

# **Women and Urban Environments, Volume 2: Feminist Eutopian Visions of the City**

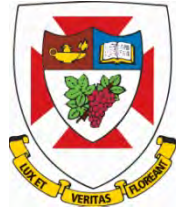
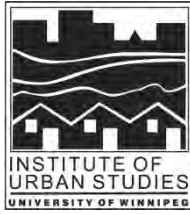
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**edited by Mary Ann Beavis  
1997**

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**The Institute of Urban Studies**





THE UNIVERSITY OF  
WINNIPEG

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**WOMEN AND URBAN ENVIRONMENTS, VOLUME 2: FEMINIST EUTOPIAN VISIONS OF THE CITY**

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**WOMEN AND URBAN ENVIRONMENTS**  
**VOLUME 2: FEMINIST EUTOPIAN VISIONS OF THE CITY**

Student Paper 10

Mary Ann Beavis, editor

Institute of Urban Studies

1997

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. . . I only want a place where we are all free and equal. It's difficult to understand why this can't be possible. I suppose those in charge don't want the status quo to change. But it will. I know so many have come before me and pushed and pushed and screamed and cried—"Look at what's wrong!" This is all so wrong and screwed up!" I will continue this song, this lament, this scream of knowledge and pain and begging for understanding, I know things won't change today, not for a long time. But maybe one day there will be a place, a land, a city, an anywhere—where there are no men who beat their wives and make their children feel inadequate. There will be a place where all of our colours will mix together and our ancestors won't be a mystery. We will accept the differences and celebrate them. Celebrate—the same but different. There will be a place where all the people who are broken and busted will be made to feel whole. A place where they will be able to ride their wheelchairs with the wind and the deaf, the blind, the sick whoever! Whatever is "wrong" won't be such a big deal. That deformities will be seen as just a part of what it means to be human. A place where men aren't the head honchos and a place where women all know the history of great ones that have fought before themselves. A place where we all live in comfort and harmony with Nature. We don't dominate or subjugate. We recognize our selfish behaviour and somehow, somehow we stop mutually agreeing on mutually polluting. A place where everyone is happy. They can eat real food and breathe clean air, drink pure water and watch their children grow up without wondering "What's the point?" and "The world is so screwed up anyway."

Will there every be such a place?  
 In my head, in my heart . . .  
 Eutopia!



this is a fragile  
 ball of boiling  
 mass hatred heat  
 greed destruction  
 invention  
 where we all see stars  
 and the concrete.  
 so perhaps  
 instead of treating this  
 ball like a potato  
 in England, we will  
 treat it like a crystal; reflecting  
 all the wonder  
 of positive love life  
 light blue . . . and clean.



Excerpts from "The M.A.D. City of Women" and "Memoirs of a Face Anonymous" by Michelle A. Desbiens.  
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## INTRODUCTION TO VOLUME 2

This is the second volume of student papers from the course “Women and Urban Environments,” taught each year at The University of Winnipeg. The papers in the first volume, published earlier this year, were feminist analyses of existing urban spaces, from a suburban shopping mall to a downtown street. In general, the urban spaces examined were found to be unsafe environments in which women, nature and other disenfranchised groups (e.g., children, the disabled, the elderly) were marginalized and stereotyped.

The papers in Volume 2 are more optimistic and constructive, and fall generally within the theme of “Feminist Eutopian Visions of the City.” The genre of the feminist utopia or eutopia<sup>1</sup> has been with us since Christine de Pizan penned *The Book of the City of Ladies* in 1405. Each generation of women has imagined what a “good place” for women would be like in terms borrowed from their own times (de Pizan’s eutopia was a walled city inhabited by legions of strong, brilliant and courageous women from the annals of history and mythology), and in reaction against the limitations placed on women in their own milieux. Some outstanding examples are Sarah Robinson Scott’s eighteenth century *Millennium Hall*, nineteenth century feminist Charlotte Perkins Gilman’s celebrated *Herland*, and contemporary Canadian author Elisabeth Vonarburg’s riveting epic fantasy *The Maerlande Chronicles*.

In addition to the hundreds of extant feminist literary utopias (and dystopias), there now exists a healthy secondary literature on feminist utopianism (see Bibliography). However, one topic that the critics—although not necessarily the creative authors—have apparently overlooked is that of the image of the city in feminist utopias. In different ways, the papers in this volume all address the intriguing question of “What would a City of Women be like?”

The volume is divided into two parts. The papers in Part One: Feminist Transformations of Urban Spaces, combine imagination and practice in that they describe urban spaces with potential for feminist transformation, or which are already being transformed in feminist ways.” Longtime friends *Sacha Kopelow and Elizabeth Carlyle* relate their vision of the feminist “dream house” they have been planning since childhood. *Karen Schlichting Enns* describes an intentional community that she and her house mates established in inner-city Winnipeg. *Jennifer Peters* identifies the feminist elements in her downtown Winnipeg neighbourhood. Finally, *Sarah Koch-Schulte* discusses the feminist potential of the community gardening movement, and, in particular, the Osborne Village Community Gardens, with which she has been involved for some time. These essays illustrate well the point made by Lenard Hart (1996) that in contemporary

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<sup>1</sup>For a discussion of the distinction between the terms Utopia and Eutopia, see my essay in this volume (p. 43, n. 6).

<sup>2</sup>The excerpts by Enns and Foy were previously published in *Sacred Spaces*, 5,2 (March/April 1995).

feminist thought, utopia is conceived as a *process*, not necessarily as a static state of perfection. Daphne Spain's (1997) comparison of the invisible "cities of women" that exist within contemporary cities—the network of "redemptive spaces" conceived and delivered by women—to the horizontal layer of a tapestry, the weft, is instructive here. Spain notes that during the major city-building era in North America:

. . . while men were building the vertical warp of the city—the office buildings, factories, and monuments that formed the skyline—women were constructing the horizontal weft—the ordinary places that held the urban fabric together [such as orphanages, settlement houses, training schools, playgrounds, gardens]. (Spain, 1997, p. 2).

The essays in Part One illustrate that women are still very much involved in efforts to make the contemporary city into a "good place" for women, children and men.

Part Two, *Dreaming Eutopia: Feminist Visions of Urban Places*, contains papers that are more squarely within the eutopian feminist literary tradition. My own contribution is an examination of the visions of the city of seven contemporary feminist science fiction and fantasy writers: Marion Zimmer Bradley, Ursula Le Guin, Sheri S. Tepper, Pat Murphy, Starhawk, Pamela Sargent and Elisabeth Vonarburg. *R.L. Thompson's* short story "Gynesis" is an urban feminist rewriting of the biblical myth of creation. *Laura Foy* ponders the question of what housing and community design would look like in a feminist city. Finally, *Monica Papendick* describes life in the "City of Ecstasy", a "non-sexist" city reclaimed and recycled from the ruins of the contemporary city, where "social and physical design changes . . . reflect the ongoing attempt to displace or break down the physical and psychological patriarchal mazes that have for too long prevented people, particularly women, from developing a sense of Self."

As with the papers in the first volume, these (with the exception of my own essay) undergraduate student papers offer some novel perspectives and fresh insights into the question of "What would a city designed by women be like?" All of the contributors share in the desire for urban social transformation so eloquently expressed by *Michelle A. Desbiens*:

*Will there every be such a place? In my head, in my heart . . . Eutopia!*

Mary Ann Beavis  
Senior Research Associate  
Institute of Urban Studies

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Also try Laura Quilter's excellent webpage on "Feminist Science Fiction, Fantasy, and Utopia" <http://tigger.uic.edu/~lauramd/sf/index.html>.



**PART ONE**

**BUILDING EUTOPIA: FEMINIST TRANSFORMATIONS OF URBAN SPACES**



# THE HOUSE: PROBLEMS AND POLITICS, OR SACHA AND LIZ BUILD A HOUSE

Sacha Kopelow and Elizabeth Carlyle

“I do know that the building of houses, of our homes, has been entrusted far too much to a masculine thinking about structure and material.”  
—Bruno Bettelheim\*

## INTRODUCTION

We are Sacha Kopelow and Elizabeth Carlyle. Friends for some years, since the age of about sixteen, we have been talking and dreaming about making a house together. It all started with Youth PLANET (Protecting Life and Natural Earth for Tomorrow), an environmental group of which we were both original members. The group itself has since disbanded, but the friendship that grew out of our work together has remained. In order to understand where our house-making ideas come from, we will provide a bit more detail on our Youth PLANET days.

The group was a lively assemblage of high school students, and a few non-student youth, who had an interest in taking action on the environmental problems that our parents' generation had entrenched and that our generation furthers. The groups soon realized that we agreed on a lot more than just our ideas about ecological justice: there was common ground on issues of justice in general, from women's issues to violence to poverty. Being without much experience in effecting change in our society, we tended to focus on getting together and sharing stories. As we graduated from our respective high schools and moved on in our lives, the organization could not be sustained. The group of friends, however, proved to be more resilient and is still “together” to some degree, changed in a great many ways. Throughout the three years that Youth PLANET persevered in small, local actions, we were enthusiastic, sometimes discouraged, but always intent on action. For us, action meant protests, rallies, education tours, and the like. But it also meant walking the talk: making our own individual lives as close as they could be to acting out what we believed in.

For us, activism (acting on our beliefs in an organized or planned out way) was the starting point of our friendship. The next identification we made with each other involved a common obsession: making things. We have insatiable creative impulses, and are constantly sketching out grand plans to make just about anything from bike carts to pottery cups to a window garden. Sometimes mundane life diverts us from our creative selves, but you can be sure any conversation we have somehow works its way around to the “wouldn't it be great if we made of of these?” question.

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\*Bruno Bettelheim, “The Commitment Required of a Woman Entering a Scientific Profession in Present-Day American Society,” in Jacquelyn A. Mattfield and Carol E. Van Aiken, eds., *Women and the Scientific Professions* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1965), p. 18.



Photo: Co-author Sacha Kopelow.



Photo: Co-author Elizabeth Carlyle.



As far as housemaking goes, it was a natural topic of discussion for two do-it-yourself-minded young women fashioning their own realities from the world around them. Being inclined to optimism as opposed to pessimism, we knew nothing was impossible. We are both realistic, though, so our dreams have tended to be grounded in the possible, with an element of fantasy added for good measure.

The modest beginnings of this project date, I would say, back to one of the original PLANET inside jokes: the commune-in-a-jar. This commune, long since vacuumed away after the famous jar was found in pieces by a PLANETeer's tidy mum, consisted of tiny wooden animals, people and building blocks, painted and made out of wood. The commune belonged to one of PLANET's outgoing members: it was a cherished childhood toy. Many hours were spent by the group arranging the characters, assigning them names and duties, working out imaginary conflicts and just generally playing make-believe. The commune became a metaphor for our collective conflicts. It seemed that each of us in the group was struggling to eke out an identity, separate from the various versions of our nuclear families, but also grounded in the comfortable, familiar parts of our childhoods.

So, the commune was the metaphor that did not disappear with the loss of the material representations of it. I, Liz, even found a replacement set of animals and people at a garage sale. At fifty cents, it was a steal. But, like the replacement commune, our ideas about where we want to live have changed over the years. This project seeks to reflect the tension between change and stability in a very personal journey to build our ideal house.

Like our lives together, our house is very definitely incomplete, but secure in the basics.

## **THE INTEGRATED HOUSE**

Housing is not a new preoccupation for humans (or other animals, for that matter).<sup>1</sup> Whether one is considering the questions of where home is in the philosophical sense or what will provide one's shelter for the night, to have or have access to a house is essential. The United Nations recognizes shelter as one of the basic human rights of any citizen and, on a global scale, enormous variation in housing exists, from the simplest tent to the most elaborate mansion. Here, in non-Aboriginal North American cities, the house has come to be humans' personal protection against the forces of nature. In this way, the city has become constructed, metaphorically and also literally, on top of nature, as opposed to within it.

This, however, is being challenged by some. In particular, with the dawn of modern environmentalism, North America has seen a real movement towards the "integrated house," the house that works with "the forces of nature," not against them, the house that could be part of a socially and ecologically sustainable city. Here, ecofeminist perspectives will be considered.<sup>2</sup>

As the words suggest, the “Integrated House” or “Natural House” concept examines possibilities for allowing our shelters, indeed our cities, to be reclaimed as part of the living environment. (And the word “reclaimed” here is used with the full knowledge that such integrated houses have been the norm across the globe for much of human history, and still are in some parts of the world, mostly for reasons of survival. What this piece may add to the discussion is an idea of where humans have been able to work comfort, not just survival, into the picture). Because this is so radical a shift for North American urban settlements, a call for fundamental changes in city planning, engineering, architecture,<sup>3</sup> and a great many other sectors, it has remained largely outside of mainstream academic disciplines until recently. In fact, its main proponents have been people, often environmentalists, who have built their own houses/communities or have practical experience, not professional planners or academics.

The Integrated House, then, gets at the root of the nature/culture dichotomy, one which ecofeminists have criticized because it places culture in patriarchal hands, and also places women and nature under those hands. In this scenario, Carol Adams suggests that “both women and nature became man’s *‘bestiae domestica’*.”<sup>4</sup> In moving towards an Integrated House, ecofeminists reject the modernist argument that people, as they evolve, will do things better, faster, harder . . . and eventually overpower nature by creating the ideal “technologically advanced,” hermetically sealed house. The premise of the Integrated House is, to put it simply, quite the opposite of such thinking: the idea is to respect the complexity and power of nature and its forces, and to shape our cultures so that a sustainable interaction based on life (not death), interconnectedness (not dichotomies) can be carved out.

In examining the Integrated House concept, it becomes clear that process and participation are just as important as constructing the house at all. This is partly linked to an ecofeminist approach that considers interconnectedness of people and other living things, resources, energy and cultures. Possibilities for the natural house vary considerably based on principles of adaptability, bioregional and personal appropriateness, and availability of resources. Some of the main themes in Integrated Housing, ecofeminist and otherwise, include: “no-waste” disposal, non-toxic construction materials, biodegradability of all components, energy efficiency, ergonomics for all members of the household, shared housework possibilities, community dynamics, and multiple uses. The general qualities of components do not differ much from the overall qualities of the whole house. The explanation for this is simple: holistic or integrated approaches require a fundamental integration of units.<sup>5</sup>

Despite ecofeminist contributions to thought in urban design and housing possibilities for the future, it remains clear that the field of housing design, whether conventional architecture or integrated housing, is still dominated by men. A quick perusal of the literature available, both academic and popular, illustrates this barrier. Whether one looks at the *Journal of American Architecture*, *Harrowsmith* or *Mother Earth News*, men

dominate the house construction and planning section, and women tend to be relegated to the “home and garden” section. While ecofeminists do not advocate rejecting women’s ties to nature and the domestic, they are critical of this state of things and are calling for a more humanistic approach in which all people would become closer to the earth as a source of life.

As in other areas, ecofeminism (and feminism in general) is marginalized not only from the mainstream, but also from a male-dominated “alternative” stream. Nevertheless, ecofeminists continue to imagine and support integrated forms of housing that challenge the very core philosophical bases inherent in current, unsustainable housing models.

## **DOES SCIENCE HAVE A PLACE IN THE HOME?**

While Jane Jacobs would not normally be considered to uphold or support ecofeminist approaches, she did make comments, in her spirited literary attacks on “scientific” city planning, that point to a very basic ecofeminist criticism of patriarchal science: science, based on its very approaches, methods and assumptions, can easily forget the people (and the planet).<sup>6</sup> If one takes the house as a focus, based on the topic of this paper, one can see what role conventional Western science has in creating human settlements. Increasingly, in North America, science has been mobilized to make the house bigger and more decadent for the rich, more uniform and drab for the poor, more manipulable in terms of in-house environment, more reliant on fossil fuels and hydroelectricity, more removed from the natural world, and more ideal for the “ideal” nuclear family. To look at it in another way, science has *not* been mobilized to create houses that are: more sustainable, less consumptive, closer to the surrounding natural environment, more adaptable to multiple uses and diverse householders, more energy-efficient on any great scale, cheaper even while taking environmental costs into account, and more varied.

In extending the concept for the Integrated House, there is a clear mandate here to re-examine the role of science in creating ecofeminist houses and communities. In general, ecofeminists reject science as it now exists in Western academia. Perhaps, to paraphrase feminist anthropologist Donna Haraway, ecofeminism seeks a new science, one that is more amenable to partial perspectives and situated knowledges (politically-informed science).<sup>7</sup> Upon reflection, one can see that this would be a very different approach to the current science that seeks to remove itself from the world and stand over it in a profoundly destructive performance of the “god trick,” with the ability to see everything and everyone from a neutral space that it calls “objectivity.”

While ecofeminists have by no means been the first to criticize science for its role in creating modern necropolises, wastelands of class strife, environmental degradation and stagnation for all but a few brokers

of resources and power,<sup>8</sup> they (along with grassroots and environmental movements) have been at the forefront in suggesting and beginning to implement new ways of seeing and doing things. In a different vision of our communities, science and technology can be deployed as tools, as one approach among others with something to contribute to constructing houses that are people-friendly, safe, ecologically integrated, personal, adaptable and reproducible.<sup>9, 10</sup>

## **SELF-SUFFICIENCY AS A ECO-FEMINIST IMPERATIVE**

In the discussion of the Integrated House, it was noted that process in constructing an ecofeminist house is as important as the product, the house itself. Keeping in mind general ecofeminist principles of sustainability and social equality, and working in new bioregional approaches whereby provenance of resources is as important as their use,<sup>12</sup> self-sufficiency can be seen as a necessary part of this framework. Without it, ecofeminism would be relying entirely on the “master’s tools”—capitalist, exploitative, violent, over-consumption-driven economics. In this way, self-sufficiency is an economic term, where economics refers to how we procure the material elements of our survival.

In examining issues of self-sufficiency, it is interesting if not troubling to take note of where we may find agreement in other North American grassroots movements. As with issues of pornography, ecofeminists may find striking similarities in some very right-wing grassroots movements when it comes to self-sufficiency. The American homestead movement, which is one of the most long-standing movements on the continent (besides Aboriginal communities, of course) is divided among aryan or at least right-wing separatists on the one hand and what one might call more progressive, environmentalist, anarchist homesteaders on the other. It may go without saying that ecofeminists have another approach in mind than what happened in Waco, Texas, for example, but perhaps the parallel can help us to formulate a better definition of what self-sufficiency means for ecofeminist endeavours.

