebirth. Alyx is allied with that power: transformative, fertile chaos before patriarchal ideology tames and diminishes it. This image from Russ's alternative creation myth is also a significant subversion of the typical Judeo-Christian mythology with which most of her readers would be familiar. Instead of the serpent seducing the woman and both of them instigating the downfall of otherwise-virtuous man, the woman is the serpent. In the Judeo-Christian myth the woman is passive, seduced by the serpent; in Russ's myth she herself is the active serpent and man hardly appears in her focus. Instead she is consumed by 'who knows what unguessable mysteries' (28).

This image links Alyx to the chrono-materix, the alternative time-space described by Second Wave cultural feminists. Nevertheless, I hesitate to suggest that Russ's writing displays the essentialist tendencies of cultural feminism and feel that my interpretation of these images needs to be qualified. Here in her early stories, Russ both foreshadows the postmodern fragmentation of the self that she explores so forcefully in *The Female Man* and she uses language and imagery that evokes a sense of some Other force, characterised as feminine. I would like to suggest that when she describes this Other and the effect of an alternative temporality on Alyx as necessarily *different* from masculinist culture and thus most easily described as female, she deploys 'the feminine' as a strategy that undermines authoritative masculinist culture. For Russ, 'the feminine' signifies an experimental space, where meanings are fluid so that, even though she uses the same cultural feminist terms and images that Piercy does (her descriptions of Loh and later the goddess Chance are provocative images of a particularly female power), the 'femininity' she puts into play is more subversive and unnerving than that employed by Piercy. Because of this, and despite the fact that the *Alyx* tales were written during the early years of the Second Wave when the feminist project to destabilise certain categories and terms was still finding its feet, Russ would emerge as one of the earliest voices of a postmodern feminism that refuted the existence of 'women' and 'men'. Even here, her experimentation with time and the subsequent subversion of patrilinear time are often far more all-encompassing than those attempted by Piercy or Butler in the two novels discussed earlier. Russ refutes the cultural feminist notion of a 'feminine' time to which women, and women alone have access; instead she describes a force that

subverts linear narrative as much as it subverts existing patriarchal ideologies that limit both men and women.

An example of the subtlety of her experimentation is the temporal cycle Russ creates here with the closing image of Loh which returns the reader to the myth which opens the story. So, instead of the customary end of the narrative, another (mythic) beginning is implied. The last line of 'Bluestocking', 'But that's another story,' also suggests that this is not the end of Alyx's narrative; it will cycle back in on itself to reveal other events, more stories in endless cycles.

The story that follows 'Bluestocking', 'I Thought She Was Afeard 'Til She Stroked My Beard' (1967), strengthens this circular motion, taking the reader back to before Alyx was/is Alyx, when there was only a nameless young girl. 'I Thought She Was Afeard' opens thus: 'Many years ago, long before the world got into the state it is in today, young women were supposed to obey their husbands, but nobody knows if they did it or not' (31). The 'many years ago, long before (...) today' is once again intentionally vague. Russ refuses the reader a date in linear history, thereby subverting the authority of linear time, as does her offhand disregard of the history that tells us women *did* obey their husbands. That, she suggests, is just another fiction, one falsely imbued with authority by patriarchy because 'nobody knows if they did it or not.'

In this time of the 'long before (...) today' there is a woman, referred to only as 'she' or 'woman', who stands as a general representative of women at the time. She is married and subservient to her husband, occupying another place in linear time allotted women by patriarchy, marital servitude: 'She spun, she sewed, she shelled, ground, washed, dusted, swept, built fires all that day and once, so full of thoughts was she that she savagely wrung and broke the neck of an already dead chicken' (32). This description echoes Simone de Beauvoir's account of housework in *The Second Sex*: 'Few tasks are more like the torture of Sisyphus than housework, with its endless repetition: the clean becomes soiled, the soiled made clean, over and over, day after day' (1953:451). This banality drives the young woman to watch her husband with an 'unvarying hatred' (31) because she is caged and yearns for something more. Finally she murders him and dives into the ocean to join a group of pirates. Of this, Cortiel writes:

Beginning with the stories around Alyx, Russ's fiction develops androicide as the focussed representation of a revolutionary war. Taking the life of a member of the sex that has denied women the capacity to act opens new grounds for female characters in the existing archive of permissible storylines. In Russ's texts, androicide as a narrative device represents women's claim to agency, destroying as it does established gender-specific narratives in the handed-down set of basic storylines available to (genre) fiction writers. (...) Women, who are conventionally expected to help the male hero, become heroes of their own stories, destroying precisely those characters in the story which would bar their access to heroism. (Cortiel, 1999:46)

This young woman murders her husband with a gleeful brutality, her desire for action unleashed and directed at the person who has kept her caged. Like both Dana and Connie it is the act of androicide that finally frees her from patriarchal authority. In this moment the woman begins the process of becoming something Other than what men expect her to be. As she swims to the pirate ship Russ writes of her that:

She felt something form within her, something dark and queer and hard, like the strangeness of strange customs, or the blackened face of the goddess Chance, whose image set at crossroads looks three ways at once to signify the crossing of influences. (...) Dripping seawater like one come back from the dead, with eighteen inches of leather crowned with a heavy brass buckle in her right hand, her left gripping the rope and her knife between her teeth (where else) she began to climb. (34)

What the girl begins to feel is the assertion of her alliance with an untamed force, the chaos before the Law. This force is described as 'queer, dark and hard,' which echoes the description of Loh in 'Bluestocking'; both the girl and Loh are strange and independent and seem 'hard' because of it. The narrator says this strangeness is like 'the blackened face of the goddess Chance'. This is significant because Chance is akin to the principle of becoming – nothing is set and everything can change. This connects the girl with the alternative temporality of the chrono-matrix. Unlike the fatalistic quality of a patriarchal culture that likes to order and control everything, the girl's alliance is with the female Other that signifies 'the crossing of influences', everything in flux. It is also significant that the girl begins to assert her link to the chrono-matrix while swimming in the ocean, symbolically the womb from which all life is born. The girl is thus 'reborn' when she emerges from the ocean. In a line that recalls both womb and grave we are told that the girl emerges from the ocean 'dripping seawater like one come back from the dead'; she has died to her old life and been born to a new one in which she will define and create herself.

The young woman thus takes up with the pirates. They are coarse and brutal but even the captain is vaguely uneasy about her because he senses something in her that he cannot control or dominate. He watches her and we are told:

When he saw his woman squatting on deck on the balls of her feet, a sliver of wood in her teeth, dealing out the cards to tell fortunes (...) he thought – or thought he saw – or recollected – that goddess who was driven out by the other gods when the world was made and who hangs about on the fringes of things (at crossroads, at the entrance to towns) to throw a little shady trouble into life and set up a few crosscurrents and undercurrents of her own in what ought to be regular and predictable business. (39)

Again she is associated with the chaotic potential that exists before men quell the independence of women. Even after the solarisation/masculinisation of myth when the goddess ‘was driven out by the other gods when the world was made’, she still ‘hangs about on the fringes of things’ much as women are forced to do. However, it is ironically from this position that she can undermine order. Russ suggests that the goddess and the girl represent the liminal that threatens the established and what they embody/enact is the rupture of linear time, always setting up crosscurrents and undercurrents in ‘what ought to be regular and predictable business.’ The word ‘shady’ is suggestive in this context, implying that what these women inject into any dealing is something slightly underhanded; the masculine is the light, the transparent, the good and the feminine is the shady, the sly, the ‘serpentine’. The pirate captain knows that the girl does not belong to him even though he calls her ‘his woman’ because he recognises in her an unruly energy and is threatened by it. The title of the story expresses just this sense of threat: ‘at first I was afeard ‘til she stroked my beard.’

When the girl finally defies his authority he locks her in his cabin and she, bored, aimlessly picks up a mirror he has given her. Russ uses mirrors in her fiction to mimic the male gaze, the authority and power of the watcher who defines the object being watched. However, she also suggests that it is in this self-reflected mystery of a mirror that another liminal space is created. A mirror can become a doorway, or a crossroads, and what one sees in the mirror, what steps through, is always something other than the passive, pretty, feminine woman pictured by the male gaze. For Russ, a mirror allows movement back and forth, another tiny cycle that forces an evaluation of identity, of self: a rebirth of sorts. The girl looks into the

mirror and sees only the kind of woman the captain wants her to be and she is horrified. The narrator tells us that:

This (woman) stumbled away, dropped the mirror, fell over the table (she passed her hand over her eyes) and grasped – more by feeling than by sight – the handle of the sword he had given her, thirty or forty – or was it seventy? – years before. The blade had not yet the ironical motto it was to bear some years later: *Good Manners Are Not Enough*. (44)

In that moment of recognition the girl drops the mirror and with it defies any last vestiges of acquiescence to patriarchy's expectations of or authority over her. She picks up the sword, claiming agency. Significantly, linear time is also ruptured here; in that moment she cannot recall how long ago the sword was given to her because time has become fluid, stretched beyond linearity. The motto that the sword bears later is also significant: women who are docile and domestic, expecting that good manners will achieve for them a place of worth and recognition, are never free. Good manners are a 'phallacy'; it is better to trust to the sword and to act on one's own behalf.

The girl, having claimed the sword and once again defied patrilinear time and masculine authority, leaves the pirates and arrives six weeks later in Ourdh where we are told:

She materialised so quietly and expertly out of the dark that the gatekeeper found himself looking into her face without the slightest warning: a young, grey-eyed countrywoman, silent, shadowy, self-assured. She was hugely amused. "My name," she said, "is Alyx." (...) [And she] vanished through the gate before he could admit her, with the curious, slight smile one sees on the lips of very old statues: inexpressive, simple, classic. She was to become a classic in time. But that's another story. (45)

This language again recalls Loh and the goddess who 'hangs about on the fringes of things (at crossroads, at the entrance to towns)' (39). The girl is *becoming* something stronger, stranger and certainly strange to man's reality, which is defined only in terms of the power of the phallus. The girl claims an identity but her secret smile and her alliance with the shadows suggest that this identity is fluid, an enigma unwilling to be pinned down.

'She was to become a classic, in time' can be read in a number of ways. The narrator could be suggesting that Alyx will become well known in the future, that it will be her travels in

time that will make her a classic or that, as a ‘classic’ she has value in all eras, for all time. Alyx is a classic – a brutal, active, self-assured woman.

The story that follows ‘At First I was Afeard’ in the collection is ‘The Barbarian’ first published in 1968. Russ brings us in a cycle back to the older Alyx, now about thirty-four or thirty-five. Alyx is the barbarian in the story, called that by the ‘fat man’ who hires her. Russ appeases the reader’s need to impose a linear progression on Alyx’s tale by providing a history recalled for us by her new employer. On the surface this account seems satisfactory and the reader moves on to the body of the story. But when one reads it as part of the Alyx cycle a number of temporal discrepancies are revealed. Russ subverts linear time and again undermines patriarchal history which is written by men who think they know the histories of women. Russ writes:

It occurred to her that she had seen him before – though he was not so fat then, no, not quite so fat – and then it occurred to her that the time of their last meeting had almost certainly been in the hills when she was four or five years old. That was thirty years ago. (...)

“I know you,” he said. “A raw country girl fresh from the hills who betrayed an entire religious delegation to the police some ten years ago. You settled down as a picklock. You made a good thing of it. You expanded your profession to include a few more difficult items and you did a few things that turned heads hereabouts. You were not unknown, even then. Then you vanished for a season and reappeared as a fairly rich woman. But that didn’t last, unfortunately.”

“Didn’t have to,” said Alyx.

“Didn’t last,” repeated the fat man imperturbably. “No, no, it didn’t last. And now,” (he pronounced the ‘now’ with peculiar relish) “you are getting old.”

“Old enough,” said Alyx amused. (49-50)

According to Alyx, she sees the fat man for the first time as a child, before she has killed her first husband or come to Ourdh that ‘first’ time. The fat man remembers her only from the first time he believes she came to Ourdh with the religious delegation. He says that was ‘some ten years ago’, making Alyx twenty-four or twenty-five at the time. In ‘Bluestocking’, however, Alyx remembers coming to Ourdh with the religious delegation when she was twenty-three. It is therefore unclear which is the *correct* first time. Given her travels in time it is also possible that neither of these was her first trip to Ourdh at all. The fat man also says that Alyx ‘vanished for a season and reappeared as a fairly rich woman.’ Her vanishing could

signify the ‘Picnic on Paradise’ (aged twenty-six) episode or that with Edarra (aged thirty) or possibly another story we haven’t been told. Alyx’s history is imprecise because Russ means to subvert the authority of *any* history. A person’s history is not a unified narrative in which events, motives, thoughts and actions follow a neat linear path. Alyx’s narrative explores just this and so displaces the patriarchal tendency to homogenise, define and control her. Although the fat man says “I know you”, we know that this is not the case and can never be the case.

The fat man’s focus on Alyx’s financial status is also interesting. In a patronising, pitying tone he says that her wealth did not last. Alyx’s response reflects her lack of interest in her position or status in linear time. Her ‘didn’t have to’ also suggests an awareness of an alternative chronology that undermines the single moment of wealth because both wealth and the lack thereof are experiences that will come round again. When he doesn’t succeed in upsetting her the fat man relishes reminding Alyx that she is getting ‘old’. He insists on denigrating her, measuring her against the set of specifications privileged by the patriarchal ideology of linear time: ‘lasting’ wealth and youth and beauty. Alyx, however, remains amused by his attempt to unnerve her; Russ’s dry sense of humour undermines the pomposity of male authority. Later in the story the fat man says to Alyx, in a summation of the dynamic between the two of them, and between women and patriarchy:

“I want your obedience!” “Oh no,” she said softly, “I know what you want. You want importance because you have none; you want to swallow up another soul. You want to make me fear you and I think you can succeed, but I think also that I can teach you the difference between fear and respect. Shall I?” (57)

As the story progresses the fat man betrays Alyx and she goes after him. His ‘headquarters’ turn out to be a tall tower standing alone in the middle of the sandy dunes outside Ourdh, very much a phallic representation of his masculine power. When Alyx enters the tower we are told: ‘What she remembered as choked with stone rubbish (she had used this place for her own purposes a few years back) was bare and neat and clean’ (59). This memory, a reminder of another time and another story we do not know, threatens the linear narrative of this tale and again asserts the fact that only Alyx knows her full history. This sentence is followed by: ‘She could see dancing in (the light) the dustmotes that are never absent from this earth, not even from air that has lain quiet within the rock of a wizard’s mansion for uncountable years’ (60). If the place has lain quiet for ‘uncountable years’ when is Alyx’s ‘a few years back’?

We can assume that this is another sign of time travel. What is for her ‘a few years back’ is, for the fat man/wizard and the linear timeline to which he belongs, ‘uncountable years’ ago.

In order to gain access to the inner sanctum of the tower Alyx discovers that she must seem to be dead in order to cross an energy barrier. She concusses herself (to appear dead), falls through the barrier and wakes up (reborn) on the other side. On this side of the barrier she discovers the ‘modern’, technologically advanced laboratory of the fat man who now claims to be the god who made the world. Arrogant, pompous and not a little patronising, he explains his devices to Alyx as though she were an idiot, incapable of understanding: “My armour plate has in-er-tial dis-crim-in-a-tion, little savage”. (...) [Y]ou must understand that I cannot allow a creation of mine, a paring of my fingernail, if you take my meaning, to rebel in this silly fashion” (64). His dangerous arrogance is that of a patriarchal culture that dismisses women as ineducable children. What the fat man/ wizard/ scientist/ god does not know is that Alyx has been to the future and the results of an over-mechanised society can be in ‘Picnic on Paradise’. She is therefore neither awed nor cowed by the fat man’s machines. She smothers him, bringing to an end his petty rule and the world continues without him because his power and authority are revealed to be no more than a thin veneer.

As she moves back and forth in time Alyx reveals the vanity and fragility of patriarchal authority because her encounters with various people reveal the arbitrariness of these power structures; in ‘Picnic on Paradise’ she reflects on this:

The stranger pointed his weapon and favoured them with a most unpleasant smile ... it occurred to Alyx with a certain relief that she had known him before, that she had known him in two separate millennia and eight languages and that he had been the same fool each time. (130)

Alyx is completely dismissive of the empty, arrogant, bullying authority of each of the patriarchies with which she comes into contact.

In ‘Picnic on Paradise’ (1968), in linear time eight years before the previous story, ‘The Barbarian’, Alyx is commissioned by the Trans Temporal Military Authority to guide a group of holidaymakers to safety because the resort planet, Paradise, has become immersed in civil war. ‘Picnic’ explores a world where mechanised, linear time and all its privileges holds sway: women are objects, technology controls, measures and homogenises everything and the

patriarchal dominance of the Trans Temporal Military Authority is unquestioned. The motto of Trans Temp is ‘People for Every Need!’ which reflects the fact that in this world people are commodities. The world of ‘Picnic’ is very much like the horrific alternative future that Connie visits and the themes both Piercy and Russ explore in these places are similar.

Significantly, Trans Temp is only able to pull Alyx into the future because she was almost dead. We are told that she was being drowned and was ‘considerably more dead than alive, just dead enough, in fact, to come through at all and just alive enough to be salvageable’ (160). Again, Alyx, almost dead, is reborn after an immersion in the ocean and so embodies the transformative chaos and power of the chrono-matrix in contrast to this world that privileges only the patrilinear.

When she arrives on Paradise she strips off her clothes as the others have done and they react to the sight of her with nausea and shock. Their reaction reveals something significant about them:

“None of *you* has anything on,” said Alyx.

“You have on your history,” said the artist, “and we are not used to that, believe me. Not to history. Not to old she wolves with livid marks running up their ribs and arms, and not to the idea of fights in which people (...) linger on and die – slowly – or heal – slowly.” (72)

Alyx appears feral to them and she is untamed in comparison with them but what revolts them in her is the physical reminder of their own mortality. During the course of their journey she brings up death a number of times and is met each time with horrified shock and resistance. The first time she does so only to warn the group of the dangers around them but their reaction suggests that she has committed an awful faux pas more than anything else: “‘One of you may die.’ Behind her there was a stiffening, a gasp, a terrified murmur at such bad, bad taste’ (81). And later when Maudey dies the reaction of the group is similarly detached.

“Well, how is she?” said Iris. (...)

“She’s dead,” said Alyx.

“That,” said Iris brightly, “is not the right answer.” (113)

These people have disconnected themselves so fully from any real understanding of death and pain that it becomes an awkward embarrassment for them instead of the painful, almost

unbearable thing it is. Alyx, connected as she is to the chrono-matrix and time as devourer and grave as much as life force, is contrasted with the two-dimensional linearity of these people. They are inexperienced children in comparison with her even though she is younger than most of the group.

“Twenty-six,” said Alyx steadily, “ think of that, you thirty-three year old adolescent! Twenty-six and dead at fifty. Dead! There’s a whole world of people who live like that.” (...)

“But that’s so long ago!” wailed little Iris.

“No it’s not,” said Alyx. “It’s *right now*. It’s going on right now. I lived in it and I came here. It’s in the next room. I was in that room and now I am in this one. There are people still in that other room. They are living *now*. They are suffering *now*. And they always live and suffer because *everything keeps on happening*. You can’t say it’s all over and done with because it isn’t, it keeps going on. It all keeps going on.” (128)

Alyx’s statement here epitomises Russ’s exploration of time: nothing is over and done with because one moves back over the same experiences again and again. Alyx tries to remind these people whose humanity has been sterilised of what they are, of the pain, blood, death and life that ultimately give meaning to human existence. Unfortunately her words fall on deaf ears. In fact, at the end of the story she seems to have had no impact on the characters who merely move back into their mechanised, aesthetically pleasing, clean lives with relief. Because the other characters in ‘Picnic’ resolutely continue to deny the transformative power of death, to deny that death occurs at all, they trap themselves in a linear existence that makes change or transformation, even as an introspective mental process, impossible. In a world where all pain is dulled the death of the self, in any form, is unspeakable and this makes change impossible. This denial of the value of the human is also what Piercy explores in *Woman on the Edge of Time*.

As she moves through time Alyx defies her husband, the authorities of Ourdh, the fat man-god and at the end of ‘Picnic in Paradise’, angry at the callous domination of the world by Trans Temp, she rebels against them too. This thread is taken up in the final story of the Alyx cycle: ‘The Second Inquisition’ (1970). ‘The Second Inquisition’ is the most complex of the Alyx stories and foreshadows the experimentation of *The Female Man*. Although Alyx herself does not appear in the story, the protagonists are descendants of hers. Set in 1925, the story focuses on the relationship between a ‘visitor’ and the sixteen-year-old daughter of the

white, middle-class, American family with whom she is staying. The visitor is here to prevent the assassination of the girl by the Trans Temporal Military Authority. She tells the girl quite openly that, “Without you, (...) all is lost” (172). The relationship of the visitor to the girl is clarified somewhat when the Trans Temp assassin accuses the visitor of “(presuming) on being that woman’s grand-daughter!” (189)

That this story is accorded a date in our linear chronology is significant. What Russ suggests here is that the battle Alyx and her descendants are fighting is not removed from the reader’s reality but is of immediate relevance. It is also significant for my purposes because in bringing the action back into a linear time that we can recognise, Russ positions her *Alyx Cycle* in Kristeva’s third generation. The strength, resourcefulness and independence Alyx and her descendants have achieved is now brought into patrilinear reality in order to change the oppressive patriarchal system that exists.

As the story progresses references are made to Wells’s *The Time Machine* and the visitor tells the girl that she is a ‘Morlock’. Following the story of ‘Picnic on Paradise’ it seems that the pretty and plastic people of the future are the Eloi. The Order, fighting against Trans Temp, are the Morlocks: the harbingers of darkness, blood and murder. In this case the Order is connected with the chrono-matrix and temporality that demands death and transformation. Like the Morlocks, the Cosmic Mother devours her children in order to remake them. Significantly, the visitor is often described as spider-like, an image that links her to the chrono-matrix and time as death and rebirth: she rests ‘one immensely long, thin elegant hand on [the assassin’s] shoulder like some kind of unwinking spider’ (174) and ‘there were lines on her face that made it look sectioned off, or like a cobweb’ (190). Like Alyx, she has become a weaver of space-time because she defies Trans Temp’s control of her and time.

It is important that it is Alyx and her female descendants who are at the centre of this rebellion against Trans Temp. Alyx steps out of linear time and into an alliance with the chrono-matrix and that rupture allows her to become something strong and strange, something that threatens the authority of patriarchal ideology. This rebellion is embraced by her female line. In fact, the potential for subversion is very much what Russ intends when these generations of related women meet each other. As Pat Wheeler writes:

In much of Russ's work the tropes of space/time continuums fulfil important roles: they provide both the sites of struggle over cultural meanings of gender (in the world as we know it) and they offer (in other worlds) the potential for future emancipation for women (...) [T]his narrative convention allows disparate women, or versions of the same woman to connect. Women of different generations and from parallel universes interact, often in the most personal and intimate ways and frequently giving voice to their anger at women's lack of autonomy or woman's lack of will to effect change. (...) The time travel device offers a call to women to connect. (Wheeler, 2009:101-102)

This particular element of the feminist time travel story comes to the fore in 'The Second Inquisition' which focuses on the inter-generational link between Alyx's descendants. The visitor believes that the young girl is her great-grandmother. The girl says of the visitor that 'taking out from the wardrobe a black dress, glittering with stars and a pair of silver sandals with high heels, she would say, "These are yours. They were my great-grandmother's, who founded the Order"' (172). In a letter to Jeanne Cortiel, Russ herself reveals that: "'The Second Inquisition" is an Alyx story – the character in it is Alyx's great granddaughter' (Letter to Jeanne Cortiel, 21 September, 1995: Cortiel, 1999:135). So the young girl is Alyx's great granddaughter and she, in turn, is the great grandmother of the visitor. And Alyx has been or will be a presence in the future that contains or will contain both of them. Through these women Russ creates another type of temporal cycle: the female descendants of Alyx reflect the new becomings of her genetic code. When they take up her cause against Trans Temp this circle of women embodies the disruptive principle of the chrono-matrix.

