Constructing the Ideal Mate: Pondering the Gynoid Connection

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On the back cover of Lynn Peril´s *Pink Think: Becoming a Woman in Many Uneasy Lessons* the editorial blurb asks "What does it take to be the ideal woman?"[1] I believe this problem is still valid today, but I am not sure that any of the proposed answers to date offer a real solution. I will not look at these other proposals but will ask again: What does it take to be the ideal woman? I will center my paper on media attitudes during the 1950s and the 1960s Cold War era and especially on the image of woman as a transgressed Other as played out by science fiction narratives. For this I will focus my attention at the particular take that some episodes of Rod Serling's television series *The Twilight Zone* [*TZ*] (1959-1964) have on this issue, taking special interest in the episode "The Lonely" (aired 13.Nov.1959), and in the representation of the female as object (gynoid) to see how they allow us to re-think the evolution of midtwentieth century ideas of male-female dichotomy. I won't claim to answer the questions posited by these works, and many others. At most I pretend to point toward a societal attitude that seemed to express a need to continue as if nothing was wrong, and, as such, conspired to repress social mores in both men and women by engaging in the stabilization of sexual roles. I also look at some other examples, both contemporary to and later works, to see if these ideas are still present and valid.

The deconstruction of the female (and male) body in the second half of the twentieth century has failed in producing any positive results in the liberation of women (and men) from the oppressive and repressive nature of (post)modern society. This is so because such deconstructive acts strive toward a pure redux of gender, a move more aligned with turning identity into a sterile and unknowable mush, an amorphous material readily molded into any shape or concept temporarily fancied at the time, and not toward establishing shared experiences of Being-in-itself. The somewhat cynical view of woman as "savior of their gender" by becoming both male AND female in their android/cyborg form somewhat seems to undermines the whole idea of hybridity. What must be achieved, and cannot be achieved by the senseless and incessant finger-pointing accusations of the Other, is, rather, the embracing of the centering-decentered being. That is, it is necessary to accept, temporarily, the absoluteness contained at the moment in space, and the locale in time, where events of being are enacted. And, in the relation between men and women, this means that it is necessary to accept the presumed absolute nature of the body as represented in the maleness of the woman and in the femaleness of the man. "As the imagined social body has become increasingly more perfect and controlled—more and more closely fitting the modernist model of (male) autonomous subjectivity—the likelihood of the eruption of the repressed body, in all its abject, excessive, imperfect,

uncontrolled, boundary-challenged 'female-ness,' increases" (Orbaugh 443). But this does not mean that we must return to the old oppressive apollonian/dionysian camps of being male or being female. Nor does it mean that each camp must absolve the differences that exist between each other. Rather, it means that one must demand that each being identifies its dual nature, its male-female juncture, through which the species turns toward one as identity, and desires the other as completion in the true hybrid nature of Being. Then, and only then, can any true progress be made in solving the problems between the male and the female. And only then can the female be truly free from this oppression, not only of men, but of the women who do not allow for an "other" to be free. Only then can beings stop worrying about being men or women, of being male or female, and turn their attention to Being itself.

Part of the problem stems from the fact that many works try to fall within the "utopian tradition of imagining a world without gender, which is perhaps a world without genesis, but maybe also a world without end" (Haraway 150). Yet as Anne Balsamo notes of Arthur Kroker's analysis of the female body in *Body Invaders*, "female bodies continue to mark gender: thus they announce the deployment of a gendered opposition of bodies in postmodern theory. This is a gendered opposition, whereby the One (recently "invaded" body) is unmarked by gender and the Other (the always postmodern body) is female. Such is that the fate of the female body in the postmodern cultural imaginary: an always silent/silenced conceptual place holder in hysterical male discourse" (Balsamo 32).

In "A Manifesto for Cyborgs" Donna Haraway proposes seeing the cyborg as a "utopian" paradigm through which one may pursue an understanding of the gendered body by providing a hybrid context through which to represent unfamiliar "otherness." This stems from Haraway's idea that "There is nothing about being female that naturally binds women. There is not even such a state as 'being' female, itself a highly complex category constructed in contested sexual scientific discourses and other social practices" (Haraway 155). It is in this context that she introduces the cyborg as a female construct. "The cyborg," states Haraway, "is a matter of fiction and lived experience that changes what counts as *women's* experience in the late twentieth century" (*my emphasis*, 149).

I am troubled by what seems to be Haraway's conclusion that the cyborg is exclusively a female construct, especially since Haraway begins her argument with a more generic and genderless definition of the cyborg. Yet Haraway eventually takes for granted that the dichotomy of the cyborg is by nature female. Even though "A cyborg," as Haraway states earlier, "is a cybernetic organism, a hybrid of machine and organism, a creature of social reality as well as a creature of fiction" (149) she eventually claims that the cyborg is a female construct. As one can

roughly see there is no direct link between the "cyborg" as defined above and its identification with "women's experience," or any gendered experience per se, as stated later by Haraway. This overt identification of the cyborg with "women" is reinforced when Haraway later states that the cyborg is "an ultimate self untied at last from all dependency, a man in space" (151).