Both of these two divergent streams of self-sufficiency are predicated on a limited definition of self-sufficiency: to procure material goods needed for survival, as much as possible without participating in existing nation-state (and now global) macro-economic processes. Self-sufficiency here means surviving on one’s own: getting food, shelter, water, *etc.* from “the land.”

When one considers the disquieting similarities of ecologically-motivated and equity-minded models of self-sufficiency to right-wing models, one can expand the definition of self-sufficiency to gain a better understanding of ecofeminist intentions. Several other elements ecofeminists bring to that definition are that they look to the land not only for material resources of survival but for more intangible ones also: knowledge, sagacity, experience, spirituality and balance. At this point, it becomes clear that ecofeminist self-sufficiency

is truly an alternative way of approaching survival, while the right-wing manifestations of self-sufficiency are merely an extreme implementation of the “master’s tools” on a sort of warped-out grassroots do-it-yourself model of Christian nihilism. In the latter, there is no alternative: the objectives are still dominance, taming the earth and enforcing the primacy of human beings over nature (mediated only by a fundamentalist God).

Expanding on more progressive ideas about self-sufficiency, it would also be interesting and very instructive to look to the experience of many First Nations and Third World regions in examining self-sufficient housing and communities.<sup>11</sup> Initially, the example of Gandhi comes to mind, but others have brought forth similar ideas. The reason why Gandhi’s efforts might be of particular interest is that he not only recognized that human needs go hand-in-hand with environmental sustainability and justice, but also said that he was very much involved in putting those ideas into practice.

Another Indian activist, Vandana Shiva, has recently been very vocal about creating self-sufficiency. Fortunately, her approach has been explicitly ecofeminist: Shiva has been very involved in developing positive self-sufficiency models for poor women. Her message is clear: self-sufficiency for women must go hand-in-hand with environmental sustainability if it is to have lasting effects.

Self-sufficiency in an ecofeminist sense in relation to urban environments is not only about survival, it is about choosing new ways of doing things based on age-old strategies and friendly new technologies.

## AESTHETICS

“Have nothing in your house that you do not know to be useful or believe to be beautiful.”

☞ William Morris ☞

In North America, degree of wealth is seen as the best measure of beauty: the rich own beautiful houses, the poor functional ones. Beauty here is divorced from function, creating another one of those many patriarchal dichotomies. In this dichotomy, beauty is based on exclusive definitions related to wealth or lofty principles. It is also associated, in conventional art and elsewhere, with women. The *Collins English Dictionary*, for example, defines beauty as “grace or loveliness.”

For us, these attitudes twist aesthetics into rather a mess, placing beauty in the hands of specialists, artists and academics. We are not interested in arguing over “what beauty is,” because for us it is very personal, context-dependent, and often inexplicable. If we turn again to our focus—houses—we can illustrate what we mean.

While we can think of a great many houses that we would consider to be aesthetically pleasing, we would not answer that any of these, given the choice of any we could imagine, fulfills our expectations for

beauty, although parts of them certainly might be considered beautiful. So, in fact, we have two aesthetics: real and personal. In embarking on this project, we have been faced with the prospect of merging the two, of piecing together literally thousands of particles of beauty in a way or ways that is/are compatible with creating a beautiful whole.

Now, if we consider lessons in partial perspectives here, it is obvious that, wrapped up in anyone's personal ideas of beauty are their own, well, everything: beliefs, experiences, idiosyncrasies, personalities, politics, *etc.* Morris, despite being a producer of modestly mass amounts of beauty, hints at this in the citation above.

So, overall, there is not one kind or style or shape or colour of house that we can call beautiful and would like to call our own. Rather, if the house itself was to be our personal expression, or better yet one shared with others, then we would be quite content to name it beautiful. The point here is that beauty is, in fact, in the eye of the beholder.

## **WOMEN OF THE CITY**

Development authorities have only recently begun to realize the implications of the concept of gendered space, and now have the opportunity and responsibility to collect data on women, refer to research about women, and integrate the special needs of women into urban organization. While offering more choice, freedom and convenience not found in rural areas, women's existence in urban centres has been characterized by either bored confinement or hard labour, unending demands on time and energy, heavy responsibility, and both cultural and physical restriction. Social construction of gender roles and a general ignorance of the contributions of women to communities have created urban environments that make life difficult for many women, but especially for those of poor families and of women-headed households. Women's double burden of homemaker and wage-earner is not being acknowledged, and functionality for female demands is not being applied to human settlement issues such as zoning, architecture, transportation, community development, education, health and childcare. Awareness of the way women's lifestyles in the city fit into that infrastructure (e.g., that women may not necessarily need accessible public transport only during rush hour) can help solve the problems created by "gender-blind" planning in which the male is the norm. Urban women's concerns also include workplace conditions, wage and position issues, and the sexual division of labour. Women have traditionally taken a leading role in community development initiatives, such as recreation centres, crisis centres, *etc.*, resulting in successful improvements to human settlements and raising the skills, independence, and status of women. This is a far cry from the traditional assumption that it is best to deal with women by "zoning them safely into areas of domesticity and consumption" (Wilson, 1991,

p. 127), an assumption which has contributed to gender-role entrapment and systematic marginalization, limiting the contribution potential of the female sector. Feminist urban development is made easier by an understanding of the distinction between practical and strategic gendered needs. Practical needs, referring to those needs arising from the living conditions that women face daily within the household because of their gender, are really the family's needs as well; identifying them as "women's needs," although they are often the priority of women, can reinforce sexual stereotypes. Strategic needs, on the other hand, are discovered through an analysis of women's subordination, using "a diversity of ethical and theoretical criteria, many of which are culturally specific" (Moser, 1987, p. 29). Pinpointing strategic needs enables the formulation of strategies to overcome this discrimination (abolition of sexual division of labour, removal of discriminatory institutional policies, lightening the burden of domestic labour). It is necessary for urban planners to understand the needs, physical, mental and political, of women, if cities are better to facilitate the enormous contributions that women make to urban society.

## **KEEPING IT RUNNING: NORTHERN DESIGN AND ENERGY EFFICIENCY**

In keeping with our plans to build an ecologically sound house, we strive to design a space that can generate and conserve energy for heating, lighting, *etc.* An important facet of this attempt involves the fact that we live in the harsh climate of a predominantly winter city. Certain designs are therefore more appropriate, considering extreme weather fluctuations, precipitation volumes, wind, sunlight patterns, *etc.* In designing a people-oriented space, it is also important to factor in perceptions of weather and behavioural responses to winter.

In a winter severity index of the world's winter cities, Winnipeg ranked high, less severe only than Viev and Novosibirsk (Pressman, 1995, p. 20). Historically, winter has forced people of Northern climates to be creative in designing their dwellings. Snow has been used as an insulator in the Inuit igloos of Northern Canada. Natives of the Aleutian islands built subterranean dwellings, insulated by the earth. Swiss houses relied on an overall protective roof to withstand the weight of snow and protect the façade from winds. Icelandic houses were characterized by sod roofs, and they, too, hugged the ground for heat retention. Many Northern designs are plough-shaped, with an open south façade to catch sunlight, and a pointy "tail" at the North to direct wind flow. The warm southerly space would be used for living quarters, while the cool northerly tip would be perfect for cold storage of food. Shelter-belts planted on-site can reduce heat loss by cutting strong winds. Just before the Winter Solstice, of course, sunlight is at a minimum, so windows and even reflectors must be placed strategically so as to bring light into the lives of the building's inhabitants as much as possible.

The fact that Winnipeg summers can be sweltering complicates the issue a bit. Ample windows allow for air flow and moderation of indoor temperature, and well-placed shade trees are helpful. However, windows can also play a large part in the effort to heat the space with little cost and low-negative impact on the environment. Of the two types of solar power for houses, passive and indirect, a combination of the two depending on site conditions can easily heat a modest house, even during the short daylight hours of winter.

The first step, of course, is to reduce the energy demands of the household. This includes actively cutting back on day-to-day consumption by integrating common sense conservation techniques into lifestyles (e.g., turning off lights, *etc.*). As well, the use of alternative appliances such as solar ovens, washboards and clothes lines, solar-powered water heaters, *etc.* can cut down energy consumption drastically. Harnessing windpower through a generator can also provide electricity for things like deep-freezes, needed if a garden is used to aid self-sufficiency.

Reducing energy demand through design and construction means using a strong vapour-barrier to make the house airtight, and avoiding self-shading, especially on the south side. The minimal surface area of the building's exterior prevents heat loss. Note that a vapour barrier can be a health hazard without the use of an air-to-air heat exchanger which brings in fresh air, heated by the spent air as it is circulated out.

In passive-solar design, a glassed-in porch is integral, with outside windows triple-glazed, as it acts as a thermal buffer for entry and exit as well as a solar collector. The heat is then distributed throughout the house via windows and radiation and convection. Windows allow solar energy to enter directly, and is absorbed as sensible heat. A warm porch has the added benefit of acting as a garage for bicycle repairs. A south-facing greenhouse has the same effect as a porch, although it may be difficult to avoid knocking over the begonias while changing a tire. A fan at the inside peak of a house recirculates warm air down to the living space.

Indirect solar heating involves the use of external mass to facilitate solar energy collection, which is then conducted into the living space. This often produces higher temperatures, and indoor temperature is more easily regulated, and is less likely to be overheated because the energy storage is outdoors. Rock and/or water storage is most effective both indoors and outdoors.

Passive solar power can usually produce 20-30° C temperatures, and with the aid of a backup source such as a small space heater or wood stove, that's enough, even for the worst of Winnipeg weather.

## **WHERE WE'RE AT: COMMUNITY, LOCATION AND USE**

The making of ourselves is really the making of our house. We are created by our surroundings, and we will reflect ourselves in our surroundings. Form follows function follows form.



One of the most important aspects of our homemaking is the community of which we are a part. It is necessary for us to be active and involved in the wider area past our front door. We plan to be involved in much volunteer work, from acting against sexism to promoting animal rights, to being involved in the arts community of Winnipeg. To this purpose, our house will be centrally located, so that transportation to various events and meetings is convenient, and so that other people can easily access our house for meetings and group work.

We will therefore require, as well, a large, open space in our house, in which our friends and co-workers can gather. Other areas of our house will also be determined by their use. Some may be bare and simple for study and meditation purposes, others cluttered and comfortable with art and sentiment. Above all, our house will be clean and orderly enough to live in, but it will *not* be a museum, cold and untouchable and breakable.

The future use of our home will also have to be considered. If either of us partners with someone we want to live with, or has children, or if other friends want to live with us, our house must be able to grow along, to adapt to our changing lifestyle.

Another important consideration is the community within our house. Tensions can run high in any family, and we'll have to be able to deal with that. Private space in some form may be the key; clearly defined chore responsibilities, open communication, and conflict resolution tactics may help prevent/mediate conflict. A non-power based division of labour coupled with a non-power based spatial organization (e.g., no "master bedroom" type of thing) will also contribute to harmony. The heavy workload and monotony involved in being self-sufficient can also be offset by bartering with community members for their help. Who knows, we may be able to barter our experience to hopeful homemakers.

## CONCLUSIONS

For us, personally, one of the best products of this project is that we've been able to identify some general things we want our house to be:

- realistic
- cheap
- environmentally sound
- practical
- beautiful
- durable if kept up
- ours

- shareable
- convenient
- bright
- home-made
- tidy and easily kept up
- wild space, not synthetic
- non-toxic and non-polluting
- non-human animal friendly
- cosy
- safe
- energy efficient
- pit-stop possible
- winterized, season-friendly
- biodegradable
- living, changing

We want spaces like:

- private space
- low-maintenance space
- coloured space
- play space
- art and craft space
- just-right space
- outdoor space
- garden space
- no rent, no mortgage space
- green space
- meeting space
- wild space

We also recognized that we have little interest in scientific principles of architecture, planning, high-tech energy efficiency, and the like. While we certainly would keep the principles of nature in mind, we didn't see that as necessarily a scientific approach. We just want to design a house that we can love and live in. Neither are we expecting that a house will be perfect and never need to be altered: in fact, we want a house that can change and grow with us.

The other thing to consider is that, while this project is an explicitly eco-feminist endeavour, we could not easily separate it from other aspects of our lives; this is, we believe, reflected in the work. Our ideas about our house are what makes the plan simultaneously cogent and fractured. It is, at this point, a compilation of bits and pieces of our lives, together and not together.

Overall, when we look at this project and what it means for women in urban environments, several things become clear. Conventional houses in North America:

- do not work for people most of the time
- reinforce gender roles and stereotypes
- do not recognize human variability
- reflect the political ideologies that dominate: conformity, uniformity, capitalism, environmental destruction
- present limited opportunities for creativity and comfort . . .

Part of this project has been to counter those problems on an organic level. And, while we have some ideas about what we might like a community to look like, we would be hypocritical to say that we would like to see a great many houses identical to our own lining a street. Houses, we feel, should be personal and have personalities. As Frank Lloyd Wright wrote in his book *The Natural House*: “There . . . should be integrity in a house as in an individual” (1954, p. 121).

From an academic perspective, this exercise in house-building spans, for us, far beyond its material relevance. There will always be some parts of our house which reside in our minds. In fact, at this stage, our ideal is only very fragmentarily available in the material world: the next step for us in the process is to actually build it. That, however, is beyond the scope of the present endeavour . . .

**NOTES**

1. See the “Shelter” series of books, edited by Lloyd Kahn and published by Shelter Publications, P.O. Box 279, Bolinas, CA 94924, U.S.A.
2. Please note that while little explicitly ecofeminist literature on housing is available, some articles are available on ecofeminist visions of cities and communities. Judith Plant in *Earthkeeper* or *The New Catalyst* is a good example.
3. Though it should be noted that architects, especially since Frank Lloyd Wright, have tried to interact more sustainably with nature.
4. Carol Adams, *The Sexual Politics of Meat: A Feminist-Vegetarian Critical Theory* (New York: Continuum, 1990).
5. An excellent, but not the only, example of new ideas about process and product in Integrated—or here, Autonomous—housing is found in Bob Walter *et al.*, eds., *Sustainable Cities: Concepts and Strategies for Ecocity Development* (Los Angeles: Eco-Home Media, 1992).
6. Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (New York: Vintage, 1992). First published 1961.
7. Donna Haraway, “Situated Knowledges,” in *Simians, Cyborgs and Women: The Reinvention of Nature* (New York: Routledge, 1991).
8. This, however, is meant as a macro-picture of cities. In other ways, the redeeming qualities of cities have persisted and continue to be their *raison d’être* in many ways: diversity of culture, economies of scale (short-term at least), meeting places, *etc.*
9. While we mention reproducibility as a quality of ecofeminist housing, we should point out that by no means should “reproducible” become “cloned.” In my mind, personality and local availability of resources should be manifested in the ecofeminist house.
10. Here, again, refer to *Sustainable Cities*, edited by Walter *et al.* While it is not ecofeminist *per se*, some of its contributions are.
11. By “new,” we simply mean renewed in environmental and academic thinking: the Practices of bioregionalism are by no means new. Rather, they have been the norm for most of human history.
12. This does not mean to say that people in Third World economies are living in voluntary simplicity. My objective is not to romanticize or idealize living conditions that make desperate self-sufficiency an imperative. The comparison is to point out that we can learn from experiences in the Third World, where many grassroots groups, and governmental and quasi-governmental agencies, are struggling to balance Third World survival against First World opulence.

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## Excerpts from "Turning a Dull Grey Area into a Place of Colour: A Feminist Analysis of My Home" by Karen Schlichting Enns

I have chosen to do a feminist analysis of a very common space—my home. It is common because we are all very familiar with this place we call "home." The unique aspects of my particular living situation stretch the traditional concept of "home." Although our household is not the only one of its kind in the city of Winnipeg, it still stands as a challenge to the traditional expectations of people our age, race and social class. Most of us in middle-income white families have grown up in a single-family dwelling, either in the suburbs or in the country. . . . The goal, conscious or unconscious [of most people in our society], is to duplicate this common understanding of "home." . . .

The inner city of Winnipeg in many respects has become what Jane Jacobs called "dull grey areas" (Jacobs, 1961). Sherbrook Street, the street we are currently living on, is one such street. . . . We decided to make a commitment to this neighbourhood because we were tired of feeling isolated from the growing issues of poverty, and we knew that living on our own in this neighbourhood might be an unsafe decision. With a community giving support, issues of crime and poverty became more manageable.

Another important consequence of living together was the opportunity for the two [single] women to live with a male (besides a father or brother). And for me, the opportunity to regain some of the community I felt before I was married, when I was living in a household of women. The three women, myself included, were all coming into some sort of "feminist" awakening at the time we moved in together. . . .

Our neighbourhood has some extremely dysfunctional and abusive male/female relationships. In the summer on a nice evening we don't necessarily hear the chirp of crickets, but rather the screaming and yelling of women and men and the smashing of class on concrete. The issues of male violence, overt and subtle, are part of our daily experience. For us, this meant that you could not avoid talking about the issues and processing feelings. As men and women, we have been able to face the abuse and not let it control us by fear. To survive and even to thrive in our neighbourhood, you cannot avoid it. The more people not willing to let it go unchecked, the safer the neighbourhood.

Our house is situated between two other houses, owned by seniors. . . . All three houses, our own and the ones on either side, have a common feature. We all have back yards and spend a considerable amount of time in them. These back yards have been the meeting place and communication centre for our three homes and several children in the neighbourhood. Our yards/gardens have been a natural place to share stories, dreams, and anxieties. . . .

The apartment blocks and crowded living arrangements result in very little space for outdoor activities. When the weather warms, the children love to help in planting, cultivating, and raking in our yard. Over the past several years, I believe our yard has become a safe place and a fun place for a number of children. . . . These children face some of the harshest environments I've ever seen. They are readily exposed to pornographic images, substance

abuse, violence, racism and classism. Many of these children will need much more than the four walls that keep them dry and warm at night in order to survive. . . .