Russ also experiments with these new 'genetic becomings' of Alyx. Although we are never told outright in the narrative that the visitor is related to her, her mannerisms throughout the story are similar to Alyx's and mark her as her descendant. Her way of speaking echoes Alyx (often curt and dry), as does her ability to shift at a moment's notice into something enigmatic, dark and vaguely threatening. The girl says of her, 'she was in black from head to foot. I thought *black*, but black was not the word; the word was *blackness*, dark beyond dark, dark that drained the eyesight' (186). This blackness recalls the darkness and shadow that the narrator associates with Alyx in previous stories. Both women are also hardened fighters. Alyx has fought in a number of battles and when the girl asks the visitor if she fought in the Great War, the visitor responds laconically, "'Which great war?"; she is also described as having 'the look of somebody who had seen people go off to battle and die' (174).

The third mannerism that links the visitor to Alyx is her laughter. Having just killed a number of people in ‘I Thought She Was Afeard’, Alyx ‘(begins) to laugh, more and more, leaning against him until she (is) convulsed’ (44) and in ‘Picnic’, ‘Alyx (begins) to giggle (...) then she (lets) go and (hooraws), snorting derisively, bellowing, weeping with laughter’, so much so that the lieutenant says, “That...is pretty ghastly” (76). In ‘The Second Inquisition’ the visitor also ‘began to laugh. I had never heard her laugh like that before (...) she began to choke’ (184). Andrew Butler suggests that laughter in Russ’s work recalls the laugh of the Medusa that Cixous writes about: a raucous, full-bodied laugh that is chaotic and a foretaste of the disorder the female characters are about to inflict on their worlds (Butler, 2009: 150). This is definitely the case in the Alyx stories. Each time Alyx breaks into uncontrolled laughter it undermines the authority of the man trying to control her. The visitor shares her raucous laughter in the face of that weak attempt at control.

Russ takes the connection between the characters to an interesting and important conclusion at the end of the story: she conflates the identities of the characters so that the distinction between them becomes blurred. The visitor has left 1925 but returns to see the girl one last time, appearing to her in a mirror. Thus the girl looking into the mirror sees both the visitor and her own reflection. The suggestion is that they are one and the same; all the female ancestors and descendants co-exist in that moment of reflection and in the girl. When the visitor leaves the mirror the girl tells us:

As I walked toward the door of the room, I turned to take one last look at myself in the mirror and at my strange collection of old clothes. For a moment something else moved in the mirror, or I thought it did, something behind me or to one side, something menacing, something half-blind, something heaving slowly like a shadow, leaving perhaps behind it faint silver flakes like the shadow of a shadow (...) something somebody had left on the edge of vision, dropped by accident in the dust and cobwebs of an attic. (192)

In that last look at herself the girl sees and acknowledges in herself her chaotic potential. The shadows she sees are both separate from her and part of her own reflection. They recall for us Loh and the goddess Chance and Alyx and the visitor. Russ fragments the identities and the timelines of the women so that what remains is an endless cycle. As the visitor says “Nothing ends, you see. Just keeps going on and on” (190). In a letter to Cortiel Russ writes:

I wanted the stories to form a sort of closed piece, a klein-bottle thing, with its tail in its mouth, to imply that the protagonist of ‘The Inquisition’ went on to write the other stories. That’s impossible of course, but I did like the tail-in-the-mouth effect. (Cortiel, 1999:135)

The tail-in-the-mouth image is typically associated with the ouroboros, the Cosmic Mother and cyclical time and is therefore an image that recalls the chrono-materix. Russ therefore means the text to form a circle within which Alyx moves through time and in which Alyx and her descendants form a powerful female circle within time. Russ says the implication at the end of ‘The Second Inquisition’ is that the young girl is meant to have written the other stories. The power of this suggestion is that the girl really is all of these women and there is no boundary between them. This fluidity of identity, constantly becoming something else, is very much the principle of the chrono-materix; the girl defies definition because she is all these women, in all times. Also, if the girl is author of these tales she has the authority and power to create reality, to subvert linear narrative and the patriarchal symbolic order that will define her as an ‘inert woman’. Cortiel makes the following suggestion:

As in many of Russ’s later texts, the narrator, who makes herself part of the story, is endowed with greater control over plot and narration than a conventional ‘first person’ narrator. In making the process of creation part of the story, that is in placing a significant part of the story in the narrator’s imagination, the text gives her an authority that is not available to a narrator who merely recalls events from her own experience and must, by implication, be controlled by a superior authorial consciousness. (Cortiel, 1999: 138)

In *The Adventures of Alyx* the chrono-materix underlies all the action and ideological content; it is the rupture of linear time and the embracing of the chrono-materix that enable Alyx and her descendants to defy patriarchal ideology and define themselves and their own realities – to become over and over, constantly new and defiant of the static definition of themselves in the symbolic order.

Although Russ experiments more with the fragmentation of time than either Butler or Piercy in the two novels of theirs that I discuss, it is interesting that all three authors make use of the disruption of linear time to facilitate the liberation of their characters from stifling patriarchal realities. It is similarly interesting that the images and language used to describe the experiences of the three time travellers recall the language of cultural feminism to varying degrees. Through their time travelling Dana, Connie and Alyx reassess the lessons patriarchal

culture would have them learn: that women are servile, subservient and stupid. The move out of linear time enables them to distance themselves from this harmful ideology and discover strengths and resources of which they might otherwise have remained unaware. But it is also significant that not one of these three authors allow their characters to remain in the alternative time/space of the chrono-matrix. Each of these characters returns to her world and introduces into it the consciousness and intentions of a fully realised, liberated woman and each acts to change patriarchal culture as it exists in her world.

Chapter 3

Fantastic Cosmogynesis: Le Guin, Lee and Tepper

‘Once upon a time or twice upon a time or more times and still some more...’
(Jochen Jung: ‘Sleeping Beauty’)

Like science fiction, fantasy is a genre particularly suited to experimentation with time. Because fantasy does not always adhere to the rules of physics that govern the ‘real’ world, time itself becomes malleable and can therefore be put to whatever use an author can imagine. As fantasy and SF literary critic Brian Attebery writes, the phrase “‘Once upon a time” (...) signals the importance of time itself in fantasy. Narrative is language’s way of exploring time; it enables us to give shape and meaning to time in somewhat the same way architecture orders space’ (1992:53). If, as Attebery suggests, time functions like the architectural structure of story then it shapes the narrative in a substantial way. Pertinent to my purposes then is that, unless the author imagines time from a different perspective, time in fantasy may well inscribe the same patriarchal ideology as it does in the real world. The feminist authors whose fantasies are discussed in this chapter shake the foundations of this temporal architecture so that passive princesses who may have been forced to sleep through the last millennia finally awaken. In the novels I have chosen to examine Ursula Le Guin, Tanith Lee and Sheri Tepper all describe patriarchal worlds in which their female protagonists are limited by what their cultures expect of women; when these characters challenge the authority of patrilinear time they deny patriarchal culture the right to restrict their actions. Each female character is drawn into the chrono-matrix and, liberated she rebuilds her world according to a new temporal blue-print. Like the novels discussed in the last chapter, the novels examined here can also therefore be read as contributing to the Second Wave examination of time which culminates in works that seem to reflect the viewpoint of Julia Kristeva’s third generation.

Because fantasy encourages the expression of whatever imagination can generate it is a space in which many women and feminist authors have speculated, among other things, about gender equality. Interestingly, the history of female authors’ engagement with fantasy follows much the same pattern as it does with science fiction in that during the Second Wave greater numbers of female authors appeared than there had been before. Although there were women writing fantasy before the 1960s, this genre, too, was dominated by male authors (Mains,

2009:43). In general the contribution of women during these early years seems to have revolved around the remythologisation and re-appropriation of figures like the witch and the female warrior. Christine Mains suggests that while men still tended to describe female characters as passive (the inert princess-to-be-rescued), evil (the witch or sorceress) or peripheral (the female warrior who is the companion of the main, male hero), female authors were rewriting these stereotypes in such a way that these characters were empowered and empowering (2009:40-41). During the Second Wave and in the years that followed, more female authors took to writing fantasy and a greater public awareness of feminist fantasy resulted. Of this trend, Christine Mains writes that

[w]hile some criticisms of the field do have some validity – that it is politically conservative, that it appeals to children and the childish, that it is formulaic and repetitive, especially in the trend to never-ending sequels – fantastic fiction can be a way of describing an imperfect world and provoking social change. Women writers in particular have used the mode of fantasy to recuperate female archetypal roles that have fallen into stereotypes (and) to deal with women-centred issues such as rape and gender inequality. (2009:62)

Therefore, not only does fantasy create a fictional space in which feminists can explore their concerns in a way that is often impossible in realistic fiction, like SF it may be an appropriate fictional space in which to rewrite stories and myths that insist that passivity and weakness are the essential traits of ‘good’ women. The reason that fantasy has the potential to revise the stereotypes that are so deeply entrenched in patriarchal culture is because, as Attebery notes, ‘the body of modern fantasy – and this is true of fantasy by men as well – comes to resemble a mythology: that is, a compilation of narratives that express a society’s conception of itself, its individual members, and their place in the universe’ (1992:89). As Western patriarchal culture is challenged, new myths are written that explore the resulting changes and so feminist fantasies may contribute to the emergence of a new worldview in which women have agency. Because fantasy uses the same strategies as myth, the ‘new myths’ it disseminates have the power to displace the old ones.

The language and narrative strategies of myth and fantasy are powerful and difficult to resist because, as Le Guin writes in her essay ‘The Child and The Shadow’:

The great fantasies, myths and tales are indeed like dreams: they speak *from* the unconscious *to* the unconscious, in the *language* of the unconscious – symbol and archetype. Though they use words, they work the way music does:

they short circuit verbal reasoning, and go straight to the thoughts that lie too deep to utter. (1989:51)

Fantasy can affect the reader on a very primal level because it draws on that which is deeply embedded in him or her: a reasoning that goes beyond the rational and a need to participate in the very processes of creation. Fantasy is one of the vehicles that enables readers to participate in actions of a pseudo-sacred nature and to explore mythical prototypes through their ‘new’ incarnations as archetypes (anima, animus, hero, shadow) that are supposedly common to all of us. These modern terms come to us through the work of psychoanalyst C.G. Jung. Briefly, he posits that all people share a universal Self. Because the Self is overpowering and immense we cannot comprehend it as a whole and so, argues Jung, we break it up into smaller forces he calls archetypes. Each person grapples with these archetypes and the psychological issues they symbolise as he or she struggles to understand the Self (Jung, 1964:163). Jung has given the modern world a lexicon for unravelling and understanding the enduring appeal of myth and story because, as he would suggest, story translates the chaos of the unconscious into comprehensible form. This is also why Le Guin argues that ‘[f]antasy is the medium best suited to a description of that journey [into the unconscious, because] only the symbolic language of the deeper psyche will fit [these events] without trivialising them’ (Le Guin, 1989:55).

In a sense, then, fantasy encourages authors and readers to remake the world. And it may be precisely this characteristic of fantasy that encourages (what I suggest are) the Second Wave explorations of time undertaken by Le Guin, Lee and Tepper. When the female characters return to linear time in the SF discussed earlier, they each undertake an individual attempt to change their cultures. In the fantasies discussed in this chapter, each of the female characters, having refused the authority of patrilinear time, is involved in a cosmogonic act that brings about the cosmogenesis of their entire worlds. These two terms are used by twentieth century myth scholar Mircea Eliade to describe the mythical act that takes place at the moment of creation when the world is made (Eliade, 2005:20). In most myth and fantasy the cosmogonic act is facilitated by a male hero and the rebirth realigns the world with ‘good’; in the case of the feminist fantasies considered in this chapter, the rebirthed worlds are aligned with the non-patriarchal. These female characters therefore bring about the *cosmogynesis* of their worlds – rebirth by women and empowerment of women. Fantasy scholar Marek Oziewicz suggests that ‘fantasy aims to create in its readers a state of mind in which fantasy “fiction”

becomes a “true narrative” about the possibility of real change’ (Oziewicz, 2008:5-6); this is particularly true of the feminist fantasy novels I discuss here.

The first author whose work I examine is Ursula K(roeber) Le Guin. In 1979 Le Guin won the Gandalf Award which acknowledges the work of a fantasy Grand Master and in 2006 she was awarded the Science Fiction and Fantasy Writers of America Grand Master Award. She has won multiple Hugo and Nebula Awards for both her fantasy and SF and these, coupled with other literary accolades gathered over a lifetime, could fill an entire page. Suffice it to say that she is considered a master storyteller, having crafted poetic tales that have moved generations of readers.

Le Guin grew up in a home that encouraged mental exploration and enquiry, exposing her to different peoples and ways of being. Her father, Alfred Kroeber, was a respected anthropologist, particularly well-known for his work among Native Americans and her mother, Theodora Kroeber, was a writer and folklorist (Fadiman, 1986). This upbringing fostered in Le Guin a deep imaginative curiosity about the world, about how culture is created and how it influences the people who operate within its limits. This is something that she explores sensitively in most of her writing. Like many fantasy authors, as a youngster she felt she was an outsider and it was in stories that she found where she belonged (Fadiman, 1986:23). From a young age, therefore, myth and myth-making preoccupied Le Guin and came to play an important role in her thinking and approach to fantasy and SF writing and criticism.

Although she is considered an influential writer of both feminist SF and fantasy Le Guin began exploring feminism only later in life, having been introduced to it by her grown-up daughter, a lecturer in English and Gender Studies: ‘In a 1995 interview, Le Guin [explains], “I am a woman writer. I finally learned how to say that when I was in my fifties. I am a woman writer, not an imitation man”’ (Reid, 1997:10). This is particularly relevant to the novels I discuss here because Le Guin wrote the first three Earthsea books in the early seventies before she publically proclaimed any feminist sympathies. Two of these early novels focus solely on the experiences of male heroes embedded in a male-dominated culture. It is only when she returns to the Earthsea books later that Le Guin attempts to balance the masculine focus in the novels with a female point of view. This shift in focus is most obvious

in the last two novels: *Tehanu* (1990) and *The Other Wind* (2001). It is significant, however, that throughout the series, even in the earlier novel *The Tombs of Atuan* (1972), Le Guin links her female characters with becoming and rebirth and therefore aligns her exploration of time with the Second Wave thinking encapsulated by the chrono-matrix. Although the male protagonists of the earlier novels, Ged and Lebannen, are both ‘reborn’ as any coming-of-age story requires, it is through her women that Le Guin initiates the cosmogonic act that enables the rebirth of all Earthsea. It is also significant that she requires the men of Earthsea to acknowledge that it is the women and the alternative time that they usher into Earthsea that saves this world.

Although some of Le Guin’s writing seems to explore overtly feminist issues, it has been suggested by some critics that what is read as a feminist position may be more accurately described as a reflection of her Taoist beliefs (Elizabeth Cummins, 1979; Susan M. Bernardo and Graham J. Murphy, 2006; Tony Burns, 2010). Elements of Taoist philosophy are often quite obvious in her writing, particularly in the *Earthsea* novels but I would like to propose that a close reading of this series may perhaps reveal that her feminist sympathies inflect her use of Taoist imagery, particularly in her descriptions of the women of Earthsea. Taoism calls for a balance between an active masculine principle (yang) and a passive feminine principle (yin) so that the world exists in perfect equilibrium. In *Earthsea* the wizards are openly cautious about affecting ‘the Balance’ with their magic and it is often the restoration of this fragile equilibrium that drives the plot in these novels. In his book *Blue Dragon White Tiger: Taoist Rites of Passage* (1990), Taoism scholar Michael Saso describes Taoist rituals in great detail. He writes that yang is the male ‘moving forces’ of the world that bring about ‘cosmic change and the completion of a cycle’ (1) and that ‘the cosmic symbol of yang is the sun, the source of daylight’ (3). Yin is female and is associated with ‘the night’ and ‘winter rest’ (3). In religious iconography, yang is ‘blue dragon’ and yin is ‘white tiger’ (3); (Saso himself uses the terms ‘male’ and ‘female’ where feminists might be more comfortable with the terms ‘masculine’ and ‘feminine’). In a Taoist temple the forces of yin are represented by ‘the spirits of the mountains, water and the white tiger’ (15).

An awareness of this symbolic language reveals Le Guin’s treatment of Taoism in the *Earthsea* novels to be nuanced (possibly by a feminist viewpoint?). In *Earthsea* the power of the male wizards is compared to water. The main male protagonist, Ged often pointedly

stares at the stars of the night sky and uses them to guide him and more than once he walks the land of the dead which is dominated by a night sky. Ged also comes from Gont, a mountainous island. He, and through him the male forces of Earthsea, are thus aligned with the forces of Yin according to Taoist symbolism. In my reading of the novels I also suggest that the domination of Earthsea by men has resulted in an era of passive apathy, and therefore a period in which Yin has ruled. In contrast to the Taoist association of yang with male forces, Le Guin describes her women in such a way that they come to represent this active principle. Throughout these novels the main female characters are associated with dragons (particularly in the later novels), fire and light. I trace these moments here in my reading of the novels. The women also represent the force of change, bringing about the completion of a cosmic cycle and the rebirth of their worlds, or cosmic change. Le Guin's connection of her female characters with yang is nothing short of a revolution in mythic imagery; she reverses the symbolic polarity of this religious binary and gives her women the active power to change the world. One must remember, however, that true to the spirit of Taoism it is these forces in balance that create a healthy world; Le Guin does not mean to suggest that the women should dominate the men as they have been dominated, merely that the insertion of women and all that they represent into public life will bring all into balance.

This discussion of the Earthsea novels focuses on the books that have female protagonists and so we begin with *The Tombs of Atuan* and the story of Tenar; (the page references for *The Tombs of Atuan* and *Tehanu* are taken from the 1993 Puffin one volume edition). This novel seems to reflect the position of Second Wave liberal and socialist feminisms as they are outlined in my first chapter because Le Guin describes a world in which women have been denied active roles in linear time and the plot of the novel follows the journey of one woman who achieves re-insertion into public linear time. Le Guin focuses here on the fact that women have been removed from public life and so have suffered stagnation and been forced to endure a 'living death'; the solution she envisions, like liberal and socialist Second Wave feminisms, is that women need to be given access to public life and public time. In this novel Le Guin does not go so far as to criticise patrilinear time, this next step is one she takes in the two later novels that follow Tenar's journey.

Earthsea is divided into two kingdoms, the Hardic Lands and the Kargad Empire; *The Tombs of Atuan* is set in the Kargad Empire, a patriarchal kingdom ruled by a Godking who is

considered divine by his people. Older than the worship of the Godking, however, is Kargad's veneration of the Old Powers of the Earth. The primary temple to these powers is part of a desert complex known as the Place. Only women and eunuchs are allowed inside and all is presided over by the One Priestess, Arha – the eaten one. The lore of this religion decrees that on the death of the One Priestess a child is born who is the reincarnation of Arha. As a young child, Tenar is 'recognised' as this priestess reborn and is brought to the temple complex to be trained. However, this 'rebirth' of Tenar as Arha is not the living *becoming* process of the chrono-matrix, but the static petrification of a single role and a single reality forever repeated and forced on her. Le Guin seems to concur here with the Second Wave liberal and socialist positions that women who are removed from linear time are forced into an eternity of passivity that is no better than death. A reflection of this is the fact that the only women who wield any power in patriarchal Kargad are those who serve as priestesses but their 'power' is very much limited by the role they must play. As Le Guin scholar Elizabeth Cummins writes

[t]he Place mirrors female experience in Kargish society. Ostensibly protected by its walls and guards and eunuchs, the women are actually imprisoned. Ostensibly honoured by their society, they are actually punished by being isolated, perhaps a reflection of the male fear of the female principle. Ostensibly powerful in their roles as religious leaders, they are actually functionaries who have internalised male standards and enforce them. The women have become their own prison guards. (Cummins, 1993:43)

With this in mind, it is telling that when the priestesses come to take Tenar from her parents her father admonishes her grieving mother, saying, 'Why do you let your heart hang on the child? They're coming to take her away next month. For good. Might as well bury her and be done with it' (175). The child will be dead to her parents but the irony is that as Arha, supposedly powerful and reborn, she is entombed in the Tombs of Atuan with the other priestesses. For her there is neither a life of her own nor the possibility of becoming something new.

Throughout the novel Le Guin's description of the Place is one of desolate ruins, despairing, cold emptiness and threatening darkness. She characterises the worship of the Old Powers as a feminine, chthonic religion, all priestesses, labyrinths, caves, darkness and 'rebirth' but no new life is brought forth from the womb of this 'mother'. If cyclical time is both womb and grave, the Place embodies only the moment of the grave; here there is no anarchic moment of

birth to usher in something new and unknown. Under the patriarchal rule of the Godking, women are removed from linear time and kept powerless to assert the Other temporality of the chrono-materix. The state of the Place reflects the lack of life to which these women have been condemned:

[t]hrough the cracks in the roof of the Hall of the Throne, gaps between columns where a whole section of masonry and tile had collapsed, unsteady sunlight shone aslant. It was an hour after sunrise. The air was still and cold. Dead leaves of weeds that had forced up between marble pavement-tiles were outlined with frost, and crackled, catching on the long black robes of the priestesses. (177)

The air is ‘still’, the sunlight ‘unsteady’ and the weeds pushing through the floor are dead. And as Tenar takes her steps up to the empty throne, we are told that:

The three highest steps directly before the throne, above the step on which she had knelt, had never been climbed by mortal feet. They were so thick with dust that they looked like one slant of grey soil, the planes of the red-veined marble wholly hidden by the unstirred, untrodden siftings of how many years, how many centuries. (179)

There is nothing but dust and death in this place. The consciousness of cyclical time may exist in Kargad but the dynamic force of the chrono-materix is undeniably absent. The fact that the dust on the stairs is the ‘unstirred, untrodden siftings (...) of how many centuries’ suggests the cumulative burden of linear time, not the cleansing motion of the chrono-materix. The presence of death and the grave is overpowering so that even the ‘red-veined marble’ is like skinned flesh. Tenar’s initiation into the mysteries is also grotesque; during the ceremony, she is meant to be beheaded so that her blood is spilled into the dust. At the last minute goat’s blood is substituted for hers at which point a cry goes up:

‘O Let the Nameless Ones behold the girl given to them, who is verily the one born ever nameless. Let them accept her life and the years of her life until her death, which is also theirs. Let them find her acceptable. Let her be eaten!’
Other voices, shrill and harsh as trumpets, replied: ‘She is eaten! She is eaten!’
(178)

Tenar is ‘devoured’, again an image associated with the chrono-materix. The difference here is that she remains the Eaten One for *eternity*, never able to be reborn or become something new. She is stripped of her life by a patriarchal culture in which she is forever defined and constrained by the role expected of her.