Another problem with Haraway's cyborg as female stems from her statement that

> Unlike the hopes of Frankenstein's monster, the cyborg does not expect its father to save it through a restoration of the garden; that is, through the fabrication of a heterosexual mate, through its completion in a finished whole, a city and cosmos. The cyborg does not dream of community on the model of the organic family, this time without the oedipal project the cyborg could not recognize the Garden of Eden; it is not made of mud and cannot dream of returning to dust. (Haraway 151)

Haraway's utopia seems to reject most previous ideas of the utopian. Though I admit that many books and movies have idealized the soulless cyborg as a rebel against societal conformity (and patriarchal oppression), I find it somewhat strange that Haraway feels moved to not only over generalize this idea of total individualization but to embrace it so wholeheartedly. After all, if a cyborg, by her own admission, is part machine part organism, then is it not expected that part of it will eventually deteriorate into dust? This lack of dreaming and of hope also seems to imply that the cyborg has no human quality: i.e. a human brain. As such, Haraway's idea of the cyborg is supported mostly by the implementation of an AI rather than the old standard wetware. This only seems to compound one's sense that one must strip the cyborg of all (dare I say it) humanity for the cyborg to be defined as Haraway seems to infer, as intrinsically female. One may even argue that the cyborg is homosexual by nature since it has no interest in seeking heterosexual mates (Or could it be asexual? Not really since Haraway makes it clear that it is female, but it would be an interesting thought.). Why not just say that it looks for no mate at all? That would make more sense given that Haraway had just previously defined the cyborg as "a creature in a post-gender world…," and, as such, it might make more sense that it would not seek a mate at all, whether homo- or hetero- (150).

Even so, I am particularly intrigued by how, in some cases, the present discourse of the androids, cyborgs, and, especially, gynoids propose an idealized utopian(/dystopian) form of female (or male) being, and how this discourse evolves into a gendered hybrid identity. This identity might not present a true discourse between the One and the Other for, as a transgressed identity, its borders are not necessarily well defined. There is the possibility of

seepage from one to the other, from male into female into male, from human to machine to human.. As Balsamo notes, “Cyborg bodies, then, cannot be conceived as belonging wholly to either culture or nature; they are neither wholly technological nor completely organic. In a similar sense, cyborg bodies cannot be completely discursive. Cyborgs are a matter of fiction and a matter of lived experience” (33). As such the cyborg’s “identity is predicated on transgressed boundaries” (Balsamo 32).

In “The Lonely” James A. Corry (played by Jack Warden) is serving time for a murder he didn’t commit on a penal asteroid out there somewhere nine million miles away in an unspecified future. Corry’s only contact with society is with the captain and crew of a supply ship that visits his quadrant regularly every four months or so. Other than that, Corry is all alone in what represents a desolate asteroid, reminiscent of the Arizona desert, alone in a rundown metal shack, flanking a rundown touring car of centuries gone by for company, and running makeshift parlor games as entertainment. As the opening narration sums it up for us: “Now witness if you will a man’s mind and body shriveling in the sun, a man dying of loneliness.”

Corry’s physical isolation accentuates the existential loneliness felt by man during the midtwentieth century, and its effect on the human psyche. Loneliness is that state of mind from which no human being can completely escape. This phenomenon and its effects upon the psyche has been explored before by writers such as Daniel Defoe (*Robinson Crusoe* 1719) and Adolfo Bioy-Casares (*La invención de Morel* 1940. Translated as *The Invention of Morel*). *The Twilight Zone* has also explored this theme in some of its episodes, such as in the pilot episode “Where Is Everybody?” (aired 2.Oct.1959) Mike Ferris (played by finds himself in a town strangely devoid of people. But despite the emptiness, he has the odd feeling that he’s being watched. The story ends with the revelation that Ferris is an astronaut who has been in an isolation chamber as part of laboratory experiments to gauge man’s ability to travel for long periods alone in outer space. As the closing narration warns us “Up there, up there in the vastness of space, in the void that is sky, up there is an enemy known as isolation. It sits there in the stars waiting, waiting with the patience of eons, forever waiting...in the Twilight Zone.” But isolation is more than an experiment, and is not exclusive to outer space. Loneliness is real and, as the opening narration reminds us, “The place is here, the time is now, and the journey into the shadows that we're about to watch could be OUR journey.” And our journey is being-in-itself, as “an undetermined and constant movement situated between disclosure and concealment” of the truth of the fe-male self (Del Río 387).

Of course the problem is: Who or what is the proper companion?

Concepts such as journey, abandonment and loneliness have been considered by writers before. For example in Daniel Defoe's novel *Robinson Crusoe* we are confronted with a man marooned on an island for years, who alone at first eventually befriends a (noble) savage whom Crusoe saves from cannibals. Defoe's novel seems to propose that a savage, Friday, given its simpleness of being, is the ideal companion for a civilized and cultured man stranded on a deserted island. But this is only possible if the character of the savage is somewhat feminized by turning him into a slave/servant, the ideal of the Noble Savage, or a child of nature, and thus subservient to the ideas and whims of the West and the rationality of civilization. Even though Defoe's tale is seen mostly as a cautionary tale and a statement of civilized Europe's somewhat screwed-up ideals and treatment of the New World and its inhabitants, it points to the paternalizing attitudes of the (civilized) male over its (savage) inferior (i.e., the female) in any (un)natural relationship, being the male One and its inferior seen as its Other.

This same idea is present in the campy sci-fi version *Robinson Crusoe Goes to Mars* (Byron Haskin 1964) in the guise of a small monkey which tripulated a previous Mars probe, and later by an alien humanoid who ends up being the extraterrestrial Friday, an ideal (estranged) Other. An equally yet somewhat more telling of the imposition of correct social sexual mores is the disneyesque version of this story of abandonment, *The Swiss Family Robinson*[2] (Ken Annakin 1960). The problem of abandonment and loneliness is compounded by the presence of a cast ensemble in the place of the One. It is not the plight of a sole survivor who is marooned, but of a family unit. Equally complicated is the fact that the Other is already inserted in the unit in the figure of a surviving young woman, Roberta, the Captain's niece (played by Janet Munro). Roberta is the "perfect" (girl) Friday since she will eventually fulfill her role as ideal companion in the movie. Roberta will be referred to by the androgynous (almost male) moniker "Bertie" until she eventually becomes the intended for the family's elder son, and, being the only other female, a focus of discord between the all-male Robinson siblings. Even in isolation the gendered construct of being female wrecks havoc on the peaceful quasi-utopian illusion of the island paradise. Bertie's blossoming into the more formal and gendered, and more feminine, Roberta is foreshadowed by the dual nature in her proper name Robert-a, a subtle semblance of her hybrid identity.