Because our house is close to the downtown area, we are often able to walk to places of entertainment, school, doctors, hair stylists, etc. Most of us also choose to cycle in the summer time to many of our destinations. It is a very freeing feeling to be able to propel yourself along without the use of fossil fuels. Having friends living within cycling distance is an asset to the environment, but also to building a more connected community. Also having banks, the swimming pool, theatres, restaurants, post office, library, shopping areas and a variety of social action groups within walking or cycling distance increases time spent exercising and in direct contact with natural elements. Being on a bicycle or walking puts you in direct contact with people who are sharing the sidewalk or street with you. You are not isolated by car doors or speed; you are forced to take notice of what is happening around you, for your safety, which also results in a safer neighbourhood environment. . . .

None of us knew each other very well before moving in together. . . . The cohesive element was our connection to the Mennonite church. This element, the Mennonite church, a patriarchal structure, has similarly been challenged by the burgeoning thoughts and criticisms coming out of this blend of people. The "dilemma" of church or of a biblically based spirituality is still in the hot seat of discussion. One of our close friends is a member of the Medewin Lodge (a traditional Aboriginal religious group) who brings a broader understanding of religion and faith than most of us are familiar with. This element, along with the feminist tendency of the house, creates an interesting religious blend.

The structure is a two-storey house built in the early twentieth century. The floor plan of the house has lent itself to good community building. The main floor is used as common living space. A fair-sized living room is the centre for relaxation after school or work. The physical features of the house are not very noteworthy, but we have tried to create an atmosphere which reflects who we are by the art we display on the walls. The living room has been designated as the room with intentional Aboriginal content. Because we have all been moved by the importance of community and symbols in the Native tradition, the room carries two large Aboriginal paintings of people, and a variety of hand-crafted items (by ourselves and others) highlighting an earth-based spirituality. Rounded, womb-shaped vases and plants symbolize the life-giving female nature around us and within. The living room also has a large window facing Sherbrook, allowing us to see and be aware of the activity going on in our neighbourhood. It is often the place where we first get alerted to violent activity that needs intervention. The centre of relaxation also becomes a safety feature for others travelling in our neighbourhood. . . .

The kitchen, unlike many in its construction era, is unusually large. Perhaps the kitchen and the eating area is the one place where we most often come together. The joy



of eating and celebrating life through food, creates another natural discussion area. We have committed to try to eat together as a household whenever possible. . . . The kitchen is the place where decisions are made on a consensus basis, small decisions pertaining to what to make for supper to larger issues of where we as a household want to invest our grocery money. Because the space is large enough to seat up to ten people, we have had the pleasure of sharing this space with friends and family, usually marking significant or symbolic times in our lives like birthdays, religious holidays, and just days of life celebration. . . . This year we had a Gender Bender Halloween Bash. The party was a great success! It did indeed bend our concepts of gender in an atmosphere that was non-threatening.

The kitchen is not the domain of the women of the house. Meals are prepared by the one with the most energy to initiate cooking. In our case, this happens to be more often than not a male-initiated activity. The clean-up is then in the hands of whoever did not help with the cooking. Those of us who get overwhelmed by cooking participate in alternative activities that are more suited to our interests. . . . The kitchen has two windows and a back door which, primarily in the summer, lend themselves well to monitoring the activity of the children in our yard or back lane. The door is often open in the summer, extending our living space to the outdoors. In the summer, we will eat several of our meals outside. The garden is just a step outside the back door, giving us quick access to our own food sources and also to the composter which nourishes the soil in which we grow our food.

The food we prepare and feast on is also an extension of a commitment to an alternative way. Because we have a fairly large storage space, we are able to buy several items in bulk, which uses less packaging and is more cost efficient. We have also just recently decided to start purchasing our groceries from Neechi Foods in the North End, just over the tracks. . . . Neechi Foods is an Aboriginal employee co-operative, seeking to keep capital in the community, building a stronger and healthier inner city (Nozick, 1992, p. 225). . . .

The upper floor is the area which we use for our personal space. We each have our own room. The rooms are not very large, but each has its own window which allows in plenty of light. My partner and I share a room and an adjoining bathroom. The other three (two women and one man) share a common bathroom. The rooms, because of their limited floor space, make finding enough private space a bit of a challenge. It is not very liberating to have a shoe box for private space. What we have done is constructed beds that are off the ground, leaving space underneath for a chair or dresser, creating a larger functional private space . . .

The basement of our home is a rather "cave-like" place, but has been a place where we have been able to transform garbage into functional living components. The basement houses a workshop, complete with an array of tools and handy items. In the workshop, we have been able to recycle lumber found in dumpsters or back lanes into shelving, coat racks, tables, refurbished antique end tables and benches. The workshop space has enabled us to produce the majority of the furniture in our home. . . .

The way we have dealt with common household duties is perhaps one of the more solid attempts to balance the time the men and women spend at housekeeping. For some of the women in the house, there is a tendency to be aware of dust, mess and the like. If we were not committed to distributing the duties evenly, it would be easy to imagine how the household would slip into traditional male and female roles. There are five categories of duties which we each do for a two-month period. Grocery-shopping, vacuuming, recycling, putting the garbage out, and basic yard maintenance are the five categories. Because we have all committed to this format, it also creates an opportunity to keep each other accountable.

This house, although struggling to be an alternative to the patriarchal household, is not what I would consider an ecofeminist utopia. The three women and two men in the household fall into traditional patterns of functioning at some point or another. We lose sight of the larger community and its issues. We are not consistent with our commitment to the environment and to how and what we consume. We did not grow up with feminist values, we are people deeply rooted in a patriarchal world view that has simultaneously dominated both women and nature. This world view is hard to shake. It is much easier to shake the foundations in the context of a community; however, in a mixed gender community, it remains a constant tension to live with the reminder that the patriarchal world view is constantly a threat. Perhaps it is this awareness, just like the awareness of the larger patriarchal structures, that creates violence and crime in the neighbourhood, that can keep us on our "gender toes." . . .

Ironically, what has caused us to relax and reconvene around issues that are important to us has been the last member of the household, our cat. The cat, with its playful nature and constant need for attention, can draw our attention away from stress and cause us to see life from a different perspective. This sounds quite strange, and perhaps slightly exaggerated, but it is an element that I could not omit from this analysis. The cat is an element that cannot be contained, it is a reminder for all of us that we do not have to live by constructs that have been designed to oppress women and nature. We can go beyond what our political structures have taught us is possible, we can change the destructive, self-seeking, male-dominated structures that dictate how our cities develop. We definitely cannot do it alone, but woven together by a variety of threads, we can recreate a fabric which brings colour to what has been "dulled" and "greyed" in our society.

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# IDEAS FOR TRANSFORMING WOLSELEY INTO WINNIPEG'S FIRST NON-SEXIST NEIGHBOURHOOD: AN ECOFEMINIST ANALYSIS OF URBAN DESIGN

Jennifer Peters\*

City planning in the Wolseley neighbourhood of Winnipeg, Manitoba has failed to foster non-human habitat and to improve the lives of women and other marginalized people through creative, ecological, and inclusive urban design. An ecofeminist analysis of the urban design of Wolseley identifies that within this neighbourhood the protection and enhancement of non-human habitat is inadequate, and that the experiences, needs, and ideas of women and other people marginalized by race, ethnicity, economics, ability, sexual orientation, and age are underrepresented. How would the Wolseley neighbourhood be different if the perspectives of marginalized people were included in its urban design? Would the process of making decisions about urban design *with* the public instead of *for* the public generate urban design features that would contribute to a greater quality of human and non-human life? These questions are being asked and answered through ecofeminist analyses of mainstream urban design.

Literally man-made, mainstream urban design is not generally informed by the perspectives of people marginalized in our society. This results in the spatial and social control by the elite of the people with the fewest resources and the least power. Feminist analyses of the values, theories, and practices of prevalent urban design confirm that our built environment contributes to the creation and perpetuation of social inequalities (MacGregor, 1995, p. 29; Wiseman, 1992, pp. 2,3). From an ecofeminist perspective, social inequality is ultimately an outcome of patriarchal ideology that depends upon male supremacy and the inferiority and domination of women, other social groups, and non-human nature.

Patriarchy as "an architecture of exclusion that segregates and manipulates people according to social caste" (Weisman, 1992, p. 63) is evident in both historical and current examples of marginalized people who are denied access to public places. Examples abound of spaces such as buses, boardrooms, residential areas, and educational institutions where people have not been permitted due to discrimination and the unspoken rules or official policies of the social group with the greatest political power.

The design of inclusive urban space is slow to occur in the academic environmental sciences of architecture and urban design. These are disciplines that lack diversity and, therefore, the influence of the experiences, needs, and ideas of marginalized people. Feminists and other people are, however, critiquing urban design and are envisioning and implementing inclusive urban design that will benefit a broad range of citizens and the environment. The work of Norwood and Smith (1995) provides a comprehensive introduction to design options for inclusive, ecological living.

Urban design informed by the perspectives of marginalized people is needed in order to deconstruct existing social inequalities maintained by patriarchal ideology and to create buildings and communities designed

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to realize social equality. How does this relate to the Wolseley neighbourhood? This paper will identify aspects of urban design in the Wolseley neighbourhood that currently fail to meet women's needs, and will demonstrate that the implementation of urban design changes informed by an ecofeminist analysis is fundamental to achieving gender equality and urban ecological sustainability. The ecofeminist perspective used to analyse the Wolseley neighbourhood recognizes persistent gender inequality that discriminates against women, and links the destruction of the environment with discrimination against women and other marginalized groups.

This paper is divided into three sections. The first section will explain the methodology and significance of ecofeminist analysis. The second section will provide a brief profile of the Wolseley neighbourhood. The final, most comprehensive section will identify aspects of urban design in Wolseley that fail to meet women's needs, and will suggest examples of urban design changes informed by ecofeminist analysis that contribute to gender equality and urban ecological sustainability.

## **SECTION ONE: WHAT IS AN ECOFEMINIST ANALYSIS?**

An ecofeminist analysis is an approach to understanding the social processes that affect women's lives and the environmental ethics of society. For the purpose of this paper, the methodology of this analysis will involve examining information from a woman-centred perspective, interpreting how issues specifically affect women, and critiquing structures and institutions that marginalize women, other social groups, and non-human beings.

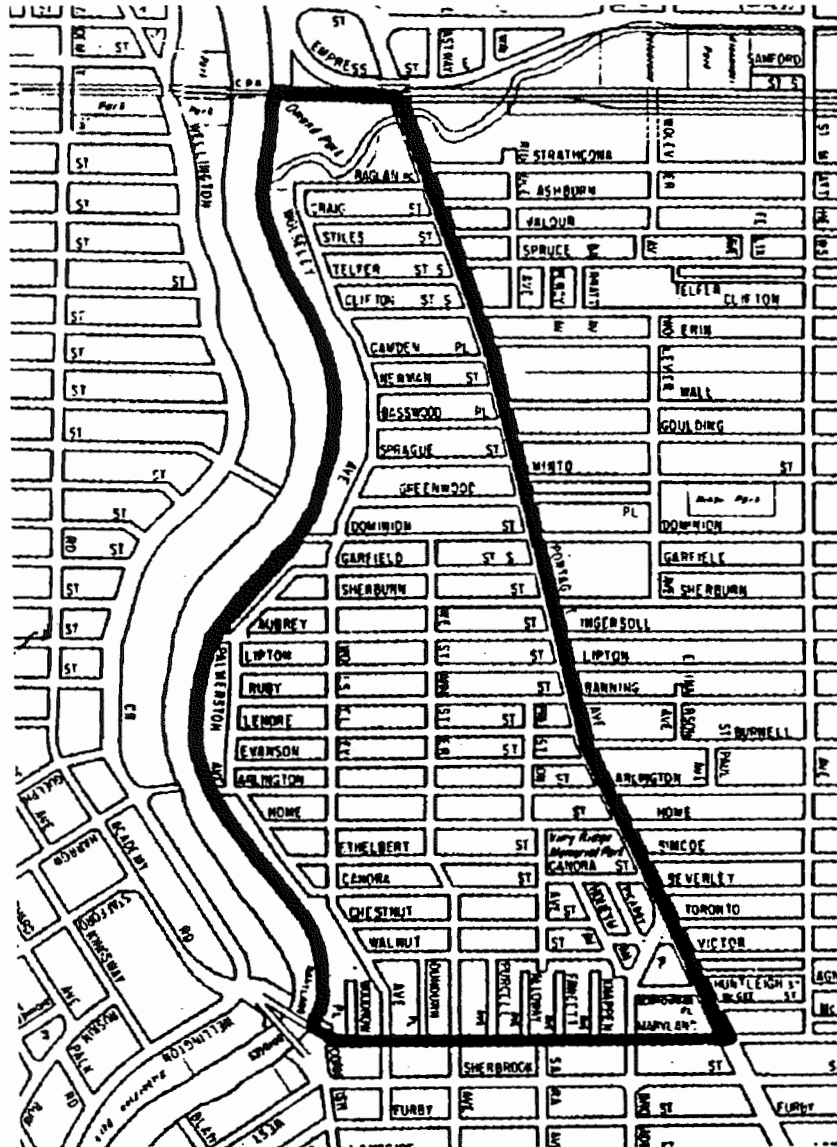
The "eco" in ecofeminist is derived from the word *oikos* which means house or household in Greek, and which is also related to the words and concepts of ecology and economy (Beavis, 1995, p. 1). The house and household relate to the built environment of human artifacts and landscaped areas, and both ecology and economy play a role in our current communities. This analysis necessitates attention to the ecological, economic, social, political, and cultural issues affecting women.

City planners have, however, generally been ignorant of the appropriateness and the value of ecofeminist analyses of built environments. This is primarily because planners have been gender-blind to the reality that women and men often experience cities in different ways (MacGregor, 1995, p. 26). Many of women's specific experiences in and concerns about built environments have been ignored by official planning departments. This is in direct opposition to international Canadian commitments through endorsement of the United Nations, *The Platform for Action and the Beijing Declaration*, which states:

Governments and other actors should promote an active and visible policy of mainstreaming a gender perspective in all policies and programmes so that before decisions are taken, an analysis is made of the effects on women and men, respectively (1996, p. 111).

The practice of implementing gender-based analyses in all governmental planning including urban design

Figure 1: Geographical boundaries of the Wolseley census area in Winnipeg, Manitoba



Source: City of Winnipeg Planning Department—Systems Branch, "Westminster 1.13" in *Winnipeg Area Characterization Program* (Winnipeg: City of Winnipeg Planning Department, 1991).

should be implemented locally. Women's lack of access to the political process and decision-making prevents women's perspectives from being considered in decisions related to urban design; this perpetuates women's inequality.

Ecofeminism is defined as a perspective that recognizes persistent gender inequality that discriminates against women and that links the destruction of the environment with discrimination against women and other marginalized groups. This perspective has been embraced by the writer in the feminist fashion of the personal is political. Practical observations about local urban design features in the Wolseley neighbourhood that perpetuate social inequality and ecological degradation support the theoretical basis of this perspective.

## **SECTION TWO: A PROFILE OF WOLSELEY**

The Wolseley community is defined geographically as the area south of Portage Avenue extending to the Assiniboine River between the western boundary of Omands Park to the west and Maryland Street to the east (Figure 1).

Statistics Canada census records indicate that in 1991, there were 8,139 residents in Wolseley (1991, p. 61). The Wolseley neighbourhood is primarily residential, with commercial activity along two borders and a small amount of mixed use along two central streets within the neighbourhood: Westminster Avenue and Wolseley Avenue. The average economic value of a private dwelling in Wolseley is listed as \$82 335.00, while the average annual income for males 15 years and over is \$24,392.00 and the significantly lower income for females in the same category is \$17,763 (Statistics Canada, 1991).

There is a close balance between the percentage of single-detached houses and the percentage of apartments in the area, as well as between the number of occupied private dwellings that are owned and rented. Census records show that the largest percentage of people in the area are of British ethnic origin, followed by German, Aboriginal (the records do not specify Aboriginal nations), and then Ukrainian. The overall proportion of women is slightly higher than that of men in terms of total population, and in the age category 65 years and over, there are significantly more senior women than men residents in Wolseley (Table 1).

<b>Category</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Total of occupied dwellings—single detached houses	50.8%
Total of occupied dwellings—apartments	47.1%
Total of private dwellings—owned	49.7%
Total of private dwellings—rented	50.3%
British ethnic origin	28.6%
German ethnic origin	14.5%
Aboriginal ethnic origin	11.9%
Ukrainian ethnic origin	10.2%
Population—female, total	51.5%
Population—male, total	48.4%
Population—female, total 65 years +	6.2%
Population—male, total 65 years +	3.5%

Source: City of Winnipeg Planning Department—Systems Branch, "1991 Census Update: 1113 Wolseley" in *Winnipeg Area Characterization Program* (Winnipeg: City of Winnipeg Planning Department).

## **SECTION THREE: AN ECOFEMINIST ANALYSIS OF WOLSELEY URBAN DESIGN FEATURES**

### **ACCESSIBLE PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

In order to transform Wolseley into a non-sexist and ecologically sustainable neighbourhood, the process related to making decisions about the urban design features of this neighbourhood must change. Residents of Wolseley should have the opportunity to play a greater role in determining the urban design and, therefore, the long-term character of the neighbourhood. A model should be developed informed by a gender-based analysis to increase and incorporate public participation, and this participation should be explicitly accessible to women. The overall process of public decision-making should be guided by professionals within the City of Winnipeg Planning Department who are trained in gender-based analysis, collaborative group decision-making, and conflict resolution. The public should consider and make decisions on all aspects of urban design including the often overlooked areas of architectural accessibility, heritage features, natural ecological features, and resource use and management within the neighbourhood.

If the public participation process takes the form of meetings, then the locations and times of the meetings should be considered from a woman-centred perspective to prevent these logistics from being a barrier to the participation of women. Women may feel fear about getting to or from a meeting during the evening even within their own neighbourhood, or at a particular time of the day women may have family responsibilities such as meal preparation or childcare that are infrequently shared by men. Quality childcare should be provided at these meetings to maximize the participation of parents, especially women, young, and low-income parents. The meeting locations should be wheelchair accessible.