In the wider context of the Earthsea series the fact that Tenar will now be nameless, known only as Arha, the eaten one, is significant. In Earthsea names have great power. Every person has two: a call-name and a true name; a true name is powerful because it reflects the essence of a person's being, their truth. It is therefore both significant and ominous that the Old Powers are the Nameless Ones. They never change and so they embody the un-living, unmoving, and 'evil' temporal stagnation that is the opposite force of the dynamic destruction and creation of the chrono-matrix; at the very moment of *creation*, these are the 'tombs of those who ruled' (187). Again, and always, the Place and the Nameless Ones are associated only with death, entombed and unchanging and Tenar is now theirs. Once her name is taken from her, she too no longer exists in a true sense. In the world of Earthsea she is eaten, nameless and, like all women, denied an active role in patrilinear time.

Feminist scholar Lauren Burchill writes that "the feminine" was called up, as it were, by the project of contemporary philosophy insofar as it was judged capable of questioning the notion of time as a linear and homogenous succession of present moments' (Burchill, 2006:85). According to Burchill Arha and the priestesses (as the female and 'the feminine') should be able to oppose patrilinear time and challenge the ideology it enforces but they are prevented from expressing the truths of the 'Other' and experiencing the alternative temporality of the chrono-matrix. The patriarchal rule of their world is so effectively enforced that these women are trapped in a 'succession of present moments' that deny them authentic experience. As Tenar's initiation ceremony ends, the meaninglessness and changelessness of the 'life' before her are evoked: as the priestesses walk down the hill from the Tombs, 'they began softly to chant. (...) The word that was repeated over and over was a word so old it had lost its meaning, like a signpost still standing when the road is gone. Over and over they chanted the empty word [in] a dry unceasing drone' (179). It is significant that the women are limited to the use of an out-dated, meaningless language because this signifies that there is no becoming for them, no rich semiotic from which they can draw their own meaning. If we are beings 'constituted by being spoken through by language' (Grosz, 1990:148) then these women mean nothing. The 'dry drone' also suggests the infertile desiccation of being locked into repeating one action 'unceasingly' even though it no longer has any meaning: although the 'signpost still (stands)', the 'road is (long) gone'. As Arha

ages in the novel the narrator says ‘the days went by, the years went by, all alike’ (185). She becomes part of an unmoving landscape and significantly, ‘as she [grows] older she [loses] all remembrance of her mother, without knowing she [has] lost it’ (182). She is cut off from the dynamic help of her female continuum because she is unchanging, always the One Priestess Ever Reborn.

When she is old enough, the girl begins to explore the labyrinth beneath the tombs. This is her domain and no one else may enter. Once again, Le Guin uses the images Second Wave cultural feminism associates with feminine cyclical time to describe the domain of the priestess. The door to the first part of the tombs is described thus: ‘an uneven section of the red rock moved inward until a narrow slit was opened. Inside it was blackness. (...) The darkness seemed to press like wet felt upon the open eyes’ (199). This earth is likened to the flesh of a female body. Arha enters the earth, moving into the central cavern, the ‘womb’, after which she begins to explore the labyrinth which is described as a ‘spiralling tangle of tunnels’ (213) and a ‘vast, meaningless web of ways’ (222). The spiral and the labyrinth are both associated with the chrono-materix but although these images should suggest spiritual and psychological illumination, here in the tombs they are tangled and meaningless.

Eliade writes that ‘from the structural point of view, the return to the womb corresponds to the reversion of the Universe to the “chaotic” or embryonic state. The prenatal darkness corresponds to the Night before Creation’ (Eliade, 1963:80). However, instead of signifying fertile chaos that bears life and that ushers in the new, this ‘womb’ is empty and infertile and does not signify ‘prenatal darkness’. The force for change that is usually connoted by images associated with the chrono-materix is undermined by a patriarchal culture that retains its power even here, in what is meant to represent the heart of the female psyche. Although Tenar goes deep into the tombs, a movement that in any other fantasy novel would suggest the hero’s journey into herself, this journey leads nowhere because the womb has been stripped of its power.

It is significant, too, that the labyrinth is described as a ‘web’ and that the only creatures who live in this darkness are little white spiders. The spider recalls for us the weaver of time, Grandmother Spider, the feminine temporal principle. However, the spider is a symbol with two complementary, if opposite, meanings: on the one hand its web is a metaphor for the

connection of all living beings and on the other it is a merciless predator, a devourer of living creatures. Here in the Place, only the devourer exists. Arha thinks to herself of her labyrinth, ‘Do flies need rules to tell them not to enter the spider’s web?’ (221); she sees herself as a spider but as the devourer, not the weaver of living connection. Arha does not know that she has the agency to refuse to be what the Godking requires her to be.

As time passes, however, Arha begins to chafe against the absolute stillness and sameness of her life, of all her lives, and it is then that something out of the ordinary happens. On one of her trips into the maze she sees a man holding up a light in this sacred place that is ‘the very home of darkness, the inmost centre of the night’ (200). She is outraged by the desecration of this most holy of places and she calls out, startling the man who puts out his light and flees into the labyrinth. She closes the door behind him, trapping him. In Jungian terms, the appearance of a man here in the centre of ‘feminine’ power is a manifestation of Arha’s animus, the masculine part of her that signals she is ready for action.

The man Arha has trapped is Ged, a powerful Hardic wizard. He has come to the Place on a quest of his own but he obviously signals a disruption of Arha’s eternal stagnation and it is significant that this disruption begins with light. In an interesting reversal of both traditional Western and Taoist symbolism Le Guin equates female power and agency with air and fire and male power with water and earth in these novels. Arha has been trapped in the dark earth, equated with solid, unmoving masculine control. In *The Tombs of Atuan*, *Tehanu* and *The Other Wind*, Le Guin uses the constantly moving, whirling, spiralling and flaming elements of air and fire to signify the liberation and agency of the female protagonists and so it is significant that, when Arha first sees Ged, what strikes her most forcefully is his were-light shimmering off the crystalline walls of the great cavern. It is the beauty of the light in that formerly dark and formless place that haunts her. It is also significant that, in her first, forbidden, conversation with him he mentions dragons; he says:

“I have seen the islands where they come to dance together. They fly on great wings in spirals, in and out, higher and higher over the western sea, like a storming of yellow leaves in autumn.” Full of vision, his eyes gazed through the black paintings on the walls, through the walls and the earth and the darkness, seeing the open sea stretch unbroken to the sunset, the golden dragons on the golden wind. (248)

These creatures of air and fire share an elemental kinship with Le Guin's female protagonists that becomes more pronounced as the books progress. At this point, however, Ged is the spark that kindles Tenar's flame. He draws her gaze up and out to the sky, to a vision that could not be more different from the dank, dark lifelessness she has known up to this point. However, although she is curious enough to forestall the Law that demands Ged's death for entering the Labyrinth, she is not ready to betray the Old Powers just yet. Her rejoinder to Ged's vision of golden dragons is this: "All I know is the dark, the night underground. And that's all there really is to know, in the end. The silence, and the dark (...) – the one true thing" (249). Significantly, though, this is not something that she has learnt for herself. Arha merely repeats what she has been told by Manan and Thor and Kossil, all figures that consolidate the authority of Kargish patriarchal culture over her. She does not know the truth at all.

When Arha turns to leave, Ged calls to her: "Take care, Tenar" (256). As a wizard he knows her true name and in calling her Tenar he begins to undo the bonds with which the Place has kept her subjugated. In giving Arha back her name, Ged pulls the girl from the vacuum of the Place into the flow of time. That night Arha has a significant dream. In it she sees what the reader would assume to be angels and we are told that

[o]ne of them came up quite close to her. She was afraid at first and tried to draw away, but could not move. This one had the face of a bird, not a human face; but its hair was golden and it said in a woman's voice, 'Tenar,' tenderly, softly, 'Tenar.' She woke. Her mouth was stopped with clay. She lay in a stone tomb, underground. Her arms and legs were bound with grave cloths and she could not move or speak. Her despair grew so great that it burst her breast open and like a bird of fire shattered the stone and broke out into the light of day. (257)

The angel speaks to her tenderly in a woman's voice and her hair is the same golden colour as Tenar's mother's hair. In fact, later in *Tehanu*, Tenar says that she remembers her mother, 'only as the warmth and lion-colour of firelight' (499). The angel also tenderly calls her by the name her mother gave her. When Arha wakes in the dream, although she is buried and her mouth is stopped, a phoenix-like bird shatters her breast and flies free. The face of her mother is 'bird-like', her mother's colouring is reminiscent of firelight and the dream soul that flies free from her is a phoenix. These associations with air and fire reflect Tenar's slow return to her natural elements and her liberation from the silence of the stone tomb. The phoenix image

is particularly interesting in that a ‘bird of fire’ could be a dragon described in the words of someone who has never seen one and I argue that in Earthsea dragons are creatures of the chrono-materix. The connection between Le Guin’s women and dragons becomes more complex as the novels progress but at this moment the appearance of the ‘bird of fire’ signals Tenar’s resurrection from the ashes of the Tombs.

This is also a significant moment for Tenar because the alien images that appear to her in the dream could be equated with the eruption of the semiotic; her subconscious reaches out for a language capable of expressing the transformation she is undergoing and does so by reconfiguring the relationship with her mother. This is interesting because, as Schmitz suggests, ‘the ordering of the semiotic is first based on the body of the mother (...) and relates the body of the subject-to-be to the mother’ (Schmitz, 2006:132). This dream appearance of her ‘mother’ therefore signals Tenar’s reconnection with her female continuum and gives her the strength she needs to fight the Old Powers and defy the patriarchal authority of the Godking. When she fully wakes up from her dream, she says “‘I am Tenar. (...) I have my name back. I am Tenar’” (258). Like the female characters in the SF discussed in the last chapter, when Tenar names herself she claims the right to define herself and to *become*. She need no longer be constrained by the role demanded of her by the patriarchal culture of Kargad; she need no longer be buried.

Significantly, when she asks Ged how he knew her name, he replies: “‘You are like a lantern swathed and covered, hidden away in a dark place. Yet the light shines; they could not put out the light. (...) As I know the light, as I know you, I know your name, Tenar’” (267). He suggests that her name is synonymous with light. To be free, Tenar must burn away the death, stagnation and stillness that have prevented her from becoming. She decides to free Ged and leave the Place herself and it is significant that the key she uses to free them both is ‘dragon-hafted’ (273). The journey out of the labyrinth is difficult because the Old Powers try to block them but when they are finally out of the labyrinth, ‘with a crash that seemed to echo off the sky itself, the raw black lips of the crack closed together’ (281). When Arha leaves the Tombs, becoming Tenar, the entire complex caves in; the mouth that devoured will never swallow someone again. This moment of true rebirth topples the Tombs of Atuan, destroying them forever.

On the first morning that she awakes free of the Tombs, Tenar looks around her and in contrast to the darkness of the Place, ‘the huge, silent glory of light burned on every twig and withered leaf and stem, on the hills, in the air’ (282). Ged says to her, “‘You are – more than I had realised – truly reborn.’” She nodded, smiling a little. She felt newborn’ (287). She has come into the light and, born anew, takes her place in living time. Ged takes her home with him to the Hardic Kingdom and she begins her life. However, this new life of hers in the Hardic Lands, while freer than that as Arha, is still fairly restricted because the Hardic culture is also patriarchal. This is explored in greater detail in Le Guin’s last two Earthsea novels.

In the two later books that follow the journey of Tenar (and Tehanu), Le Guin seems to move beyond the simplistic positions of Second Wave liberal and socialist feminisms regarding time. These two later books acknowledge that although Tenar may have stepped into linear time, she is still disadvantaged in patrilinear time because she is a woman. In these novels Le Guin explores the effects that the patriarchal domination of time might have and suggests that the dominance of patrilinear time must be balanced by an assertion of that Other time of the chrono-materix in order to correct the imbalance that is destroying the world. This process begins in *Tehanu* and culminates at the end of *The Other Wind*. These last two novels therefore seem to trace a shift in Le Guin’s exploration of time which now comes to reflect the perspective of Kristeva’s third generation: women demand an insertion into patrilinear time but also acknowledge and enforce the possibility of an alternative temporality that enables them to destabilise the patriarchal ideology embedded in linear time. In *Tehanu* Le Guin explores the various ways in which the patriarchal culture of Earthsea crushes women and in *The Other Wind* she describes a world that is breaking apart because of the imbalance created by gender inequality. When this imbalance is rectified at the end of *The Other Wind* and Tenar and Tehanu finally do assert the temporal force of the chrono-materix, Earthsea itself undergoes a cosmogynesis.

The next time we meet Tenar, in *Tehanu*, she is a middle-aged, widowed mother of two and sixteen years have passed for Ursula Le Guin. In *Tehanu* and *The Other Wind* Le Guin addresses the patriarchal imbalance prevalent in Earthsea and the dire consequences that result from this imbalance. In Earthsea men have all the power, both magical and political and women, not surprisingly, play the roles of mothers, wives, sisters and (on rare occasions) evil seductresses. While men of power are sent to the prestigious school for wizards on Roke

Island, women of power may rise only to the position of the outcast and often pathetic figure of village witch. After all, as the idiom suggests of woman's power, it is 'weak as women's magic, wicked as women's magic' (511). The tone of the last two books of the Earthsea series is markedly different from the first three. There is the suggestion that the world is going through an age of ruin: there is no peace because pirates and bands of thieves harass innocent people; rape and violent crimes are not isolated events; and a sense of impending doom and immeasurable loss pervades the Hardic Kingdom. Even those who wield magic complain that their spells go awry and that the Balance has been damaged. Through the actions of the women in the last two books and Earthsea's surrender to the chrono-matrix, the world is reborn and brought back into Balance. Le Guin's final statement is that cyclical becoming – being birthed anew – together with feminine fire and air, must balance masculine linearity, earth and water, if life is to continue at all.

Tehanu is a quiet book that focuses on the 'small', domestic actions of the now older Tenar as she goes about her life on Gont, the small island on which she has settled and married. It is very unusual for a fantasy novel to have a middle-aged woman as the protagonist but Le Guin does so in order to make a point about heroism. In her lecture, *Earthsea Revisioned* (1993), she looks back on the first three Earthsea novels and discusses what was at the time, the latest addition to the series: *Tehanu*. She writes that heroism is traditionally about men in some sort of contest and that the equation of heroism with this action denies a different measure of worth. In the first three Earthsea novels, the protagonists are men and only they are heroic. Of Tenar, she writes:

In *The Tombs of Atuan*, Arha/Tenar is not a hero, she is a heroine. The two English words are enormously different in their implications and value; they are indeed a wonderful exhibition of how gender expectations are reflected/created by linguistic usage. Tenar, a heroine, is not a free agent. She is trapped in her situation. And when the hero comes, she becomes complementary to him. She cannot get free of the Tombs without him. (Le Guin, 1993:9)

However, Tenar is only not-heroic when she is embedded in a patriarchal ideology that defines heroism as men in a battle involving power and which counts heroic action as the only action worth noting. In *Tehanu*, Le Guin subverts that paradigm, valorising a different way of measuring worth.

We are told that when she first arrives on Gont, Ged leaves Tenar with his old mentor, the wizard Ogion. Ogion sees undeveloped power and potential in Tenar and offers to teach her how to use it according to the rules, skills and spells of the all-male magic of Roke. She refuses his offer and instead chooses a life of quiet domesticity. This is a singularly unheroic choice in a genre that demands great things of its protagonists but it is significant because Tenar chooses to walk away from male power and her inclusion in an all-male hierarchy to create meaning for herself. She chooses the only freedom available to her. Arguably, she then takes up a restricted role as wife and mother and is just as defined by patriarchal culture as she would have been had she chosen the alternative. As Orr writes, ‘the feminine as Other seems doomed to either subordination in the status quo, or erasure through assimilation to the contrary norm’ (Orr, 2006:4). However, Le Guin suggests that it is her refusal of masculine power that signals Tenar’s potential, particularly in Earthsea where masculine power has led to a dangerous imbalance. She writes:

Her insignificance is her wildness. What she is and does is ‘beneath notice’ – invisible to the men who own and control, the men in power. And so she’s freer than any of them to connect with a different world, where things can be changed, remade. (Le Guin, 1993:23)

In returning to Earthsea and writing it from the perspective of a female character, Le Guin recreates this world so that, ‘History is no longer about great men [and] the important choices and decisions may be obscure ones, not recognised or applauded by society’ (Le Guin, 1993:13). She therefore writes about Tenar, an older woman whose heroic act in this novel is to care for a disfigured child and a defeated, ageing Ged.

For Le Guin older women also represent the culmination of human wisdom and she equates that wisdom with having experienced the cyclical deaths and rebirths that she argues are part of a woman’s life, of her daily experience of the chrono-materix as it were. She writes that the older woman, ‘was a virgin once, a long time ago, and then a sexually potent fertile female, and then went through menopause. She has given birth several times and faced death several times – the same times. She is facing the final birth/death a little more nearly and clearly every day now’ (Le Guin, 1986:6). The older woman embodies the cycles that bring human wisdom and she is the one to whom we should turn for solace, healing and teaching; Tenar is thus characterised as being the embodiment of the chrono-materix. One can see here how Le Guin’s language echoes that of the Second Wave cultural feminist treatment of time.

In writing about Tenar as an older woman, Le Guin also contributes to the Second Wave cultural feminist project to reassess female stereotypes; in this case it is the figure of the Crone that she redefines as powerful and subversive. Re-appropriated by feminists, the Crone, who represents monstrous and unnatural femininity in patriarchal culture's imaginary, becomes a force that threatens patriarchal authority. Tenar's potential for subversion is thus that much greater than it was before: her sexuality becomes a site for resistance against patriarchal stereotyping, her wisdom challenges its intellectual arrogance and she represents an archetypal energy that facilitates eruption and becoming. In fact, Jane Caputi writes of the Crone that she is 'associated with old age, death, the waning moon, winter and rebirth [; a]s a harbinger of rebirth, the Crone's appearance signals a call to profound transformation and healing' (Caputi, 1992:433). This is precisely the role that Tenar plays in this novel. Thus the older woman, usually dismissed and isolated by patriarchal society, is now imbued with the dangerous, subversive energy of the Crone and becomes the unlikely protagonist of a fantasy tale.

As the Crone who embodies the chrono-matrix, Tenar also connects the various characters in the novel, weaving disparate people and elements into a whole. In *The Tombs of Atuan*, Arha/Tenar identifies with the predatory aspects of the spider; this is appropriate given that she is both devoured by the Tombs and the representative of the Powers that devour but now, part of the world and embodying the principles of cyclical time, she is known as Goha, 'which is what they call the little white web-spinning spider on Gont' (483). She now represents the other aspect of the spider, the force that weaves different things into a living web of being, moving them all toward the moment Earthsea needs most: a cosmogonic act of rebirth. In a typically understated way, Le Guin imbues the smallest things with profound meaning and once again her language and choice of images suggests a sympathy for the Second Wave cultural feminist treatment of time.

At the beginning of the novel Tenar adopts a little girl who has been abandoned by her family: the child is born to a band of thieves who rape and beat her and finally leave her for dead, pushing her body into their live campfire to erase the evidence of their actions. The brutality of this act is indicative of the social evils bubbling up in Earthsea. Tenar takes the badly burned and crippled child, saying to her, "I served them and I left them...I will not let

them have you” (486). She equates the evil in the world with the Old Powers she left behind her in Kargad. To her, evil is that which has no place in the natural cycle of creation and destruction.

Tenar calls the child ‘Therru’ which ‘means burning, the flaming of fire’ (500). Significantly, although Therru is disfigured and crippled she does not die in the fire and so, like Tenar, there is a sense of her having been reborn from the ashes, a phoenix/dragon child; she begins her new life as Tenar’s child. Throughout the novel Le Guin highlights the connection of both girl and woman to the element of fire. This continues the motif she began in *The Tombs of Atuan*. Therru says to Tenar, ““You’re red, like fire”” (497) and later when she is talking to herself, Goha says, ““I am Tenar”” and ‘the fire, catching a dry branch of pine, leapt up in a bright yellow tongue of flame’ (499); the fire itself seems to respond to the name ‘Tenar’.

The child has been with Tenar for a year when she is called to Ogion’s deathbed. Ogion is an interesting character because he recognises her power. Perhaps this is because he has also chosen to distance himself from the world of men, spending more time alone in the forests of Gont than anywhere else. He refuses to bow to patriarchal authority and is quite willing to defy the Master Wizards on Roke to teach Tenar, a woman, the ways of power. When Ogion sees Therru he seems to recognise that she will play a part in the change he senses is coming. Dying, he says to Tenar, ““Over! All changed! – Changed, Tenar!”” (502); Ogion is the only male wizard who is described as sensitive to the emerging power of the chrono-matrix. Tenar presides over Ogion’s death, again deftly playing the role of the Crone.

Tenar stays in Ogion’s cottage to wait for Ged who arrives hurt and unconscious on the back of a huge dragon. Dragons are the most powerful creatures in Earthsea but they are also wild and unpredictable and people are therefore cautioned to be wary of them. Tenar, however, stands steady before the great beast and the narrator tells us that, ‘she had been told that men must not look into a dragon’s eyes, but that was nothing to her’ (516); because she is a woman, she is not afraid of the dragon. Again, Le Guin hints at kinship between women and dragons and this suggestion is provocative given the wariness with which the dragon is treated by many myth theorists. Eliade writes that ‘the serpent almost everywhere [symbolises] that which is latent, preformal, undifferentiated’ (Eliade, 2005:69) which makes the Primordial Dragon threatening and Northrop Frye suggests outright that the dragon is

Satanic in his discussion of archetypal demonic imagery (Frye, 1957:147). This language has been used in various discourses to describe not only dragons, but women and the feminine. In suggesting a relationship between these two Othered creatures, Le Guin thus empowers both. Dragon and woman look at each other and the dragon greets her with its name, Kalessin, to which she responds with her true name, Tenar; they behave as equals.

Later when Tenar thinks about this moment, she reflects:

What power had she now? What had she ever had? As a girl, a priestess, she had been a vessel: the power of the dark places had run through her, used her, left her empty, untouched. As a young woman she had been taught a powerful knowledge by a powerful man and had laid it aside, turned away from it, not touched it. As a woman she had chosen and had the powers of a woman, in their time and the time was past; her wiving and mothering was done. There was nothing in her, no power for anybody to recognise.

But a dragon had spoken to her. "I am Kalessin," it had said, and she had answered, "I am Tenar." (...) So she was a woman dragons would talk to. (537-538)

Although she believes she is not worth much, that she is as small as the patriarchal cultures of Kargad and the Hardic Lands would have her believe, Kalessin acknowledges something in her and pays homage to it. Significantly, it is because she refuses patriarchal power that she can look Kalessin in the eye. Both dragon and woman have powers and wisdom alien to man and both are capable of gaining access to alternative temporal spaces, something that becomes very significant in the final novel of the series, *The Other Wind*.