But the idea of an ideal mate can lead to more questionable and interesting propositions, as dealt (un/intentionally?) in the television series *Lost in Space* (1965-1968) where the perfect companion may not be organic at all, but an inorganic surrogate, present in the figure of Robbie the Robot (portrayed by Bob May). Even though the series was mostly campy fantasy, especially in its last year of production, *Lost in Space* is just another

version of *Robinson Crusoe* story only set in Outer Space. It is the story of a family (the Robinsons) and their crew, (the pilot and the stowaway) marooned in space without an inkling of how to return to their known universe. Father, mother, two daughters and a son, plus a pilot and the stowaway brings the total to seven, four males and three females. An uneven number and one that leaves someone (eventually) alone, in this case presumably the son, Will Robinson (portrayed by Bill Mummy). The presence of the robot is not only as an essential part of the equipment necessary to their operations but, as it will eventually play out, to their well being as humans, by becoming a friend and companion to the son, Will, and an eventual mate. One has to consider that Will is somewhat Other-less in the matrix of the story. He is the only character which has no Other to play off, except for his sister Penny (portrayed by Angela Cartwright) and Dr. Zachary Smith (portrayed by Jonathan Harris). Barring any ideas of incest or pedophilia, it actually does present a wierd interest triangle between the three Others and Will as its focus. This is remedied, somewhat, by playing the tensions off Penny (as sibling) and Dr. Smith (as male antagonist) against Will, who allies himself with Robbie the Robot. As Will Robinson's "play-mate" Robbie becomes an early example of machine supplanting "natural" relations between humans, and, effectively, between male and female while avoiding any questionable relationship between his female sibling or the male antagonist. Which, in retrospect, is no weirder than the relation between Chuck Noland and Wilson, portrayed by Tom Hanks and Wilson Soccer Ball respectively, in Robert Zemeckis' *Cast Away* (2000). It is, after all, about man confronting his loneliness.

Returning to "The Lonely" it seems to imply that what releases human beings from their existential angst is not just the presence of another human, as evidenced by Corry's (Crusoe's) excitement at the arrival of the supply ship (cannibals/pirates) from Earth (Neighboring islands/Europe), but of a mate (Friday). As always, the proposal of *The Twilight Zone* is to explore the quirks of human existence, and, in this particular episode, this quest emphasizes the human quest for companionship as defined (as in almost every other stereotypical case) by a woman. Even though the story is structured lightly on what seems to be a (gendered) dichotomy of "authority, power, and control," (Cranny-Francis 156) I believe that it is more a problem of the human sense of Being before the void, not only embodied but augmented in the simulacra of the female android or gynoid.

In "The lonely" there are two concepts being queried: 1, the image of the female as companion; and 2, the idea of technology and machines as substitutes to nature (and as companion). Both concepts are common in the defining ideals of the male (boys and their toys), and "The Lonely" explores both concepts as they become one. Key to this idea is the common practice underlying in man´s relations to the female to machines, where both are seen as

one and the same—women treated as objects (possession), machines being feminized (car referred to as she). First the female figure and its male observer would become a determining factor as to the roles played by women in science fiction. Laura Mulvey's analysis of spectatorship in "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" proposes that all cinematic representations fall into categories of male voyeurism or male sociophilia. Mulvey also states that it is the traditional role of women in films, especially during the 1950s and 1960s, to carry forth the pleasure images thus always in display to the masculine gaze.

> Traditionally, the woman displayed has functioned on two levels: as erotic object for the characters within the screen story, and as erotic object for the spectator within the auditorium, with a shifting tension between the looks on either side of the screen. (Mulvey 19)

Even though Mulvey is correct in her assessment of male fantasy, Paul Wells' argument in "The Invisible Man: Shrinking Masculinity in the 1950s Science Fiction B-Movie," brings to light an interesting, and equally valid, counterpoint to her proposal. Wells' claim that the American male has lost his 'masculinity' during the cavalcade of science fiction films of the 1950s is not too far from the truth. Accordingly the male personae upheld by society until the 1940s had started to break down due, in part, to the new roles played by women during the Second World War, roles that openly questioned man's tower of authority, and the justification of the ruling patriarchy. Furthermore, Wells argues that during the 1950s the supremacy of the male was put in question especially by the boom of the science fiction film industry. For example, Wells indicates that "time and again, men in sci-fi B-movie[s] demonstrate ineptitude in their attempt to secure power and take control of their circumstances" (Wells 182). This ineptitude delivered a great blow to man's exclusive claim of dominion and authority over nature through science. The stereotyped scientist is perceived as an "isolated figure, single-mindedly pursuing his research, sometimes at great personal cost, but with an unbridled energy and intensity that sometimes borders on the obsessive," his masculinity usually left unexplored (Wells 183). In fact, this stoic, almost monkish personae tends to reflect a personal repulsion for the other sex.

The other sex is in fact seen as a bothersome inconvenience that may have to be suffered given social convention. Even so, the scientist is usually portrayed as a person who often neglects his wife, focusing all his attention on his work. Hence movies tend to depend on the antisocial, "de-sexualized" rationalistic paradigm to

create a sub-tension in the plot showing the "inadequacies" of the scientific de-naturalized male, such as in *Forbidden Planet* (Fred McLeod Wilcox 1956) and *The Thing (From Another World)* (Christian Nyby 1951).

One classic pre-1950s case in point is James Whale's *Frankenstein* (1931), where the scientist, Henry Frankenstein (played by Colin Clive), becomes "the Promethean figure of modern science" at the expense of becoming, ironically, impotent, as Michael Sevastakis notes:

> Whereas the count in Browning's Dracula has brought life-in-death to those with whom he came in contact, Dr. Frankenstein is interested in bringing a death-in-life to his creation. Once he has aided in the process of creation, however, he [Henry Frankenstein] is physically and mentally incapacitated and cannot for a time go through the marriage ceremony (60).