To encourage the participation of all people, accessible language should be used during the process and when technical language is unavoidable (although this should be rare) then clear, detailed explanations should be provided.

Currently, the concerns of Wolseley residents about issues within the community, including urban design features can be expressed through a private presentation to the City Centre Community Committee, or through the Residents' Advisory Group that advises this council, or to the Wolseley Residents' Association. However, without a process for developing a long-term, neighbourhood strategy for urban design, citizens' concerns and actions related to urban design are fragmented and primarily reactive instead of proactive. Women's needs for local alternative urban design features are not being met through the current public participation process.

The importance of an accessible, democratic public participation process is to distribute the power of decision-making about local urban design among interested citizens. The impetus, from an ecofeminist perspective, is to alter the professional approach of designing urban environments for the public to designing with the public. This could benefit women and other marginalized groups through the incorporation of their specific needs in urban design. This could also potentially better incorporate urban ecological design features within neighbourhoods where there are residents who are knowledgeable and motivated in this area.

## SERVICES

There are a number of useful, existing services in Wolseley. There is also a lack of services that would specifically benefit women and other marginalized people. The description of services presented in this section include publicly funded and subsidized services as well as small, private businesses.

- There is a Canada Post outlet. This is an important communication service for all citizens, but is especially important for women who want to keep their identity as private as possible, perhaps for reasons of male violence, and therefore are in need of a private postal box in a location other than where they live.
- There is a private laundromat. This is important in an area where many residents rent apartments that may not include shared laundry facilities. Women are generally still more responsible for more household work including laundry than men, so a nearby neighbourhood laundromat is useful. (The laundromat as it currently exists is not a purposefully social, educational, or empowering public place, but it could become this through alternative design). From an ecofeminist perspective, a system developed within neighbourhoods for groups of people living in close proximity to co-operatively share laundry facilities, as well as other appliances, is desirable economically and environmentally. This would free people from the powerful consumer push to perpetually purchase expensive, large household items. Economic cost savings would be realized from the initial purchase of these items as well as through shared repairs. Finally, there is the environmental benefit of reducing the overall production of such items in society. This strategy of co-operative management could be used for appliances such as vacuum cleaners, blenders, food processors, and pressure cookers, *etc.*
- There are private childcare centres in the neighbourhood which are a necessary service for parents. However, the universal, federally-funded childcare program promised by the Liberal government is needed in Wolseley by parents, especially by low-income parents who are primarily women and young people. The stress of parenting is especially difficult for women who are socially isolated, and for all low income people who have fewer choices in our capitalist economy.
- There is a centre in Wolseley specifically for young mothers. This centre is geared towards teaching



- parenting skills and to providing childcare for young mothers who are pursuing high school education or employment training programs. This is an existing, necessary service that should be expanded and publicly funded to provide support for more young mothers.
- There is a community centre that provides free and subsidized public programs for people of all ages in the Wolseley neighbourhood. Sports are played in the gym at all times of the day by children, youth, and adult groups. As well, there are activities designed for children and youth including crafts, athletics, and rock band concerts during all seasons, spiritual Tai Chi courses for adults, plus workshops on other topics are held, seed and perennial plant exchanges take place, and there are frequent flea markets in the gym. All of these activities provide education, training, and recreation for people of different ages within the neighbourhood for free or at a low cost. This is important from an ecofeminist perspective because more women than men live in poverty and therefore have limited access to these kinds of opportunities unless they are inexpensive. The activities at this centre also provide a safe public place for children to spend time. As well, people in the neighbourhood can generally self-propel themselves (by foot, wheelchair, or bike) to the centre which reduces the need for resource-consuming vehicle travel. Also, many of the events at this centre, such as the flea markets and seed and plant exchanges, are based on resource conservation and ecological practices. These visible events in the community reduce the social stigma of using second-hand items, and they encourage barter arrangements and/or alternative economics that especially benefit low-income people, most of whom are women in Wolseley. It would be useful if the community centre could also function as a cultural centre where groups could meet, hold events, store and disseminate resources, and offer workshops on such themes as racism, homophobia and language training.
  - In Wolseley, there are second hand clothing and furniture stores. One of these stores is owned by a woman who advertises that she donates clothing to both a women's shelter and to an Aboriginal women's organization for women in business training who are in need of business attire which is typically expensive. These stores are important from a ecofeminist perspective because they are inexpensive places to purchase items; this benefits women and young people. These stores are also built on the principle of resource conservation. In the case of the local store owner who collects and donates clothing to support women-focused services, her efforts are important to support. As well, these street-level, locally owned businesses contribute to neighbourhood safety. These businesses generate small amounts of steady foot traffic that results in more public attention to the security of people in near proximity (Bushby, 1996, p. 29; Jacobs, 1961).
  - There is some good street lighting in Wolseley, but more bright and energy efficient white street lights are needed.

- What if there was a publicly funded place where people could go within Wolseley at any time of the day to receive feminist counselling and/or co-counselling on a variety of issues? There is a need for this service within the urban environment to create healthy communities through healthy community members. The cost and/or waiting list for private counselling sessions is currently prohibitive to many people.
- A fund to assist low-income people to retrofit homes to make them more energy and water efficient as well as accessible for wheelchairs is needed. As well, all existing and new governmental buildings should be retrofitted, and private businesses should be encouraged to do this as well.
- Subsidized co-housing living arrangements, especially for seniors, are needed in Wolseley. This would benefit seniors (more of whom are women than men in Wolseley) in terms of quality of life by living longer independently in community instead of in institutionalized care homes. In families where there are young children, co-housing could benefit both parents and kids in living situations where the "co-habitant" assists with childcare.
- A community kitchen is needed in Wolseley, where interested residents could purchase healthy food in bulk to save money and to reduce the production and accumulation of food packaging. Individuals and families could share the company and support of others while preparing and sharing meals, and this could also be a good location for workshops facilitated by local residents on a variety of topics.

Selected services and small businesses play a positive role in contributing to the quality of life of women and other marginalized people within a neighbourhood. A "service", however, such as a video shop that advertises pornographic material that is degrading to women and other social groups, and is unwanted in a neighbourhood by residents, is an example of the spatial control of marginalized people by by-laws which are part of urban design. From an ecofeminist perspective, residents have an important role to play in imagining what kind of neighbourhood they would like to live in, and in building community and political will to implement inclusive urban design.

## **SAFETY AND EMPLOYMENT**

It is increasingly well understood that the urban design features of a neighbourhood affect citizens' safety and, especially, the safety of women and other marginalized people in public. Many city planning departments in North American cities have conducted safe city audits and reports covering urban design, planning, public transit, and policing that are specifically geared towards developing strategies to prevent public violence against women. Urban design features that have been introduced to meet the safety needs of marginalized people include the establishment of safe zones in transit stations where there is security or emergency telephones, improved lighting in public places, security in parking garages, and landscaping with

low shrubs and fences to promote visibility (Nozick, 1992, pp. 162-63).

It is evident from the large number of women who participate in the annual Take Back The Night march in Wolseley that women feel fear about being in the streets.<sup>7</sup> From an ecofeminist perspective, the legitimate fear that women and girls experience about male violence against women is due fundamentally to the patriarchal ideology of our society. Male violence against women and girls will not end as long as men believe that male power is based on having power over others. Feminist analyses of urban design show, however, that urban features play a role in increasing and decreasing public safety.

In Wolseley, poor lighting fails to meet women's safety needs. The introduction of more bright white lighting on residential streets is needed, and is especially important at neighbourhood bus stops where women may spend time waiting alone. Existing derelict lots should be maintained and kept clear of large objects to prevent potential attackers from lurking in these areas where there are typically few other people. As well, there are currently many store front buildings and apartment blocks in Wolseley which have indented doorways which provide a concealed place for attackers to hide. All newly constructed buildings should be mandated to open to the street instead of being designed with indented entrances.

It would be valuable for the Wolseley Residents' Association, or any other interested group, to implement a neighbourhood safety audit and to encourage residents to participate in a zero tolerance program against violence. Residents could post signs in visible places on their property indicating that they would provide support to someone threatened due to a violence-related situation. This program would be similar to neighbourhood block parent programs. The potential irony of this program could be that women and girls in need of assistance would feel afraid to approach unknown people for fear of greater violence.

Mixed residential and workplace land use in a neighbourhood is an effective urban design strategy to increase public safety. This meets women's needs by the presence of more people "in the streets." Jane Jacobs writes that when people describe a city as unsafe, this usually means that people identify the city sidewalks as unsafe places (1961, p. 30). It is commonly known within feminist academia and women's consciousness-raising groups that many women view sidewalks not as neutral physical structures but, rather, as places where unsolicited attention and/or assault against women and children by men can and does occur.

Increased mixed land use as a form of urban design is also environmentally sensible because people are more able to work near home and to walk or bicycle to work. Wolseley, however, is primarily residential with

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<sup>7</sup>The Take Back The Night march is a North American women's march through city streets to encourage public solidarity and action to prevent male violence against women and girls. The theme "take back the night" refers to women and girls taking control of their environments without fear and in safety, and especially at night when women and girls fear the most for their personal security in public places.

the exception of being bordered by one highly commercial street, one marginally commercial street, and having a small amount of commercial activity along an interior street. An increase of mixed land use in Wolseley including commerce, services, and different types of housing would be a beneficial from an eco-feminist perspective.

From an eco-feminist perspective, another important change would be to rescind municipal zoning regulations that currently prohibit home businesses in Wolseley. Women are more likely than men to operate cottage industries and this change would benefit women. Intensified communities are reported to best meet women's safety, employment, and training needs and therefore contribute to greater gender equality (Bushby, 1996, 28).

## **FOOD SECURITY**

Individual and community food security requires that all people have reliable and dignified access to healthy, personally acceptable, and adequate amounts of food (Guberman, 1995, pp. 113-14; Van Dusen, 1996, p. 18). In 1994, at least 280,000 Canadian children used a food bank each month (Stienstra and Roberts, 1995, p. 99). In our modern day urban environment, the public is not accustomed to thinking about the relationship between urban design and food security. Food security, however, is integral to the quality of people's lives and an ecofeminist analysis of built space shows that this issue relates to urban design.

Currently, in Wolseley, people have the option of purchasing commercial food in a small number of grocery and corner stores, of producing their own vegetables in private gardens, of buying high cost organic food at a local food co-op, and of buying organic baked goods at a locally owned bakery. All of these options are important from an ecofeminist perspective. It is beneficial to have grocery stores within residential areas because people can then walk, bicycle, or go by wheelchair (weather permitting) to these stores which has environmental benefits. This is also advantageous for low-income people who are less likely than those with higher incomes to own vehicles. Without local food stores, travelling to purchase food becomes more complicated and time-consuming. It is also good that homeowners can grow their own food in private gardens and teach this fundamental practice to children. Finally, it is desirable from both a health and an environmental perspective to have the option to buy organic food; although, if this food is produced far away and is transported long distances, the overall environmental benefits are reduced. As well, the high cost of organic food is prohibitive to many people. All of these food-related options are part of the urban design of Wolseley, and still it is reasonable to assume that there are people living in the neighbourhood who do not consistently have enough to eat.

Poverty is the primary reason that people live in food insecurity, and poverty disproportionately affects women of all ages globally (United Nations, 1996, pp. 38-39). People living on a limited income usually spend

money first on fixed costs, such as rent and utilities, which can leave little money left over for food and other necessities. An urban design feature that could benefit all people within a neighbourhood, and especially low-income people and apartment dwellers who do not have gardening property, would be the establishment of community gardens for local food production. Garden plots could be established on both private and public vacant lots in Wolseley supported by the municipal government through access to this land and free rototilling to develop the plots. Municipally funded community animators who could help establish gardens, teach gardening practices, and provide garden-related assistance would contribute to the sustainability of this initiative. Converting vacant lots to "green" gardens would result in more people spending time in previously abandoned areas which would increase neighbourhood safety. Community gardens would also encourage local non-human diversity.

Gardening work is time consuming and could potentially add to the work for which women are already responsible. Therefore, sharing gardening work and the garden harvests between groups of people would be a good arrangement in many cases. The harvests from gardens would reduce food bills and gardeners could grow healthy, organic food. Increasing women's food security and self-sufficiency through community gardens would contribute to greater gender equality and urban ecological sustainability.

## **TRANSPORTATION**

Wolseley as a community prioritizes private vehicle transport through its urban design. In Wolseley, there is enough private vehicle transport to evoke concern as a parent and an ecologically-minded person. There are parked cars on every street and in private garages in each back lane throughout Wolseley. Research shows that women in cities have more complex travel patterns than men due to a greater number of short trips, and that women rely on public transport because they are less likely than men to own private vehicles (MacGregor, 1995, p. 31; Zielinski, 1995, p. 132). Women are described by Zielinski as "transportation disadvantaged captives" due to the general economic and social conditions of women's lives (1995, p. 132). The urban design of Wolseley that emphasizes private car use, and that encourages car dependency, therefore fails to meet women's needs. The prioritization of this mode of transport is also commonly known to be highly environmentally polluting. While it is common to see cyclists in Wolseley, there are no specific urban design features such as bike lanes to give priority to this mode of transport and to make it more safe. Cycling as a mode of transport has environmental, economic, and health benefits.

To better serve women and all low-income people in Wolseley, and to contribute to environmental sustainability, at least three things are needed: less expensive public transportation; increased car pool and co-ownership car arrangements; and an urban design that prioritizes bicycle transportation by the development of sufficient, clearly defined bike lanes going in both directions along all streets. Bicycle racks at all bus stops

are also a need, and all businesses and other services should contribute to encouraging bicycle traffic by providing safe places to lock bikes.

## **PUBLIC ART**

There is minimal public art in the Wolseley neighbourhood and little art that specifically portrays or celebrates women's positive contributions to society as thinkers, artists, professionals in all roles, community activists, mothers, *etc.* There are, however, exploitive patriarchal advertising images of women within stores in Wolseley and on billboards on the fringe of the neighbourhood. There are also street signs in Wolseley, such as the signage accompanying pedestrian crossways, literally portraying men (not women) walking through the neighbourhood safely. Besides a few examples of woman-centred art designed by women in the neighbourhood, such as the transformation of a pesticide saturated boulevard to a beautiful butterfly garden and occasional lesbian visibility and woman-centred poster campaigns, public art in Wolseley does not empower women.

The acceptance of and support for innovative public art that portrays women in positive, feminist defined roles, and that also encourages ecological consideration and honours these practices, would contribute to greater gender equality and environmental sustainability.

## **CONCLUSION**

An ecofeminist analysis of urban design identifies that the perspectives, experiences, and needs of women and other marginalized people in our society are generally inadequately represented in mainstream urban design. Environmental protection through the enhancement of non-human habitat and resource conservation practices is also not the intention of mainstream urban design. Examples of the ecological unsustainability of mainstream urban design include massive resource consumption through consumerism, as well as agribusiness instead of local food production, and the prioritization of private vehicle transport. From an ecofeminist perspective, this reality of urban design both creates and perpetuates ecological degradation and the social control of marginalized people whose needs are inadequately met in built environments. The ideology of patriarchal society that is based on male supremacy and the inferiority and domination of women, other social groups, and the environment is what drives the values and practices of inequitable and unsustainable urban design from an ecofeminist perspective.

This paper has identified, from an ecofeminist perspective, aspects of the urban design of the Wolseley neighbourhood that fail to meet women's needs and has suggested examples of urban design changes that would contribute to greater gender equality and urban ecological sustainability. In doing this, the justification

and initial ideas for transforming Wolseley into a non-sexist, inclusive, and more ecological neighbourhood have been provided. Creative, ecological, and inclusive urban design changes must take place through an accessible public participation process in the Wolseley neighbourhood. City planning in Wolseley has failed to foster non-human habitat and to improve the lives of women and other marginalized people, but with public and political will, positive changes could be implemented in the Wolseley neighbourhood to make this neighbourhood Winnipeg's first non-sexist, ecological community through urban design.

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# **HOW THE GARDEN GROWS: A FEMINIST ANALYSIS OF COMMUNITY GARDENING**

Sarah Koch-Schulte

## **INTRODUCTION**

A food system, like an organism, can only be understood and described in terms of behavior, that is, how the parts interact. —Brewster Kneen, 1993

The community gardening movement is growing through using urban land sustainably for the social development of a neighbourhood. Community gardens often begin when a group of people in a community reclaim a vacant lot or park space and plant gardens. Sometimes a church, hospital or other institution may sponsor a community garden in a neighbourhood. Community gardening in Canada carries feminist values, yet there is limited recognition of gendered aspects to this activity in analysis. I shall here provide a global context and a feminist analysis of the Osborne Village Community Gardens, with which I have worked and gardened for the past year.

I will begin by explaining my interpretation of community gardening in Canada as carrying feminist values. I define feminism inclusively as a way of knowing and being which includes a recognition that the experiences of women, children and men are often unique. Feminists often acknowledge systems of oppression which occur in society, and seek to change such systems. This sometimes involves (re)covering the roles women play in life and events, and often includes a focus upon the everyday experiences of diverse people.

The history of community gardening places the Osborne Village Community Gardens within a global movement. This context and background will be discussed in part one of this paper. Part two will provide a feminist analysis of several roles community gardens play in the Osborne Village Neighbourhood, using individual, community-based and environmental benefits as a framework.

## **PART 1: THE GLOBAL MOVEMENT—COMMUNITY GARDENING AND URBAN AGRICULTURE**

Eight hundred million people in the world are creating a new food system as city farmers by growing food in urban areas (Smit, 1996, p. 3). The urban agriculture phenomenon was recently examined at the second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) held in Istanbul, Turkey in June 1996. Community gardening is identified within a global urban agriculture movement which is localizing sustainable food systems. This situation is combined with recent increases in farmers' markets, organic produce and demands for local, seasonal produce in supermarkets.

Urban agriculture can be defined as:

. . . an industry that produces, processes and markets food and fuel, largely in response to the daily demand of consumers within a town, city or metropolis, on land and water dispersed throughout the urban and peri-urban area, applying intensive production methods, using and reusing natural resources and urban wastes, to yield a diversity of crops and livestock (Smit, 1996, p. 3).

Predominantly subsistence urban agriculture can be undertaken in private gardens by landowners, and in community gardens by non-landowners (using private vacant land, school yards, hospital grounds, parks, under hydro lines, *etc.*).