Ged has just returned from a journey in which he and Lebannen (the new Hardic king) crossed into the land of the dead. In order to save Lebannen, Ged the Archmage, has spent all his power and he thus returns to the land of the living bitter, powerless and unsure of who he is. Tenar patiently brings him back to life and the language with which Le Guin describes this process is interesting; we are told that they talked, 'spinning and sewing their lives together with words, the years and the deeds and thoughts they had not shared' (667). Goha/Tenar, the spider, spins and sews, pulling everything together, weaving the frayed threads into a whole. Ged spends long hours trying to understand the experience he had in the land of the dead and he tells her:

“What’s youth or age? I don’t know. Sometimes I feel as if I’d been alive a thousand years; sometimes I feel my life’s been like a flying swallow seen through the chink in a wall. I have died and been reborn, both in the dry land and here under the sun, more than once. And the *Making* tells us that we have all returned and return forever to the source, and that the source is ceaseless. Only in dying, life.” (666)

His understanding of time as linear has been undermined but he cannot understand what this change means. He also knows that death leads to rebirth, or that it *should*. But then what purpose does a ‘land of the dead’ serve? Only those who measure their existence in a linear fashion would need a land in which to continue their existence. Throughout these novels the land of the dead is called the ‘dry land’ and the sand and dust recall the deathly stillness of the Tombs of Atuan because both are unnatural spaces outside time. When Ged uses the last of his magical power there, he describes it as water trickling into the dead sand; the fact that Ged, who was Archmage of all Earthsea, is now powerless reflects the waning of man’s power. As Ogion predicted, everything is changing and this change is coupled with the quiet assertion of Goha, the white-spider woman, the abused Therru and their mysterious kinship with dragons and fire. Although Ged feels everything is falling apart, that this is a ‘dark time, an age of ruin, an ending time’ (547), Tenar starts to feel more and more that some new beginning is imminent. After Kalessin leaves:

She slept, and her sleep opened into a vast, windy space hazy with rose and gold. She flew. Her voice called, “Kalessin!” A voice answered, calling from the gulfs of light. When she woke (...) there was something in her, some seed or glimmer, too small to look at or think about, new. (522)

As in *The Tombs of Atuan*, Tenar’s dream connects her to fire and dragons and in this other-time, out of the mundane world, she is not limited by what women are in patrilinear reality: in this alternative time/space she can call to Kalessin and she can fly. She also feels something within her that is ‘like (...) a spark; like the bodily certainty of a conception; a change, a new thing’ (524). Ged feels the dark foreboding of an ending, but Tenar sees the conception: ‘only in dying, life.’ The narrator describes this new beginning, this seed, as a ‘glimmer’ and a ‘spark’, suggesting that new life for Earthsea will spring from fire and, increasingly, Therru seems to have something to do with that fire. When Tenar tells her about Kalessin, the girl responds to the name as though it has unlocked something elemental within her. We are told that ‘a wave of warmth, heat, seemed to flow from the child, as if she were in a fever. She said nothing, but moved her lips as if repeating the name, and that fever burned all around

her' (520). Therru responds to Kalessin like a flame to oxygen and this reaction suggests that there is something more to the girl than her disfigured humanity.

Throughout these last novels Therru is connected in various ways with dragons. The way she is treated by people recalls Frye's connection of dragons with the demonic because people equate her disfigurement with a curse. She seems evil to them, as do dragons. As the novel progresses, Le Guin subverts this prejudice against both dragons and girl, describing Therru's connection to dragonkind in terms that imply strength and health. Even early on, as the girl's wounds heal Tenar is reminded of the flight of dragons: 'Therru went, not crouching and sidling now but running freely, flying, Tenar thought, seeing her vanish in the evening light beyond the dark door-frame, flying like a bird, a dragon, a child, free' (568).

Throughout *Tehanu*, references are also made to an old legend, 'The Woman of Kemay', about a woman who can become a dragon. Tenar tells the girl, 'this story is about something like shape-changing but Ogion said it was beyond all shape-changing he knew, because it was about being two things, two beings, at once and in the same form' (490). Le Guin is obviously introducing something new into her Earthsea mythology that directly relates to the little girl and to the changes that are coming. It is significant that this change also subverts the patriarchal binary: the woman of Kemay is both woman and dragon, not either/or as the patriarchal establishment would prefer. Similarly, when Tenar asks Ivy, the witch who lives near her farm, what Therru is, Ivy's response is:

"I don't know what she is. I mean when she looks at me with that one eye seeing and one eye blind I don't know what she is. I see you go about with her like she was any child, and I think, what are they? What's the strength of that woman, for she's not a fool, to hold fire by the hand, spin thread with the whirlwind? They say, mistress, that you lived as a child yourself with the Old Ones, the Dark Ones Underfoot, and that you were queen and servant of those powers. Maybe that's why you're not afraid of that one. What power she is, I don't know, I don't say. But it's beyond my teaching." (632)

The girl is obviously something new to Earthsea and that Tenar chooses to mother her makes both of them kin to this new, bright force that is coming into the world. Tenar's conversation with Ivy intrigues her so that while she takes care of Ged in Ogion's hut Tenar also befriends Aunty Moss, the village witch in this area. Moss is a stereotypical hag: she is unwashed and filthy, she speaks what seems to be garbled nonsense and her power is limited by the

superstitious, folksy charms she uses. However, as time passes the conversations between the two women reveal much about Earthsea and Hardic society, particularly about the differences between men and women and the power to which each has access. As Tenar spends time with Moss, she also realises that

[a] good deal of her obscurity and cant (...) was mere ineptness with words and ideas. Nobody had ever taught her to think consecutively. Nobody had ever listened to what she said. All that was expected, all that was wanted of her was muddle, mystery, mumbling. She was a witchwoman. She had nothing to do with clear meaning. (526)

Moss is what all women of power become in Earthsea: outcasts whose power is stunted because they are refused access to 'the mysteries'. They are kept apart from the patriarchal system lest they threaten it. Moss 'has nothing to do with clear meaning' because she belongs to the chrono-matrix and the space of the semiotic, of things not confined to one meaning only. Like the priestesses at the Place, her relationship with language reflects her position in society: they are condemned to using a dead language that has no meaning and neither can Moss express herself clearly through the patriarchal language she is forced to use. Because she occupies a space outside the system, people within the system dismiss and patronise her.

Le Guin spends most of *Tehanu* describing the imbalance created by a patriarchal culture that dismisses women and these conversations with Moss remind Tenar of the essential powerlessness and helplessness of women in Earthsea, a recognition that is compounded by two chance meetings. First she sees one of the men who beat and burnt Therru and finds out he is working as a field hand for the Lord of Re Albi. When she tries to confront the man, she finds herself in conflict with the Lord's Mage, Aspen. He takes an instant dislike to her and accuses her of coming to 'make bad blood among the field hands, casting calumny and lies, the dragonseed every witch sows behind her' (586). It is interesting that he calls Tenar a witch, recognising her power in the same moment that he disparages it and that he suggests witches sow 'dragonseed' behind them; women and dragons are united as the 'calumny' that threatens man's neat order.

When Aspen curses Tenar she and Therru return to her farm on the other side of Gont. Unfortunately, however, the field hand follows them. He gathers a band together and attacks Tenar's house in the middle of the night. We assume that their intention is to harm the

women and indeed, it is only because Ged surprises the men, attacking with a pitchfork, that they take fright and run away. Tenar is angry and frustrated that all she did was lock the doors against the attackers, to which her friend Lark replies: “What could you do but lock the doors? But it’s like we’re all our lives locking the doors. It’s the house we live in.” Tenar looks at her friend and asks, “What are they afraid of us for?” (651) The escalating violence that has reached even rural Gont is terrifying and it is women, far more than men, who are the victims. The violence is born of the imbalance; because men have dismissed women, whether out of a greed for power or a fear of women, as Tenar suggests, and they have shaken the foundations of Earthsea.

The behaviour of Tenar’s son also reflects the gender inequality embedded in Hardic culture. His behaviour towards his mother is an exact copy of the condescension of his father. The reader knows Tenar as the priestess, the healer and the woman to whom Kalessin speaks so the dismissive manner of her son dismisses is doubly apparent. Tenar tries to speak to him but he sidesteps her questions and she reflects that, ‘so Flint had answered her questions for twenty years, denying her right to them by never answering yes or no, maintaining a freedom based on her ignorance; a poor, narrow sort of freedom, she thought’ (672). Her son also expects her to serve him, after all, ‘was he less a man than his father?’ (673); because she is a woman, Tenar is immediately less important than men are and nothing she does or is can offset that first and absolute division. Le Guin takes care to describe a world in which everything is tainted because of the imbalance created by gender inequality. No one benefits from a world in which men dominate women because the humanity of each is then compromised.

Aspen’s final attack against Tenar is a succinct example of the perversion that is encouraged by gender inequality; he ensorcelles her and takes pleasure in her humiliation, calling Tenar his ‘bitch’ and making her crawl like a dog. Therru watches Ged and Tenar taken captive and what she sees finally reveals to the reader her dragon-nature:

The one called Aspen, whose name was Erisen, and whom she saw as a forked and writhing darkness, had bound her mother and father, with a thong through her tongue and a thong through his heart, and was leading them up to the place where he hid. The smell of the place was sickening to her. (...) She looked into the west with the other eye and called with the other voice the name she had heard in her mother’s dream. (685)

Like the dragons, Therru sees the truth and she also seems to have access to ‘the other wind’, the time/space that is akin to the dream world. She has heard Tenar calling to Kalessin in this space and when she calls the dragon comes, ‘in the gulfs of light, from the doorway of the sky’ (687). Kalessin blasts Aspen and his followers with fire, destroying them. Afterwards, when he speaks to Therru, he calls her both ‘Tehanu’, the name of the brightest star in the summer skies, and ‘daughter’. Her kinship with dragonkind is now settled; Tehanu belongs with ‘her people’ on ‘the other wind’. It is also particularly significant that she calls Kalessin ‘Segoy’. In Earthsea legend Segoy called the world into being and the implication here is that Segoy is a dragon, and not a man, as mankind has always assumed ‘he’ was. This provocative statement leads directly into the concerns of *The Other Wind*.

I would like to suggest that the term ‘the other wind’ could stand here as Le Guin’s name for the chrono-matrix because it is the time/space of the *Making*, of deaths and rebirths and of alternative temporality and it is the realm of dragons and women as opposed to the patrilinear reality of men. It is the insertion of the other wind into patrilinear Earthsea that will right the imbalances of this world; *The Other Wind* follows Tehanu and Tenar as they facilitate the cosmogynesis of Earthsea.

When *The Other Wind* opens, Tenar and Tehanu have been called to the court of King Lebannen in Havnor because dragons are attacking the outlying islands. He hopes that Tehanu will be able to stop them. Tenar has left Ged, now her husband, on Gont and while she and Tehanu are gone, Ged is visited by a young man named Alder, who is plagued by dreams in which the dead call to him. As the series draws to a close we find out that the anger of the dragons and the desperation of the dead are connected and that men cannot fix the problem. Le Guin writes of *Tehanu*, but it remains true for *The Other Wind*: ‘No magic, nothing they know, nothing they have been, can stand against the pure malevolence of institutionalised power. Their strength and salvation must come from outside the institutions and traditions. It must be a new thing’ (Le Guin, 1993:19); this new thing will be born of women and dragons.

In *Tehanu*, Le Guin reveals that in the beginning men and dragons were one people. In time dragonkind divided into two groups: the one wanted to settle and live on the land and hoard

precious belongings; the other wanted to remain free and unencumbered, part of the wild chaos of creation. Those who chose the land became people and those who chose the wind remained dragons. As Kalessin says, ““Long ago we chose. We chose freedom. Men chose the yoke. We chose the fire and the wind. They chose water and the earth. We chose the west, and they the east”” (Le Guin, 2002:151). The problem is that man, in giving up his dragon-nature, relinquished his access to magic and the Language of the Making. Therefore, in order to have at least some magical power he undertook the Verdunan. The male wizards of Earthsea have forgotten the lore of the Verdunan and it is significant that this knowledge is brought back to them by a woman; a Kargish princess named Sesarakh who has been sent to be Lebannen’s bride against her will, tells the wizards of the Verdunan:

“That was a thing, I don’t know what it was, that told some people that if they’d agree never to die and never be reborn, they could learn how to do sorcery. So they chose that, they chose the Verdunan. And they went off into the west with it. (...) They live, and they can do their accursed sorceries, but they can’t die. Only their bodies die. The rest of them stays in a dark place and never gets reborn.” (124)

The Verdunan is therefore an oath or bargain that the male Hardic wizards made in the far distant past in which they traded the possibility of rebirth for power in the one, finite life they each now had. In their bid for power, men enforced the rule of linear time over their reality: ‘the verw-nadan was the first great triumph of the art magic (...) and the goal of wizardry was to triumph over time and live forever’ (232). Men could now measure their progress and count their wealth, they could own things and they could cast spells of awesome power that controlled and manipulated the environment. This is exactly what Davies suggests about the ideological implications of linear time when she writes:

The social construction of current dominant temporal patterns has its roots in the central concerns of various male-dominated hierarchies which were interested in solidifying and retaining their positions of power in society. (Davies, 1990:35)

The wizards, in solidifying their power, created an imbalance that caused a rift in the natural temporal order and set Earthsea on a course that would lead to its eventual destruction.

As if to emphasise the linearity of patriarchal time at this point in the series, there is a scene in Havnor in which clock-time is foregrounded. This occurs nowhere else in the other books.

We are told that, ‘Alder knew of course that there were six hours from midnight to noon and six hours from noon to midnight, but had never heard the hours told, and wondered what the man meant’ (89). Then trumpeters appear all over the castle to call the hour, ‘so the courtiers and the merchants and the shippers of the city could arrange their doings’ (90). Le Guin links linear time to the patriarchal concerns of economics, wealth and power and to the dismissal of women which is vividly explored in her accounts of the priestesses and the treatment of Moss, Tenar and Sesarakh, the princess from Kargad.

Sesarakh is an interesting character because she is initially presented to us as almost the stereotype of an objectified, disempowered woman. Her subsequent empowerment and transformation are therefore profound. At the beginning of the novel, she is nothing more than a feminine object of great value, traded between men in their economic and political games. She is bartered by her father, the God-king of Kargad, for peace with the Hardic Kingdom and upon her arrival in Havnor Lebannen treats her with the same disregard. Johles-Forman writes that, ‘regardless of circumstance, women are strangers in the world of male-defined time and as such are never at home there’ (Johles-Forman, 1989:1). This is particularly true of the princess who is both a stranger to the Hardic kingdom and repulsed by the linear time imposed there by the Verdunan.

Le Guin foregrounds Sesarakh’s otherness through her appearance and her inability to communicate. The princess is dressed, according to Kargish custom, in a thick red veil and outer garment that hide her body, making her appear inhuman and unapproachable. This alienation is exacerbated by the fact that she cannot speak Hardic. Like Moss and the priestesses, Sesarakh is disempowered by an inability to wield patriarchal language. Significantly, the one person in Havnor with whom she can communicate is Tenar. As in *Tehanu*, Tenar, the spider, gathers and connects isolated characters, weaving them into a whole. Tenar teaches Sesarakh a rudimentary Hardic that enables her to connect with the people of Havnor and later, with the king. This also enables her to communicate her important knowledge about the Verdunan. It is significant that when she is finally able to speak, and is listened to, she is revealed to be a woman who has a valuable contribution to make, a contribution upon which rests the salvation of the world.

It is with this in mind that her veil takes on special significance. Although it is undeniably a symbol of her oppression in a rigidly patriarchal society, it may also signify something else. Estella Lauter, in her fascinating study of liberating images used in the poetry and visual art of women in the twentieth century, suggests that veils are often used to suggest spiritual growth, transformation and protection (Lauter, 1984:138-139). Much as a cocoon implies new birth and transformation, so Sesarakh's veil may suggest a process of becoming. This symbolic connection is pivotal at this point in the Earthsea series. Le Guin therefore subverts the traditional patriarchal meaning of the veil to link the Kargish princess with the overarching theme of rebirth. This becomes clearer as she becomes more confident and removes the veil; the princess, like Tenar and Tehanu, embodies the dynamic transformative force of the chrono-matrix.

As the women are connected with the principle of transformation and the temporality of the chrono-matrix, we are constantly reminded that the men of Earthsea are responsible for the atemporal space of the land of the dead because of the Verdunan. Essentially, when men split away from dragons and the wizards enforced the rule of linear time over their reality, some part of the Spirit Plane was cut off from living time and walled off to create a 'prison' where the spirits of the Hardic dead could gather. Here time is an unending stasis. Alder asks Ged about this place and his response is telling; he describes a place where the dead are wraiths and cannot interact even with one another. He is haunted by the Dry Land, horrified by the idea that this, and only this, is what awaits him after death:

And it seemed to him now that the memory of that land, the darkness of it, the dust, was always in his mind just under the bright various play and movement of the days, although he always looked away from it. He looked away because he could not bear the knowledge that in the end that was where he would come again: come alone, unaccompanied and forever. To stand empty-eyed, unspeaking, in the shadows of a shadow city. Never to see sunlight or drink water, or touch a living hand. (79)

The Dry Land is like the Place in *The Tombs of Atuan* because of its emptiness, its unchanging darkness and its lack of life. Le Guin suggests that this is what comes from a desire to dominate rather than to be equal, and live in balance. The healing of Earthsea falls to the dragon-women, Tehanu and Irian. The narrator reveals that into each generation of man and dragon two beings are born who are both human and dragon and who may take either form; significantly, these beings are always women. In Le Guin's mythology, women and

dragons embody the temporal principles of the chrono-materix; after all, dragons are ‘the sacred sign and pledge of death and rebirth’ (134).

Tehanu travels with the king to the islands being attacked by dragons and calls to one, saying ‘Medeu’, which means brother or sister and the narrator says that, ‘the dragon sank a little in the air, lowered its head, and touched her hand...like a falcon stooping to a wrist, like a king bowing to a queen’ (109). It recognises the burnt woman and pays homage to the kinship it shares with her. Tehanu asks the dragon to find Irian, the other dragon-woman, who must represent the dragons’ interests at a council convened by the king. Irian arrives as a magnificent red dragon who transforms and: ‘there was no dragon. There was a woman. (...) She stood where the heart of the dragon might have been’ (147). It is significant that Irian, the woman, is the *heart* of the dragon. This vibrant image stands in stark contrast to those used to describe the land of the dead. An interesting linguistic link, of which Le Guin is probably aware given her father’s work with Native Americans and her own knowledge of Native American lore, is that the word heart and womb share a symbolic significance in some of these languages. Paula Gunn-Allen writes that,

[a] mother is often bonded to her offspring through her womb. *Heart* often means “womb”, except when it means “vulva”. In its aspect of vulva, it signifies sexual connection or bonding. But this cannot be understood to mean sex as sex; rather, sexual connection with woman means connection with the womb, which is the container of power that women carry within their bodies. (Gunn-Allen, 1986:23)

The fact that Irian seems to be the heart of the dragon turned into a woman is a very rich image if one takes into account the reading of ‘heart’ and ‘womb’ suggested by Gunn-Allen. The heart of the dragon is woman, is womb, is the generative space of female power and becoming; it is the space of the chrono-materix. The connection between woman and dragon foregrounds sexual embodiment and the sexual generation and bearing of life, suggesting that both women and dragons are the embodiment of a burgeoning, fecund living energy in stark contrast to the aging wizards and the Dry Land. Whether or not Le Guin intends it as such, this image is very reminiscent of the sentiments expressed by Second Wave cultural feminism’s description of a ‘women’s time’.

Irian confirms the rumours that wizards walled off part of the dragons’ realm for their Dry Land because “men fear death as dragons do not. Men want to own life, possess it, as if it

were a jewel in a box” (150). She also reveals that because the dragons no longer have the freedom of their other wind more and more of them are born dumb beasts, losing their power as the wizards lose theirs. Following her pronouncements, the king moves the proceedings to Roke where wizards, dragons and women will work together to heal the rift in their world. However, even when this is obviously the only way to save Earthsea, some of the wizards are loath to trust the dragon-women and resentful of their ‘untaught’ power. Onyx, the king’s mage, says of this, “Sire, this is very strange, this is a strange time, when a dragon is a woman and an untaught girl speaks in the Language of the Making!” Onyx was deeply and obviously shaken, frightened’ (101). And later one of the other men echoes Onyx’s sentiments: “What do the dragons want of us?” said Gamble. “These women who are dragons, dragons who are women – why are they here? Can we trust them?” (234) Dragons embody the chrono-materix, that force which is in direct opposition to the patriarchal culture that has ruled Earthsea for centuries. Some of the men are obviously afraid because the coming change will displace them as the ‘rulers’ of this world. Grosz could be describing exactly the reaction of these men in this place, although she is writing of patriarchal attitudes in our world, when she writes:

Predictable, measured, regulated transformation, change under specifiable conditions and with determinate effects, seems a readily presumed social prerequisite; upheaval, the eruption of the event, the emergence of new alignments unpredicted within old networks, threatens to reverse all gains, to position progress on the edge of an abyss, to place chaos at the heart of regulation and orderly development. (Grosz, 1999:16)

Nevertheless, no matter how afraid the men may be, the process of becoming has begun. The wizards and Irian enter the Dry Land through Alder’s dream and break down the wall that has kept the dead imprisoned. As they do so, the sun begins to rise over the dry land which has been locked in perpetual shadow; light and fire and wind release the dead into the chrono-materix. As the book closes dragons once again fly free on the Other Wind and Tehanu herself is also transformed. We are told that a golden dragon like a bright star lifts into the currents of the wind and her wings, catching the sun’s rays, flicker and flame out. Tehanu is reborn, glorious and free.

Tenar, who represents the small, quiet cycles of the chrono-materix returns home, once again the white spider-woman of Gont; as Mary Daly would say, a ‘spin-ster’ who ‘participates in the whirling movement of creation’ (Daly, 1987:3). Le Guin writes of Tenar:

The sacrificial image of dying to be reborn is not appropriate to her. Just the opposite. She has borne, she has given birth to, her children and her new selves. She is not reborn, but rebearing. The word seems strange. We think of birth passively, as if we were all babies or all men. It takes an effort to think not of rebirth but of rebearing, actively, in the maternal mode. (Le Guin, 1993:18)

This is precisely what makes Tenar the embodiment of the chrono-matrix, of ‘mother time’ that insists on birth, after birth, after birth. In *Earthsea* everything has changed, everything is *becoming* something new. In liberating themselves, and allying themselves with the chrono-matrix, Tenar and Tehanu have been instrumental in the *becoming* of their world.

Le Guin’s contribution to the Second Wave exploration of time in her *Earthsea Series* is thus rich and provocative, particularly because we can follow the development of her thinking from that of a liberal/socialist position to one that seems to ally itself with cultural feminism. In drawing on the images and language of cultural feminism she describes the other Wind, the chrono-matrix as a force that can balance patrilinear time and heal a world in which gender inequity has led to pain and the disfigurement of both men and women. The final cosmogenesis of this world is the act that positions Le Guin’s *Earthsea Series* in Kristeva’s third generation: patriarchal culture is irrevocably changed by these female characters that bring the Other Wind with them into patrilinear reality.

Although Tanith Lee’s novella *The Winter Players* (first published in 1976) may lack the grand scale and poetry of the *Earthsea* novels, it too reflects the larger Second Wave examination of time. This piece of short fiction can be situated in Kristeva’s third generation because not only does Oaive (Lee’s protagonist) ally herself with the chrono-matrix, she brings what she learns into patrilinear time and remakes her world. Her act of cosmogenesis, like that of Tenar and Tehanu, fashions a world in which men and women are equal and free. Lee writes fantasy that is dense with evocative imagery and heroic action and much of her writing has a feminist bias; this novella is merely one of the stories in which she explores the struggle between a powerful woman and an insidious evil characterised as patriarchal. She has won two Nebulas and numerous British and World Fantasy Awards for her contribution to fantasy and her work most certainly warrants critical attention. *The Winter Players* is a simple, but provocative contribution to the Second Wave exploration of time.