On the other hand, Virginia Wright Wexman's work *Creating the Couple* sheds light into the common misgivings that scholars have reflected in their interpretations of male-female relationships during the 1950s (e.g. Mulvey). Wexman points out that "By 1950 52 percent of women worked outside the home.... As a result, the relations between the sexes became newly charged with issues of competition and dominance" (168). This new and open "threat to the traditional gender hierarchy" brought about new concerns which imperiled the ruling concept of the domesticated housewife. Current trends, though, have shown that through a careful appreciation and study of science fiction of the 50s and 60s we are able to access a "critique of the control exerted over women's lives by culture in which their reality is denied in favour of a constructed image that serves the maintenance of a gender hierarchy" (Shaw 264). But, while it is true that June Cleaver (played by Barbara Billingsley), from *Leave it to Beaver* (1957-1963), and Donna Stone (played by Donna Reed), from *The Donna Reed Show* (1958-1966), tried to sell the myth of the perfect female role as wife and homemaker, women in the real world were advancing precariously into the world reserved for male roles of business and sciences, though in those few examples television series portrayed her as a hybrid of business and homemaker as seen in the character of Dr. Maureen Robinson played by June Lockhart in *Lost in Space*. Even so, these characters were few and mostly paired to a strong male figure, somewhat offsetting any power the female character may wield. As Debbie Shaw notes in "In Her Own Image: The Constructed Female in Women's Science Fiction"

> A large component of women's oppression originates in the myth that we [women] are condemned to frailty, both physical and mental, through our reproductive capacity and it

> is this, plus the demand that we conform to a physical image of the 'ideal' woman, that imposes the burden. (274)

This role of the "female" should be approached from a possibly less jilted point-of-view. For example L. Timmel Duchamp, in her essay on the construct of the "housewife" in the later part of the twentieth century, tries to remember what made the actual transition from "housewife" to "career girl" seem so traumatic back in the 1950s and 1960s. As she remembers her experience of her own mother's life during that period she reflects that all is not as it seemed.

> Her care to earn less than my father had had as much to do with her desperate attempts to "feel like a woman" (as she usually put it) as with the desire to preserve my father's masculine pride. It had never occurred to me that *her* pride—as a—"real woman"—required this difference. She might be a "career girl" when she was on the job (where men as well as women had to jump when she said "jump!") functioning like a man, but at home, at least, she could act like a woman—which meant if not cooking and sewing, at least bringing in less money and wearing cosmetics and "feminine" clothes. (Duchamp 21)

Duchamp's mother's identity doesn't exactly conform to the traditional Western subject as described by Sheryll Vint in her essay "Double Identity: Interpellation to Gwyneth Jones's Aleutian Trilogy." In it she defines the process of subject formation as "formed by both what is (those identifications we make, those calls we answer) and what is not (identifications we reject, calls we refuse). The process of subject formation thus plays on doubled meaning of the word identity as both unique characteristics and as sameness. To construct a definition of self (identity) we need to describe what we see as the same as this self (what we identify with) and set the boundary where this self ends and becomes other" (407). Duchamp's mother is a true hybrid identity (though not a cyborg, as Haraway would lead us to prefer), in her role as both female and male, mother (in her inward role as "housewife") and (somewhat) father (in her outward role as a "career girl"). She balances being both, unique yet the same.

But this is not an option that everyone can envision for female roles during the 1950s and 1960s, especially in popular media. Such an example is the episode "The Lateness of the Hour" (*TZ* aired 2.Dec.1960). Jana (played by Inger Stevens) has lived all her life, with her parents, in the protection of her house and in total isolation from the world. She not only resents her exclusion from life she resents the fact that she *has* no life to speak of. Her prison is both outward as it is inward, in the form of the house, and in her gynoid nature—a fact which compounds the

problem at hand. Both represent the artificial environment in which she has been raised, and which has impeded her true role to be achieved. For Jana is unable to come to terms with the traditional subject as she learns that she has no boundaries, that she is unique yet *not* the same, and she is bounded by her true (hidden) nature as a gynoid.

It is the female role, the role of mother-housewife that the "daughter" in "The Lateness of the Hour" wishes to embody. To fully feel alive. This, of course, brings horror to her parents, who have lived a long and sterile secret. For Jana is not even human. She is an android—a gynoid—the perfect and ever unchanging daughter. The parents never counted on her developing this psychological need to be "feminine"—to be a woman—so they never figured they needed to tell her the truth about her identity. This need to be "feminine" is now compounded by the artificial make of the gynoid. She now not only wants to be "female," she wants to be human—to feel, to love and to have a family. All which is to be denied Jana as gynoid, eventually loses her mind, not only because she is not human, but because she is not even she, and cannot bear the uselessness of her apparent form.

A contrasting example of this idea is "I Sing the Body Electric" (*TZ* aired 18.May.1962) where the gynoid takes the form of a sweet, yet stern, grandmother who aids a bachelor father to raise his children as a surrogate mother figure. This gynoid is not to be seen as a substitute of the lost companion and lover, she does not present herself as a remedy for the male (in the role of the wife), but as an aid which complements the natural role of nourishing and protection needed by the family, one that once her job is done will leave and return to her storage. The story seems to imply that man can only be true to one woman and that the loss of her demands that the man be faithful to her memory. Yet given the lack of a "housewife," society demands that this void be filled by an entity. The presentation of an artificial "mother," not to be confused as a sexual but as a (grand)motherly figure, prevents the man-father of crossing over to the female role of woman-mother while allowing him to fulfil his primary male role as patriarch-provider.[3]

Returning to "The Lonely," Corry, as a fallen being, does not fall into these idealized male roles, and as such, is forsaken from all societal connections. As a consequence, he has no "female" figure to focus his being. He is the (ne'er-do-well) rogue of the old westerns and the film-*noir* mysteries that lives exiled in the limits of society. But, contrary to romantic rogues such as Clark Gable in *Gone with the Wind* (Victor Fleming 1939) and Humphrey Bogart in *Casablanca* (Michael Curtiz 1942), Jack Warden's character is a misfit rogue who is ousted from society against his will and wants desperately to return to the security of the community.