Jac Smit outlines a process whereby community gardens alter the “urban footprint” we are stamping on the world by promoting localized food systems. The modern division in Northern countries between food production and urban settlements is being questioned, and community gardens are central in a transition away from this artificial separation.

The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) discusses the role of gender as central in the development of urban agriculture. The urban farmer is frequently a woman, who grows vegetables primarily to feed her family and earns income from local sales. The view that urban agriculture is “women’s agriculture” prevents it from receiving adequate research and extension services. “Acceptance of urban farming as a legitimate activity is also hampered by a gender bias that does not recognize household work done by women as an economic activity” (Smit, 1996, p. 213). The UNDP identifies the dramatic acceleration of urban agriculture throughout the 1980s: Moscow shifted from 20% to 60% of families practising urban agriculture; Dar es Salaam increased from 18% to 67%; 67% of Bangkok’s land is farmed; Kinshasa, Kampala and Maputo follow this trend (Smit, 1996, p. 25).

Through a gender analysis, urban farming/gardening in Kampala, Uganda is understood as a household strategy of women. This is a way to maintain economic independence and family food security, as the real value of the food produced is known only to the women who produce it. Men and women have different views of this work: “Women view urban farming in very pragmatic terms as a source of food; men describe it in terms of women’s cultural expectation of themselves, but view the practice as being of only marginal importance” (Maxwell, 1995, p. 1673). The health benefits of urban agriculture for children are threefold: food security; improved nutrition; and increased time mothers can directly care for their children.

Urban agriculture is nothing new. Jane Jacobs is an urban planning writer whose work I define as feminist due to her recognition of the unique experiences of women, children and men, and because of her call for a new way of knowing cities. Jacobs speculates that food production work that we usually consider rural originated in the earliest human settlements: “The idea that agriculture itself may have originated in cities . . . may seem radical and disturbing. And yet even in our own times, agricultural practices do emerge from cities”

(Jacobs, 1969, p. 17).

One of the origins of North American and European community gardening can be traced to eighteenth century highland clearances and the loss of the “commons.” Eight thousand square miles of land were enclosed by special parliamentary acts—an area equivalent to one-seventh of all England (Warner, 1987, p. 8). Following the clearances, some common land was set aside by charities for people to grow food. John Stuart Mill opposed charity allotment gardens on the basis of population growth which would occur as a result of improved nutrition. Sam Bass Warner links Mill’s historic attitudes to antagonism towards mothers living in poverty in North America. “Yet so they were [scorned] in Mill’s time; and so they are in ours” (ibid., p. 9).

A legacy of the loss of the commons is the Canadian community gardening movement. During World War I and World War II, victory gardens were established in most Canadian communities of more than ten thousand people to help support the war effort. Community gardening re-emerged during the 1970s, particularly through interested environmental movements and the participation of immigrants from Asia and Africa skilled in urban agricultural practices.

Montreal typifies the history of community gardening in Canada, while maintaining the most comprehensive program in North America. The Island of Montreal began its community gardening program in 1973, and maintains 75 community garden sites containing 6,654 allotment plots through the Department of Recreation, Parks and Community Development. Gardens are culturally diverse, and none of eight garden sites has a majority of either francophone or anglophone participants (Cosgrove, 1997, p. 1).

Connie Guberman provides a gender analysis of the Canadian community gardening movement focused upon reducing hunger and poverty:

While food security is a necessity for everyone, poverty and hunger affect women disproportionately. Women, particularly single mothers, are among the poorest, and traditionally it is women who are responsible for making sure their families are fed, housed and kept healthy (Guberman, 1995, p. 126).

Historically and globally, community gardening and urban agriculture activities are gendered, and often include household strategies. Gendering is found at interconnected levels of both production and consumption. Women participate more often in work related to food production and preparation generally, while household work done by women often remains undervalued and unmeasured due to gender stereotypes. Child care, child nutrition and food sufficiency are enhanced through urban agricultural practices. Poverty and hunger affect women and children, as consumers of food, disproportionately. This is the context within which Winnipeg’s Osborne Village Community Gardens exist.

## **PART II: OSBORNE VILLAGE COMMUNITY GARDENS**

The Osborne Village Community Gardens (OVCG) are located in a densely populated and diverse neighbourhood with a high turnover of apartment dwellers whose opportunity to garden is limited to patios. The gardens were first established by the Riverborne Community Development group on land owned by a construction company. A dozen people gardened on the large vacant lot in the summer of 1995. More than sixty people gardened on this land in 1996, with an extended waiting list of new gardeners. This section will provide a feminist analysis of the OVCG in three areas: individual benefits, community roles, and the environment.

### **1. INDIVIDUAL BENEFITS**

Community gardening benefits individuals as a spiritual and therapeutic activity, through youth recreation and training, and in healthy food production. These roles fit well into a feminist understanding of improving living conditions for women, children and men.

During research interviews with several community gardeners, the spiritual and therapeutic feelings involved in gardening emerge as a central component. Gordon Sanguin, president of the Riverview Gardening Society allotment gardens in St. Vital, Winnipeg, explains such a sentiment:

. . . it you give those plants the love and the care that they need, they will produce the healthy plants you seek, just as people will be healthy with that same love and attention. So that is what it is for me, it is a very spiritual thing (Sanguin, personal interview).

Young people and children require summer activities for the long school break. Sports and camp programs have costs involved which limit the participation of many young people and children. Young people help in the planting and maintenance of the gardens through gardening with a parent/caregiver, independently, or by periodic garden visits to help out.

Youth empowerment and an increasing sense of responsibility can occur from maintaining your own plot of land. Michael Ramsay, a fourteen year old who gardens independently at the OVCG, was featured in a *Winnipeg Free Press* article about community-building (Simon, 1997, p. 1). A group of twenty children from a daycare also regularly tended to their plot along with their caregivers. Plans for summer 1997 include developing schoolyard gardens with two local elementary schools.

Healthy food production is the material individual benefit of gardening. Organic produce is harvested in limited Osborne Village space for personal consumption. I feel that the gardens will extend and improve substantially in capacity for food production in the next few years. Many beginner gardeners are expanding their gardening knowledge to increase food yields.

The feminization of poverty in Canada, accompanied by a one in five child poverty rate, is an



Photos 1 , 2: Scenes from Osborne Village Community Gardens.

increasing reality. Food security and nutrition are particular concerns for low-income families, particularly “lone-parent, mother-led families dependent on one income, [who] have a higher chance of ending up in poverty than any other family type” (Guberman, 1995, p. 115). Urban gardening can augment food self-reliance for interested families in light of ongoing cuts to social services, and the increasing role of food banks. However, it must be stated that many low-income parents will have limited time and skills for the added workload of gardening activities.

## 2. COMMUNITY-BASED

The Community Gardens have acted as a symbol for growth and positive change in my neighbourhood through providing beauty and increased perceptions of safety. The beauty of this community garden is visible to all through its location—on the way to the bus stop and grocery store. Residents have commented on increased feelings of safety in the neighbourhood through the presence of busy gardeners, and as a result of trimmed hedges and brush on the “vacant” lot.

“Bread and Roses” has been an ongoing slogan in the Canadian women’s movement, and was featured during the summer 1996 Canadian Women’s March Against Poverty which camped on the Manitoba Legislature grounds across the Assiniboine River from Osborne Village. “Bread” represents the material needs of women, and “roses” symbolize the importance of beauty in our lives. The gardens are enacting the balanced “Bread and Roses” qualities.

The improved safety perception in the vicinity of the OVCG has been commented upon by gardeners and residents. Urban safety is an ongoing concern of feminists. Urban safety improvements are part of a larger feminist emphasis upon non-violence. Voice of Women, a feminist Canadian peace organization, calls for the building of a “culture of peace.” Community gardening promotes a culture of peace and safety in the Osborne Village area.

## 3. ENVIRONMENTAL

The environment is an active partner with human beings in community gardening in redefining urban greenspace, and demonstrating compost techniques. This partnership fits in well with an ecofeminist perspective.

Ecofeminism interconnects feminist critiques of patriarchy, capitalism and science. Vandana Shiva critiques a view of nature as inert and fragmented, which diminishes the natural capacity for creative renewal (Shiva, 1993, p. 23). Through facilitating the return of agriculture into the city, community gardens break down this modern division; nature is moved beyond the borders of city parks, where it is walked on, to be *worked with* by gardeners. Our perception of nature shifts from an object of admiration to nature as subject, participating

in the growth cycle in partnership with humans.

Composting is a part of the community gardening partnership with nature. What is harvested from the earth in produce, stalks and roots must be returned through compost nutrients. Comprehensive composting in the Osborne Village area should provide facilities for apartment dwellers, such as shared composters or vermicomposting.<sup>1</sup> The OVCG maintains five composters and provides ongoing composting workshops on apartment vermicomposting appropriate to local residents.

## CONCLUSIONS

Community gardening is part of global urban agriculture movement which is redefining farming by situating it in an urban environment. This movement carries feminist values and involves women as central participants, yet has received limited gender analysis. The United Nations 1996 Habitat II conference was critical in recognizing urban agriculture and promoting its visibility in development programming, particularly the gendered components. This is perhaps because Habitat II closely followed the United Nations International Women's Conference held in Beijing in 1995, to conclude the 1990s UN Conference series.

The Osborne Village Community Gardens in Winnipeg have played an active role in the neighbourhood. Individual spiritual and therapeutic benefits of gardening are valuable; youth empowerment can result from taking on gardening responsibilities; and reliable food sources can be useful for low-income families and individuals. The community benefits include increased perceptions of safety and beautification. Environmentally, community gardens encourage a reframing of the role of nature in the city.

My feminist analysis of the OVCG views women as participants in gardening, as well as from the perspective of feminist and ecofeminist theories. The feminization of poverty, urban safety, concepts of a culture of peace and calls for "bread and roses" are examples of issues common to community gardening and eco/feminist thought.

## NOTES

1. Vermicomposting uses worms to break down organic kitchen waste into humus/compost; the small indoor bins are ideal for apartment dwellers.

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**PART TWO**

**DREAMING EUTOPIA: FEMINIST VISIONS OF URBAN PLACES**



## FEMINIST EUTOPIAN VISIONS OF THE CITY

Mary Ann Beavis

Ceres, who was in ancient times queen of the kingdom of the Sicilians, enjoys the privilege of being the first to discover cultivation and to invent the necessary tools. . . . This lady did even more: for she had the people of that time gather into communities. They had traditionally lived scattered here and there in the forest and wilderness, wandering like animals. She taught them to build cities and towns of permanent construction, where they could reside together. Thus, thanks to this woman, the world was led away from bestial living conditions to a rational, human life. . . . And because of the authority of her knowledge and the great good she brought about for the world, the people of that time worshiped her and called her the goddess of grain. (Christine de Pizan, 1405).<sup>1</sup>

If the [feminist] utopias stress a feeling of harmony and connection with the natural world, the authors may be telling us that in reality they feel a lack of such connection. Or perhaps the dislike of urban environments realistically reflects women's experience of such places—women do not own city streets, not even in fantasy. Nor do they have much say in the kind of business that makes, sustains and goes on in cities (Joanna Russ, 1981).<sup>2</sup>

These two quotations, both by writers of feminist utopias, one from the early fifteenth century, one from the 1980s, typify two attitudes to the city, and women's relation to it, found in Western culture, and in feminist utopian writing. For the Renaissance courtier Christine, woman, as epitomized by the deified Ceres, is the founder and exemplar of civilization; woman brings to humanity arts, crafts, culture and refinement—traditional accoutrements of urban life (see Figure 1). The contemporary Joanna Russ, in contrast, interprets the city as a male artifact, a dangerous, patriarchal space in which women are marginal, at best.

To some extent, these two radically different views of the city stem from the historical and cultural gulf between a noblewoman-philosopher of early fifteenth century Europe and a late twentieth century American author of feminist science fiction. However, these two ways of portraying women's relationship to the city are found in many other feminist utopian works. For some feminist utopists, the "good place" (eutopia) for women is located in the countryside, while cities, if they exist, are strongholds of patriarchy.<sup>3</sup> For others, the city is a civilized space inhabited by women with feminist values, while patriarchal men are spatially and socially marginalized outside the city walls, real or metaphorical.

This paper is primarily concerned with the latter body of literature. Below, I shall summarize and analyse selected feminist utopian works in which the city is portrayed as a "good place" for women, to determine what can be learned from this literature by feminist planners, architects and other urbanists.<sup>4</sup> As an heuristic framework, I shall use Karen A. Franck's essay, "A Feminist Approach to Architecture" (Franck, 1989). Franck correlates the work of Carol Gilligan and other feminist theorists on "women's ways of knowing" with "social and architectural research conducted by women, in utopian and alternative communities proposed



Leisurely moving bright-colored passenger vehicles skimmed along, keeping a foot or so above the pavement, as though held in that position by some gravity controlling device. People equipped with artificial wings actually flew through the air.

Illustration by Paul

Figure 1: For some feminist eutopists, the city is a civilized space inhabited by women. Illustration by "Paul" from Lilith Lorraine, "Into the 28th Century," *Science Wonder Quarterly*, 1,1 (Winter 1930): 260.

by women, and in architectural projects designed by women" (pp. 203-204).<sup>5</sup> Feminist urbanists have argued that contemporary urban spaces reflect patriarchal values and attitudes, and call for the "domestication of urban space," the concrete expression of feminist principles in the built environment (e.g., Hayden, 1984; Weisman, 1994; Eichler, 1995). The speculations of feminist utopian writers may provide some creative insights as to the forms that this might take.

The novels under consideration here are by North American feminist women (six American and one, Elisabeth Vonarburg, a *québécoise*), writing in the late twentieth century: Ursula K. Le Guin, *The Dispossessed* (1974); Sheri S. Tepper, *The Gate to Women's Country* (1988); Pat Murphy, *The City, Not Long After* (1989); Marion Zimmer Bradley, *The Ruins of Isis* (1978); Pamela Sargent, *The Shore of Women* (1986); Starhawk, *The Fifth Sacred Thing* (1993); Elisabeth Vonarburg, *The Maerlande Chronicles* (1992). All of them are eutopian, i.e., they posit a feminist "good place," which, although not perfect, is preferable to the patriarchal alternative.<sup>6</sup> Two (Murphy, Starhawk) depict a post-disaster city (San Francisco) of the twenty-first century, being rebuilt by women, and men with feminist convictions, over against a hostile patriarchal regime located in the countryside. Le Guin's novel portrays a planet (or, more accurately, a moon) colonized by the followers of a woman philosopher, Odo; their urban-centred civilization embodies her anarchist-feminist teachings. Bradley, Tepper, Sargent and Vonarburg all describe female-dominated societies, all in the remote future, Bradley's on the planet Isis, the others' on a post-disaster earth. In all the novels, the city is portrayed as an environment conducive to the pursuit of a "good life" embodying feminist values, as called for by feminist architects like Dolores Hayden and Leslie Kanes Weisman. As such, they may prove instructive to women urbanists, especially in their portrayals of the built environment and of community organization.

## FEMINIST VALUES AND EUTOPIAN SCIENCE FICTION

Karen Franck abstracts seven qualities characterising "feminine or feminist" ways of knowing and analysing issues and situations from recent feminist psychoanalytic, psychological, philosophical and philosophy of science literature:

- (1) an underlying connectedness to others, to objects of knowledge, and to the world, and a sensitivity to the connectedness of categories;
- (2) a desire for inclusiveness, and a desire to overcome opposing dualities;
- (3) a responsibility to respond to the needs of others, represented by an "ethic of care";
- (4) an acknowledgement of the value of everyday life and experience;
- (5) an acceptance of subjectivity as a strategy for knowing, and of feelings a part of knowing;
- (6) an acceptance and desire for complexity; and
- (7) an acceptance of change and a desire for flexibility (Franck, 1989, p. 203).

Below, the seven feminist utopian novels will be analysed in terms of how these qualities of feminist

consciousness are expressed in their depictions of urban design and political organization.

## 1. CONNECTEDNESS

Four of the novels under consideration depict future earth societies that have rebuilt on the ruins of a patriarchal past in which nature and civilization have been irreparably damaged by nuclear war or ecological degradation (Tepper, Sargent, Murphy, Starhawk, Vonarburg). In Le Guin's *The Dispossessed* and Bradley's *The Ruins of Isis*, people with feminist values have fled their (patriarchal) home planets to establish societies that conform to their philosophies.<sup>7</sup> Ecology, the science which deals with the relations and interactions between organisms and their environment, is a strong concern in all the novels; in the post-disaster utopias, because the great value of the ecosystems that have been lost is deeply felt, and in Bradley and Le Guin, because the worlds of Annares and Isis are environments that are habitable by humans only with great effort and care (Annares is a desert moon; Isis is prone to earthquakes and tidal waves). Starhawk's San Franciscans have become "artists of un waste" (1993, p. 3). The ability to design human settlements constrained by ecological limits is essential to the survival of all the feminist utopias.

Because of the scarcity of environmental resources in these novels, the inhabitants of feminist utopian cities are acutely aware of the importance of agriculture and the natural world. The protagonist of Le Guin's story, Shevek, feels uncomfortable in an urban park where exotic, high-maintenance vegetation from the home planet Urras has been transplanted: "Were they not wasteful, those crowding leaves? . . . Wasn't all this extravagant foliage mere extravagance, excrement? Such trees couldn't thrive without a rich soil, constant watering, much care. He disapproved of their lavishness, their thriftlessness" (1974, p. 100). The (mostly urban) women of Bradley's Isis rely on coastal pearl fisheries as a trade resource to support their economy, and both women and men acknowledge this dependence in a seasonal fertility ritual that acknowledges the sea as the origin of life. In Vonarburg's *Maerlande* ("the land of the mothers"), the far-flung settlements of an ecologically devastated Europe 700 years in the future are all very different, and designed in conformity to their physical environments, reusing and adapting the remains of earlier, forgotten civilizations. As a child, the hera,<sup>8</sup> Lisbeī, perceives the outlines of ancient skyscrapers in the towers of her native Bethely; the university town of Wardenberg retains something of the layout and urbanity of the ancient Scandinavian (?) city it overlies. As a grown woman, Lisbeī becomes an "explora" and a "recuperata,"<sup>9</sup> whose work is to search "the Badlands" outside the populated centres for areas whose levels of contamination have abated enough for human incursions, and to reclaim some of the knowledge that has been lost through centuries of social and environmental upheavals.