Lee uses the images and language of cultural feminism to establish a link between her protagonist and a particularly ‘feminine’ chrono-materix; from the first moment we meet her, Oaive is positioned ‘outside’ linear time and therefore has the potential to subvert patriarchal culture. The first thing Lee establishes in *The Winter Players* is a significant link between her protagonist and the ocean. Oaive is the witch-priestess of a shrine that stands on the ocean’s edge and she belongs to the fisher-people who live in the village that grew up around the shrine. The first time we meet her she is hauling in nets from the ocean and reflecting on the fact that each tide brings new treasures onto her beach. This awareness of the tides and the new that *becomes* with each ebb and flow suggests an already established empathy with the chrono-materix. I have touched on the significance of the ocean and water before and here too, Lee describes the ocean in such a way that it evokes a sense of the womb, of deaths and rebirths, of beginnings and becomings and she connects Oaive with this dynamic power. In *The Great Cosmic Mother*, Monica Sjoo and Barbara Mor write:

In the beginning (...) was a very female sea. For two and a half billion years on earth, all life-forms floated in the womb-like environment of the planetary ocean – nourished and protected by its fluid chemicals, rocked by the lunar-tidal rhythms. Charles Darwin believed the menstrual cycle originated here, organically echoing the moon-pulse of the sea. And he concluded that the female principle was primordial. In the beginning, life did not gestate within the body of any creature, but within the ocean womb containing all organic life. (...) In the cause of evolution, the ocean – the protective and nourishing space, the amniotic fluids, even the lunar-tidal rhythm was transferred into the individual female body. (Sjoo and Mor, 1987:2)

Sjoo and Mor’s ‘in the beginning’ recalls the opening lines of Genesis but they pointedly suggest a feminine alternative to the patriarchal, masculinist version of creation presented in the Bible: a ‘very female sea’ gives birth to new life instead of a lone, male Father God. Birth and life are connected with woman and woman/womb to the ocean. That Oaive’s connection with the ocean is emphasised from the beginning suggests that life also begins with her, something that becomes evident as the story progresses.

Her name is also significant in this context. First, we are told that, ‘her name was Oaive, or so they called her, a name like the sound of the sea’ (8; all page references come from the 1988 Beaver edition), which again emphasises the connection between the girl and the ocean. However, it is also interesting that her name, Celtic in origin, would most probably be

pronounced 'Eve', echoing the name of the first woman in the Bible. Oaive is therefore connected with the first woman and also the first mother, the ocean, making her the space from which new life may issue.

Oaive's experience as a priestess is both like and unlike Tenar's. We are told that even as a child she was kept apart from the rest of the villagers because 'she had been chosen before birth' (8). Like Tenar, she is 'other' because she represents a female force that is alienated by patriarchal culture and so she is kept separate from the patrilinear, public world of her people. Although the villagers seem to respect her and what she represents, they cannot fully accept her. Both Tenar and Oaive are outcasts because of the role foisted on them by patriarchal culture. However, while Tenar is completely isolated as the One Priestess, Oaive feels she is drawn into a female continuum linking all the women who have served the shrine and this is both powerful and nurturing. When the old priestess first initiates her into the mysteries, we are told that:

[a] great change took Oaive. She had never felt affection for the ancient woman, but now she sensed a bond uniting them. (...) It came to Oaive that she was not beneath a yoke; she was the guardian of the people. (...) She did not belong to the flock. She was the shepherd. (10)

She is at peace with being the representative of the feminine principle for her people even though, like Tenar, her role is limited because they are not entirely comfortable with female authority. Nevertheless, unlike her Earthsea counterpart, Oaive belongs to a supportive female continuum made up of the priestesses, women of power and intelligence, who have come before her and who will follow after.

We see Oaive do three significant things as the priestess of the shrine, all of which evoke the chrono-matrix. First, she collects shells on the beach on which she paints spirals, making 'lucky' talismans for the villagers. The spirals are an esoteric design symbolic of the cyclical and the feminine, having been used on paleolithic goddess figures from the Celtic isles to suggest the womb. Unlike the spiralling labyrinth that traps people in *The Tombs of Atuan*, Oaive's spirals are evocative of the necessary and healthy cycles of the chrono-matrix. The second thing she does is weave cloth on her loom. Like Tenar's weaving, Oaive's recalls the feminine principle in the forms of the Fates and Grandmother Spider who weave time. She becomes associated with that which ties disparate elements into something complete, with

weaving time from the perspective of a feminine generative space. The third thing she does is perform the ritual of the shrine, always at sunrise and sunset. The timing of the ritual is significant because the chrono-matrix, which is not part of the everyday, linear measurement of hours, exists in the liminal spaces when it is neither day nor night. This is another reminder that while Oaive and what she represents may be respected, it is not wholly accepted. She and what she represents, exists on the fringes of society.

One day a stranger visits the shrine: a man with grey hair and grey eyes, dressed all in grey and wearing the pelt of a black wolf. Oaive describes him as a ‘winter sea’ (12) because he seems frozen in a perpetual grey winter. He says he has come to the shrine to observe the ritual and watches Oaive who uneasily performs her customary actions. In stark contrast to the cold stranger, Oaive’s power takes the form of fire, as does that of Tenar and Tehanu. She faces the altar and:

She called fire. She called it from her own self.

The heat began in her right shoulder blade and ran along her upper arm and whorled in her elbow. As the fire swelled in her forearm, the skin glowed and became transparent, showing the red blood and the bone structure under the flesh. Then the fire ran into her forefinger and she let it drip free upon the altar. It flowed up in pale darts, and the incense she had scattered there smelled sweet. (14)

Lee contrasts the stranger, who tells Oaive to call him merely ‘Grey’, with her protagonist. Where the one is cold and colourless, trapped in winter, the other has tawny hair, moves with the ocean’s tides and calls fire from her flesh. Lee’s focus on the visceral quality of Oaive’s power is also in stark contrast to the bloodless sorcerer who is later revealed to be controlling events. The fire seems to flow like blood, warm and burning red; significantly, this recalls the elements of a traditional pagan chant: ‘my blood is the healing blood of the sea’ (Currott, 2002: 32); again Oaive’s power is likened to the primordial feminine ocean. Lee reverses the traditional gender binary in which the woman would usually be equated with passivity and man with activity because Oaive seems so alive and vibrant as opposed to Grey, who is cold and colourless.

Grey has come to steal one of the sacred relics from the shrine, a small, fine fragment of bone. There are three sacred relics: a dull Jewel, a tarnished Ring and the Bone and we are told that, ‘the relics were never given a history, never explained. Their explanation was lost in

time' (16-17). However, it is only in linear time that the meaning of the relics is lost. Their significance will be recalled and resurrected when Oaive surrenders fully to the chrono-matrix. As Grosz suggests, 'time can no longer be understood as neutral or transparent [medium] whose passivity enables the specificity of matter to reveal itself; rather [it is the] active ingredient in the making of matter, and thus the constitution of objects and subjects' (Grosz, 2004:174). This is true for the chrono-matrix in which becomings are emphasised and in particular in this case where the chrono-matrix is an active ingredient in the creation of the relics. It is thus only when Oaive steps out of linear time and into this dynamic time that she is able to understand the relics and their intimate link to her.

When Grey steals the Bone Oaive is afraid for her people. She already knows that the Bone and the shrine protect the villagers from something but what that 'something' is, she does not know. She says only that, 'the savageness of the winter grows' (22) and now that the Bone is lost, she is afraid that it will destroy the village. As the narrative progresses it becomes clear that Lee equates winter here with patriarchal power and linear time. Much like the wizards in Earthsea, the evil sorcerer we meet later in this novella has stopped time, gaining immortality but leeching the rest of the world of its warmth and life. Because of this, although they do not know it, the more the villagers allow their faith in Oaive and the cyclical principle she represents to wane, the less they are protected from the winter of patrilinear time and the sorcerer's power. The winters have already begun growing colder in their area so that food is scarce and survival more difficult and now that Grey, himself described as 'winter', has stolen the Bone from the sea shrine, there is the danger that the village will be lost entirely.

When she tells the village Elders she must chase after Grey and the Bone, their attitude to her is telling. Significantly, all the Elders are old men; what little authority and power is to be had, even in this small fishing village, is held by patriarchs and while they do not dismiss what she says outright, 'they fidgeted, avoiding her eyes' (23). Unfortunately, they are more concerned about maintaining the patriarchal status quo than the esoteric concerns of a young girl, even if she is a priestess. They can relate to her only in so much as she maintains her allotted position within their established order. Oaive, for all that she is a priestess and 'powerful,' is still other and disempowered by the patriarchal system that is gaining authority in her world.

The male Elders do not believe that she can act independently of the village rules and customs but Oaive, driven by her need to retrieve the Bone that is so central to her faith, decides for herself what she should do. As she prepares to leave the village the weaving motif again connects her with the chrono-matrix, reminding the reader that her magic comes from a source outside the domain of patriarchal culture. The first connection of her to weaving is through the fact that her magic allows her to use a piece of cloth torn from Grey's cloak to track him. The second focus on weaving happens as she reads omens in the cloth on her loom: 'She sat to tie off all the threads of her weaving. As she was doing this, suddenly she noticed that two had frayed and were broken. A fist seemed to clench on her heart. Was this also an omen? The broken thread, sign of severed ties, or of death itself?' (25) The broken threads in her weaving reveal that something is wrong. She will have to weave the unravelled threads back together, weave death and winter back around to spring and rebirth if her world is to be saved. Gunn-Allen writes of Grandmother Spider that 'her power to weave includes the power to unravel, so the weaver, like the moon, signifies the power of patterning and its converse, the power of disruption' (Gunn-Allen, 1986:27). Like the temporal principles of the chrono-matrix that demands death before rebirth, Oaive will have to unravel the mistake of the sorcerer, destroying everything, in order to weave things anew.

As Oaive follows Grey she is met with suspicion, fear and open animosity by the people along the way. He has obviously warned them to expect her and be wary of the sea witch. She patches together the story he must have made up:

The wicked witch from the coast pursued him, for the sake of vengeance. Probably without cause. He had twisted the ears of her pet cat, or trodden on her toad. The witch was mad, evil and had sly magics. Avoid and beware of her. She might only seem a young girl but that was just a disguise she took to fool you. Under it she was old and foul, with snakes for hair. (31)

The fact that this stereotype is so readily at hand and so easily believed suggests that (powerful) women are generally mistrusted and feared in this world. At home, the people treat Oaive as though she is 'lucky', but they are still careful to keep their distance and the Elders are quite comfortable patronising her. The reaction of the people she meets away from the village is therefore a clearer reflection of public prejudice against women like her. This is a patriarchal world and away from her shrine, Oaive, '(begins) to lose the sense of who she (is)' (28), because patriarchal culture defines her as threatening. Like Medusa, she is a witch

and must be cast out of ‘normal’ patriarchal society. Lee’s revision of the figure of the witch situates this novella in cultural feminism’s project to rehabilitate threatening female images; the reader knows Oaive to be steadfast, powerful and good and so our understanding of the term ‘witch’ is coloured by Lee’s feminist sympathies.

Finally she reaches Grey’s kingdom and the land seems dead because it too appears to be trapped in a perpetual winter: ‘It was as though a plague had passed over it, killing everything, and then the plague had died. The snow sprinkled down’ (58). There will be no spring to wake Grey’s kingdom because all there is, is winter; there is nothing to offset the destructive ‘plague’ Oaive imagines.

To enter the kingdom she travels through a dark tunnel under the mountains and is ‘swallowed’ down the gullet of the land; in an image that recalls the chrono-materix, she is devoured. When she reaches the other side of the tunnel, she looks up at the mountains and it is as though the entire valley has been swallowed. The narrator reveals that, ‘There were new mountains there (...). They were slender and pointed. They stood in a rank like teeth set in the jaw of the land’ (58). Like the wasteland of the Place in *The Tombs of Atuan*, this place is dead, devoured by evil. The kingdom lies in the maw of linear time and perpetual winter.

Finally, she finds Grey’s home and meets Niwus, an evil sorcerer. He tells her that when Grey was a child, his mentor died. Denying the old man’s death, Grey performed a powerful spell to call the soul back into the body but what took possession of the body was ancient and evil: Niwus. Like the Hardic wizards of Earthsea, it is significant that it is Grey’s denial of death and the temporal principles of the cyclical chrono-materix that destroys his kingdom. Similarly, the spirit that answers Grey’s call is evil precisely because it is one that lingers and refuses rebirth. As in Earthsea the denial of death leads only to sterility, to being undead, not to eternal life. Grey tells her that he has served Niwus for six years and that ‘during those years, the appearance of the priest’s body has changed greatly. You will note, he resembles something unfinished or bloodless. This is a reflection of his nature’ (66). Although Niwus is by far the most powerful being we meet in this world, his continued linear existence threatened by nothing, he is bloodless and lifeless. Lee equates domineering patriarchal power and arrogance with the dead chill of winter; the narrator tells us that, ‘his power was everywhere, like the smell of winter itself’ (69).

It is interesting to watch the interactions between the two men because they reveal the same loyalty to hierarchical patriarchal politics that are present to a lesser degree in the Elders of the fishing village. Niwus and Grey are playing a game in which Niwus's authority and position are enhanced by Grey's enforced submission. The obsession with status and power entrenched in a hierarchy is inextricably linked to the wholly patrilinear, masculine existence that Niwus has established. This display of dominance and submission is explored in a scene in which Niwus taunts Grey, forcing him to tell Oaive about the black wolf pelt he wears:

Again Niwus spoke. "Tell her about the black wolf."

"Yes," Grey said, "the black wolf skin I wear. It's a sort of joke of my master's that I should. I killed the black wolf, not with knife or bow, but by sinking my teeth in his throat when I was as he was. He was the leader of the pack. Wolves will fight for pack leadership. Now I am leader."

"Who?" said Niwus. "Who was the black wolf that you killed, whose pelt you wear as my joke?"

Grey's eyes were white with the tide of fury and pain so hardly held back. His voice was noncommittal.

"My father was the black wolf. I killed my father."

Oaive held her breath. The air seemed thick with poison. (72)

As she explores the dynamics between these men, Lee suggests that a parallel exists between the wolf pack and men in patriarchal society: both respond to an alpha male that represents authority and power. Niwus is the dominant alpha in this pack of which he and Grey are the only members left and he takes malicious pleasure in forcing Grey to acknowledge this. On a whim Niwus curses Grey's family, turning them into wolves and he watches the son tear apart his father for the privilege of leading the pack. In this instance Lee seems to suggest that masculine authority and power rely on brutality and violence and she unequivocally condemns the masculine fight for dominance as bestial.

There is only one thing of which Niwus is afraid: the Bone he has Grey steal from Oaive's shrine. It is significant that the only thing that threatens his immortality (measured in linear time) is a magical talisman symbolising the chrono-matrix. As Niwus watches Oaive:

He had the Relic, the tiny narrow bit of Bone. He was rolling it like a plaything, back and forth, between thumb and forefinger.

“Here it is,” he said. “It’s very powerful. I don’t know why. Perhaps it is only because generations of priestesses have venerated it and built up its power. You venerate it, do you not?”

Oaive had caught back a cry. For it was more than veneration. It was like regaining her lost child, or a treasure from the sea. (...)

“Presently and together we will bind it with spells. Then I shall grind it in powder. I shall eat it; its sorcery will pass into my blood, become part of me. I shall not have to fear or seek it anymore. Its magic will be mine.” (71-72)

There is an immediate and personal connection between Oaive and the Bone; they seem to be one being. For her the Bone represents the generative space of the chrono-matrix. The narrator, reflecting Oaive’s thoughts, uses evocative imagery, describing the Bone as Oaive’s lost child and as a treasure brought to her by the ocean. Niwus cannot understand the power of the Bone because he denies the cyclical so fully; all he guesses is that the power is feminine in nature. He believes that once he has destroyed the Bone, it will be destroyed forever.

At this point in the story, Niwus, who does not comprehend the nature of the relic or the power of the chrono-matrix, makes a fatal mistake. He gives the Bone to Oaive and the minute she touches it, she can feel that it has the power to free her:

How could she build a barrier against the magician? She squeezed her eyes shut again. She held the Bone against her face. She thought of the shrine by the sea. (...) Yes, it was working. The shrine was her home where she had grown and learned. She was sliding away from Niwus, deep into her own mind, towards the shrine, the House of the Bone. (...) She could not hear Niwus anymore.

She could hear instead a priestess, speaking the ritual in the shrine. It began with one voice, but shortly there were countless voices. She was hearing all the priestesses who had ever served the shrine. She was reaching back, back into the past of the shrine, back to the beginning, to the Relics themselves. (76)

The Bone pulls Oaive into the chrono-matrix and the female continuum of priestesses, whose voices she can hear, strengthens her; here Niwus cannot touch her. Oaive can feel herself ‘reaching back’ and when she finally opens her eyes, it is to discover that she has, in fact, travelled in time. In surrendering completely to the Bone, she has ‘travelled in time. And place’ (80). She is back at the coast and back in time before the shrine or the relics existed. When she realises what has happened it is important that she is completely at ease with it. She thinks to herself:

Of course she had travelled in time before. They were not after all dreams, when she had seen Grey as a child or the casting of Niwus's curse. (...) She did not feel any panic or bewilderment. She did not ask herself if, having entered the past, she could return to the present. This was because she had experienced, for the first time and to the full, the might of her own sorcery. (81)

Like Dana, Oaive recognises that she has been 'unstuck' in time before – this is not the first time she has been removed from linear time. For the first time, however, she recognises that this temporal displacement may give her a certain amount of power. She has been returned her to the very beginnings of her own history so that she is able to reconfigure herself and her world.

Ancestors of the people who will one day live in the fishing village witness her performing the ritual on the beach and calling fire from her body down onto the stone altar. They immediately acknowledge her power and adopt her, for the first time and yet once again, as their village witch. As she relearns the old language, finds healing herbs in the wild and performs the traditional ritual she learned in the future, she becomes the first witch-priestess of the shrine. She also teaches the quickest young girls all she knows and asks the villagers about the relics, planting in them the belief that these objects, should they ever be found, are sacred and powerful. Everything that Oaive does here in the past establishes the tradition that she learns centuries ahead of this time; in Oaive, Lee creates a perfect incarnation of the chrono-matrix because she is both the beginning and the end and the beginning again of this feminine tradition. Even Oaive herself is aware of cyclical time moving her and working through her: 'It gave her an odd sensation to speak those words on that windy headland so many years before they would come to be spoken. Truly, she was playing games with time' (85).

After some time has passed, the villagers tell Oaive that a grey stranger is hiding in the hills just beyond the village and they are afraid of him. The repetition of this scene from her past and the village's future creates another cycle within the text. This time, however, there are not yet any male Elders to question her. When she leaves to defend them, the people approve of her bravery. As she leaves the village for the second time on this particular quest, 'she thought: I left by this path in the future. Strange to admit I may die today, and yet still I shall

live, centuries ahead of myself' (88). Like the characters in the other novels discussed in this thesis, Oaive is no longer limited to linear time, she knows now that her existence will cycle round from death to new life.

As she leaves, a little girl runs up to her and says that she will take up the ritual while Oaive is gone. She wishes Oaive luck and as she runs off we are told: 'her fair hair burned like a dim, smoky flame down the hill. Her hair is like mine, Oaive thought suddenly. And for some reason that filled her with pride, and with anger. And then the answer struck like a thunderbolt' (89). In this moment Oaive realises that she is the first priestess, that all who follow have followed *her*. The priestesses are part of her line. She also realises that she is or will be the last priestess of the shrine. The relic after which Grey and Niwus have been chasing, the Bone, '(is) hers. It had always been' (95). Lee's book, like *The Adventures of Alyx*, is an exercise in circles and cycles; the chrono-matrix creates a temporal space that enables Oaive to move through time, beginning the tradition that ends with her only to begin again. The priestesses who look like her and create a female bond with her through time also form a circle that strengthens Oaive for the final conflict against Niwus. And, finally, the Bone that Oaive uses to gain access to the chrono-matrix is her own finger-bone. She holds within herself the dynamic potential of the chrono-matrix; she is both Eve, the first woman, and the female embodiment of the oceanic power of the chrono-matrix. Having grasped this, when she draws upon her strength and fully realises her power she is not only able to defy the patriarchal condescension of her world but destroy the arch-patriarch, Niwus.

It is significant that in the final conflict with Niwus, it is the fact that Oaive is no longer bound to linear time that enables her to defeat him. Niwus is casting a deadly spell when, 'Oaive [seems] to catch the moment like a white-cold flame between her fingers' (94). She traps him in the moment at which point Grey decapitates Niwus with his sword. In the process, the tip of her finger is cut from her hand to fall on the floor with Niwus's ring and a jewel from Grey's wolf pelt. The three relics are created.

When all this happens as it must have happened before, Oaive, who is the only character able to recognise that time is cycling over and over says, "It is endless, Grey. We are caught on a wheel of time, turning forever" (97); Niwus has trapped all of them in the repetition of a single action, preventing the flow of living time and this is what is slowly condemning the

world to winter. Oaive recognises that she must have tried to defeat Niwus before and in so doing created this pattern of events. In order to break the pattern she needs to change something: she must sacrifice herself. Eliade suggests that the act of sacrifice, '[n]ot only exactly reproduces the initial sacrifice revealed by god *ab origine*, at the beginning of time, it also takes place at that exact same primordial mythical moment' (Eliade, 2005:35). At the moment of her self-sacrifice Oaive, the Weaver, is thus able to unravel the world and weave time back into a new shape: her sacrifice begins the cosmogonic act. She goes into the future and prevents Grey from casting the spell in the first place, knowing as she does so that she will change the future entirely, that they will all become something new.

In the epilogue Lee brings her readers back to the fishing village of the first chapter. Temporally, we are at the beginning of the novella but the world is different. There is no shrine, but there is a girl with flame-coloured hair and we are told:

Her name was Oaive, a name like the sound of the sea. She was seventeen and, like her two friends, she was a witch. You never knew how many would be born with this natural witch-power, but generally there were two or three naturals in each generation. (...) Often it was a woman's daughter who would inherit her own power, for the people had no lore which said a sorceress must live separately and not marry. (101)

In this world powerful women are part of village life not separate from it or treated with wary veneration. Oaive is no longer alone; she has friends who share her powers. Women who are born with magical powers are now called 'naturals', the implication being that women without magical powers are also taught the skills of the priestesses, those 'born' to the role. This society obviously accepts and encourages women to become learned and powerful. At the beginning of the novella we are also told that Oaive's mother could not love her because she was different and she knew she would lose her daughter to the shrine. But in this new present we are told that, '[t]hough Oaive's mother had not been a witch, they had been close. The mother was proud that her child would be a healer and a spell-maker' (101).

In the patriarchal culture that existed before, Oaive was kept apart from others, out of public life and the linear time of production. Her displacement in time and the resulting alliance with the chrono-matrix enables her to claim power and agency; she steps back into linear time, to a moment in the past and remakes history. Like Tenar and Tehanu, she brings about the

cosmogynesis of her world. The result is a world in which women are empowered and contribute to public life. Oaive is no longer denied a mother, friends or a mature adult relationship with a man. In fact, in the last scene of the novella a stranger in grey visits Oaive and there is a connection between the two of them that hints at romance to come and Oaive feels she is ‘on the verge of recollecting this story she could not conceivably know’ (103). Having read Oaive’s story it is clear that, like the other novels discussed in this thesis, Tepper’s *The Winter Players* takes the ideas about time proposed by Second Wave feminist theorists and explores them in an imaginative manner. Her novel can also be seen to reflect that of Kristeva’s third generation because Oaive does not separate herself from patrilinear culture and expect things to change, she undertakes a cosmogonic act that will change patrilinear time and the patriarchal culture of her world.

Le Guin describes Tenar and Tehanu in such a way that they embody the principles of the chrono-matrix. These two characters bring about the cosmogynesis of Earthsea because they assert the transformative force of the Other Wind, denying the limitations of patriarchal expectations. From the beginning of Lee’s novella, Oaive is associated with the chrono-matrix and when she travels in time her dormant potential comes to the fore. She chooses to step back into linear time in order to save her world, bringing about its cosmogynesis. In Sheri Tepper’s *Beauty* Beauty also travels through time and discovers strengths and resources that patriarchal culture would otherwise have denied her. These resources enable her to save her world but Tepper chooses not to reveal this final cosmogynesis. Tepper insists that Beauty’s actions will bring about the birth of a new world but she leaves the details up to her readers. In this way, her novel renders an even greater capacity for becoming and cosmogynesis because the possibilities are as numerous as the individual visions of each reader.