Captain Allenby, the penal supply ship's commander (played by John Dehner), feels sorry for Corry's condition. Part of the subplot deals with the inhumanity with which a society may punish a human being for crimes committed against society. Corry has been sentenced to fifty years of solitary confinement on an isolated asteroid by the authorities on Earth. Since his sentencing, Corry's lawyer has tried to appeal the decision. But the courts are harsh, and, given that Corry's crime is murder, even though it was in self-defense, his plight falls on unsympathetic ears. As such Allenby decides to lessen Corry's inhumane burden by a token of his latent and weary humanity: Allenby brings Corry a consort, of a sort, a robot named Alicia (played by Jean Marsh).

Corry's objection stems from the isolation expressed by his barren hostile surroundings. It is the world of the Western. The Western defines clearly the binary female role between the schoolmarm and the saloon girl, the former defining the temperament of civilization, the latter defining the passion of the Wild West. The male is represented as a wild card, a somewhat lovable rogue who paired to the right woman can become an example of society, but if seduced by the wrong woman he becomes the epitome of lust and recklessness. This struggle is present in such movies as *Angel and the Badman* (James Edward Grant 1947), *Shane* (George Stevens 1953) and the television series *Gunsmoke* (1955-1975) where the hero is depicted as constantly straddling both the good as the bad. The loner, viewed outside civilization, and the law, roams between both world, seduced by the wild passion of the saloon but attracted to the civility of the school. A good example of this struggle is the episode "Two" (*TZ* aired 15.Sep.1961). A post-apocalyptic retelling of Shakespeare's *Taming of the Shrew*, this story deals with the survival of two opposing warriors of an all out global war, one male (Charles Bronson) and one female (Elizabeth Montgomery). We only listen to the male figure as the female, for reasons not explained, doesn't talk.[4] As we see them progress through the episode, and through the desolated city, their hatred and distrust wanes as they grow comfortable with each other and end, eventually, walking away hand in hand towards an unknown future, somewhat like Adam and Eve after they have been driven out of the Garden to face the perils of a new world together. Elizabeth Montgomery's character is portrayed as both feral and feminine, more a Lillith than an Eve. Yet her female role eventually takes over and allows her "softer" side to rise to the occasion. This is evident when she says "Precrassny", which is Russian for pretty, when looking at a dress and the proceeds to put on the dress. Meanwhile Bronson'c character "shaves" thus revealing a civilized man under the wild savagery of the warrior. What makes it more poignant is that this is the only word she utters during the whole episode, while Bronson's character talks

throughout the whole episode Montgomery´s only verbalization is in reference to a frilly dress on display at a store window.

This episode seems to imply one of two things (or maybe both): either that men are superior to women given their power of reason over impulse, or that women are mere objects for men's fulfillment and pleasure. This is especially relevant given Montgomery's portrayal of her character as a feral child (Tarzan), a female Friday for Bronson's Crusoe. She is, in fact, the perfect (or at least better) Friday, for she is not only a Noble-ized Savage, but a female (Eve) with which Bronson's character (Adam) may fulfill his role as patriarch and re-populate the world. Thus Montgomery's character not only transforms her sex role by adopting a hybrid identity, as construct of the warrior and feminine, but through her femaleness allows Bronson's character to become a more fulfiled male.

This struggle between the sex roles can be seen in *The Postman* (Kevin Costner 1997) Kevin Costner eventually resigns himself to accept the female companion not as lover but as a partner, and thus, equally, resign himself to not wander aimlessly anymore through the New Old West the frontier out of the post-apocalyptic western American plains. As in the Old Western motif woman and child (daughter), lover and loved, bring civilization to the savage wilderness of man—represented in the form of the post-apocalyptic ravaged lands of the American Northwest.. The unwilling hero, a post-apocalyptic Shane, saunters up to once again defend and solidify his future through the guise of the female.

But as Sigmund Freud would state, this future is double-edged. And man must face his true fears—his nakedness, especially before the Other."Whenever primitive man has set up a taboo," states Freud, "he fears some danger and it cannot be disputed that a generalized dread of women is expressed in all these rules of avoidance. The man is afraid of being weakened by the woman, infected with her femininity" ("The Taboo of Virginity" 198). In facing the female man is afraid of loosing his virility—his maleness—, in a sense, he is afraid of becoming a "girly-man." Or, in event, of not be(com)ing at all. The female marks the end of his liberty—more libertine—, she announces the end of the male's lack of responsibility and of the sense of pure freedom from all constraints. She also defines the possibility of never reaching truth, the ideals and dreams by which the male guides all his actions. In fact, the Postman never arrives at his set destination, he never reaches the place he had originally set for, nor, for that matter, the Pacific Coast, he allows himself to be "shackled" to a "lesser" goal. It is this fear of not reaching one's true goal, of giving up one´s dream—or true destiny—that makes the female such a terrifying entity.

In “The Lonely” Corry is equally afraid of losing his true goal. In fact, Alicia serves as a remembrance of earth, of the civilization Corry had to leave behind because of his “imprisonment,” and it is the fear of giving up, the underlying realization and resignation of never been able to go back, that makes Corry reject her. For Alicia is a (virtual) reminder, if not a balm, of his exiled being, of his ostracization from society, and from humanity itself. Alicia is an institutional attempt to civilize, or rather to give the illusion of civilization to social misfits. As a construct the gynoid allows man to focus his desires on an objective site of action, an outward unconscious which deflects the natural impulse or desire allowing him to experiment with various possibilities and outcomes without risking committing himself to any one of them. Barring his ostracized condition, Alicia allows Corry to fix the physical and the psychological boundaries of the self by allowing Corry to seek and posses her in his loneliness.

