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A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF FEMINIST APPROACH TO
ALL-FEMALE WORLDS IN CHARLOTTE PERKINS GILMAN'S
HERLAND AND JOANNA RUSS'S "WHEN IT CHANGED"

Charlotte Perkins Gilman'ın *Kadınlar Ülkesi* ve Joanna Russ'ın "Değiştiğinde" Adlı Eserlerindeki Yalnızca Kadından Oluşan Dünyalara Karşılaştırmalı Feminist Bir Yaklaşım

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Abstract

This study aims to explore Charlotte Perkins Gilman's novel *Herland* (1915) and Joanna Russ's short story "When It Changed" (1972) with the comparative method in order to determine the similarities and differences between the feminist approaches of two authors and thus seeks to find and reveal the reasons underneath these similarities and differences. Accordingly, quotations taken from two works are analyzed in parallel with each other. The result of the comparative analysis of two works shows that despite the different periods in which these works were situated, they put forward similar concerns regarding women's oppressed position in private and public lives while expressing it from different literary devices.

Keywords: Feminism, *Herland*, *When It Changed*, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Joanna Russ.

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Öz

Charlotte Perkins Gilman'ın *Kadınlar Ülkesi* adlı romanı ve Joanna Russ'ın *Değiştiğinde* adlı kısa öyküsünü karşılaştırmalı yöntem ile alan bu çalışma, iki yazarın eserlerindeki feminist yaklaşımları arasındaki benzerlik ve farklılıkları tespit etmekte ve bu benzerlik ve farklılıkların altında yatan nedenleri bulup ortaya çıkarmayı amaçlamaktadır. Bu doğrultuda her iki eserden örnekler alınarak birbirine paralel olacak şekilde incelenmektedir. İki eserin karşılaştırmalı analizi neticesinde, farklı dönemlerde konumlanmış olmasına rağmen her iki eserin de kadınların özel ve toplumsal yaşamlarındaki bastırılmış konumlarına ilişkin benzer kaygıları öne çıkardığı, bunu ifade ederken farklı edebi teknikler kullandığı sonucuna varılmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Feminizm, *Kadınlar Ülkesi*, *Değiştiğinde*, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Joanna Russ.

Introduction

Although the Women's Movement and later feminism, have their roots deep in the European -until the 1800s- and American history- when our study is considered- feminist movement cannot still be told to have reached its aim totally. The biggest reason that lies behind it, is a clash of ideas among the feminists themselves most probably, which results mainly with the divisions of feminist movement such as liberal feminism, radical feminism, Marxist feminism socialist feminism, cultural feminism and may other feminisms so on suggest. In Elaine Showalter's words in her well-known work *A Literature of Their Own. British Women Novelists From Bronte to Lessing.*, women have been suppressed and spoken for by men for so long that,

[t]hus each generation of women writers has found itself, in a sense, without a history, forced to rediscover the past anew, forging, again and again, the consciousness of their sex. Given this perpetual disruption and also the self-hatred that has alienated women writers from a sense of collective identity, it does not seem possible to speak of a 'movement' (1977: 11-12).

However, despite these divisions, all feminists, deep down, have one absolute aim which is to achieve better positions and conditions for all women. Since they from time to time lose their hope for a better future for women, some feminist writers turn to writing feminist utopias in an attempt to achieve their goal, to make it come true even if it is in a fictional world.

A Comparative Analysis of the Feminist Approach to All-Female Worlds in *Herland* and “When It Changed”

As the writer of the very well-known short story “The Yellow Wallpaper” (1892) and the first novel of the trilogy *Moving the Mountain* (1911), Charlotte Perkins Gilman’s *Herland*, which falls into the category of Feminist Phase -lasting from 1880 to 1920- according to Showalter’s categorization (1977: 13), is one of these feminist utopias as is well known. Although it was written in 1915, the novel is quite ahead of its time with the feminist ideas it deals with. Since it is a feminist utopia, it presents and supports a peaceful vision of an all-female world known as Herland.