While the women of all these works reject the patriarchal values of the past (and, in the case of the *Maerlands*, the matriarchal past as well), there is an awareness of the importance of history and remembrance.

Knowledge of the past may prevent the repetition of mistakes, but it also may provide valuable information that can be used in the present. The women of Vonarburg's Maerlande and Tepper's post-nuclear walled cities are painfully aware of the technology that has been lost over the centuries. Le Guin's Annaresti make extensive use of technology in their management of the inhospitable terrain of their adopted world, presumably imported from Urras: "they would not regress to pre-urban, pre-technological tribalism" (1974, p. 95). On Bradley's Isis, the women are desperate for a trading relationship with other worlds so that they can obtain the technology they need to compensate for the geophysical instability of their planet.

## 2. INCLUSIVENESS AND OVERCOMING DUALITIES

In the novels under consideration, the distinction between nature and culture, the urban and the rural, is blurred; animals and plants are at home in feminist eutopian cities, and agriculture is carried on within as well as in proximity to settlements. Pat Murphy and Starhawk, for example, envision a twenty-first century San Francisco being transformed in egalitarian/feminist ways by inhabitants who are unconstrained by the binary oppositions characteristic of patriarchal thinking. A ritual recounted in *The Fifth Sacred Thing* recalls the day when the starving rebels who reclaimed San Francisco from a local strongman (ironically dubbed "the Steward") in a California devastated by global warming:

. . . tore up the pavement, blow by blow, and filled the holes with compost from a sack Greta carried, and planted them with seeds. By then a crowd had gathered, the word was carried through the streets, and we rushed from our houses to join them, bringing our tools or only our bare hands, eager to build something new. And many of us were crying, with joy or with fear, tears streaming enough to water the seeds (Starhawk, 1993, p. 18).

In *The City, Not Long After*, Rose Maloney invites nature into a space where it "shouldn't be" as she gradually transforms an abandoned church into a garden:

She opened the church's windows to let in more light and air. Finches and sparrows came to explore the cool interior. She took to feeding them—scattering bird seed on the marble floor beside the altar. Each day, she added something: a window box filled with the soft-leafed house plant know as creeping Charlie, a plaster replica of a Grecian urn in which a glossy-leafed olive tree grew, a potted palm that she rescued from someone's living room.

After a year or so, she moved to the rectory to be closer to her garden. She set up a system of barrels to catch the rainwater, so that she would have irrigation water during the summer months. She planted ivy at the base of the steeple, bamboo in the baptismal font. When a minor earth tremor broke three of the stained glass windows, she tore out all the colored glass to let in more light (Murphy, 1989, pp. 156-57).

Nature and woman gradually reinhabit a space formerly dominated by culture and man; even the boundary between the natural and the supernatural is overcome: "The plants flourished; the birds sang in the foliage and nested on the outstretched arms of the crucifix" (*ibid.*, p. 157).

In Murphy's San Francisco, the survivors of a devastating plague not only transform their city, but are shaped by it; the few survivors, an assortment of artists, intellectuals and assorted eccentrics, live simply, but contentedly, off of the leavings of the pre-disaster culture. The city is in the process of being transmuted into a work of art by its bohemian inhabitants, as illustrated by this dialogue between a newcomer and a character named Danny-boy:

She peered into the glass. "I walked by there," she said. "Someone had painted designs on it."  
 "The Neo-Mayanists," Danny-boy said. "Group of graffiti artists down in the Mission. They've taken over the Pyramid. They're making it into a temple of some sort."  
 The woman was watching the glitter drift through the city streets. "On my way into the city, I saw a crowd of men made of metal. When the wind blew, they muttered to each other."  
 "That's a sculpture by Zatch and Gambit," Danny-boy said. "They call it 'Men Talking with Nothing to Say.'"  
 "I heard music—deep hollow notes that moaned like the wind."  
 "That's Gambit's wind organ. It plays music when wind blows across the pipes."  
 "I saw a metal spider the size of a dog. It ran past me down the center of the street."  
 "The Machine built that. He builds a lot of independent machines. Some people don't like them, but they're all right. They won't hurt you or anything."  
 He glanced at her face. She wet her lips like a nervous [sic] cat, hesitating. Then she said, "I saw the angel that took my mother. Did The Machine build that?"  
 "An angel? What do you mean?" (Murphy, pp. 76-77).

As the last exchange suggests, Murphy's post-plague San Francisco has a life of its own that integrates the worlds of the living and the dead. The streets are haunted by shadows of the past; the hero, Jax, is sometimes tantalized by glimpses of her deceased mother:

There was a flicker of movement to her right—she caught a glimpse of it from the corner of her eye. She turned to see someone run from between two cubes and dash down the mirrored passageway. She saw only a flash of dark hair and a pale face, but Jax recognized her mother, knew her with a certainty that made words catch in her throat. Of course—the city had led her to her mother. She called out to her mother, "Wait, I'm here!" But the running figure had vanished around a bend (pp. 89-90).

Commonplace distinctions between city and country, nature and civilization, art and architecture, past and present, and even life and death, are all undermined.

One opposition that remains problematic in the majority of these stories is the distinction between male and female, or at least between male and female gender roles. In four of the seven novels, women and men lead separate lives, and are spatially segregated by sex. While these societies may be eutopias for women, they are dystopias for men. Bradley's *Isis* is a matriarchy, in which males are considered to be less-than-human playthings, at best. Those who are not chosen to be "Companions" to high-status women live apart in "men's houses," and serve as slave labour. Very few males are born to Maerlande women, and many die in childhood, so that men in Vonarburg's Maerlande constitute, at most, three percent of the population, and, while valued



for their fertility (which is severely limited, due to mutations), they are socially marginal, and pursue their work separately from the female majority. In Tepper's and Sargent's worlds, women live in walled cities, and most men are consigned to the hinterland, where they are allowed to play meaningless war games (Tepper) or fend for themselves in loosely organized bands of hunter-gatherers (Sargent). In all these eutopias, boys are sent away from the women's houses to the male sphere while they are still small. Le Guin's Annaresti recognize no gender roles apart from biological imperatives; nor do the San Franciscans portrayed by Murphy and Starhawk. In these three eutopias, men and women live together, or apart, as they choose.

In the four novels that depict women and men as socially and spatially separated, the radical sexual dichotomy symbolized by the spatial marginalization of males is ultimately recognized as an undesirable and temporary state, the result of women's reaction (or perhaps even over-reaction) to past patriarchal oppression. Both Bradley and Sargent portray the dominantly female society as excessively rigid and prejudiced against males, whom the women stereotype as potentially savage, violent and dangerous creatures that must be controlled in order for civilized (female) life to endure. In Tepper's *Women's Country*, the councillors of the cities have secretly been conducting a comprehensive program of selective breeding in order to create a male population without the aggressive characteristics that make most men inimical to the maintenance of a civil society. The marginality of men in Maerlande is largely the result of the minuscule number of males born to the women, which is recognized as a severe problem. However, it is also an artifact of a violent history that has swung from the brutal patriarchy of Harem times and the cruel and repressive matriarchy of the Hives era. Vonarburg's hera, Lisbeï (whose name is a play on the author's, Elisabeth) is instrumental in the first efforts to integrate men into Maerlande society.

### 3. ETHIC OF CARE

An ethic of care and sensitivity to the needs of others (especially other women) is a theme that pervades these novels. In the predominantly female societies (Bradley, Tepper, Sargent, Vonarburg), supportive households of women—mothers, daughters, lovers, life-partners—live together in comfortable, although rarely opulent, surroundings. The spirit of camaraderie captured by Pamela Sargent in *The Shore of Women* is exemplary:

Inside my tower, a few small girls were playing near the entrance. I crossed the lobby and entered the lift; the platform carried me up through its transparent cylinder and stopped at my floor. Women leaned over the railings on other floors and called to the girls below . . . (Sargent, 1986, p. 43).

I was standing on a brightly lit street just south of the towers. A few young women had gathered across the way to talk; through a window behind them, I could see several women of various ages around a table, sharing an evening meal. . . . A girl behind a table laden with

candies and other sweets called out to me, but I walked on, having nothing to trade for her wares. . . . Here a girl could grow to maturity in a household of women, could pursue what art or craft she like. . . . She would grow old among a community of women, a house filled with others like herself (ibid., p. 70).

Both Sargent and Vonarburg portray women living in clusters of "towers" filled with halls and passageways connecting women physically and socially with other women and girls. Although in Vonarburg's *Maerlande*, the historical era of "the Hives" is regarded as a harsh matriarchal regime that must remain in the past, her descriptions of Lisbeï's native Bethely are often reminiscent of a bustling insect community: "There were people in the corridor when Lisbeï burst out of Selva's office. She paid no attention. There were always people in the corridors of Bethely, always somebody going somewhere doing something. Sometimes she imagined the Towers being transparent like Antonë's ant terrarium. It was just the same, all these blue dots, or red, or green, forever moving in all directions" (Vonarburg, 1992, p. 160). Although the city of Wardenberg is "not the antheap Lisbeï had expected" (ibid., p. 231), she observes that "Wardenberg was never a Hive, but it buzzes like one" (ibid., p. 232).

Women (and, in some cases, men) are expected to form loving relationships with a partner or partners throughout their adult lives. Household structures vary. In *Women's Country* and *The Shore of Women*, children live with their mothers; boys are sent to live outside the city at a young age, sometimes causing great anguish within the family. In *Starhawk*, Murphy and Le Guin, people live together in a variety of configurations of women, men and children, living together or alone, as they choose. In *Maerlande* and *Isis*, women, children and a few men ("Companions" and "Honorary Women") reside in communal dwellings in extended family units. In all cases, the wider community functions as an extension of the household, where care and concern for all the inhabitants of the city are exercised in varying degrees.

#### 4. VALUE OF EVERYDAY LIFE

Two of the seven works under consideration portray the street life of city as it exists in their alternate realities in some detail. Le Guin gives an extended description of Annares' great city, Abbenay. In keeping with the harsh climate of the world, the design of the city is spare and spartan, but the mixed uses and vibrant street life would be commended by Jane Jacobs:

The squares, the austere streets, the low buildings, the unwallled workyards, were charged with vitality and activity. As Shevek walked he was constantly aware of other people walking, working talking, faces passing, voices calling, gossiping, singing, people alive, people doing things, people afoot. Workshops and factories fronted on squares or on their open yards, and their doors were open. . . . The activity going on in each place was fascinating, and mostly out in full view. Children were around, some involved in the work with the adults, some underfoot making mudpies, some busy with games in the street, one sitting perched up on the roof of the learning center with her nose deep in a book. . . . The wiremaker had decorated the shopfront

with patterns of vines, cheerful and ornate. The blast of steam and conversation from the wide-open doors of the laundry was overwhelming. No doors were locked, few shut. There were no disguises and no advertisements. And every now and then down Depot Street a thing came careering by clanging a bell, a vehicle crammed full of people, . . . a little boy on a homemade tricycle pursuing it madly, electric sparks showering blue from the overhead wires at crossings: as if that quiet intense vitality of the streets built up every now and then to discharge point, and leapt the gaps with a crash and a blue crackle and the smell of ozone. These were the Abbenay omnibuses, and as they passed one felt like cheering (Le Guin, 1974, pp. 99-100).

In *The Ruins of Isis*, Bradley relates the her, Cendri's, view as she is driven through Isis city:

Her first impression of the city was of low, regular buildings, made of something like sun-dried adobe . . . decorated with bright paintings, which varied so much in quality that Cendri suspected each house was decorated, not by professional artists or painters, but by its own inhabitants.

The houses were arranged in clusters, irregularly, in park-like gardens. The car moved leisurely along narrow streets which seemed reasonably full of men and women and little children, dressed in the same confusing variety of clothing Cendri had seen on the spaceport. There was no uniformity, though in general those who were working—a man hanging lengths of brilliantly dyed fabric on a wooden framework, a woman pushing a barrow piled high with bright green globes which could have been vegetables or playthings—wore rather less than those few who were doing nothing (Bradley, 1979, pp. 29-30).

The themes of mixed use, a vital street life, and visibility of labour are also found, in different forms, in Tepper's description of Marthatown, Vonarburg's evocation of Wardenberg, Sargent's depiction of life in the city of women, and Starhawk's portrait of the future San Francisco. Pat Murphy's "city, not long after" is too depopulated to display the signs of vibrant urban life depicted in the other novels, but the shadows of its former urbanity are so vivid that they still haunt San Francisco and can be perceived by its inhabitants.

Part of the bustling vitality of the feminist eutopian cities is the presence of children. In *The Ruins of Isis*, the Cendri notices children "everywhere" in the city, some playing, some working alongside the adults. Her room in the Promatriarch's residence shows "evidence of children's play, toys and cloth dolls, a child's shoe lying abandoned at one edge of the room, but the children themselves had been hastily cleared away . . ." (Bradley, 1979, p. 38). The paintings on the screens that serve as partitions in rooms on earthquake-prone Isis are the handiwork of the children of Isis. In Maerlande, due to the depredations of a plague that afflicts all young children, and kills most of them, babies and toddlers are carefully tended in segregated precincts called

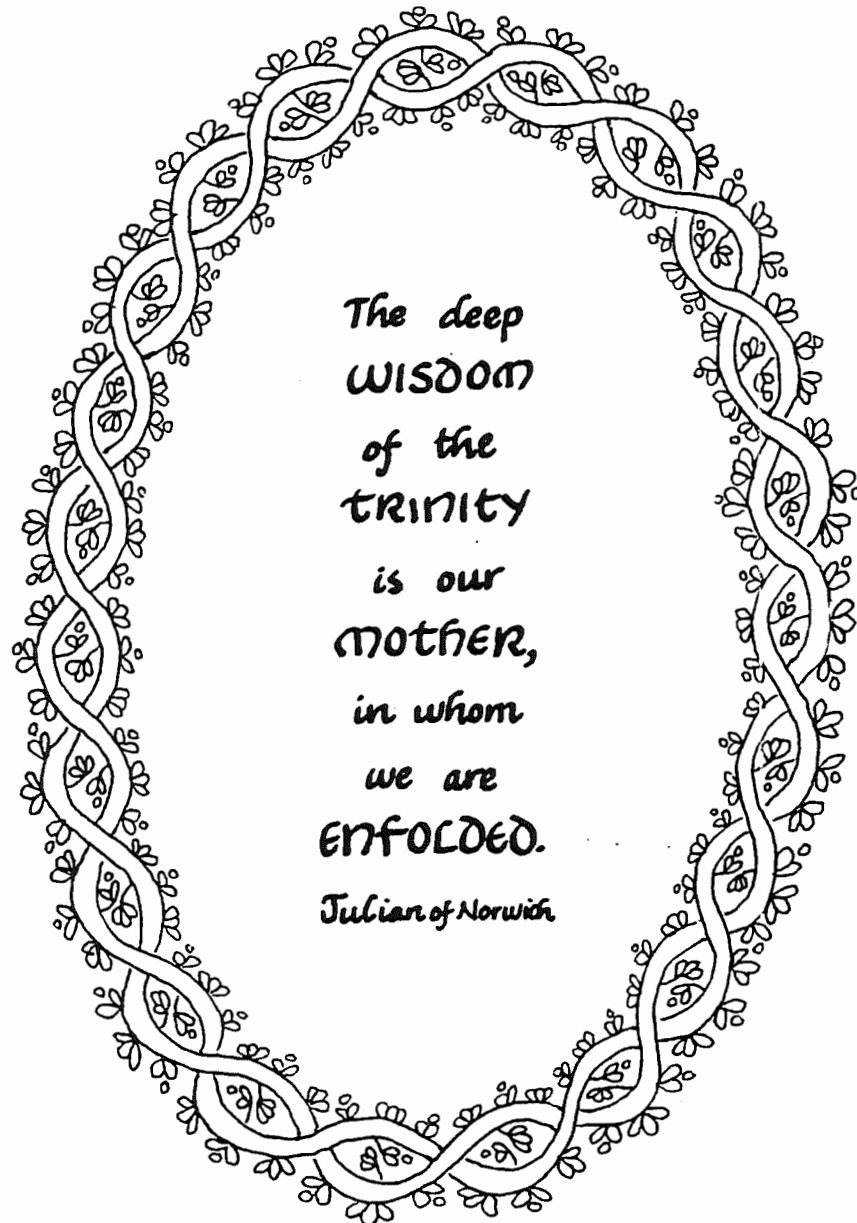


Figure 2: Some form of goddess religion is an important element in most of the feminist utopias. Illustration by Joanne Cordón, 1994.

"Garderies." Only after they have undergone the rite of passage enforced on them by the sickness are they regarded as human beings and integrated into the community, where they are carefully raised and educated (or, in the case of the boys, sent to be trained with other boys for life in the sphere of men).

## 5. ACCEPTANCE OF SUBJECTIVITY AND FEELINGS

In most of these novels, the depiction of city and society is mediated through the experience of a character or characters who are both part of eutopia, and critical of it. In the stories which describe societies that have been in existence for many decades or centuries (Annares, Maerlande, Women's Country, Sargent's cities of women, Isis), this theme is very pronounced, especially in the heras' relation to the governing bodies or founding principles of their communities. Le Guin's hero, Shevek, is a brilliant physicist who feels stymied by the limits his anarchist society imposes on his development as a scientist. The heras Miranda (*Isis*), Lisbei (*Maerlande*), Stavia (*Women's Country*) and Birana and Laissa (*Shore of Women*) all develop an awareness, through experience, learning and emotional growth, that their cities' exclusion of men is regrettable, at best, unjust and cruel, at worst.<sup>10</sup> Although the marginalization of males is represented as a rational response to a history of destructive patriarchy, the heras of these novels come to deplore the deceptions, distortions, stagnation and secrecy that preserve their secure, civilized lives. Feelings and empathy, as much as observation and information, provide an impetus for societal change.