And she does achieve civilizing Corry, for Corry, in his barren dellusion, finally accepts Alicia as his companion to the point that he *really* believes that she is ‘real’. But, with the help of violent force, this illusion is lifted when Allenby shoots Alicia in the face revealing the ugliness of the circuitry that was hidden under the falsity of womanhood.

With this revelation we find out that the scientific/technological community forms an integral part of the illusion makers, if not the greatest of all illusions themselves.[5] For the woman, Alicia, is not flesh and blood but a creation of someone’s belief of the ideal woman, the techno-scientific version of Pygmalion’s Galatea or Hephaestus’ Pandora. But, instead of being a creation of divine purity, Alicia is revealed to be no more than another tool, another machine created by humans to fool man, with her pretty face (conveniently shot off by Allenby), into believing that he is not alone in the world. With that, another lie that keeps humanity, and, in this case, man under control is destroyed. Male’s reason for being, and the well being of society, the propagation of his seeds to preserve the species, is revealed as a conspiratorial lie established, ironically, by a patriarchal society to suppress him from acting out his own will.

During the 1950s and early 1960s science and technology functioned to support societal illusions of correct roles for man and woman.[6] This societal illusion, which hides in itself the loneliness veiled by technology, and which eventually eats at a human’s soul, leaving it helpless in a nauseating sterile void, is revealed from under the artificial female societal mask as Allenby tells Corry: “All you're leaving behind is loneliness.” Corry, stunned by his willingness to accept the pseudo-reality that was created by an authoritarian science and technology, replies: “I must remember that. I must remember to keep that in mind” (“The Lonely”). In other words, if Corry doesn't keep

the remembrance of this illusion alive, he might fall again victim to the dangers and vanities of trusting the plastic pleasures of the created feminine, and of civilization as a whole. He must remember to remember what must be, not what is, for what is is only an illusion upon which his whole life is constructed.[7] One could say that God (Allenby) giveth and God (Allenby) taketh away.

It had taken Corry eleven months to accept this othered Other by falling prey to the illusions of femininity, and of civilization. And, it takes a fleeting action of violence to recuperate his freedom by destroying the other.

> It is not true that human beings delay loving or hating until they have studied and become familiar with the nature of the object to which these affects apply. On the contrary they love impulsively, from emotional motives which have nothing to do with knowledge, and whose operation is at most weakened by reflection and consideration. (*Leonardo da Vinci* 74)

Allenby's violent act against Alicia, as woman, depends heavily on seeing this woman as a menacing other that keeps Corry from his true freedom, from his reality, by providing, effectively, a false comforting illusion of happiness amidst the desolation of his surroundings. Alicia had fulfilled her role as female; she had been the oasis in the desert of Corry's Being. Alicia's mission/crime was to seduce Corry into believing she was human. And a woman, to boot. She is vilified by the same society that offered her as remedy to the pain of Being (alone) in the world. She is reduced to an aberration against nature, and man. And she is discarded as old rubbish, along with the beat-up jalopy and the run-down metal shack that once defined Corry's reality.

Alicia's vilification, not only as android/cyborg but as well as female, is standard practice in science fiction. It is the fear of the unnatural Other, a fear grasped in Fritz Lang's *Metropolis* (1926).[8] Rotwang's Maria, gynoid, represents the idea of the evil that that infernal creation called woman can be if left to her own doings. But this male paranoia is again revealed as misdirected when it is revealed that the gynoid Maria is the result of a male centered fear of the Other, of the ambiguous power of the natural female Maria, It is the forceful encounter of the opposites as defined by the medieval concept of AVE-EVA, the conceptual dichotomy of woman as Saint (in form of the human Maria) and Whore (in the form of the gynoid Maria). Unfortunately, this male attempt to (re)create the (ideal?) female backfires not only when Rotwang loses control over the robot, but because it was created to create havoc and seduce the masses with her female wiles.[9] The idea of the gynoid Maria in Fritz Lang's movie warns us

not to accept something at face value (pun intended), but to look deep under the covers, or the war-paint, to see the true horrors of an irrational artificial being determined to eventually destroy humanity. She is the vagina dentata personified, for she devours the goodness of men through her sex. Did her creator know what he was unleashing on man? Did the creator know what he was unleashing upon him-self?

Part of the problem is that Alicia is created in the image of the female. She is not only a product of man's ingenuity—of technology, but she is molded in the form of the Other, and not just any Other but the idealized Other—the female. As in the story of Adam and Eve God creates woman, not from the same material as man (the clay of the Earth) nor does He breathe life into her, but he takes a rib, an object defined by man's previous being, and shapes woman out of it (Genesis 2). She is an object made from an objectified being, a simulacra of the true being—man. As Eve is denied the same essence in her coming to be so Alicia is denied her essence in her illusion of being female. In a sense, she is a hand me down. As much, as in Genesis, and unlike Rotwang's Maria, Alicia is supposed to be created for a good—that is, she is not to undermine man's patriarchal society but to uphold its egalitarian status. Alicia is created to be of a service to her male 'owner.' Equally present in her figure is the negativity of the created Other, as portrayed by Hephaestus' Pandora, the woman commissioned by the gods to punish and torment man, So , in essence, Alicia is the embodiment of the eternal hybrid—between good and evil.

In the real world, man spends his efforts and his technology in remaking the female, not only in her physique, but through her surroundings, recreating woman's role as mother, wife, caretaker, and lover. And in real life, science does not liberate women from their slavery, but, as demonstrated by their fictional counterparts, science reconstructs her prison in such ways as to hide from her the truth behind those marvelous technological advances thus perpetuating her slavery (e.g. *House of Tomorrow*, *Kitchen of Tomorrow* / Avery / 1949). As Adorno puts it: "The individual who supported society bore its disfiguring mark: seemingly free, he was actually the product of its economic and social apparatus," (42) and, in the end, as in the case of Corry and Alicia, its slave. For in the end Corry became not a prisoner of Alicia, but of a simulacrum of the ideal, a rational ideal which represented the rational male ideal of the correct female role.