Sheri Tepper (1929-), who only began writing in her fifties, won the Locus Award for fantasy for *Beauty* (1991) in 1992. She has also been nominated numerous times for both the Arthur C. Clarke and John W. Campbell Memorial Awards. Tepper is a prolific author who writes crime fiction, horror and fantasy but is best known in critical circles for her feminist SF and fantasy, almost all of which either implicitly or explicitly explores her eco-feminist concerns. Although *Beauty* was written after the Second Wave, the way in which Tepper uses Beauty’s dislocation in time to explore feminist issues and criticise patriarchal cultures

throughout history means it is possible to read this novel as making a contribution to the Second Wave debate about time. I propose that the perspective on time taken up in *Beauty* is also that of Kristeva's third generation: briefly, Beauty is expected to enact a passive femininity in patrilinear time (she is literally a Sleeping Beauty) but as she travels in time she becomes aware of, and refuses, the constraints of patrilinear time and she discovers strengths that enable her to defy patriarchal culture's expectations of her. Once she claims her right to agency she then takes it upon herself to change the world, destroying misogynistic patriarchal culture. Like the characters in the five other novels I have examined, *Beauty* therefore takes up its place as an exploration of Kristeva's third generation of feminists.

Although Beauty's first break away from linear time involves a trip into the future in a time machine this novel remains primarily a fairy tale, which is why it is discussed in this chapter rather than the previous one. Tepper weaves a modern fantasy drawing extensively on the conventions of the fairy tale genre yet maintaining a clear and critical focus on what she wants to say about humanity's present and future. While this critical focus on modern reality may seem at odds with the dark, dream-like magic of fairy tale it turns out not to be. Marina Warner reminds us that 'fairytales typically use the story of something in the remote past to look towards the future; their conclusions, their 'happy endings' do not always bring about total closure, but make promises, prophecies' (Warner, 1994: xvi). In this respect, the fairy tale is similar to speculative fiction. According to Warner, in fairy tales, 'the enchantments universalise the narrative setting [and] encipher concerns, beliefs and desires in brilliant, seductive images that are themselves a form of camouflage, making it possible to utter harsh truths, to say what you dare' (Warner, 1994: xvii). Speculative fiction also has the potential to do this; the only difference is that, where SF uses the scientific novum, fairy tale, like fantasy, uses magic or supernatural aid.

Fairy tale scholar Jack Zipes also notes that fairy tale shares speculative fiction's ability to criticise social evils; he writes that 'folk and fairytales have always spread word through their fantastic images about the feasibility of utopian alternatives, and this is exactly why the dominant social classes have been vexed by them, or have tried to dismiss them as 'Mother Goose' tales' (Zipes, 2002:3). Like speculative fiction, fairytales offer a vision of the future in which evil and injustice, in whichever forms they take (stepmother, ogre, dragon, technology, giant corporation, government), have been vanquished and the hero or heroine is

(the reader hopes) free to live ‘happily ever after’ in a newly created utopia. Tepper’s interweaving of these two genres is effective because it allows her an even richer medium through which to ‘utter (the) harsh truth’ that our world is dying and promise that the intervention of the chrono-matrix can save it.

Although Zipes suggests that it is perhaps due to the ‘feminine’ voice of fairy tale that it is dismissed, Tepper neatly subverts this particular problem in *Beauty*. Because the narrative is recounted via the journal entries of the protagonist, the female voice in *Beauty* is infused with authority. This strategy works because of the Second Wave feminist respect for ‘authentic’ autobiographical texts by women. *Beauty* speaks from a position of authority because although the story may contain magical elements and fantastic occurrences, she reports them and her observations objectively. In this way, Tepper is able to ground her fantasy in ‘authentic reality’ while the fantastic elements allow her the freedom to explore a number of different concerns. Given the narrative strategy employed by Tepper, Iona and Peter Opie’s observation that ‘[f]airytales are (...) more realistic than they may appear at first sight [because] [t]he magic sets us wondering how we ourselves would react in similar circumstances’ is apt (Opie, 1984:20).

The interweaving of fairy tale and SF elements in this novel is also masterful because the two genres approach time so differently: fairy tale belongs to the atemporal space of myth time, whereas science fiction tends to focus on the ‘realistic’ scientific-physical properties of linear time. When she embeds the fairy tale in real-time history Tepper creates an uncomfortable temporal vortex in which ‘myth’ and its nemesis, linear history, are interwoven; this subverts the pragmatic authority of the history recorded by patriarchal cultures. Then, over and above this already promising subversion of linear time and accepted history, she introduces a dystopian science fiction future into the mix. Her novel seems to explore, among other things, a temporal dissonance that reflects the broken nature of the world. The dominance of patriarchal culture in society and history has resulted in the disunities and disharmonies reflected in these various realities.

As *Beauty* travels both back and forward in the linear time of Earth’s history she is exposed to pocket realities that exist outside linear time. In the human world, patriarchal linear time is dominant and the clock is counting down to the moment when all life will be destroyed but in

the other pocket realities (Faery, Chinanga, Baskarone and Hell) time is static. In the world of the fairies it is perpetually either dusk or dawn. Because time stands still here no one dies and no one ages but neither can they create anything. In Chinanga, events loop over and over again because it is the dream world generated by a man from Earth named Ambrosius Pomposus; Chinanga is like the same piece of film footage played over and over until the film has worn thin. Like Faery, therefore, Chinanga is static and unchanging. In Baskarone (which is modelled on Heaven) and in Hell a single experience exists *ad infinitum*, revealing yet another temporal stasis.

These different realities and times share a salient feature: natural beauty is dying in them all, killed by greed, overpopulation, vanity, cruelty and apathy. In fact, on an Earth in the future we watch the deaths of the last, emaciated whales and shudder at Tepper's visceral description of the destruction of the last non-human living thing, a radish. In the author's note to this edition of the novel, Tepper writes:

It seems to me sometimes that all beauty is dying. Which makes me hope that perhaps it isn't dead but only sleeping. And that makes me think of Sleeping Beauty and wonder if she – Beauty, that is – might not be a metaphor for what is happening to the world at large: perfect Beauty born, Beauty cursed with death, Beauty dying – but with the magical hope of being reawakened. (1)

At the end of the novel Beauty is the only hope for the survival of the Earth; because she allies herself with the alternative temporal space of the chrono-matrix she becomes the seed that will enable the cosmogynesis of the world.

As Beauty travels through time Tepper describes various patriarchies that have existed throughout Western history; she suggests that women have been subjugated and oppressed in each time that Beauty visits and it is only the mechanisms and strategies of control that change. When we first meet Beauty, it is 1340 and she is almost sixteen. Beauty has been brought up by a number of maiden aunts because her mother disappeared when she was a baby; the aunts represent one of the options available to women at the time. They are characterised as stern and masculinised or as dithery and dim-witted. This is typical patriarchal stereotyping of older, unmarried women. Ultimately, in their acquiescence to their brother's authority and what is expected of 'maiden aunts', these women become physically and mentally sterile: they create nothing and do nothing except flap around the castle growing

old (apart from the two who join a convent and grow old there). They cannot think for themselves and passively allow themselves to be ruled by the laws of patriarchal culture as they are embodied by their brother.

The second role women may play is revealed by Dorothy, one of the serving women who work in the castle. Of her Beauty writes, ‘Doll is short for Dorothy. She was named for St Dorothy who was a virgin martyr known for her angelic virtue. Doll says she wishes she had been named for someone a little less angelic and a bit more muscular’ (18). Even though Dorothy is strong, independent and outspoken, her names reflect the attempt of patriarchal culture to curtail her vitality and rein her in to the diminutive femininity expected of women. Her real name recalls a ‘virgin martyr known for angelic virtue’, the epitome of desirable femininity: sexually unspoiled, selfless, dead before becoming a burden. This name does not reflect the Dorothy we meet in the novel and Tepper obviously means to contrast the two in order to point out the illusory nature of the feminine ideal venerated by patriarchal culture. Dorothy’s nickname, ‘Doll,’ is similarly ironic because it suggests something passive: a pretty plaything. Dorothy, who is muscular, powerful and physically active, is the exact opposite of her name. The reality, however, is that in this society she can only be ‘St Dorothy’ or ‘Doll.’ Her names may not reflect her true nature but they do describe her role as prescribed by patriarchal culture.

The third position that women may hold is encapsulated by Sibylla and her mother. Beauty’s father has decided to remarry and Sibylla is to become Beauty’s stepmother. In true fairy tale form Sibylla despises Beauty and tries to come between the father and daughter. Beauty finds this ironic because she knows her father is unlikely to pay attention to either of them. She writes of Sibylla:

At table this evening she peered at me as a chicken does at a bug, acting very discontented and disappointed, as though she had been counting on my making a fuss about moving, perhaps, which would have given her something to complain to Papa about. Poor fool woman. She doesn’t know Papa. (30)

Although we are not sympathetic to Sibylla she deserves sympathy as much as any of the female characters because she is forced to behave as she does. Her options are to marry, join a convent or become destitute and so her actions are mercenary: she has no alternative but to be manipulative and deceitful. She plots to usurp Beauty’s place to ensure that she and her

mother will be cared for. Although our loyalties lie with Beauty, Sibylla is merely the unfortunate product of a patriarchal society in which women compete for the scraps thrown from the master's table.

Tepper criticises the various positions allotted women and uses the fairy tale elements of the novel to do so. Warner argues, as Zipes does earlier, that one of the key elements of fairy tale is just this kind of social criticism. She writes that 'The literary women who wrote fairytales (...) mounted an attack on many prejudices and practices of their day, which confined and defamed women' (Warner, 1994:49). In eighteenth century France, which saw a revival of interest in fairytales, educated and erudite women used these tales to criticise the subjugation of women but fairy tale's critical focus on the lives of women is as old as the form itself. In fact, the earliest version of 'Cinderella' is a Chinese tale and the desirability of her small feet stems directly from the tradition of foot-binding, which begins around the time the story first appears (Warner, 1994:202). Fairy tale, therefore, has a long tradition of reflecting patriarchal social norms and the helpless and often bloody competition between women who are trying to survive in a world that makes little space for them. As Beauty travels through time, Tepper rewrites the fairytales with which we are familiar, challenging the myths we know and the future we have been promised and she criticises the patriarchal ideology that underlies everything.

So Sibylla is cast as the evil stepmother by patriarchal expectations as much as Doll is expected to be a vacuous plaything and the aunts are relegated to the convent; this is all that women may become. Sibylla's name, which implies an ability to foresee the future, suggests perhaps that this pattern will not change as long as linear time and patriarchal ideals remain unchallenged.

The only other woman who lives in the castle at this time is Beauty herself. Like Dana and Connie, Beauty is already Othered; because of her mother, she is half fairy. Beauty is thus already a potential threat to patriarchal culture. This potential for subversion is confirmed through two of her characteristics, both of which manifest long before the subversion of linear time begins. The first is that she often dresses as a boy and works in the stableyard. Bored by the finery and frippery expected of a girl, she adopts the lifestyle of a young boy. She also openly mocks the social conventions of her time in her journal and her satirical

observations free her from having to abide by them. Her notes regarding the sidesaddle are a good example of this irreverence: ‘According to the stableboys, the sidesaddle was designed to protect a maiden’s virginity while risking her neck. Risking rather much for rather little, I thought at the time’ (17). Beauty has a sharp mind and acts according to the spur of her own will, refusing the stultifying femininity enforced by the patriarchal culture of her time and assuming an active role, even though she must disguise herself as a boy to do so.

The second characteristic is her love of her words and her reaching after meanings not yet set. She tells us in an aside that:

(I know I am being loquacious. Father Raymond says I am very loquacious and affected. I don’t really think I am affected, unless it is by the aunts, and if it is by the aunts, how could I help it? All these words are something I was born with. Words bubble up in me like water. It is hard to shut them off.) (12)

Later she also laments that ‘(her) head is full of things (she does) not have enough words for yet’ (16). Tepper connects Beauty with the chrono-materix, not only as an alternative temporal space but also as a generative space in which new meanings can be made, reflecting cultural feminism’s project of creating a ‘woman’s language’. Beauty is sensitive to the feminine space of the semiotic, to the chaos of meanings not become and they ‘bubble up’ in her. This link with water, like Oaive’s with the ocean is provocative because the image makes a connection between Beauty and that anarchic women’s language that Cixous describes: liberating, uncontrolled, fluid. Even the fact that she speaks in an aside suggests that her speech is set apart from linear rule-of-the-father communications; it belongs outside normal conversation, in the space between utterances. Her (deliberate?) misunderstanding of the term ‘affected’ suggests an ability to play with language and an unaffected shrugging off of Father Raymond’s authority on the subject. Beauty expresses herself with the loquacious, exuberant reaching-after-meaning of the semiotic and this allies her with the becoming of the chrono-materix. Because the novel is written as though it is Beauty’s journal, she is given both authorial power over her story and the authority to use language as she sees fit. These things distance her from the trapped, silent women by whom she is surrounded.

The story begins when Sibylla forces Beauty from her chambers to the tower where her mother lived before she disappeared. The Duke and the aunts locked Elladine away because they thought she was mad and Beauty writes that ‘such is known to be the fate of madwomen

and madmen whenever madness and towers occur in appropriate contiguity. Towers, or, in a pinch, attics' (40). But Elladine is locked away because she makes the Duke and the aunts uncomfortable; she is a fairy and therefore destabilises the mundane reality to which they are more suited. Tepper's tongue-in-cheek reference to Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar's 'Madwoman in the Attic' is effective because it lends feminist weight to Beauty's observations; she realises that her mother is allied with this figure who threatens patriarchal authority. The madwoman must be removed from society post-haste in order to minimise the damage she may do. Elladine is therefore locked away and unless something happens to avert it, her daughter seems doomed to share her fate.

Throughout her life up until this point Beauty has been denied any relationship with the women in her family; her mother has been absent and the aunts have kept their distance due to her questionable lineage. They have also refused to tell her anything objective about her mother, who, they claim, killed herself. This lack of mothering, of female love and filial feeling affects Beauty deeply. In fact, at the very start of the novel, it is the first thing she reveals about herself:

I never knew my mother. My father never speaks of her, though my aunts, his half-sisters, would make up for his silence with a loquacity which is as continuous as it is malicious. The aunts speak no good of her, whoever she was and whatever has happened to her, specifics which they avoid. (...) When I was very young I used to ask about her. (As think any child would. It wasn't wickedness.) First I was hushed, and when I persisted, I was punished. (11)

Bruno Bettelheim writes that 'it is characteristic of fairytales to state an existential dilemma briefly and pointedly' (Bettelheim, 1976:8). Beauty's existential dilemma is her feeling of alienation from everything and her desperate need for a mother, for a connection to a female continuum. But it is important that she has had no mothering so that when her mother does interrupt the course of events, it signals a break with the patrilinear reality that she has known up until then.

When she moves into her mother's old tower room she finds, as if by magic, a hidden treasure: a letter from her mother, a strange mechanical device and three spools of thread (from the first spool she makes a cloak of invisibility, from the second a pair of seven-league boots and from the third, a wisdom cap). Tepper undermines the negative connotations of the

tower as a place where subversive and dangerous women are locked away and isolated from society and makes it a place where mother and daughter meet. The letter is significant because it weaves Beauty into a female history and reveals a mother who cares about her. The letter and gifts shift the way Beauty relates to reality because she is no longer bound only to her father but is aware of a second parent, and an alternative path represented by her mother.

The discovery of the strange mechanical device hidden with her mother's things is particularly significant. When Beauty describes it, she concludes that there is nothing much to it 'Except the noise it makes. I can only hear it at night when things are very quiet, but I can hear it then. The tiniest ticking, the faintest crepitation, like something very small inside there, breathing or tapping its toe' (32). We conclude that this must be some kind of time-keeping device, although how it works and what kind of time it keeps remain a mystery. This device is significant for two reasons. The first is its connection to Beauty's mother or the world from which her mother comes and the second is that the time-keeping is personified: 'breathing or tapping its toe'. This time is alive and it is Other, different from the patrilinear time in which Beauty has been embedded until now. Although we do not discover until much later the exact nature of the device, at this point it signifies the first real break with 'normal' pragmatic reality and linear time and is significantly initiated through Beauty's reconnection to her female continuum.

In her letter, Elladine reveals what happened before Beauty was born and in her turn of phrase, we recognise the same stubborn independence that Beauty displays:

As it happens with my people, from the moment of wooing, my memory of my past existence was dimmed. I was first enveloped by your father's encompassing desires and later smothered by his overwhelming aunts. The former caused me to lose my memory and virginity, though temporarily; the latter have caused me to lose my mind. I hope this is also temporary. (...) As I grew larger, he left me completely to myself. Among my people, celibacy restores both memory and virginity. (36)

It is significant that when she surrenders herself to the position of woman-as-sex-object, Elladine forgets who she is; the moment at which she surrenders to seduction by a mortal man she becomes embedded in linear time, stifled by patriarchal control and forfeits her freedom. Tepper's suggestion is that the role of sex object is just as limiting as the other roles

already explored in the novel. However, when Elladine is pregnant and therefore not a suitable object of desire, the Duke moves on to affairs with numerous other women about the castle; this reprieve from sexual activity enables her to remember who she is. Once he has seduced the fairy, he loses interest in her and Elladine writes to Beauty that

[h]e castigates himself for marrying one of my race, and me for being what I am. Men are like that. They marry for reasons that have nothing to do with what they expect from matrimony and then damn their wives for not being what they want later. They marry for beauty and charm and sex, and then expect their wives to be sensible, parsimonious and efficient. Now that memory and virginity are restored, I need not remain here to be insulted. I choose to return to my ancestral lands. (38)

The reinstatement of her memory and virginity restores Elladine's independence and allows her to leave the mortal world and linear time and return to Faery. Northrop Frye observes that these particular elements (memory and virginity) often reflect the restoration of identity in literatures that display elements of the romance, as fairy tales do (Frye, 1976:147). He also suggests that 'apart from the idealising of the pre-sexual state, there is a sense in which virginity is an appropriate image for attaining original identity' (Frye, 1976:153). Memory is important because it establishes a sense of who we are through reminders of our past; essentially, it embeds us in time and affects who we may become; as Grosz suggests, '[t]he ways in which we consider the past to be connected to and thus to live on through the present/future have direct implications for whatever concepts of futurity, the new, creativity, production or emergence we may want to develop' (Grosz, 1999:18). When Elladine remembers who she is, she is able to act independently of the Duke. The link between memory and virginity is also important because it suggests, as Frye notes, that virginity is crucial to independence and self-sufficiency. Effectively, sexual independence rather than the submission to and submersion in a partner, is vital for the creation of independent identity. This is entirely contrary to the notions of romantic love that tell women fulfilment can be found in partnership with a man. Elladine's letter again reveals to Beauty a different path from that of the norm.

This letter also introduces the destabilisation of linear time. Although the letter has been hidden in the tower for sixteen years waiting for Beauty to find it, she is 'struck by how clean the parchment looked upon which all this had been written. It could have been delivered that very afternoon...in a sense it had been delivered that very afternoon' (39). The magical letter

is protected from linear time and so it appears pristine and newly penned at the moment that Beauty opens it. In the letter Elladine finally explains Beauty's curse and tells the girl to find her as soon as she wakes from her hundred year sleep. This unsettles Beauty, who writes, 'I could not understand how Mama expected to see me after the curse, since even mothers (do) not, as a general rule, live more than a hundred years' (38). The letter therefore challenges, not only the conventions of patriarchal culture but Beauty's understanding of time as linear as well.

A few days after she reads the letter Beauty celebrates her sixteenth birthday. Irritated by the attention, she trades places with her best friend, Beloved (an illegitimate daughter of the Duke who looks just like her). Thus it is Beloved who falls prey to the curse. As Elladine and the Duke understand it, on her sixteenth birthday Beauty will prick her finger on a spindle and fall into a deep sleep. After a hundred years have passed she will be woken by the kiss of her true love. In reality Beauty's fairy Aunt, Carabosse, has seen the future and planted in Beauty a tiny seed and Carabosse means her to sleep until it is safe for the seed of a new world to germinate. The seed image recalls the language Tenar uses to describe the new beginning she too feels is coming. Significantly, the purpose of Carabosse's 'curse' is to remove Beauty from linear time and embed her in the chrono-matrix, ensuring her survival and that of the Earth.

Throughout the novel Carabosse is linked with time: her home is full of clocks and even here she uses a spindle, the tool of the Fates, to ensorcel Beauty. In his discussion of the Sleeping Beauty fairy tale Bettelheim, too, notes the feminine connotation of the spindle or distaff; he writes:

The curse centres on the distaff, a word which in English has come to stand for female in general. While the same is not true for the French (Perrault) or German (Brothers Grimm) word for distaff, until fairly recently spinning and weaving were considered as characteristically 'woman's occupations'. (Bettelheim, 1976:232)

So Carabosse, weaving time and fate, is the agent of the chrono-matrix. Nevertheless, it is important that Beauty evades the curse here at the beginning of the novel because, had she succumbed to the curse, she would have remained a passive vessel and therefore been unable to undertake the cosmogonic act. It is essential that the female character herself chooses to undertake the cosmogonic act and she can only do this if she knows why she needs to remake

the world. Beauty needs to learn about the world first and see the damage that patriarchal greed and cruelty are doing to it so that when she claims agency and chooses to act, she consciously brings about a cosmogynesis that liberates the world.

Tepper rewrites the ‘Sleeping Beauty’ fairy tale quite significantly in this novel and the differences between her tale and the traditional one expose feminist concerns over traditional images kept alive through the retelling of fairytales. Like Le Guin and Lee, Tepper re-appropriates these images of women and tries to imbue them with a new feminist meaning. Sellers suggests that ‘the citation of a known pattern provides points of orientation and recognition so that the resulting fiction contains a greater degree of resonance and applicability’ (Sellers, 2001:133). In this way, the use of the fairy tale motifs sets up a certain resonance for the reader who knows the story and expects the same comfortable pattern to be forthcoming. When the pattern is different, the resulting fiction has a greater impact because the reader cannot avoid noticing the differences. Larrington suggests that this device has two aims: ‘patriarchal myth-smashing and woman-identified myth-making’ (Larrington, 1992:427). In *Beauty* Tepper writes about a ‘real’ young woman who wants to be active and free, not a passive, two-dimensional princess awaiting the kiss of Prince Charming.

In the traditional fairy tale Beauty is pricked by a needle or a splinter from the spindle and falls into a deathly sleep from which she will awaken only when Prince Charming kisses her. The blood drawn from her finger is meant to signify menstruation and coming of age and Bettelheim suggests that the ensuing sleep, ‘protects the girl from premature suitors by an impenetrable wall of thorns’ (Bettelheim, 1976:233). This sleep reflects the girl’s unwillingness to leave a protected childhood and become an adult. Only when she is old enough and ready does the ‘right man’ come along and help her with her transition into full maturity (*ibid*). Tepper’s Beauty however refuses the passivity expected of her and when everyone in the castle falls asleep she makes plans with no fuss or hysteria, donning the clothes of a boy and setting out on an adventure. She is not a passive, disempowered princess, overcome by the immensity of her first menstruation. Like an active male protagonist, she decides instead that coming of age means a quest into the unknown.