Here was evidently a people highly skilled, efficient, caring for their country as a florist cares for his costliest orchids. Under the soft brilliant blue of that clear sky, in the pleasant shade of those endless rows of trees, we walked unharmed, the placid silence broken only by the birds. [...] Everything was beauty, order, perfect cleanness, and the pleasantest sense of home over it all. As we neared the center of the town, the houses stood thicker, ran together as it were, grew into rambling places grouped among parks and open squares, something as college buildings stand in their quiet greens (Herland, 1979: 18-19).

Compared with their own hometown, Herland, where the blue of the sky and the green of the earth blend with each other, seems to be a very peaceful place, a kind of heaven on earth for these three intruders, Paralleling with the heavenly view, the environment of this mysterious country called Herland, the inhabitants of the land, namely the Herlanders are also a very peaceful society:

[...] they were not old women. Each was in the full bloom of rosy health, erect, serene, standing sure-footed and light as any pugilist. They had no weapons, [...] Six of them stepped forward now, one on either side of each of us, and indicated that we were to go with them. We thought it best to accede, at first anyway and marched along, one of these close at each elbow, and others in close masses before, behind, on both sides (Herland, 1979: 20-21).

Although the women have no weapons, they have the power to make the three men obey them, and do what they want from them. Their not having weapons goes in accordance with the peaceful atmosphere on the land.

On the other hand, “When It Changed” written by Joanna Russ, who is also the writer of the novels *Picnic on Paradise* (1968), *And Chaos Died* (1970) and the famous novel entitled *The Female Man* (1975), in 1972 when the feminist movement in America as well as in several other countries such as Canada, Spain and Sweden was fervent seems to have more of a dystopia rather than a utopia, which again partly

depends on the reason that has been mentioned above. But also, the 1970s was a time of breaking down the barriers in many fields such as education, workplace, and politics. Due to this, there were strikes and protests all over the country. Perhaps that's why Russ created a pessimistic world of women or gave a negative vision of a women-only world to some extent, unlike Gilman's peaceful land. The story starts as,

Katy drives like a maniac; we must have been doing over 120 kilometers per hour on those turns. [...] The funny thing about my wife, though: she will not handle guns. She has even gone hiking in the forests above the forty-eighth parallel without firearms, for days at a time. And that does scare me. [...] Yuriko, my eldest, was asleep in the back seat, dreaming twelve-year-old dreams of love and war: [...] Some day soon, like all of them, she will disappear for weeks on end to come back grimy and proud, having knifed her first cougar or shot her first bear, dragging some abominably dangerous dead beastie behind her, [...] For someone who has fought three duels, I am afraid of far, far too much (WIC, 1972/2013: 768-769).

The words used at the beginning of the story such as “maniac, guns, war, knife, shoot, duel” reveal that the people of the planet Whileaway are not peaceful like the Herlanders, but on the contrary, they are violent. It is very natural for them to use guns, rifles or knives to kill animals. Moreover, it is understood that such actions are considered as a source of pride by their society. And also the narrator herself talks about fighting three duels, which is again an implication of violence. Even her partner's driving fastly implies a degree of violence. Their acts of violence are not confined to animals: “Phyllis Helgason Spet, whom someday I shall kill, gave me across the room a cold, level, venomous look, as if to say: Watch what you say” (WIC, 1972/2013: 770). The narrator even feels hatred for a person from her own sex and has a desire to kill her one day. This is completely opposite of what we see in Herlanders' relationship with each other, which is based on peace, respect and 'sisterhood' most importantly. However, there does not seem to be a bond of sisterhood among the residents of Whileaway. Even the people are referred to as “Southerners”, while for example Phyllis Spet the woman, the narrator -whom we learn to be Janet- wants to kill, is a Northerner. Therefore, there is a kind of discrimination between the two sides, which is actually not favored by the radical feminists, who emphasize the concept of sisterhood, notably. Thus, while *Herland* offers land in tranquility, endowed with the ideas of sisterhood, respect, and peace; “When It Changed” presents a world, full of the negatory phenomena like duels, scars caused by duels and fights, death, violence, killing, and a feeling of hatred which are frequently underlined and outweigh any positive ideas if there exist any. In other words, unlike Gilman's peaceful society of women having no negative feelings or tendencies of violence towards each other, it is quite normal for the women of Russ's fictional