With the exception of Le Guin's atheistic Annares, religion plays a significant role in all of these feminist eutopias. All practice some form of Goddess religion, and most observe seasonal festivals that bring citizens together to celebrate and socialize. In Starhawk's San Francisco, a profusion of religions flourish side by side, although a form of Wicca seems to be most common. The women of Isis, Women's Country, Sargent's cities and Maerlande appear to be fairly monotheistic believers (or unbelievers) in the Goddess. There are few physical descriptions of places of worship or sacred sites, although feasts and rituals are depicted in some detail by Bradley, Tepper, Starhawk and Vonarburg. In Sargent's post-holocaust world, the women (some of whom are believers, some sceptics) have built shrines to the Goddess in Her various aspects (Mary, Hecate, the Wise One) only in the hinterland, where they are frequented only by men, in whom devotion to the Lady is instilled by the city Mothers through a combination of mind control and sexual manipulation. Murphy's post-plague San Francisco is too early in its development, and too thinly populated, to show much evidence of religious development, although the city itself has taken on a supernatural quality.



6. **ACCEPTANCE AND DESIRE FOR COMPLEXITY/  
7. ACCEPTANCE OF CHANGE AND DESIRE FOR FLEXIBILITY**

As the discussion above indicates, complexity, flexibility and acceptance of differences (especially among women) is a feature of the physical, and in varying degrees, social landscape of these feminist utopias. However, the desire for complexity/flexibility can conflict with the value of inclusiveness and the desire to overcome opposing dualities, which is also well articulated in these novels. Sargent and Tepper both create utopias where the political structures that preserve the protected, urbane lifestyle of the women are nondemocratic, in that only a select few fully understand the policies and practices that protect women from patriarchal incursions. *Isis*, *Women's Country*, *Maerlande* and Sargent's feminist civilization are all founded on the marginalization and oppression of men. The tension between the desire for inclusiveness and the desire for complexity and change adds an element of moral complexity that is usually absent in utopian literature.

Contrary to the static perfection that characterizes traditional utopias, none of the feminist societies under consideration is perfect, nor are the women and men who inhabit them entirely satisfied with their lot. The thoroughgoing anarchism of *Annares*, for example, can be stultifying for someone with great talent or genius, and the principles on which the society is founded can be manipulated by self-serving individuals. Sargent's post-holocaust civilization, while safe and comfortable for women, is in danger of stagnation because of their indifference to history and resistance to exploration and discovery. Both Murphy and Starhawk portray a San Francisco that is under threat of attack by hostile forces from the countryside; the maintenance of their emergent utopias will require ongoing effort, adaptation and vigilance. *Isis*, *Maerlande*, *Women's Country* and Sargent's cities of women are marred by the social and spatial segregation of the sexes, although all of these novels concede that overcoming this division will be a lengthy, difficult, and even dangerous task.<sup>11</sup>

These seven novels illustrate well Lenard Hart's (1996) thesis that in feminist science fiction, utopia is represented as a process, not an end state; the heras of all these works —although not necessarily the political decision-makers of their cities—would concede that "change is an ongoing process in any society, even a utopian one" (*ibid.*, p. 29). The *Annaresi* must accept what they can learn from *Urras*, and *vice versa*; women must learn to accept the humanity of men. Significantly, the most politically and socially flexible and diverse "city of women" depicted in these works is San Francisco, which, for both Murphy and Starhawk, is in the earliest stages of its transformation into a feminist utopia. Starhawk's urban polity is radically democratic; Murphy's approaches the kind of anarchy so desired by the people of Le Guin's *Annares*. The mature utopias have all developed dystopian features, that will require constant rethinking, risk and reform to surmount.

## CONCLUSIONS

These seven urban eutopias undermine the cultural equation of woman and nature that has been both celebrated and distrusted by feminists (and especially by ecofeminists). Women are associated with cities and civilization, and in most of the eutopias (Bradley, Sargent, Tepper, Vonarburg), men are only marginally involved, if at all, in cities and city-building. Not surprisingly, the “cities of women” imaginatively constructed by feminist science fiction and fantasy writers conform quite closely to the feminist “ways of knowing” identified by Franck (see Table One); it is to be expected that feminist fabulists would be strongly influenced by contemporary feminist theory. Also not unexpectedly, the urban eutopias constructed by feminist writers are *good*, but not *perfect*, places; all the authors acknowledge that perfection is unattainable, and that the “good life” involves sacrifice and compromise as well as safety and pleasure. Perhaps Elisabeth Vonarburg’s metaphor of the anthill or beehive best sums up both the attractive and less desirable aspects of these eutopias, especially the gender-segregated ones. While, like the female-dominated insect communities, the cities of women (*Maerlande*, *Isis*, *Women’s Country*, *Shore of Women*) are organic, complex, social, lively and productive, they are also hive-like in that they are governed by matriarchies that, while they are generally benign and efficient, are often benevolently despotic in that they use a form of the “noble lie” to maintain a civilized way of life that is constantly perceived as under threat by patriarchal incursions.<sup>12</sup> Moreover, the desire for interconnectedness and inclusiveness tends to militate against the possibility of flexibility and change.

What lessons can feminist urbanists learn about city-building from these urban feminist eutopias? Insofar as the “cities of women” portrayed in these novels reflect contemporary feminist thinking, probably not much that is new. As Karen Franck has demonstrated, in many ways, the work of contemporary feminist planners, architects and other urban professional builds admirably on feminist “ways of knowing” just as much as the fictional works discussed above. What is missing in Franck’s analysis that may be instructive for feminist urbanists is the element of moral complexity—the recognition of the temptation to benign totalitarianism, the danger of entrenching (even feminist) stereotypes, the necessity of constant self-criticism and openness to change and new ideas, the informed acceptance of risk—in short, the recognition that eutopia, even feminist eutopia, is not perfect.



## NOTES

1. Christine de Pizan, *The Book of the City of Ladies* (New York: Quality Paperback Book Club, 1992), pp. 75-76.
2. Joanna Russ, "Recent Feminist Utopias," in Marlene S. Barr, ed., *Future Females: A Critical Anthology* (Bowling Green, OH: Bowling Green State University Press, 1981), p. 81.
3. Classic examples of this theme in feminist utopian literature are Sally Gearhart's *The Wanderground* (1978), Suzy McKee Charnas, *Motherlines* (1979) and Marge Piercy, *Woman on the Edge of Time* (1976).
4. For other studies of feminist utopias by urbanists see: Lenard Hart, *Utopia as Process* (Toronto: Faculty of Environmental Studies, York University, 1996); Daphne Spain, "Sustainability, Feminist Visions, and the Utopian Tradition," *Journal of Planning Literature*, 9,4 (1995): 362-69; Robyn Whittaker and Beth Moore Milroy, "Do Feminist Utopists Have Something to Say to Urbanists About Work?", *Canadian Journal of Urban Research*, 6,1 (1997): 24-39.
5. Franck mentions only one feminist utopian novel in her essay, Marge Piercy's *Woman on the Edge of Time* (New York: Fawcett, 1976).
6. The term "utopia," coined by Thomas More, is based on Greek roots which can mean "noplac" (*ou-topos*) or "good place" (*eu-topos*). As Carol Farley Kessler (*Daring to Dream: Utopian Fiction by United States Women Before 1920* [London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1983]) points out, it is characteristic of feminist eutopias that they are conceived as "better than" patriarchal societies, but not as perfect.
7. Le Guin's novel is as concerned with the depiction of an anarchist society as with feminism, but the founder of the new society, Odo, is female, and Anraes is a deliberately gender-free world. As Kessler (1993) has observed, some degree of anarchism is a feature of many feminist utopias.
8. In order to escape the stereotyped implications of the terms "hero" and "heroine," I have adopted the term "hera" to refer to the female protagonists of these novels (see Susanna J. Sturgis, "The Women Who Walk Through Fire: A Vindication of Heras and Heraism," in Sturgis, ed., *The Women Who Walk Through Fire, Women's Fantasy & Science Fiction*, Vol. 2 [Freedom, CA: The Crossing Press, 1990], pp. 1-11).
9. An explorer and an archaeologist. The population of Maerlande is about 97% female, the result of a mutation that has drastically curtailed the number of male children conceived. Previous societies have adapted to this disastrous imbalance by imposing ruthlessly patriarchal or matriarchal regimes (historical periods referred to by the Maerlands as "the Harems" and "the Hives"), both of which are eschewed in Maerlande. The feminine form of nouns referring to persons is an artifact of the Hives era, when men were despised and cruelly abused by the female majority.
10. The realization of the possibility of romantic relationships with males are an important part of the heras' dissatisfaction with the lot of men in *Isis* and *Shore of Women*; in *Maerlande*, Lisbei's advocacy of the rights of men stems from friendship and personal conviction, certainly not from sexual attraction. Stavia's disastrous relationship with a young soldier actually convinces her that the city Mothers' separationist policies and eugenics program are necessary evils.

11. In Sargent's *Shore of Women*, the single tiny, obscure band of men living together with women outside the walls of the cities has already become repressively patriarchal. Even in Maerlande, with its minuscule male population, men are prohibited from working with metals or in the production of weapons.
12. Plato, perhaps the first utopian writer, coined the expression *gennaion pseudos* ("noble lie") to refer to a foundation myth "intended to express the kind of community it is, or wishes to be, its ideals, rather than to state matter of fact" (Plato, *The Republic* [Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1974], p. 177 [translator's note by Desmond Lee; cf. pp. 51-52]). In the gender-segregated eutopias constructed by Bradley, Sargent, Tepper and Vonarburg, the spatial and social marginalization of males is justified by a mixture of myth and history that implants a horror of patriarchy, and a deep distrust of men, in the female population, and at the same time deludes the men into believing that they are inferior to women, and/or somehow unfit to cohabit with women.

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## GYNESIS

R.L. Thompson

A woman's body. Strung up by the ankle. Suspended naked in mid-air. Mouth open, eyes rolled back. One stray leg dangling, revealing what's inside.

The scars on legs, arms, face. The invisible scars festering underneath the flesh. The ideal woman: a tribute to pain; a tribute to weakness; an offering to power. She is an offering in disguise.

♀ ♀ ♀

Evie knew today would be extraordinary. It had already started that way. She was convinced she had almost immaculately conceived a child. Almost meaning almost immaculately—not almost conceived—Evie is a lesbian, and her period is late.

♀ ♀ ♀

Today is the day every billboard goes blank. Every model, confined to its two-dimensions, steps down out of the glossy finish of the ads. She destroys the image of whatever it was she was selling. Each sits in all her beauty (the non-illusory, flawed, true beauty) to stop another ad from replacing the one she ruined.

It is the day that every mouth that is hungry gets louder: and every mouth overfed purses its lips in anticipation. It is also the day intuition and meditative thinking become valued, the norm. Unlike the previous dominant philosophies, this change is not preceded by years of discourse. It becomes accepted intuitively, if you will, at once.

This change has several effects, the most extraordinary being the number of abandoned cars. They are left on the roads, in ditches, in car parks, and everywhere else. People shed their metallic shells and walk. They walk like they have never walked before. As they walk, it is the first time they feel connected to something. It is primal; it is dangerous; it is fertile.

The fertility is contagious. Trees bloom extraordinarily fast. Plants grow at rapid rates, pushing up through the concrete, the plaster, the foundations of man. Animals and insects swarm the cities and towns, birthing as they go, until all that can be seen is life creating itself again and again.

Generations of humans are born. They continue to walk.

•••••

She speaks. The body, still suspended, lit by the ethereal glow of dusk, turns slowly. She speaks again.

A woman in a brothel in Amsterdam, wearing a leather suit with a giant phallus attached, hears her. She's not sure what to make of it. It's been an odd day. There are cars and buses abandoned everywhere. Even bicycles have been abandoned.

Night falls on the world. Still she speaks.

\*\*\*

In the darkness of her bedroom, her lover snoring softly beside her with one stream of the street lamp lighting her soft lips, Evie lies awake. Her breasts are swollen and she can feel the weight in her belly. The day was as extraordinary as she had anticipated. She shivers. Things seem so uncertain now. She had grown accustomed to the coldness of the world. She was a "feeler" and used to being dismissed for her feelings. Now everyone was a "feeler" and she was not sure what that would mean.

Her lover stirs and puts her arm around Evie's belly. Evie feels safe and comfortable. She is overwhelmed by the love that connects them. She feels this love extending outside their home, in which they are used to hovering, surrounded by a world of darkness. Evie feels maybe this world is brightening and she can go outside in safety.

\*\*\*

It was the fallen models who started things again the next day. It was not a typical group destruction, certainly not a riot. They began to dismantle structures throughout the cities. Everyone nearby helped, young and old, male and female.

The first to go were the huge bank buildings. The world banking system had collapsed the day before and the buildings were unnecessary. They were disgusting and ugly amongst the beauty of all that grew around them. So nail by nail, piece by piece the buildings came down.

Not long ago these same people would have taken home with them all they could carry. Today they chose a site and collected all that could be reused for those who wish to take what they need. They added parts of the abandoned cars to this site.

People worked and laughed and ate together that day. Poets wrote about it when they took their breaks. Everyone sang and the songs were new and fresh without nostalgia, without homesickness, without idealism. The songs were real and good.



The woman suspended sang these songs. As she sang, a child in the Philippines listened from the smoking garbage dump that was her home. She sang back in a voice so clear and high it rang throughout the country. It rang to all the places where the luxury of a car to abandon was unthinkable. It rang to the places where the things to be abandoned were those things the people there have always dreamed of abandoning. The song was a song of hope. Tangible hope. This was not a Disney Film scene with a little blonde girl and her toothy grin. This girl had real dirt on her face, real wrinkles at her tender age and she was hungry. So the song grew with the plants and the animals and the girl, now nourished by the woman who hung for her.



Evie awoke to the silence of the morning. She threw up, breaking the silence. Her pregnancy had progressed overnight. She rubbed her bulging belly as she brushed the taste of vomit from her mouth. Her love was already out rebuilding with the rest of the city. Today she would go out walking. She stepped outside and felt faint from the heat of the summer outside—trying to remember if it was summer yesterday—and the extra weight. Driven to relieve her hotness, Evie removed her clothes and experienced the new city for the first time naked.

She walked to what was the core of the city and first came across magnificent gardens that never seemed to begin or end. They were well cared for, but looked like there was not the power struggle she had seen in gardens before. The plants were not restrained, they grew where they wanted; there were no ordered rows; the gardeners simply cared for the plants. The plants grew so rapidly she watched them bloom and bear fruit. One gardener brought a basket of tomatoes and offered Evie one. She bit into it and the red juices ran down her chin and body. Evie laughed.

She stayed and helped gardening until the sun became too much for her to bear. She decided to walk under the tall shady trees further inside the city. The landscape had changed so dramatically that Evie could barely recognize anything. Everywhere she went, there were people who were vaguely familiar but because they were doing things so different from the context she knew them in, she had trouble remembering who they were.

One man she recognized as a parking lot attendant, only because he still wore the bow-tie that was part of his uniform. He now helped to build a greenhouse that attached two houses. There were children

running all over around him, screaming and playing and helping out when they could concentrate long enough. Girls were yelling and being boisterous and, as long as no one was hurt, none of the adults working there bothered them.

Evie could see that there were several greenhouses being set up. She understood that the intention was to share heat between the houses in the winter and to grow vegetables then too. The houses had also changed shape. No longer tall and blatant, they were congruent in shape and texture with the earth itself.

She watched the people work and listened to how they made decisions. She noticed that the men did not dominate the decision-making. They did not compete for speaking time, but rather shared it and listened to all ideas before they made a decision. When they made a decision, they made it based on the idea, forgetting whose idea it was originally. Right now, they were deciding what to do about the kitchen in the neighbourhood; they had already decided they would have two communal kitchens for their area. Much of the surplus kitchen equipment had already been sent to the areas that needed them. They had to decide upon a location that would satisfy all the neighbours and also that would be most accessible for each neighbour, especially those who had trouble getting around.

Evie helped them choose the places, and the people began the hard work of converting the houses and kitchen to solar power and moving all the eating equipment to the kitchens. Several gardeners showed up with food to keep in the communal kitchens.

After eating a small lunch with the neighbours, Evie continued her walk. She came across what she thought at first was a new road being built (the old roads having all been overgrown with plant life). It was quite narrow, however, and she saw it was intended for bikes and only the occasional vehicle.

The people here were busy converting some vehicles to run on energies other than fossil fuels. Two were converted to solar energy, another ran on water while others used vegetable oil to combust their engines. One of the women working underneath the car, with her three daughters playing inside, told her they would leave the cars so that anyone who needs may use them. Many bicycles would be left this way too, one of the men told her, looking up from the other end of the car where his daughter was helping him.

Further along the path, Evie sees what she recognizes as a former shopping mall. It is well inside, so much of it again is being converted into greenspace. The building is full of children playing, adults looking after them and adults taking the merchandise from the old stores to the sites for free goods and reconstructing the building. It is cooler inside the building, and Evie is relieved if not a little chilly. She finds her lover drying the eyes of one of the children. She smiles when she sees Evie approaching and offers her her sweater. Evie accepts it, smiling too, and they hold hands and walk about the building.

“We will take the little one here to play,” says her lover. Evie nods.



The people were hard at work reconstructing the cities, so the fallen models had now divided themselves among several tasks. The main one was the reconstruction of the government houses, followed by the restructuring of the water systems.

The government buildings followed the same pattern as the other converted spaces. Plenty of plants were added to the yards and to the naturally lit parts inside the buildings. Much of it was converted into living spaces. Several meeting rooms, however, were kept as they were, in order to provide a place to facilitate the eventual decision-making processes and a place to mediate conflicts.

The water system was more complex. Already most of the toilets had been converted into composting toilets, so the water was needed mainly for drinking, cooking and washing. Where possible, the water was retrieved by a solar-generated pump that brought water from the nearest source, using much of the existing pipe infrastructure. In arid areas that had earlier relied on much of the water to be piped over long distances, this was no longer possible. These areas were left to be colonized by indigenous plant life, which required little water to live. They reverted to their natural desert state, with just enough local water for the people and animals to survive.

The people live. Life's hardships are still there, but less painful because they are less dreaded. Food is plentiful and free, packaging is limited to reused bottles and cans saved from the wasteful times before. When food is scarce the people band together. Some people die; those who live honour their memory.