When the roses have woven themselves completely around the castle Beauty leaves Westfaire disguised as a boy. A small distance from the castle she discovers a group of people engaged in an entirely alien activity:

The men and women I came upon were doing something incomprehensible. They moved among contrivances, among strange apparatus, boxes which hummed and winked and made noises like the midnight peeps of startled birds. There were five persons, some men, some women, though it was hard to tell which were which. They were clad much alike, and my impression of maleness and femaleness came more from stance and stature than any other regard. (75)

These people are a film crew from the future ‘recording the vanishment of magic from England – and from the world’ (77). It is usually a positive thing in feminist fiction when men and women are interchangeable because it suggests equality but this is not what Tepper’s suggestion of androgyny implies here at all. The people from the future are uniform rather than equal and neither is particularly human: both men and women display equally violent aggression and inhuman detachment from each other and their subject matter. Although they are documenting what should be the tragic loss of magic, this is merely objectified in the film and transformed into just another commodity.

The film crew is first surprised and then angry because Beauty has jeopardised their jobs. The cameraman’s immediate and chilling response is to kill her because murder is the most convenient method of cleaning up the mess. When the others protest, only because ‘killing (her will) show up on the monitors’ (78), Jaybee (the cameraman) grabs her violently and throws her into their time machine and she is transported with them into the future. The chapter during which Westfaire falls asleep and Beauty is abducted is aptly titled, ‘Another Time. Another Day. I don’t know When, Yet’ (57). Beauty has undergone her first dislocation in linear history and her journey of self-discovery has begun.

The dystopic future that Tepper describes is terrifying. It is something like the mechanistic future of Russ’s Paradise and something like the violent alternative future that Piercy’s Connie visits. The surface of the Earth is taken up for the production of food and everyone lives underground in metal structures. Beauty writes:

The surface we walked on was full of holes. Another such surface was above. There were feet above us, tramping down on us, thousands of feet. Below us

were the heads of people, moving fast or slow, thousands of heads (...) and below them, more heads and arms and feet. (80)

The fact that these people are described as disembodied heads, arms and feet dehumanises them and creates the impression of a crushing, claustrophobic mass. The people wear the same clothes, sport the same short, militaristic hairstyle and live in rooms that are no more than tiny, metal prison cells. Their lives are also regimented and controlled down to the minutest detail and any deviation from the norm means they are eliminated through the disposal chutes. The chutes are used for waste of any kind, including difficult human beings and the material created is then recycled into nutritional biscuits.

These biscuits are the only food the people have and Beauty writes, ‘it had sustenance in it but no pleasure. I could live on it, but if it were all there was to eat, I thought living might not be much worth it’ (85). This cold, convenient cannibalism is both horrifying and significant because, while cannibalism is sometimes a motif in dystopic SF, it is a common trope in fairytales where it dehumanises the other. Food is an important element in fairytales because it reflects the nature of the person offering the food: evil witch or benevolent supernatural helper. Nikolajeva writes of food in fairy tales that

[a]n important mythical figure is the Progenetrix, the incarnation of Mother Earth, the origin of everything. In most myths, she teaches humans to sow and to bake bread. The sacred food is developed into a magical agent in folktales: bread, milk, honey, apples, beans etc. (Nikolajeva, 2000:15)

Here, in the future, there is no magical Progenetrix and the food is not sacred but recycled bits of human, mashed in with other rubbish. If people ‘are what they eat’, this reflects the spiritual starvation of these people.

Like the woman Connie visits in the alternative future in *Woman on the Edge of Time*, these people also live vicariously through films and documentaries as there is little space to do anything else. Because she cannot leave the room in which she is hiding Beauty watches documentaries to learn about this new world and she writes:

There were other films, as well. I could watch some of the ‘porno-mance’ ones, but the ‘horro-porn’ ones I could not watch. Jaybee had filmed some of them. I threw them down the disposal chute, but every few days more were delivered from the supply chute. There was no end to them, each one full of

pain and blood. I learned very soon that there was nothing beautiful in that place. Even the things they watched were not beautiful. There was no contrast between beauty and ugliness. There was only ugliness. I suppose it was more practical for them. If there had been any beauty at all, people might have wanted that instead. As it was, they didn't know there was any such thing, so the lack did not bother them. I knew though. I hurt all the time with such a longing. My chest burned, as though I would die of it. (86)

Intrinsic to the ideology of patrilinear time is the desire to measure and regulate and this is taken to the extreme in Fidupur, the mechanical future world. That which is considered 'feminine' (loveliness, poetry, faith, self-expression) has been repressed lest it threaten the patriarchal order of Fidupur. Tepper suggests that unbridled patriarchal capitalism and lust for power will bring about this future. She once again draws on fairy tale tradition in order to bring her point into sharp relief because, as Luthi suggests, what is most obvious in fairy tale is a 'fascination with the beautiful, the longing for the ultimate degree in beauty, for the absolute. It is likewise indisputable that, in contrast to this absolute, this superlative beauty, there is something ugly' (Luthi, 1984:11). Beauty reflects beauty. Her innocence sets her apart from this dark, cold world and the future Tepper describes is bleaker because Beauty provides a counterpoint to it.

Although almost everything in the twenty-first century is alienating and threatening Beauty discovers kindness in Bill, the elderly script-writer who takes her under his wing. Because Beauty is both desperately unhappy and in very real danger, Bill decides to attempt a hijacking of the time machine in order to return her to a time in which she might be more comfortable. The furthest back they can travel, however, is a hundred years and so Beauty arrives in 1991 with Bill, Janice, Alice and Jaybee who also escape Fidupur.

Tepper takes Beauty back through patrilinear time in increments so that she is able to trace what leads to Fidupur and humankind's final destruction. In the patriarchal culture of the nineties Beauty goes to school and is exposed to contemporary American culture. What strikes her most is that everything is disposable and that people are consumers in every aspect of their lives, from religion and relationships to shopping. Where Fidupur is cold, mechanical and inhuman, this world of the nineties is dark and violent.

While she is here three significant things happen to Beauty. The first of these is an encounter in a homeless shelter. When they first arrive in the past Bill, Janice, Alice and Jaybee stay in a homeless shelter where Beauty meets a mother and her young daughter, also refugees from Fidiipur. She becomes fond of the little girl and is shocked when the mother slits her daughter's throat during the night. The mother has succumbed to madness and in her mumblings admits to believing the disposal chutes to be the only hope for true freedom. The violence of the act and the lack of hope are foreign to Beauty but she learns fairly quickly that both are endemic here. Tepper exposes Beauty to the worst that patriarchal history has to offer so that when she finally undertakes the cosmogonic act, it is in full awareness of the evil that must be averted.

The second thing that happens is that she meets Barrymore Gryme, a writer of popular horror stories. Even though he is far older than she is and she is repulsed both by him and what he writes, he pursues her. Gryme, who is wealthy and famous, is bemused by her rejection and while she speaks Beauty realises, 'He wasn't listening. He was looking at my face, at my shape, smiling a little to himself. He was thinking about going to bed with me' (112). Gryme does not listen to Beauty because she is an object to be desired and enjoyed, as are women in general and as is all other natural beauty in the world. He is patronising: after all, a pretty girl is not something one *listens to*. Tepper uses Gryme's short-sightedness, greed and lust to represent the attitudes of nineties Western patriarchal culture: everything can be bought, sold and used and it doesn't matter that eventually there will be nothing left. Beauty, who has seen Fidiipur and watched the 'horro-porns' produced in the future, is fully aware of the danger in making violence and cruelty entertaining; she notes that people who find horror and cruelty entertaining 'catch a kind of leprosy of the spirit, an inability to feel' (113). Tepper overtly suggests that this loss of humanity is directly related to the greedy consumerism of nineties patriarchal culture.

The last encounter in the nineties that affects Beauty involves Jaybee. From the first time we meet him he is characterised as threatening and violent. Barely held in check by the rest of the film crew, he says of Beauty, "I want her. (...) She's mine" (79) and Beauty tells us that, 'As he was going out, Jaybee turned around and gave me one more stare, a long, swallowing look, as though he'd like to hit me. Or eat me' (95). In the nineties he moves to a

different town but continues to send Beauty explicit photographs he has taken of other women. In the pictures the women have been cut or sliced open and are bleeding.

Although we recognise that Jaybee's interest in her is building to some horrible climax, one of the most chilling things is that Beauty believes Jaybee to be the rule rather than the exception when it comes to 'courtship' and men. She observes the boys and girls at school and concludes, 'It's like the women they hit on are sacrifices to some kind of god that only boys worship. Most of the boys here remind me of Jaybee, though I'm not sure why' (104). Beauty sees men treating women as bloody sacrifices to a mercenary machismo and she has nothing with which to counter those observations. On New Year's Eve in 1993 Jaybee returns for Beauty. He snaps Bill's neck and brutally rapes her. It is appropriate that this violent man who filmed the loss of magic in the thirteen hundreds, rapes the virginal Sleeping Beauty on New Year's Eve which should usher in new beginnings and hope. Jaybee's actions reflect the brutality of the male-dominated modern world that Tepper describes: magic is lost but so are soul, hope and beauty. Tepper overtly draws a parallel between how men treat women and how patriarchal industry treats the Earth.

This rape scene is also an interesting rewriting of the original tale. Both Bettelheim and Iona and Peter Opie describe a tale older than the version popularised by the Brothers Grimm; in this version Prince Charming does not kiss Sleeping Beauty, he rapes her. She is asleep when the prince comes along and rapes her sleeping body and later (still asleep), she gives birth to twins. One of them sucks the distaff splinter from her finger. Once the splinter is gone, she awakes and evidently forms 'a great league and friendship' with her rapist (Opie, 1984:103-104). Tepper does not expect this of her Beauty. In Tepper's version, the rape is violent and bloody and the child that issues from it is tainted by its origins, not a fairy tale cherub that saves its mother; Tepper's account of sexual abuse is far more honest.

Because there is already something in Beauty that weakens the hold linear time has on her, she will not remain a victim to male violence in patrilinear time. As she lies there in her blood (Jaybee having left to dispose of Bill's body) she is prodded by someone or something and suddenly realises that she has her magic boots: 'I couldn't remember picking them up, but there they were. They hadn't worked before, but now? Only it wasn't before, was it? It was the future, not past. Now? I didn't know' (115). In Fidiapur her magical seven-league

boots wouldn't work but here in the past she hopes they might. Her confusion about 'when' it is highlights the fact that Beauty is less and less bound by linear time. She has yet to realise exactly how free she is but the moment she remembers her mother's fairy heritage she knows she can escape Jaybee. When he comes back for her, he croons from the door:

“Beauty?” Jaybee called again. “Let me in or I’ll break down the door.”
He laughed, a liquid, bubbling laugh like molten lava, molten lead, searing in its vile heat. “I’ll huff and I’ll puff, and I’ll blow your house down!” (...)
“Go!” a voice said, it was a long ago voice, a remembered voice, whose?
“Boots,” I whispered softly, praying that I had not miscalculated, “take me home.” (116-117)

When Tepper links Jaybee to the big bad wolf she characterises him as a dark, voracious, masculine force that relishes destruction. A voice (her mother's?) from outside patrilinear time calls to Beauty to put on the boots and each step she takes moves her further and further into the past; she finally arrives in 1350. Because she has been a victim of violence in the future Beauty no longer feels at home even in her original historical period; abused by men, she distances herself from the patriarchal cultures she sees because she knows she has no place in them and no place in linear time. From this moment on she seems to be able to move from one temporal pocket to the next without instinctively feeling the need to know 'when' she is.

Soon after her return to the 1350s, Beauty realises that she is pregnant with Jaybee's child. In order to avoid the taboo of having a child out of wedlock she quickly procures a husband and has the child but the role of a matron is uncomfortably restricting. In her journal, she writes, 'Mostly I thought I did not want to be married...what I really wanted to do and had set out to do was find my mother. I longed for a mother' (141). Tepper uses Beauty's longing for her mother to suggest the need for a space that is not tainted by men and patriarchal expectations. This sentiment echoes the separatist desires of Second Wave cultural feminism. The world run by men makes Beauty an outsider, an 'other' who is alienated from herself. Even the act of childbirth is treated by the men around her as something unnatural and unclean and this leaves Beauty desperate for her own mother:

At the end of the 'lying in' I went to the chapel, all muffled up in the traditional veils to take a seat near the altar and have the priest read psalms over me to compensate for my having offended God by bearing a child in holy wedlock. (...) When the priest had finished, I was supposedly free of the world

again, able to look upon sunshine and stars. I did not tell them I had been sneaking out of bed nighttimes to sit in the window watching the moon and longing for something I could not quite name. My own mother, I think. (147)

Tepper's phrasing is interesting here: the priest 'frees' Beauty from the world of visceral, undignified female childbirth and reintegrates her into the contemplative, clean, rational world of man, represented by the sun and stars. Beauty, however, has not separated herself from 'the world' as was expected of her; she has been watching the moon, significantly a symbol of the Great Mother and the chrono-materix. She longs for something other than this patriarchal world in which she lives.

Nevertheless, while Beauty recognises the importance of motherhood and longs for her own mother, she cannot bring herself to love her daughter. Much like Connie's experience of motherhood, Beauty's has been tainted by the violence of men. She writes of the infant that she 'opened her eyes and looked at me and it was Jaybee's look, greedy and violent. Her mouth clamped down on me... There was blood on my nipple.... Inside I bubbled with hysteria, He too had bitten me there. He too had drawn blood' (146). Although absent mothers are characteristic of fairytales, Tepper suggests in *Beauty* that it is patriarchal culture that poisons the mother-daughter relationship: Beauty's father ignores Elladine and betrays her trust, so Elladine deserts Beauty; Jaybee rapes Beauty, so Beauty deserts her daughter; in an inhuman world, a mother cuts her daughter's throat. Guenther writes that, 'the newly born child brings the promise of a renewed time that would be different from the past, a future that does not already belong to the terms and conditions of the present' (Guenther, 2006:4). Natality should introduce something new into time, something that could disrupt it and allow cosmogynesis, but Tepper flatly denies this possibility. Unless patriarchal culture changes, nothing can emerge new and undamaged; the future is condemned by the terms and conditions of the present.

Beauty decides that she cannot live with this poisonous daily reminder of Jaybee, so she dons the boots and orders them to take her to her mother and she arrives in 'Chinanga: Time Unknown, Perhaps Time Irrelevant' (153). Chinanga is a world in which linear time is both unknown and irrelevant because it is the day-dream world of a man named Ambrosius Pomposa. The characters, setting and actions are a pastiche of elements taken from various stories and mythologies known to Ambrosius onto which have been grafted the typical

carnavalesque elements of dream. Sometimes Chinanga seems to be a satirical reflection of the real world – of certain things in linear history – and sometimes it seems merely to be the play of mesmerising images. Its purpose in the novel is to function as a space outside linear time where Beauty can reconnect with members of her female continuum.

When she arrives, she feels she remembers this place from somewhere and is overcome with a feeling of nostalgia. There is a sense of loss, of a perfect time past and gone that pervades Chinanga which reminds Beauty of her mother, or the longing she associates with her mother. The pocket world of Chinanga also recalls Kristeva's semiotic because it is a place of 'richest imaginings' where the meaning of those imaginings has not been ordered or prescribed by the phallus. This space that exists outside of patrilinear reality is accessible because everyone shares the subversive and fecund experience of daydream and when Tepper brings Beauty here, it signals a complete break with patrilinear history.

It is interesting that the first person Beauty meets in this place is a riverboat captain named Karon. His name is an obvious reference to the boatman of Greek mythology who ferries the souls of the dead across the river Styx. As such he signifies a transitional space; neither Beauty nor the characters he ferries are dead but they are also not part of the world of linear time. This place is a space on the fringes, apart from patriarchal reality. The fact that serpents and amphibians are sacred in Chinanga also signifies it as a space of the Other. In Chinanga Beauty converses with a priest about the veneration of these creatures; she expresses astonishment at the phenomenon and Tepper neatly uses this to reflect the arrogance of patriarchal culture:

“At home,” I said, struggling for truth without complication. “At home we would think it strange to dedicate a cathedral to... ah...Amphibians.”
He seemed slightly startled. “What would you dedicate a cathedral to?”
“A martyr, perhaps,” I suggested. “An angel?”

“Were they made by the Creator?” he asked.
I nodded that they were.

“Well, so are these,” he said with some asperity, gesturing around him. “Are some parts of creation worth more than others in your homeland?”

I told him yes, that in my homeland (thinking of the 20th and 21st) only humans were worth anything at all. All else was disposable.
He shook his head over me, speechless, his old face suddenly lined with horror. (170)

In Chinanga that which is considered alien and unwanted by patriarchal culture is allowed a place, to the extent that snakes and frogs are worshipped. Here the principle of flux, fluidity and rebirth is worshipped through the veneration of skin shedders. It is therefore apt that Beauty reunites with two members of her female continuum here in this space.

The first is an elderly lady introduced as Senora Caravossa who greets Beauty by name even though Beauty is calling herself Lady Wellingford. She says of this woman that ‘she was a stranger, and yet with something familiar about her, as though her voice, or face perhaps, resembled someone else’s, someone I had known well’ (157). Beauty finds Caravossa slightly odd because of her unwarranted interest and kindness, until one night the sound of a clock alerts her to the identity of the old lady: ‘Suddenly, with a rush of memory with was almost a physical blow, I knew where I had heard the name before. Not Caravossa, Carabosse! It was the name on my clock!’ (187); the elderly lady who seems so familiar is her fairy Aunt Carabosse. Beauty confronts Carabosse about the curse and she admits to having cast the spell in order to protect her from the evil destroying the world. Carabosse also admits to having brought Beauty to Chinanga:

Carabosse said, “I used the secrets of time to find this place and explore it. No-one else could find it in a million years. All my effort, all my care, has been directed at bringing you here. (...) To get you away without anyone knowing,” she said. “Away from Westfaire. Away from England. Away from the middle centuries. To hide you somewhere safe. (...) No-one knows you are here,” she whispered to me. “Jaybee doesn’t know. The Dark Lord doesn’t know.”
“What Dark Lord?”

“Hush. Men like Jaybee do not spring into existence like spring spinach. They are aided into being by the Dark Lord. The Devil. He who has taken his portion in horror and pain. That one.” (187-188)

Carabosse has ‘used the secrets of time’ to hide Beauty from the evil Dark Lord; as the agent of the chrono-matrix she has been protecting what is good and beautiful by moving it out of linear time, eventually meaning to facilitate a cosmogynesis of her own. This is also a significant rewriting of the original tale because Tepper transforms the evil hag who curses Sleeping Beauty into a redeemer and protector; the ‘evil witch’ saves Beauty just as the ‘evil’ dragons save Earthsea. In Tepper’s fairy tale patriarchal culture is evil and it is ultimately combatted and defeated by the forces of the chrono-matrix. One night on a steamboat,

Beauty has a vision that encompasses this idea. In it, she seems to become the embodiment of the Great Round that protects life:

In daylight, things seem to vanish at the horizon, joining there. Here in the firelit dark, all lines plunged toward us across the waters, ending at our feet, a fan of radiance with ourselves at its centre. All things centred upon the observer. I was the axle of a wheel of light. It seemed important to remember this moment when the universe wheeled upon my hub, the moment in which I was impaled upon a fan of light.

“Remember this,” said a voice of the ambassador from Baskarone. “Remember this. All things end here with you, Beauty. Remember this.”

“Remember,” whispered an old woman’s voice. Senora. I looked around, but she was nowhere near. (178)

She is at the centre of a wheel of light with all life turning about her: she is the Great Round of life, death and rebirth – the chrono-matrix. She is instructed to remember this vision by Carabosse and Israfel, an angel. Israfel and those from Baskarone share the traits of angels from Judeo-Christian mythology but in *Beauty* they have allied themselves with Carabosse and the chrono-matrix in order to save the world.

The second important woman Beauty meets in Chinanga is Elladine of Ylles, her mother. Although this is the meeting for which Beauty has been longing, expecting that her mother will be the hub around which she herself can turn, she is disappointed. Her mother is distant and denies her the feminine familial bond she has been craving. Of their first hug, she writes:

The embrace itself was not what I expected. It was awkward, a little embarrassing. Mother did not cling. She gave me a brief, almost perfunctory hug and then stood away from me, looking intently at me, as though trying to find in me some resemblance she had expected. (...) I smiled fondly at Mama. At least, it began as a fond smile. Mama’s reaction to it was to turn abruptly away from me with a sigh. (195)

As Beauty sees Jaybee in her daughter, so Elladine sees the Duke in Beauty and she turns away in disgust. The taint of masculinity, of mortality and linear time is imprinted on her daughter and Elladine can therefore not accept her. As they spend more time together there are brief moments when she warms to her daughter but these do not become the rule. Beauty writes: ‘when she was being my mama, I felt as secure as a child held in loving arms. When she looked through me, I felt wavery, as though my very existence was in question’ (202).

When Beauty finds out that Elladine can also not tell the difference between her and Beloved, who is asleep in Westfaire, it shakes her reality and she feels ‘wavery’. Beauty’s idealisation of her mother has been an anchor for so long that now when the anchor proves unreliable, she does not know where to turn. She has moved beyond the world of patrilinear time but is yet to find where she belongs.

Beauty’s growing ties to the chrono-matrix begin to affect Chinanga. Because she introduces something absolutely new into this place where nothing and no one is new, she begins a chain reaction that will lead to its implosive destruction at which point she and her mother use the boots to travel to Faery. Like Chinanga, Faery is a realm that stands outside linear time. When they arrive, Beauty cannot make out the time of day and the conversation she has with Elladine reveals that time is static here:

“Is it morning or evening?” I asked Mama, gesturing at the sky.
“It is as it is,” she said. “As it always is in Faery. The sky a dark and glorious blue. The stars just showing. The flowers still visible and their perfume lying soft on the air. The grasses cool with evening. The air warm from day just passed...as it always is in Faery.” (219)

Later, Beauty is also told that ‘faery time is not the time of earth, it flows fast, it flows slow. Sometimes it almost stops wandering like the tortoise, long hours in the space of a breath. Other times it dives like the hawk, a year in a moment’s pace’ (234). This passage is slightly misleading read out of context; time itself does not move in Faery, but linear time continues to move outside it. So a person who moves between the two worlds can expect time to progress at a haphazard, fey pace in the mortal world of linear time. The Faery are aware that time passes outside their world and they even seem to measure themselves by it, though it does not affect their everyday existence. This paradox is encapsulated in the title of their king, Oberon: He Who Endures. This suggests that he will last, unchanging for all time and yet will be measured by the length of his endurance. The fairies also say that, ‘when he is gone, so will we be’ (224), which acknowledges a finite existence.

Faery considers itself superior to the reality of man and yet it, like Chinanga, is determined by humanity. Chinanga is limited because it is the dream of a man. Faery is limited by the fact that its continued existence relies on man’s belief in magic. The power of Faery has also begun to fade because, as man progresses in linear time and as the world becomes more and

more mechanical and soul-less, man's faith in anything but machines and money diminishes. As economic and mechanic inroads are made into the human soul, Faery is being destroyed.

While she is in Faery, Beauty visits Carabosse, whom the bogles call 'Old Carabosse of the Clocks', 'Old ticktock' and 'Clockwork Carabosse' foregrounding her relationship to Other time (242). Beauty's relationship with this woman is far more familial than the one she has with her mother; in fact, she describes her as affectionate and motherly. During the visit, we are told that, 'after a time she reached out and took (Beauty's) hand. It felt like a mother's hand' (244). The comfortable relationship between the two women allows Carabosse to help Beauty understand the chrono-materix and her responsibilities. Frye suggests that 'there are two central data of experience that we cannot see without external assistance: our own faces and our existence in time. To see the first we have to look in a mirror and to see the second we have to look at the dial of a clock' (Frye, 1976:117); Beauty learns about herself because she sees herself in the dial of Carabosse's clock.