world to feel hatred for their own sex. Cheri Register argues that “The feminist movement in America is seeking to create a feeling of sisterhood, a new sense of community among women, in order to overcome group self-hatred, the animosity that many women feel for others of their sex as a result of isolation, competition of male attention, and belief in female inferiority” (1975/1996: 238-239). Therefore, Gilman’s and Russ’s works can be said to be the representatives of these two opposite sides: one, of sisterhood and the other is of self-hatred for other women of their sex which appears mostly to be a consequence of isolation or isolated lives they lead.

That’s why *Herland* is a novel that goes in accordance with the label “feminist utopia”. However, Joanna Russ’s short story with the ideas of death, violence, and duels gives the impression that it can be called a feminist dystopia rather than a feminist utopia. Although M. Keith Booker supports this claim, he does not call these kinds of works as completely dystopian but instead, he uses a milder term and believes that they include “dystopian warnings”. In his own words: “[...] the writers of feminist utopias have always been aware that their positive visions were imperiled by the existing patriarchal order and have thereby often included dystopian warnings within their utopian texts” (1994: 339). Or as Tom Moylan puts it, some feminist writers created “critical utopias” since they were aware “of the limitations of the utopian tradition” and preserved utopia just as “dream, not as blueprint” (1986:10 qtd. Booker, 1994: 338-339). Therefore, their remarks verify the claim that Russ’s short story cannot be considered as a feminist utopia, but falls into that category of feminist dystopias.

As for the community in “When It Changed”, it appears to be a very modern community with many machines and technological devices like frequency transceivers, steam tractors, trucks, I.C. flatbeds. Furthermore, the story has even some implications of science fiction with people who are aware of the last technological advances and some of whom deal with science and algorithms:

‘Whileaway was lucky’ I said. ‘We had a big initial gene pool, we had been chosen for extreme intelligence, we had a high technology and a large remaining population in which every adult was two-or-three experts in one. The soil is good. The climate is blessedly easy. There are thirty million of us now. Things are beginning to snowball in industry- do you understand?- give us seventy years and we’ll have more than one real city, more than a few industrial centers, full-time professions, full time radio operators, full-time machinists, give us seventy years and not everyone will have to spend three-quarters of a lifetime on the farm’ (WIC, 1972/2013: 770-771).

The quotation gives the impression that by the phrase “gene pool”, Janet implies creating new individuals by using the gene pool, which is actually a direct

reference to the science-fictional features of the story. All in all, Russ, in her story called “When It Changed” builds a much more developed society with the wide use of technology, industrial developments and thus capitalistic ideas, which indicates that Russ’s imaginary society is closer to our contemporary society following industrial and technological developments and finally reaching capitalism. One of the clues revealing that they are closer to contemporary society (our world) is that they can understand and speak Russian, which as Janet says, was once their “lingua franca” (WIC, 1972/2013: 770). So they are either Russian or another Russian-speaking nation.

However, we do not get such an impression in *Herland*. It is not a kind of story related to our contemporary world. Reversely, there are no implications of a known nation in Gilman’s *Herland*, the Herlanders are in a way ‘nationless’ or they do not have a sense of it as in the way we comprehend or mean it. Theirs is a world unique to itself. In other words, -compared to the one in “When It Changed”- Gilman in her novel *Herland* invents a world with its more primitive society where all inhabitants seem to be equal and which might be the subject of another study about cultural feminism. Even the language and the words used in the novel point out to the signs of cultural feminism:

They loved their country because it was their nursery, playground, and workshop- theirs and their children’s. They were proud of it as a workshop, proud of their record of ever-increasing efficiency; they had made a pleasant garden of it, a very practical little heaven; but most of all they valued it- and here it is hard for us to understand them- as a cultural environment for their children. That, of course, is the keynote of the whole distinction- their children. [...] All the surrendering devotion our women have put into their private families, these women put into their country and race. All the loyalty and servicemen expect of wives, they gave, not singly to men, but collectively to one another. [...] With their united power and wisdom, they had studied and overcome the ‘diseases of childhood’- their children had none. They had faced problems of education and so solved them that their children grew up as naturally as young trees; learning through every sense; taught continuously but unconsciously- never knowing they were being educated (Herland, 1979: 94-95).

The women/mothers are like artists/educators. They are so well-equipped and conscious as mothers and they raise their children such a healthy way that the children do not have any common childhood diseases specific to children. As is well-known for cultural feminism, the woman is the source of power, pride and public regeneration and cultural feminism concentrates on cultural transformation rather than the political one and thus claims that the society must transform/evolve into a

matriarchal society for the sake of cultural transformation (Donovan, 2005: 73-74 AÖ*). Therefore, as is seen in *Herland*, Gilman puts this idea into practice in her novel and creates a matriarchal society achieving public regeneration in the best way that can be.

It is understood that these two women-only cultures have their own language systems. In “When It Changed”, we do not learn much about the language of the inhabitants of Whileaway. As mentioned before, It is just expressed that their lingua franca was Russian. But they used it six hundred years ago and now they have their own language as Janet mentions: “He turned his head- those words have not been in our language for six hundred years- and said, in bad Russian: ‘Who’s that?’ ” (WIC, 1972/2013: 770). Their not having used Russian for six hundred years brings to the mind the idea that they have their own language, perhaps even a language that is special to women only. However, nothing further is found in the story about their language.

Likewise, Herlanders have their own language which the three intruders have difficulty in understanding at first, but have to learn later:

‘Shades of Sauveur!’ muttered Terry. ‘We’re to learn the language!’ We were indeed to learn the language, and not only that, but to teach our own. There were blank books with parallel columns, neatly ruled, evidently prepared for the occasion, and in these, as fast as we learned and wrote down the name of anything, we were urged to write our own name for it by its side (Herland, 1979: 27-28).

Since the three intruders are captured by the women of Herland, they notice that they have to learn their language in order to understand them, their culture and in order to find a way to leave the land and to regain their freedom. However, the men, apparently the scientists do not show any intention of learning or even understanding the language of the inhabitants of Whileaway. This shows the difference between the feminist attitudes in both works. While in *Herland* everything is in the control of the Herlanders, the women of the land and they make the men learn their language; in Whileaway the scientists do not care about the language of the planet and speak Russian instead, which they probably already knew that, was their lingua franca. Thus, it seems that their ignoring the language used on the planet, signals that the women have lost control of everything from then on and something is wrong or nothing will be the same for the women of the planet any longer.

The dissimilarity in two author’s feminist approaches becomes apparent in another occasion, as well. In both works, it is now obvious that there are some intruders from the opposite sex. In *Herland*, they are three ordinary men stepping on their land accidentally. Whereas, in “When It Changed” it seems that these four men, these four intruders are scientists as is mentioned before and they do come to their land on purpose, not by chance as one of the scientists points out clearly: “‘As a people, we

are not very bright,' he said. 'There's been too much genetic damage in the last few centuries. Radiation. Drugs. We can use Whileaway's genes, Janet'" (WIC, 1972/2013: 772). It is obvious that the genes of these women will be used by the scientists to create a new, healthy and perfect generation, which in other words, means that women are regarded as objects of reproduction just as in the traditional patriarchal society.