Again, I must return to the problem of man's apparent acceptance/rejection of technology as his savior from nature. When Corry opens the box in which Captain Allenby has smuggled Alicia (for it would cost Allenby his job if the authorities had found out about what the box contained) Corry is outright shocked, insulted and, even, disgusted by its contents.[10] As stated above, Captain Allenby had not revealed to Corry what the box contained.

Playing the part of a merciful god, Allenby had decided, without previous consultation, that Corry was in the need of some company to make his sentence more bearable (something which is made obvious to the spectator in the first two to three minutes of the episode). What is significant is not so much the choice of a female companion, rather that said companion is not one of flesh and bones but one, obviously, created by male technicians for those who not only are lonely but incapable of achieving a real relationship on their own (with a real woman, even).[11] Obviously we are confronted here with a version of the Adam-Eve motif, where the demiurge (in this case Captain Allenby, and by extension society) has provided this futuristic Adam (Corry) with an adequate (female) mate for companionship (Alicia).[12]

Corry is the pioneer, the isolated pilgrim in an isolated world barren and forgotten by civilization living as a hermit in a forsaken environment. Alicia brings the softness and the hope of civilized world. She is the new (technological) world made real. The hospitability in the inhospitable of their surroundings. But, instead of being provided with a woman/companion of flesh and blood, Corry is surprised by a mechanical substitute. Corry is instantly repulsed by this ever servile unnatural substitute of nature for it not being real, it—Alicia—is not of flesh and blood, it/she cannot feel. Or, can't it/she? For when Corry rejects her and roughly manhandles her, she weeps.

Emotions are supposed to be inherently human, and only human. That the machine—Alicia—weeps brings to question who or what is more human: Alicia, as dejected object, or Corry as dejected subject. The self is thrown into shock by the sudden appearance of the normal, the natural, somewhat like getting water from a stone.

Male interaction is then centered on a relationship with an artificial female creation, a gynoid, and not with a human female. It underlies our willingness to forego human contact for this sterile substitute. “If human identity—figured in terms of that which makes us uniquely ourselves—is constructed out of both identifications and repudiations, then anyone or anything that occupies the margin of self and other threatens the (constructed) existence of the self.” (Vint 405) Alicia not only straddles the boundaries between the savage and the civilized, but also the boundaries between the natural and the unnatural—between flesh and machine. She not only disrupts Corry’s routine (as outcast), but his sense of being male—human.

This male created creature underlines an attempt to subvert the freedom of human will and overcome the modern fear of uselessness in males by imposing, forcefully, upon females the supremacy of male rationality over female irrationality, and, in its wake, a superiority of technology over nature.[13] Corry’s need for companionship, and for a reason for being, eventually results in his forgetting that Alicia is not human. In the end Corry has to realize

that she is not human and that she must be content with her reality: a reality defined by the fact that she is not real but a manufactured substitute to look real, inhuman yet humanlike.

We can see a similar example in Steve Dejarnatt's *Cherry 2000* (1988) where the ideal female is portrayed as an always willing, subservient and submissive programmed electronic mate. In this movie Melanie Griffith, as a tomboyish mercenary, is hired by a businessman to find a new host to replace his live-in female consort, an android, which depicts the idealized female as a perfect wife and lover sans a soul, always willing and submissive to male desires. In a skewed attempt at male dominance over nature, women have been subjected to being reduced and reproduced as nothing more than mere mechanical commodities in the service of the ruling patriarchy.

Alicia's roboticity reflects what Ana G. Jonasdottir talks about in *Why Women are Oppressed*. Jonasdottir believes that in the same way that capitalism exploits the labor force men expropriate women's capacity to give life and love (in English 19). As such Alicia's roboticity can be seen as the epitome of how flesh and blood women give their all to men and their families: they are expected to "give up their selves, bodies and minds," spending their energies "in working for and loving others than themselves" selflessly (English 19). And we expect them to hide their flaws. They are to be perfect beings, virtual representations of the proper woman: hard working and servile to men. Or, as Shaw explains in reference to Tanith Lee's *The Electric Forest*, "Magda [a cloned being] is the idealized female, the virgin-angel, manipulable to men's desire ...." (Shaw 277). In her novel Tanith Lee describes Magda "a doll which could be bathed, with washable tresses. She was a doll who could walk and talk, and eat and drink, and have orgasms" (qtd. in Shaw 277). For all (male) intents: perfect.

Magda is emblematic of what could be deemed today as *The Stepford Wives* (Bryan Forbes 1975) mentality which has dominated, in a rather cynical way, our perception of the ideal female role. This movie proposes a community where women are replaced by automatons that do their husbands bidding. The perfect being, a sub-servient female machine, reflects upon the true nature of the gendered android/cyborg which maintains the social ideal of the perfect woman: Aristotle's incomplete ir/rational being as improved by the machine heuristics. Following on the lines of Sharalyn Orbaugh remarks in "Sex and the Single Cyborg" the gynoid, as represented in figures such as the blonde ditzes Pris in *Blade Runner* (Ridley Scott) and Cherry 2000 in *Cherry 2000*, "represent an ideal version of the modernist conception of the body/self. But the conceptual price that must be paid for our increasing attempts to control the body is the recognition that the repressed always returns" (443). But from movies such as *Species* (Roger Donaldson 1995)—where the fear of genetic hybridity is compounded with the natural fear

of women (postmodern take of the medieval AVE-EVA syndrome)—, to the television series *Sex in the City* (1998-2004)—where women adopt a more male care-free attitude toward sex—, the female personae has become a very confusing and dangerous entity to deal with—not only for men, but for women themselves.[14]

Who is fooled? The male viewer/user or the female object/use? Apparently the battle of the sexes has left us wondering who is the oppressed and who the oppressor is. Sex differences, as ambiguous constructs of the body, is no more than an agent for a simulacra, *vis a vis*, a virtual self poised upon defining "the human/machine interrelation configured through a female body [that] is not mind/machine, but body/machine" (Cranny-Francis 155).