When she asks her how she knows about the end of time, Carabosse tells Beauty, "I don't keep human time," (394) and that, "Long ago (...) when man was made, which was long after we were made, I looked into the future and saw an ending there. You have seen that ending?" (240). Carabosse reveals that the creation of man is what split time into patrilinear time and Other time and that at the moment man was created, the patriarchal carelessness and greed that would destroy everything was inevitable. Later in the novel when things are drawing to a close and there seems to be no hope left, Carabosse and Israfel look again into her forever pool and both see nothing but blackness. They believe they have failed and that all will be destroyed. But when Beauty, now an old lady, looks into the pool, something other than death is revealed:

Israfel sighed. "There," he said, pointing. I looked where he pointed and saw a glimmer of light, so faint, so dim, as though in the very bottom of the pool, some treasure gleamed, softly and infinitely far. (...)
"Whatever happens," Israfel said, "we have seen the light at the end of time."
(443)

Beauty is the seed that glimmers in the darkness and through her the chrono-materix may restore what patriarchal culture has destroyed. For the time being, however, Carabosse

instructs Beauty to continue hiding in linear history so that the Dark Lord cannot find her and destroy the seed. She returns to the human world.

During her time in the mortal world Beauty goes back to Westfaire and sees her daughter marry and produce a grandchild; Cinderella gives birth to Snow White. Unfortunately, Jaybee's poisonous influence is still there in the lives of her two descendants, neither of whom live simple, happy lives. Beauty is taken aback at the virulence of the negative influence this man has had on her life and on the lives of these two other women and she asks herself: "And is this perhaps what the Dark Lord wants? What Jaybee wanted, whether he knew it or not? To beget horror upon innocence?" (300)

When she finally returns to the nineties, it is as an old woman who has seen patriarchal culture beget evil until the entire world is almost sapped of beauty. It is significant, however, that as she travels she becomes more active in her fight to thwart evil and reassert goodness. She does all she can to help her female descendants and joins Green organisations dedicated to helping the environment. But it is too late to change the course of linear history. In the quiet moments when she is left to herself the destruction of nature and women haunts her and she keeps coming back to that first damaged relationship with her own mother and she writes: 'Sometimes I simply sit about, doing nothing purposeful, trying to make meaning of my life. It comes back to mamma, always. Why had I been born? For what? How had I failed her?' (392) For Tepper, that primary alienation of the girl from her mother stands for humanity's alienation from the feminine, the Earth and perhaps the chrono-materix. Finally, Beauty uses her last strength to go back to Faery in order to make amends with her estranged mother but she is again rejected by her mother. She writes that Elladine,

[r]an away, back to the courts, leaving me in the meadow staring after her, longing for a mother's strong love and seeing a child's weakness. Perhaps she could have loved a faery child. She had nothing to give me. She had never had anything to give me. (394)

It is telling that this final rejection leaves her unprotected and Oberon is able to hand her over to the Dark Lord. Beauty is cast into Hell, the domain of the Dark Lord and the last of the pocket realities that Tepper creates. As in Chinanga and Faery, time is static in Hell; everything in existence exists concurrently and nothing changes. Beauty writes:

Barrymore Gryme is here. Jaybee Veolante is here. Others of their ilk are here. The things that they created in their books and pictures are here as well, made real, embodied in the flesh, or more than flesh, or less than flesh. (...) Here there can be no undoing or rewriting. Here one is judged by the words already on paper, the picture already on film, the speech already recorded. Nothing new is written. Only old things redone. Old horrors, relived. (407)

Like Chinanga and Faery, Hell depends on the human world. The Dark Lord and the realm over which he reigns are incarnations of the cruelty and sadism imagined by people in patrilinear time, the inhabitants forced only to live horrors they themselves think into being. The horror Tepper attributes to patriarchal reality finds its most condensed expression here.

Because Beauty has seen man's cruelty as she moves through time, she recognises that Hell is man-made and she refuses to be defeated by it. While she is in Hell she imagines writing things in her journal and it is this ability to bring something new into being that challenges Hell's hold on her. She writes: 'I think sentences, I spell them into happening, into my book, wherever my book may be, writing them there in shadow letters, willing them to exist, enchanting them into existing, somewhere, to keep myself sane' (407). The sentences she thinks appear in her journal in the 'real' world and we are reminded of her affinity for language and her connection to the semiotic, to that which lies outside the frame of patriarchal control and patrilinear time, from which the new can arise. As her ability to bring about the new ends Chinanga's eternal apathy, so it ends the eternal suffering in Hell. Beauty merely suggests that change is possible and she begins a revolution in which Hell's denizens rebel against its authority; like Chinanga, Hell disappears.

Hell ends, Chinanga ends, and now it appears that Faery, too, is ending, dying because the mortal world is dying. Beauty sees her mother for a last time and Elladine 'smells of old flowers, drying and fading' (442). Everything is drawing to a close and so Beauty returns one last time to Earth and Westfaire. At Westfaire, she considers everything she has seen and learnt and she says, 'I wept a time for Mama and for Israfel, but weeping does no good does it? Sitting down and weeping is what women have done for centuries, and it has done no good at all. Nor praying. God has given us the Earth' (442). Tepper suggests that the world is dying because women have done nothing to stop the merciless, mechanical progress of patrilinear time. Beauty is done with weeping and mourning and passivity; she finally

recognises that surrendering one's agency to man or God achieves nothing. The Earth is hers to save; she has the same vision of herself as on the riverboat in Chinanga:

I saw myself, once again young and beautiful, at the centre of a wheel of light. All light, all beauty, ends at my feet, I told myself. It comes from everywhere, and ends at my feet. For a time, a vision possessed me, a great wheel of light which could not be extinguished, which would roll and burn and roll forever. (467)

This wheel of light is an image of the chrono-materix, rolling from life to death to rebirth so that things are always becoming anew. Beauty is at the centre of a web of light that spreads out from her, weaving all living beauty into one whole. She acknowledges the agency and active potential which are her due in the chrono-materix and does what she can to save life on Earth from total annihilation: she moves back and forth in time to collect a few of each living thing in order to create an Ark at Westfaire. Her great grandson and the last few bogles from Faery help her. Slowly they collect the animals, plants and insects, until:

There is not a species alive between year one of mankind and the 20th [century] that they have not found and brought here, alive or in seed...And beneath my breastbone the seed of beauty burns and burns, stronger with each thing that comes. It will not burn out. It will never burn out. (472)

When she is done, however, Beauty hears Carabosse laugh in her mind and say that her effort has been unnecessary because the seed within her breast is already an Ark: "In Beauty, beauty. All of it." However, it is important that Beauty herself has chosen to save the world. She is no longer a passive vessel, a fairy tale 'damsel in distress' waiting for Prince Charming or a fairy Godmother to save her. She undertakes the cosmogonic act that will save the Earth. At the very end, the last words in her journal acknowledge that the world will be reborn, that: 'All will sleep until the conditions of the enchantment are fulfilled and someone or something wondrous arrives to kiss beauty awake once more. Not a prince. Or not merely a prince. More than a prince. A rebirth of some kind' (475).

Tepper's feminist revision of the Sleeping Beauty fairy tale is provocative not only because of its defiance of feminine passivity and surrender to Prince Charming but also because of the exploration of time she undertakes. Like Le Guin and Lee, Tepper writes a tale in which the liberation from linear time enables her female protagonist to gain the distance she needs to recognise the corruption caused by patriarchal cultures. Each of these three authors condemns

patriarchal cultures for dismissing the contribution of women from the public domain and linear time. And each explores the consequences of this gender inequity, suggesting that it may very well lead to the destruction of the world. Like the female characters in the fiction discussed in the SF chapter, these female characters discover resources and claim agency as they move beyond the control of patrilinear time. They then bring their strengths into linear time and force their patriarchal worlds to change; they bring about the rebirth of their worlds so that women are equal to men and all exists in Balance.

Conclusion

Resetting the Clockocracy

28. TIME PIECES AND OTHER MEASURING DEVICES

In the Boyle house there are four clocks; three watches (one a Mickey Mouse watch which does not work); two calendars and two engagement books; three rulers, a yard stick; a measuring cup; a set of red plastic measuring spoons, which includes a tablespoon, a teaspoon, a one-half teaspoon, one-fourth teaspoon, and one-eighth teaspoon; an egg-timer; an oral thermometer and a rectal thermometer; a Boy Scout compass; a barometer in the shape of a house, in and out of which an old woman and an old man chase each other forever without fulfilment; a bathroom scale; an infant scale; a tape measure which can be pulled out of a stuffed felt strawberry; a wall on which the children's heights are marked; a metronome.

(Pamela Zoline 'The Heat Death of the Universe')

In the feminist SF short story 'The Heat Death of the Universe' (1967) Pamela Zoline recounts the daily activities of her protagonist, Sarah Boyle. Sarah's experience of time is restricted to small increments measured by the completion of domestic activities. Her life is measured not only by clocks but by measuring spoons, egg-timers, thermometers and scales – the trappings of a woman's identity as prescribed by western patriarchal culture; she is defined by and limited to the roles of mother and housewife. Zoline exposes Sarah's frustration and despair and likens her final rage to the heat death of the universe, during which entropy finally undoes order. At the moment at which Sarah's rage reaches its climax, the moment of the heat death of her universe, Zoline alludes to a resetting of the clockocracy; what has been ordered and measured in patrilinear time explodes, creating a new time that encourages chaotic becoming. This same introduction of chaos(-by-woman) into ordered, patrilinear reality is also encouraged by the authors discussed in this thesis. Like Zoline, they describe worlds in which their female protagonists are confined to and limited by roles and experiences in patrilinear time that do not allow women much autonomy. In resetting the clockocracy, these female characters free themselves and begin the liberation of their worlds.

Throughout this thesis I have focussed on the ways in which these six authors both reflect and present in nuanced terms the Second Wave engagement with time. I have argued that speculative fiction gives these feminist authors a space in which to explore time in a way that feminist polemical prose cannot. Because fiction allows these authors to recreate the world

they are not bound by the political problems and positions that limit women and feminists in the real world; instead, they are able to imagine a world beyond that envisaged by liberal, socialist and cultural feminisms. Very broadly, the problem with liberal and socialist feminisms might be that they tend to leave patriarchal systems in place and merely require the insertion of women into them; male-dominated power structures and troubling patriarchal ideologies may therefore be left largely intact. The problem with cultural feminisms is that the essentialist position they tend to espouse can perpetuate the idea of women as ‘other’, ‘different’ and therefore belonging outside patriarchal and mainstream culture. Neither position is fully able to defy patriarchal culture. It is only when the two are brought together, as they are in the novels I have discussed, that patriarchal culture is challenged and change is possible.

I suggest that the reason for this is that these authors deploy essentialist terms and concepts like ‘the feminine’ and ‘feminine time’ as a strategy for undermining the authority of masculinist culture. When ‘feminine time’ is used to insert the Other into linear time, it disrupts monolithic masculine truth and allows the exploration of an alternative truth to occur. In each of the six Second Wave speculative fiction novels discussed, linear time is described as regulated and controlled by dominant patriarchal cultures that subjugate women. An alternative time or temporal space is posited and the movement of the female characters from linear time into this Other time enables them to liberate themselves from limiting patriarchal definitions of ‘woman’. To varying degrees the authors describe this alternative time/space in terms that recall the essentialist language of Second Wave cultural feminism, characterising this alternative temporality as feminine, generative and cyclical. The only author who does not emphasise the feminine quality of this time is Octavia Butler, although she too uses it as a space in which to foreground the connections between women. These authors use feminine time as a tool that enables their protagonists to refuse the denigration of women by patriarchal culture. For them, the value in positing a time/space that is separate from patrilinear time is that it creates a fissure or liminal space in patriarchal reality in which the Other, the different, can be explored – but in which it can also become something *more* than simply ‘the Other’. Distanced from patriarchal culture, each of the female characters defines for herself what it means to be a ‘woman’ and is then brought back into patrilinear time in order to change the existing patriarchal system.

The perspectives of these Second Wave feminist authors, as reflected in the six selected novels, can therefore be identified as belonging to Kristeva's third generation. This generation claims the right to a temporal space in which a woman can define herself and create an authentic identity that is not limited by patriarchal notions of passive femininity; that is not measured by clocks and teaspoons and scales. However, such a woman is then called to live that change in patrilinear reality in order to challenge patriarchal ideology. These novels thus make a contribution to the Second Wave examination of time because, in treating feminine and masculine time in a dialectical manner, they become sites for the production of feminist knowledge, opening up a creative space for authors and readers to speculate about the consequences of adopting a new relationship to temporality. These authors further the Second Wave engagement with time because they can see beyond the borders imposed on reality by the feminist polemical prose of their time. Significantly, this ability to see beyond their own times also enables these six authors to foreshadow later developments in feminist thinking about time.

Throughout my discussion of the selected texts I foreground the authors' exploration of feminine time as privileging a 'process of becoming': in the texts the characters move out of patrilinear time and become something new and each character adopts this 'becoming' as intrinsic to her new experience of the world and herself. This perception of time as a process of becoming is one of the marks of contemporary poststructuralist feminist thought regarding time. The poststructuralist destabilisation of terms and categories such as those designated by 'male' and 'female', 'masculine' and 'feminine' has affected the way feminists approach 'gendered time', so that the masculine and feminine times explored by Second Wave feminists are now criticised as being simplistic, artificial constructs. However, I would once again like to suggest that it is to these Second Wave authors and theorists, who deploy 'the feminine' and 'woman' in order to subvert the monolithic authority of masculinist culture, that later poststructuralist feminisms can trace their beginnings. One of these poststructuralist feminists, Judith Butler, writes that

[g]ender is not traceable to a definable origin because it itself is an originating activity incessantly taking place. No longer understood as a product of cultural and psychic relations long past, gender is a contemporary way of organising past [and] future cultural norms, a way of situating oneself in and through those norms, an active style of living one's body in the world. (Butler, 1987:131)

It is clear that, if one considers gender from this perspective, as something enacted or a way of organising cultural norms, it cannot be perceived as the more unifying foundation of subjectivity that Second Wave feminisms both utilised and criticised. Instead, it is constantly shifting, mediating fractured subjectivities that differ from moment to moment and context to context. This perception of gender leads to an understanding of time as privileging becoming, rather than ‘become’, movement rather than stability. Pamela Odih writes that ‘to talk of “becoming” in this way is to embrace a perspective that refuses inevitability, universality or constancy in what it means to be a male or female subject’ (1999:14); in this framework time itself becomes part of what makes gender a shifting, unstable concept. As Elizabeth Grosz writes: ‘space and time can no longer be understood as neutral or transparent media whose passivity enables the specificity of matter to reveal itself; rather they are the active ingredients in the making of matter, and thus in the constitution of objects and subjects’ (2005:174).

It is significant that the feminist speculative fiction authors discussed earlier employ time in a way that seems to lead seamlessly into this poststructuralist theoretical framework. Not only does their subversion of linear time lead directly to a refusal of stultifying gender norms, but the open-endedness of their novels celebrates the lack of resolution that *becoming* champions. We are not told how Dana’s tale ‘ends’ because Butler has her go into the world and become whatever the future requires of her, possibly having to adapt over and over to new circumstances. Connie also does not ‘end’ because her descendants are alive and reflect her new becomings in the far distant future. Alyx rewrites her history in every story so that her ‘identity’ is always unstable, always becoming something other than what we expect. From the early years of the Second Wave, time is about becoming for Russ. Le Guin, Lee and Tepper all end their novels with rebirth, foregrounding time-as-becoming as the dominant temporal modes of their worlds. These authors refuse the dominance of linear temporality and in so doing subvert the stability of patriarchal culture and its authority over women as gendered subjects.

Louise Burchill writes that for postmodern feminists, time

is a constant fragmentation of all linearity (...). [And that] [o]n such a temporal understanding, becoming-woman might be said to consist above all in loosening oneself from the over-coding structure of subjective constraints,

including the mode of repetition as accumulation associated with gender norms. (...) In this way, women might well not only find themselves (as well as men) released from the linear time that governs the development of subjects in keeping with gender norms, but equally inflect their historical association with monumental and cyclical temporalities. Becoming-woman, in this sense, would be an affirmation of a future in which the asynchrony of gendered temporalities serving as a basis for asymmetrical power relations between the sexes would be a thing of the past. (Burchill, 2010:94-95)

Butler, Piercy, Russ, Le Guin, Lee and Tepper all understand that the subversion of linear time has this potential, and their work can be seen to explore just this possibility: becoming-woman creates a future in which misogyny cannot exist because gender asymmetries have been destabilised.

What postmodern feminism suggests is that although defying linear time literally may be a practical impossibility, if one can begin to perceive one's existence in time as a process of becoming, new alternatives and possibilities emerge in terms of subjecthood. A woman who claims *becoming* as the 'measure' of her being may begin to free herself from the heavy, deterministic expectations of masculinist culture; as Grosz writes:

Phallogentrism is explicitly not the refusal of an identity for women (on the contrary, there seems to be a proliferation of identities – wife, mother, teacher, nun, secretary, whore, etc.) but rather the containment of that identity by other definitions and other identities. (Grosz, 2005:174)

If *becoming* is asserted as the primary process of being, then none of the identities that are meant to reflect women's experiences within patriarchal culture can be upheld as models or truth. Each may reflect some part of a woman's experience, but only in so much as she herself has taken up the role and remade it in her own likeness, and then only for the short time in which she decides to play that role before becoming something else. In resetting the clockocracy, women may command their own becomings. This is precisely what is proposed by the six authors whose novels were analysed in chapters two and three.

In terms of this new feminist thinking, as with any other, the one overarching challenge remains the dissemination of ideologies that counter that of patriarchy. In this case, speculative fiction remains an extraordinarily useful tool. As seen in the six novels discussed in this thesis, speculative fiction gives feminists a fictional space in which to explore new conceptions of temporality and these works of fiction may well prove to be fruitful sites for

the production of feminist knowledge. As Feminist SF critic Veronica Hollinger, echoing Merrick and others, writes:

Analogous to feminist reading, feminist science fiction is not simply science fiction about women, it is science fiction written in the interests of women – however diversely those interests are defined by individual writers. It is a potent tool for feminist imaginative projects that are the necessary first steps in undertaking the cultural and social transformations that are the aims of the feminist political enterprise. (Hollinger, 2003:128)

Marleen Barr has lamented the fact that feminist academics are wary of including considerations of speculative fiction in their own work and in the courses they teach (Barr, 1992) and this is indeed a pity, given the sophisticated fiction being produced in this genre. Even the Second Wave fiction discussed in this thesis is sophisticated and merits academic exploration. However, the real power of speculative fiction remains its popular appeal, particularly now when many of the most popular television shows and films have a distinctly SF flavour. In fact, Aldiss and Wingrove assert that, ‘What was once virtually a secret movement has become part of the cultural wallpaper’ (Aldiss and Wingrove, 2005:149). This is reflected in the fact that, of the one hundred top grossing films at the box-office on the IMDB (Internet Movie Database) list, seventy nine are either fantasy or science fiction (and if one continues down the list, the same trend persists). The statistics published in the *Business of Consumer Publishing Report* similarly suggest that sales of speculative fiction books have been increasing steadily since 2002 (Grabois: 2007). This ‘cultural wallpaper’ is immensely powerful because it is widely accepted by the populace and because it asserts certain elements of culture as ‘given’ and one of these ‘givens’ in modern speculative fiction is often the liberated woman.

In a paper published in 1977, Ellen Morgan wrote that, ‘the social reality in which the realistic novel is grounded is still sufficiently patriarchal to make a realistic novel about a truly liberated woman very nearly a contradiction in terms’ (Morgan, 1978:277). This social reality has, in certain contexts, changed very little and will maintain the patriarchal status quo until feminists manage to change the images that populate the human imaginary, which is precisely what speculative fiction can do. It is able to take feminist ideology and translate it into images that are both comprehensible to and enjoyable for a general audience. As Patricia Melzer writes, ‘If we view the contemporary author as sharing a cultural climate with feminist political and theoretical debates, it becomes necessary to read science fiction texts as

contributions to feminist debates as well as reflections of them' (Melzer, 2006:9). Given the growing popularity of the genre, these texts are thus able to disseminate the core of feminist debate to a large, still predominantly male, audience that might otherwise have remained unaware of the importance of these issues. And in terms of feminist time studies, as Grosz suggests,

[o]ne of the most challenging issues facing any future feminism is precisely how to articulate a future in which futurity itself has a feminine form, in which the female subject can see itself projected beyond its present position as other to the one. (Grosz, 2005:177)

Speculative fiction, with its particular focus on the future and alternative futures, creates a fecund space within which the future may have a feminine form, a future within which women are not defined as other to man, but in which they may become anything at all – including *not-woman*; and similarly, where 'man' is not confined to the enactment of a rigid masculinity or male stereotype. As Marleen Barr writes, 'For reality-bound readers, the works of speculative fiction's womanists and feminists serve as our time-machines, test tubes and windows to the future. They present possibilities which can help us to develop alternatives' (Barr, 1987:81).

Apart from the sometimes overtly political and ideological agenda of much speculative fiction, it is also the simple ability of narrative to effect change in people that encourages the dissemination of these ideas. This power of story to affect its audience has been explored over the years by many literary theorists. One of these theorists, Martha Nussbaum, suggests that a reader cannot become immersed in a text without 'incurring' imaginative and moral growth; she suggests that any concentrated interaction with a text encourages an empathising with the characters which can result in the reader's developing a greater moral sensibility and compassion which he or she then brings to the real world. She suggests that it is this ability of narrative to effect change and encourage greater awareness of our responsibility to each other that makes the telling of stories essential to any truly democratic society,

[f]or a democracy requires not only institutions and procedures; it also requires a particular quality of vision. (...) Narrative art has the power to make us see the lives of the different with more than a casual tourist's interest – with involvement and sympathetic understanding. With anger at our society's refusals of visibility. We come to see how circumstances shape the lives of those who share with us some general goals and projects; and we see that

circumstances shape not only people's possibilities for action, but also their aspirations and desires, hopes and fears. (Nussbaum, 1998:88)

Speculative fiction brings into sharp relief the experiences of those who have been relegated to the space 'beyond the pale' and reminds the reader that the Other is often strikingly human. The power of good speculative fiction is that it mercilessly exposes the dark spots within the human character and within human culture and forces the reader to acknowledge his or her part in that culture. The ensuing crisis of conscience is what leads to change. As Nussbaum writes, 'the artistic form makes its spectator perceive, for a time, the invisible people of their world – at least a beginning of social justice' (Nussbaum, 1998:94). In terms of changing the everyday perceptions of men and women, narrative in general and speculative fiction in particular is a singularly potent tool with which to effect social change.

Images and stories also strengthen us by opening paths we could not have previously imagined and this is the power of a modern mythology like speculative fiction: the power of myth to affect the psyche and galvanise it into action is reflected in worlds that are recognisably similar to ours and in characters in which we are able to recognise facets of ourselves. This suggests that transformation is within our reach. When female characters, like those discussed in this thesis, defy patriarchal expectations and claim their right to become something new, readers are asked to consider the implications of a reality in which women are neither passive nor submissive. Speculative fiction, and feminist speculative fiction in particular, therefore challenges each reader to allow himself or herself to be drawn into a personal cosmogynesis and the new world into which he or she emerges should be one in which the female subject is, finally, subject to nothing.

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