Hence, the women's reactions against the opposite sex in the two works are quite the opposite. In *Herland* the three men are pictured weak and even ridiculed:

Terry pulled his revolver, and fired upward. As they caught at it, he fired again- we heard a cry-. Instantly each of us was seized by five women, each holding arm or leg or head; we were lifted like children, straddling helpless children, and borne onward, wriggling indeed, but most ineffectually. We were borne inside, struggling manfully, but held secure most womanfully, in spite of our best endeavors. So carried and so held, we came into a higher inner hall, gray and bare, and were brought before a majestic gray-haired woman who seemed to hold a judicial position (Herland, 1979: 23).

The three men as Vandyck himself describes appear to be vulnerable and helpless like little boys in front of these strongly-depicted women. Gilman caricatures them with her words so successfully that one can imagine the picture of these three men easily. Despite Gilman's depiction of the three intruders as weak children, Joanna Russ, in "When It Changed" depicts the four scientists as giving the impression of being very strong and heavy, like "apes with human faces":

'Men!' Yuki had screamed, leaping over the car door. 'They've come back! Real Earth men!'[...] Then I saw the four of them. They are bigger than we are. They are bigger and broader. They were taller than I, and I am extremely tall, one meter eighty centimeters in my bare feet. They are obviously of our species but off, and my eyes could not and still cannot quite comprehend the lines of those alien bodies, [...] A hard, hard hand. They are heavy as draft horses (WIC, 1972/2013: 769-770).

Since they have lived without mankind for six hundred years, it seems that they have forgotten what men looked like, and that is why Janet views these four men as strange creatures with "alien bodies" and cannot touch them for a while when they want to shake hands with her. Although the women of the planet seem quite violent when compared to the peaceful inhabitants of *Herland*, they appear to be very vulnerable and helpless against these men: "I will remember all my life those four people I first met who were muscled like bulls and who made me- if only for a moment- feel small" (WIC, 1972/2013: 773). Despite being fearless, violent and physically strong, even Janet feels small near these four muscled and heavy men, which

is again a negative and pessimistic depiction of womankind compared with the Herlanders in Gilman's novel who are pictured much stronger than the three men.

Women in both novels are depicted with manly qualities, physically strong, unlike the traditional Victorian type of fragile and demure women:

They were girls, of course, no boys could ever have shown that sparkling beauty, and yet none of us was certain at first. We saw short hair, hatless, loose, and shining; a suit of some light firm stuff, the closest of tunics and knee-breeches, met by trim gaiters. As bright and smooth as parrots and as unaware of the danger, they swung there before us, wholly at ease, staring as we stared, till first one, and then all of them burst into peals of delighted laughter (Herland, 1979: 15)

These girls whom the three men met just after stepping on their land are from the young generation of Herlanders. The fact that they are beautiful is obvious, however, it is not the patriarchal norms of beauty that is attributed to them- i.e.- they have short hair and very plain, manly clothes and they move extraordinarily fast. Even the middle-aged women of the society are extremely strong as Vandyck himself observes in astonishment:

Never, anywhere before, had I seen women of precisely this quality. Fishwives and market women might show similar strength, but it was coarse and heavy. These were merely athletic- light and powerful. College professors, teachers, writers- many women showed similar intelligence but often wore a strained nervous look, while these were as calm as cows, for all their evident intellect (Herland, 1979: 22).

This idea of strength which is sharply in opposition to the common idea of physical vulnerability and fragility attributed to the women in patriarchal societies is even carried one step further in Russ's story with her well-built women having muscles: "I remember prowling restlessly around the house after Katy fell asleep with one bare arm hung into a patch of light from the hall. The muscles of her forearms are like metal bars from all that driving and testing of her machines" (WIC, 1972/2013: 774). Therefore, as Toril Moi underlines, "[...] though women undoubtedly are *female*, this in no way guarantees that they will be *feminine*" (2002: 64). As is seen, in both works the women have children and so they have a role as a mother; however, they are still observed to have manly qualities as opposed to the patriarchally defined femininity.