> The cyborg or android image … conveys a very ambiguous message for women. The female androids and cyborgs that appear in fiction reinforce the cultural production of femininity as accessible sexuality rather than invulnerable authority, as a use/object rather than a user/subject. In other words, the female cyborg (or android) may have deconstructive potential for women who read the figure resistantly. But the figure has not actually offered women a position within the debate at all. The human/machine anxiety enacted within the technological imaginary was about men, authority, power, and control—not about "the human." In fact,… it configures "the human" conventionally as "the masculine."(Cranny-Francis 156)

The female construct in midcentury science fiction is rather complex. It is a hybrid that points to the somewhat simple confrontation of the male to the Other. To be male is just to be and not to be. As Vint expressed, to be fe-male implies to be and not to be, to be self and servient to man and woman alike. In the episodes I have looked at the male psyche as a simple equation: it is lonely. Its loneliness is marked by its inability to fulfill his expectations by his own self. The rejection, at first, of the female defines man's fear of not realizing his "true" (male) destiny, or of giving up on his dreams. But, as I have tried to argue, the female role gives the male role a way or realizing his self, she becomes the true reason to be by becoming the way to become.

The hybridity expressed by this utopian(/dystopian) being, as represented in the acceptance-rejection dichotomy apparently inherent to the female android (or gynoid) by the human male, could point towards an understanding of the true hybridity of the human as a gendered self: i.e. the identification of wo/man as expressed in and through the gynoid as a pursuit of Being-in-itself. This gendered being, as an extension of the male-female "sex

role" or "sex differences" dichotomy, is, in itself, an observance of being in the form of the idealized fe-male: the Being that is both and none in-its-self. The problem, then, is not that a body is gendered or that the body is cyborged nor, even, that the machine is gendered, especially, as female (and, as such, servient), but that the machine is (virtually) human.

Notes

1. Peril's book is an excellent look at the systematic societal program to create the perfect female role. As Debbie Stoller, editor and copublisher of *Bust* remarks Peril's book "Proves, once and for all, that the most unnatural thing in the world is a 'natural-born woman.'" (Back Cover blurb, *Pink Think*). In my treatment in this paper I take Stoller's remark to heart.

2. Based on the novel by Johann David Wyss (1812).

3. In fact, B-movies and television programs tried to demonstrate that this stereotyped image of women is not entirely true. Some well intended productions, such as *The Patty Duke Show* (1963-1966), actually tried to show that the female role, through their devious ways, have actually been helping men to accomplish their freedom from mediocrity. Other television sitcoms, such as *My Three Sons* (1960-1972), countered the idea of the perfect family by presenting us with a widower without a female figure. Instead the program merged the male-female roles between the father and "uncle," with the uncle functioning as the "female."

4. In "The Invaders" (*TZ* aired 27.Jan.1961) Elizabeth Montgomery (again) plays a mute woman who lives in an old wooden house and one night must defend herself from an invasion by (apparently male) alien beings. On the phenomenon of unspeaking women in literature see Jane E. Burns' book *Bodytalk: When Women Speak in Old French Literature*. (New Cultural Studies Series) Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993.

5. The whole concept of the World Fairs and, especially, of Futureland at Disneyland hangs upon this idea.

6. A very good treatment of this idea is presented in *Pleasantville* (Gary Ross 1998).

7. Similar to Phillip K. Dick's *Time Out of Joint* (1959) where a whole town is re-created to maintain one man's illusion of living a specific reality. This idea was also explored in *The Truman Show* (Peter Weir 1998) where Jim Carrey inside a created and controlled biosphere lives a controlled life, a simulacra defined by outer forces.

8. Similar interesting attempts at the creation of a gynoid are present in the form of Hadaly from Viller's de L'Isle Adam's novel *L'Eve future* (1879) and Helen O'Loy from Lester del Rey's novel *Helen O'Loy* (1938).

9. The idea of a woman created to bring pain and suffering to man is present as early as Greek mythology. Pandora is sometimes defined as a woman created and given to man as a gift of the gods to bring this pain to man. In Hesiod's version of the Greek myth, the god's created a mechanical woman so irresistible that even the gods couldn't resist her, and was sent to man as punishment for the betrayals of Prometheus. See Hesiod's *Works and Days*.

10. A definite reference to the opening of Pandora's Box in Ancient Greek mythology.

11. There is no shortage of contemporary sexual surrogates to fill our existential and physical void, from a myriad of vibrators and artificial vaginas to full size sex-dolls and a myriad of virtual (cybernetic) offerings via the Internet.

12. Again, it is possible to compare this action not only with the story of Adam and Eve, but with the various versions of Pandora's Box in Ancient Greek myths.

13. For further treatment on male fear of the female see Stephen Frosh's *Sexual Difference: Masculinity and Psychoanalysis*, especially the chapter on "Masculine mastery and fantasy," where Frosh argues that a necessity of being needed and the constant fear of losing one's masculine identity are part of the underlying foundation of the masculine.

14. For an interesting treatment on the negativity of some contemporary feminist attitudes see Ariel Levy's *Female Chauvinist Pigs: Women and the Rise of Raunch Culture* (New York: Free Press, 2005). Levy questions what happened with the feminist movement of the 1960s and 1970s given the contemporary eagerness of women to be "one of the guys," especially present in the way women are degrading other women, and themselves, just for the fun of it.

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