This physical strength of both Gilman's and Russ's women characters is also reflected in the jobs they do. They are not confined to the houses as mothers and wives all day as once the Victorian women were. Since they are physically stronger

and have many abilities which are normally identified with men in patriarchal societies, they can get “men’s jobs” such as forester, machinist chief of police and they are all pictured as capable of doing these jobs very easily. Of course, the jobs these women of two different societies possess, alter in accordance with the conditions they live in. As was mentioned previously there is a deep difference between the all-women societies of Gilman and Russ. While Gilman’s is a very primitive society living in the middle of a forest, Russ’s on the contrary, is a very modern; more than modern, a very technological one talking about concepts like industrialization, gene pools, and population control. Therefore Gilman’s characters are mostly included in jobs like foresters, carpenters and Russ’s in jobs such as machinist, chief of police, artist.

In both works, the societies do not have an all-female structure by nature. The man population is wiped off in both societies. However, the reason for the disappearance is different: in *Herland* they lost men because of war and in the aftermath of the war there occurred a kind of revolt among the slaves against their masters:

They were decimated by war, driven up from their coastline till finally te reduced population, with many of the men killed in battle, occupied this hinterland, and defended it for years, in the mountain passes. [...] Very few men were left alive, save the slaves; and these now seized their opportunity, rose in revolt, killed their remaining masters even to the youngest boy, killed the old women too, and the mothers, intending to take possession of the country with the remaining young women and girls. But this succession of misfortunes was too much for those infuriated virgins. There were many of them, and but few of these would-be masters, so the young women, instead of submitting, rose in sheer desperation and slew their brutal conquerors (Herland, 1979: 54-55).

As a result of the revolt among the slaves against their masters, they slaughter all of them leaving only the young virgin women in an attempt to become masters themselves and perhaps to marry these virgins. But one point they ignore is how strong and fearless are those virgins. They do not yield to those new masters and kill them all, to create a new, matriarchal order. This is how they become an all-women society and their land becomes Herland. Unlike this, in “When It Changed” the men are wiped off from the planet as a result of a plague:

‘Where are all your people?’ he said conversationally. [...] This is Whileaway.’ I said. He continued to look unenlightened. ‘Whileaway’ I said. ‘Do you remember? Do you have records? There was a plague on Whileaway. [...] We lost half our population

in one generation. [...] ‘Where are all the people?’ said that monomaniac. I realized then that he did not mean people, he meant men, and he was giving the word the meaning it had not had on Whitleaway for six centuries. ‘They died,’ I said. ‘Thirty generations ago.’ (WIC, 1972/2013: 770-771).

Hence, the rest of the population, in other words, the women are forced to find an alternative way to maintain the continuity of the (re)generation. On the one hand, Gilman’s Herland is totally based on the concepts of *motherhood* and *sisterhood* among women and these two concepts are underlined in the novel strongly as we read in Moadine’s, -Terry’s tutor in Herland- words:

‘Motherhood means to us something which I cannot yet discover in any of the countries of which you tell us. You have spoken’ -she turned to Jeff, ‘of Human Brotherhood as a great idea among you, but even that I judge is far from a practical expression?’ Jeff nodded rather sadly. ‘Very far-’ he said. ‘Here we have Human Motherhood-in full working use,’ she went on. ‘Nothing else except the literal sisterhood of our origin, and the far higher and deeper union of our social growth. The children in this country are the one center and focus of all our thoughts. Every step of our advance is always considered in its effect on them-on the race. You see, we are *Mothers*,’ she repeated, as if in that she said it all (Herland, 1979: 66).

Since the sense of sisterhood is developed very powerfully among them, even the women without children consider themselves as the mothers of other children as Somel, Vandyck’s tutor puts it: “‘We each go without a certain range of personal joy,’ she said, ‘but remember-we each have a million children to love and serve- *our* children’” (Herland, 1979: 71). And in such a society where motherhood is seen as a holy service for their country, more than that as a religion, they discover an extraordinary way to become pregnant: they believe that if they concentrate on the idea of being a mother and if they are healthy enough, they can get pregnant and have children. As Vandyck mentions at first it was difficult for them to admit the loss of man population but in time “‘they developed this virgin birth capacity’”: “‘When a woman chose to be a mother, she allowed the child-longing to grow within her till it worked its natural miracle. When she did not so choose she put the whole thing out of her mind, and fed her heart with the other babies’” (Herland, 1979: 71). What Vandyck calls a miracle is actually *parthenogenesis* in scientific terms, where women give birth to children without any sexual intercourse with men.

The methods of (re)production in both works are another point which distinguishes the two works: in “‘When It Changed’”, a different way/method of bearing children other than *parthenogenesis* is in question as Janet, the narrator explains:

As I left, Lydia was explaining the difference between parthenogenesis (which is so easy that anyone can practice it) and what we do, which is the merging of ova. That is why Kathy's baby looks like me. Lydia went on to the Ansky Process and Kathy Ansky, our one full-polymath genius and the great-great I don't know how many times great-grandmother of my own Katharina (WIC, 1972/2013: 772).

Although the method of reproduction is different in these two works - in accordance with the conditions and setting: one is a primitive and the other is a highly technological society - the main issue in both works is the control of reproduction, in other words, birth control which means or reinforces the idea that women have a right on their own bodies, they have a right to decide whether to be a mother or not as Magarey puts it in her own words: "Nevertheless, reproductive control is a central political issue in this story, [...]" (2014: 128).

Contrary to the idea of *sisterhood* among women that is stressed frequently in Gilman's novel and unlike the non-existence of sexual desire among them, Russ, in "When It Changed", offers a kind of queer (lesbian) relationship among women in which both Janet and Kathy call themselves "wives":

'You are' said the man, nodding from me to her. 'Wives' said Kathy. 'We're married.' Again the dry chuckle. 'A good economic arrangement,' he said 'for working and taking care of the children. And as good an arrangement as any for randomizing heredity, if your reproduction is made to follow the same pattern. But think, Katharina Michaelason, if there isn't something better that you might secure for your daughters. I believe in instincts, even in Man, and I can't think that the two of you - a machinist, are you? and I gather you are some sort of chief of police - don't feel somehow what even you must miss. You know it intellectually, of course. There is only half a species here. Men must come back to Whileaway (WIC, 1979: 772-773).

These features reflected in Russ's story immediately bring to mind Canadian-American radical feminist writer Shulamith Firestone's ideas about a matriarchal society and radical feminism. What she emphasizes most significantly is the construction of a matriarchal society where there is an equal share of labor among women which means becoming professional in a variety of jobs including the ones identified with men formerly and where there is sexual freedom and children can decide with whom to live (Firestone, 1970/2013:246). Therefore, there is no sexual difference in the all-female society of Russ and so there is no sexual division of labor as mentioned previously.

In contrast to what the man/scientist claims, Janet and Kathy do not feel that they are missing or lacking something or they do not seem to think or agree that there is only half a species on their planet. They are very happy with each other and as we understand they have a sexual life, which seems to be very normal for/to them:

I remember everything that happened that night; I remember Yuki's excitement in the car, I remember Kathy's sobbing when we got home as if her heart would break, I remember her lovemaking, a little peremptory as always, but wonderfully soothing and comforting. I remember prowling restlessly around the house after Katy fell asleep with one bare arm hung into a patch of light from the hall (WIC; 1972/2013: 774).

While Janet, the narrator talks about lovemaking, Herlanders give birth on their own with parthenogenesis and seem to have no feelings including sexual desire unlike the inhabitants of *Whileaway* as Vandyck, the narrator observes during their meeting with the young girls in Herland: "To get an idea of their attitude you have to hold in mind their extremely high sense of solidarity. They were not each choosing a lover; they hadn't the faintest idea of love sex-love, that is" (Herland, 1979: 88). When they have a closer relationship with the three girls, Ellador, Celis, and Alima, Vandyck realizes more clearly that these women do not have any sexual desire neither towards each other nor towards men:

Here everything was different. There as no sex-feeling to appeal to, or practically none. Two thousand years' disuse had left very little of the instinct; also we must remember that those who had at times manifested it as atavistic exceptions were often, by that very fact, denied motherhood (Herland, 1979: 92).

Their attitude towards sexuality or sexual impulse is another distinction between the feminist approach of the two writers in their works: one creating an all-female society with no sexual feelings even towards men; the other proposing a queer (lesbian) relationship between women. This is perhaps a result of the conditions, time and the setting the two writers lived in. Although Gilman's novel is quite ahead of its time as was mentioned above and although she is a very courageous woman for her time, it would still be a very sharp and extreme detail to think of and reflect in her work. And as for Joanna Russ, since during the 1970s feminism was at its peak, such an idea of a queer relationship between women was much more imaginable and acceptable.

Another factor that distinguishes the feminist approach of two writers again results from the time and setting. In "When It Changed", Janet and Kathy are married but one of the children is Kathy's and the other two are the narrator's as she emphasizes: "Katy and I have three children between us, one of hers and two of mine"

(WIC; 1972/2013: 669). They live a separate life in their own house with their children, which seems to reflect the individualism of the modern times, separate, individual lives trapped in individual buildings which are getting smaller and smaller day by day. However, in *Herland*, the idea of a more communal life in which each woman specializes in a profession and thus they share labor, as a rule, is reinforced: “They developed all this close inter-service in the interests of their children. To do the best work they had to specialize, of course; the children needed spinners and weavers, farmers and gardeners, carpenters and masons, as well as mothers” (*Herland*, 1979: 68). Thus, While Russ’s women lead an individual life as in today’s world, Gilman suggests more of a communal life in her work. Since Russ’s women act individually mostly -as a result of the individualism of the modern life- it is not possible for them to be successful in relation to the feminist movement, and to create a utopia. There is no promising future for them and that is the reason why this short story is a feminist dystopia. As for Gilman’s women, the idea of sisterhood and solidarity are what render them strong and also what make Gilman’s novel a feminist utopia.

Conclusion

This article adopting the comparative method handles Gilman’s *Herland* and Russ’s “When It Changed” in terms of the similarities and distinctions between the two authors’ feminist approaches to all-female worlds. Although they both create an all-female world in their works, Gilman presents a more peaceful vision of this world-as expected from a utopia- compared to Russ, who is nearly on the verge of creating a dystopia more than a utopia. These positive and negative atmospheres of the Works are reinforced by the setting, *Herland* indicating cultural feminism with its all-women society living in the forest away from “the civilization” (who-Herlanders or three men- are more civilized is questionable) “When It Changed” having implications of a more modern and technological world accompanied with even some science-fictional features. While Gilman stresses the concept of sisterhood, Russ, in accordance with the grey atmosphere of the story, underlines the hatred of women for their own sex. And along with the notion of sisterhood, comes another issue into question, which is the way of reproduction and the relationship among women. While Herlanders give birth to their babies with parthenogenesis (virgin birth) carrying no sexual instinct, the women of *Whileaway* have babies by merging of ova and story also proposes a queer (lesbian) relationship among women including lovemaking as in the example of Janet and Kathy, which appears to be one of the results of the modern life they lead. However, although the way of production and the relationship between women is different in two works, what’s common here is that both writers emphasize women’s rights on their bodies by birth control or the control of reproduction. Another distinction between the authors’ feminist approach is that Gilman proposes almost a communal lifestyle where all women are mothers

of millions of children and they specialize in their profession and thus share labor. However, as a requirement or the result of modern life, Russ presents an individual life with immediate families like Janet and Kathy's. To conclude, although these two works were written in different periods and they bear differences as well as similarities, they both deal with the issue of subordination of women in their personal and public lives by using different literary devices due to the literary genres the writers preferred, one a utopia, the other a dystopia.

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