People are not tied to the regular work week. There is no surplus-oriented lifestyle anywhere. The people live at a subsistence level, and they enjoy living that way.

The fallen models tread the earth and help anywhere they can. Small councils are formed, many made up of the people who were in similar small councils before the changes. The difference is that the decisions made in these councils are now widely acknowledged and valued.



The woman suspended blinks. She moves. Her arms reach towards her knees. Her knees bend up against her chest, her head tucked in against them. As she does this her scars peel off with her years. The woman is dead. Her song continues.





Evie is in labour. Her lover managed to get her home before it began. Now the midwife has arrived along with a former medical doctor, who no longer pushes pills. The doctor encourages Evie, explains to her what is happening. Evie can't really hear her. She does not need to. The baby is coming. The midwife catches her, the cord is cut releasing her ankle. The woman is reborn.

♀ ♀ ♀

The models have arrived. They are enormous and beautiful. They frighten Evie, who is also beautiful with the sweat beading down her red hot face. It is spring again outside and Evie wonders what happened to the winter and fall. She loves the fall. The plants have slowed down. Nothing is as fast as it was before. That is fine with Evie, speed frightens her. She purrs like a cat, content to hold her child. Outside, her lover is making a greenhouse between their home and the home next door. She builds a play space for the new baby. The neighbours are helping and wait to celebrate this new life.

A feminist is a person who advocates the removal of restrictions that lead to discrimination (Barron, 1986). In view of this, I think a feminist is a person who looks at the world, sees that women's situations are not the same as men's, that we are not as valued as men, and who wants to change this so women's lives are valued and safe. When striving for equality between the sexes, a feminist works through social activism, work experience, or experiences in the home, to document women's lives and to show their value. Focusing on the home, this paper attempts to describe what a city (or in this case, part of a city) would be like if it were designed by women. . . .

Weisman (1992, pp. 126-27) claims that our patriarchal society has done its best to uphold the dominance of the sacred, male-headed family, even though people are increasingly living as couples without children, living communally in shared housing with others to whom they are not related, or living alone. When redesigning housing to fit various realistic, present-day family arrangements, an extremely important step involves dispelling the idealism surrounding the traditional family.

Since households and the people within them vary, it is important for housing to become spatially flexible, changing over time according to household size and composition (Weisman, p. 126). To allow for expansion or contraction in size and shape, permanent walls can be replaced with sliding screens, modular partitions that clip in or swing in and out, folding wall panels, as well as curtains of vinyl, wood, metal and fabric (Weisman, p. 154). . . . In 1984, Katrin Adam and Barbara Marks proposed a housing scheme which demonstrates that a home established for a family with young children must be modifiable by family members as they change and grow . . . (Weisman, p. 150). In relation to spatial flexibility, the relationship, size and use of various rooms must become less specific (Weisman, p. 154). Adam and Marks' design scheme also provides common space, which can serve various functions such as workspace, a guest room or play area, etc. . . .

It is the housing schemes like that of Adam and Marks which inspired my own vision of a realistic community, designed to fit the diversity of families. My model follows the university setting, with its changing population and combination of adjacent living, work and social spaces. The housing units would not represent communal living in rooms or dormitories, but in individual apartments, with designated private, as well as shared public or communal spaces. Weisman (p. 129) is accurate in stating that "the private house is sacred." Many people, of which I am one, would not adjust easily to sharing a bathroom or sitting room. Peace and quiet are important when people want private time to themselves. Varying degrees of privacy and sharing would recognize differing needs and preferences of individuals and families. . . .

The apartments themselves could be designed differently, with various numbers of bedrooms, bathrooms and kitchens, depending on how many families were living in each one. The idea of a kitchenless home has been quite prominent in the past, promoted by women such as Charlotte Perkins Gilman and Melusina Fay Peirce. Even though my housing scheme similarly encompasses communal cooking and dining, many of the apartments would contain a partial kitchen (at least). People like to eat different kinds of food at different times, making it necessary to have the option of boiling an egg at 4:00 p.m. (for example). In addition, many people enjoy cooking and experimenting as a hobby, and entertaining (having friends over for dinner) has increasingly become an enjoyable social event. . . .

There would be a communal dining hall, which served breakfast, lunch and dinner at specific hours; a large shared yard with a playground; a daycare; a laundryroom; office space; and storage facilities for baby carriages, trikes and bikes, etc. The advantage to communal living directly involves shared domestic work, whether it be cooking, watching after children or washing clothes. Communal living allows groups of people to take turns doing such domestic work collectively. The men and women who partake in the cooking, dishwashing, childcare, floor washing, lawn care, etc., would be paid for their domestic work through a monthly maintenance fee. Similar to any job, people could work full or part-time, or even on a volunteer

basis. The maintenance fee paid by the inhabitants could be included in their rent, or paid separately. Its affordability can be justified through their saving money, not having to buy a dishwasher, stove, dining table, vacuum, change table, highchair, etc.

Depending on the inhabitants' wishes, a manager and staff could be hired to administer (or co-administer) this system, but I would promote the residents themselves to form a management team. Wekerle (1993, pp. 109, 111) mentions the benefits of residents becoming integrally involved in policymaking and in key decisions. She claims that women who are given the opportunity to take charge, learn new skills and infiltrate a non-traditional field for women. . . .

An extremely important feature of my housing scheme is safety. Since the residents could include families with children, couples, single men or women of any age, including the disabled and abused, it is crucial for them to feel safe. Special attention would be paid to a secure entrance system, unobstructed sight lines, and locating communal areas in high visibility locations on the first floor (e.g., locating the laundry room at the front entrance overlooking the playground) (Wekerle, p. 103). Any garages or underground parking lots would be guarded, possibly with video cameras and sensitive sound or listening devices; doors and elevators would have windows to allow for full visibility into the elevator or hallways and over the parking area; design would avoid obscuring plantings, niches or places which could harbour an assailant (Modlich, p. 130); . . . Related to safety is accessibility features for the disabled. This could include: ramps for wheelchairs; steps and sidewalk edges delineated with glowing white; larger lettering and braille on signs; a two-way communication ("in-house" telephone system; beeping signals (to indicate a door has been opened, for example) (Modlich, p. 128); and panic or help buttons.

Creating a housing complex which included all of the features I have mentioned would be costly. As with the design of individual apartments, the complex's features are meant to be varied and diverse because *different people want and need different things*. The ultimate goal of my housing scheme is to provide people with the lifestyle they want. Even though people share a need for safety and well-being, the end result would show many different living arrangements, with different apartment features, using different services that are made available. For example, some people may not feel comfortable eating in a communal dining room, and will therefore want their own kitchen. The importance of providing communal services is that they are available if people want to use them. . . .

Since the traditional family now exists more as a myth than reality, it is imperative for home design to focus on diversity, towards accommodating many different lifestyles. This requires a change in attitudes, based on the reconceptualization of work, family life and gender roles. Weisman (p. 156) concludes that "the biggest obstacle we face in developing pluralistic, flexible housing is not design, technology or even the profit motive, it is our own attitudes." In my opinion, changing such attitudes is what feminism is all about.

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# THE CITY OF ECSTASY

Monica Papendick

In her book *Discrimination by Design*, Leslie Weisman demonstrates that the formulaic plans of current urban landscapes are informed by patriarchal values. These values manifest themselves in zoning practices which essentially perpetuate the dichotomization of gender roles by relegating women to spaces designed to aid them in performing subservient roles to men. When discussing housing, a particular problem for all women, even those who have the "security" of living within the nuclear family structure, Weisman states:

Any feminist proposal for housing must be a holistic one whose goal is not equality for women in the existing work force, but utter transformation of work and family life.<sup>1</sup>

It would seem then, that such transformational qualities should underlie the entire design of an ecofeminist city. The physical structures and their uses must reflect an underlying feminist philosophy that in turn reinforces and justifies those very physical structures.

The social, metaphysical and physical architecture of my city has been shaped with the view of exploding the traditional dichotomies that represent the foundations of urban landscapes. My ideas have been influenced by those of feminist scholars and writers such as Mary Daly, Shulamith Firestone, Virginia Woolf, Dolores Hayden, Leslie Weisman, Marge Piercy and Marcia Nozick. My city reflects these diverse influences in contradictory ways. For example, the combination of advanced technology and ancient methods of healing provides the basis for the city's healthy communities. As well, this society encourages the freedom of women to uncover a less stereotyped version of Self. However, that version of Self, for reasons that I will discuss, does not involve biological motherhood. These contradictions represent a challenge to the patriarchal processes of Logic and Reason, which, paradoxically, produce neither logical nor reasonable consequences.

I've named my feminist eutopia the "City of Ecstasy" because its social and physical design reflects an underlying philosophy of "ecstasy" that has been inspired, in part, by the feminist scholar Mary Daly. The word "ecstasy" is derived from the Greek word *ekstasis*, from *existanai*, meaning to "displace, drive out of one's senses."<sup>2</sup> Thus, the term "ecstasy" has associations with the idea of expelling, or exorcising. It appears in the title of Mary Daly's introduction in *Gyn/Ecology*: "The Metapatriarchal Journey of Exorcism and Ecstasy," in which she states:

Breaking through the Male Maze is both exorcism and ecstasy. It is spinning through and beyond the fathers' foreground which is the arena of games. This spinning involves encountering the demons who block the various chambers of our homeland, which is the Background of our Selves.<sup>3</sup>

I imagine that if Daly's "metaphorical journey" would lead to a place, this place, although not necessarily a final destination, would be characterized by a feeling of ecstasy, a "state of exalted delight."<sup>4</sup>

Daly writes about breaking through the metaphorical "Male Maze" of patriarchal attitudes. I would suggest that this "Maze" finds its literal expression in current urban design: the maze formed by rows of inefficient public housing complexes, the maze of straight suburban streets lined with single family dwellings, the maze-like shopping malls with their labyrinthine parking lots, and the maze of sky scrappers whose skylines form the border between public and private life. The philosophy of ecstasy, involves a continuous attempt, similar to Daly's ongoing journey, to exorcise from our Selves, and the city within which these Selves reside, any elements of patriarchy, particularly the remains of dichotomized gender and gender roles, along with any other false dichotomies. The philosophy of ecstasy involves the resulting experience of "exalted delight."

Although Daly discusses strictly women's sense of "Self," implicating all men in the system of patriarchy that must be exorcised, I prefer to break the gender dichotomy by conceiving of gender itself as a continuum. My conception of an ecofeminist city involves the existence of social and physical spaces and structures that permit an individual to define a sense of Self without the imposing attitudes of our current system of patriarchy. In the City of Ecstasy, this patriarchal order has, for the most part, been displaced by a self sustaining society whose economy rests upon the rehabilitation of the environment, the health and well being of its residents and the creative use of their knowledge and talents. The Ecstasians live in ecstasy, and they continue to reshape their homes, the city, and their conceptions of Self. My ecofeminist city, therefore, is not the final destination of those who journey beyond the literal and figurative patriarchal mazes. It is a city whose very structures reflect the goal of transforming, of exorcising any final remains of patriarchy.

I have decided to refer to the female and male residents of my city as the "Ecstasians" because the word "citizen" is loaded with ideas of male privilege. The notion of citizen still conjures up images of ancient Athens, where women and alien residents, having the status of "Other," were denied the most fundamental rights of democratic life. Even today, some of the benefits of citizenship, particularly the ownership of land, remain inaccessible to many women. My coining of the word "Ecstasian" reflects an overall attempt to evoke a new conception of belonging to an urban community. I wanted to create a linguistic term which signifies, not "the right to," but a "guarantee of" certain privileges for the residents in the City of Ecstasy.

Virginia Woolf said that every woman needs a room of her own. This is one of the most fundamental needs whose fulfilment, in my city, has the most far reaching, seemingly unrelated consequences. Every adult resident in my city has the guarantee of a room, a condominium of her/his own. The wide-open spaces in many of the existing old buildings which may have served as warehouses in former years are conducive to the development of several personal housing units. Marcia Nozick, in her book entitled *No Place Like Home*, provides an example of a group of homeless people, known as the "Balcony Bunch," who helped develop what became known as the "Street City."<sup>5</sup> Street City exists inside of what used to be a "large open warehouse."<sup>6</sup> Nozick suggests that building within an

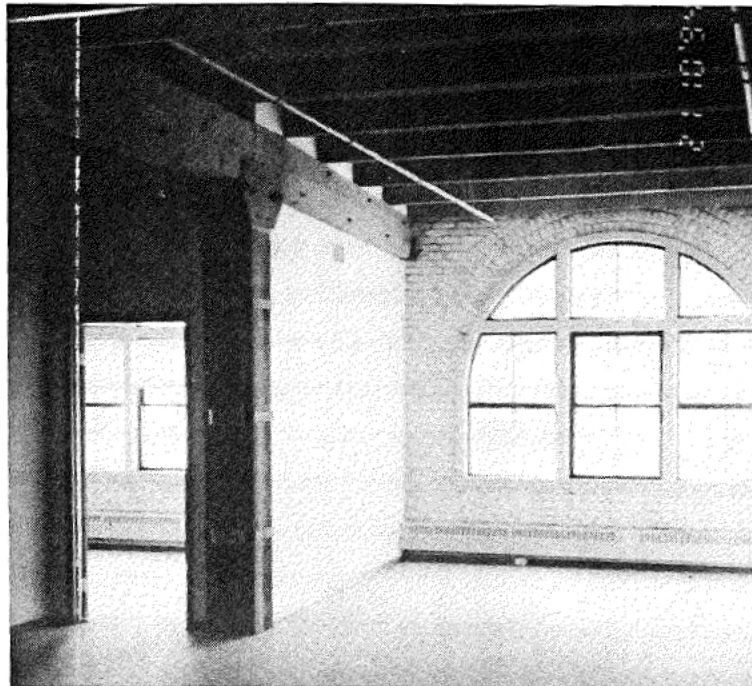


Photo A: "A room with virtually no dividing walls"—Ashdown Warehouse, Winnipeg.

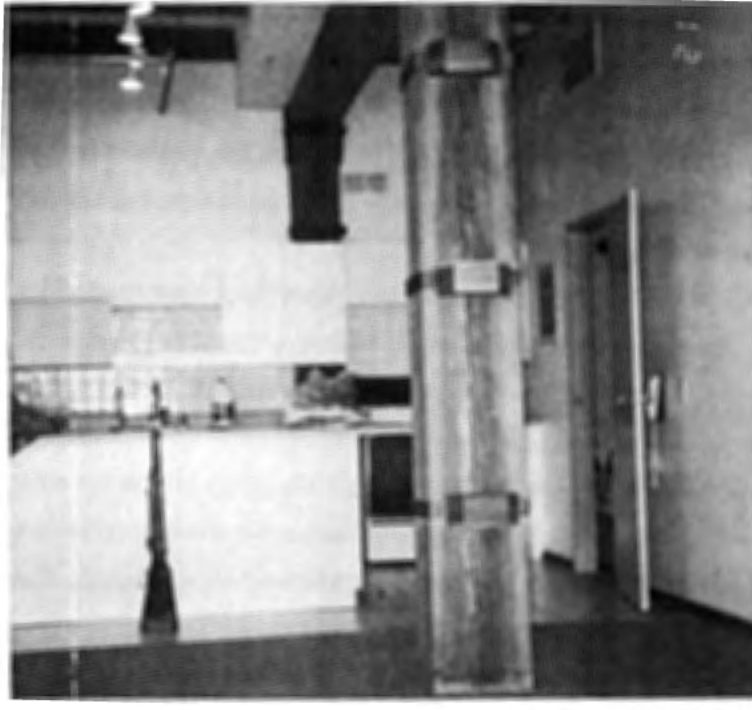


Photo B: Small kitchen. "In the City of Ecstasy, kitchens are optional, not mandatory."

existing structure affords the benefit of considerably lower costs than the typical amounts required for constructing a new building.<sup>7</sup> Dolores Hayden further suggests that "In many areas, the rehabilitation of existing housing may be more desirable than new construction."<sup>8</sup> I would also add that modifying existing space proves kinder to the environment. For every demolished building, heaps of waste remain for decades, possibly longer, in already overfilled landfill sites. Furthermore, the construction of new housing requires the continued depletion of forests. For this reason, I also propose that even skyscrapers, the giant trouble makers in current urban landscapes, remain standing, with dramatically modified interiors.

Each resident in my city may choose a condominium ranging in size between 1400 and 3500 square feet. Almost everyone in the City of Ecstasy, with the exception of very young children and elderly individuals who can no longer care for themselves, lives alone in these huge spaces, a social phenomenon that I will later discuss. The real life examples of the condominium design that I have provided reflect the possibility for further transformation of an existing structure into spaces that no longer convey any presumptions about the resident. The condominiums of Winnipeg's Ashdown Warehouse have certain features that make them representative of a close *approximation* to the kind of housing I envision for the Ecstasians. The photograph labelled "A" shows a room with virtually no dividing walls, a design technique that conveys the impression of wide open space, and allows the resident freedom to decide how to arrange her/his furniture. This type of design usurps the traditional architect's position as dictator, who uses dividing walls to allocate more space to what is considered, for the nuclear family dwelling, the more "important" rooms: kitchens, living rooms, and, in more modern homes, the businessman's study.<sup>9</sup> The huge windows constitute another desirable feature in the Ashdown condos. Because they cover a large portion of wall space, they allow more natural light into the open areas. Unlike the smaller, higher placed windows in many suburban homes, these giant sized windows afford a view to persons using wheelchairs.

The photograph labelled "B" shows a small kitchen, which all units in the Ashdown Warehouse have. In the City of Ecstasy, kitchens are an option, not mandatory. People enjoy gourmet dining experiences without the time consuming process of preparing the meals, unless cooking is a hobby. The photograph labelled "C" conveys the realizable potential of mixing businesses within the residential domain. Still within the Ashdown Warehouse is a restaurant.<sup>10</sup> The Ecstasians, have the option to dine out at any restaurant in return for the organically grown food with which they supply their condominium community restaurant—in the hypothetical case of the Ashdown residents—the restaurant shown in Photograph C. The way in which people acquire food and dine in this city reflects very realistic concerns with the economy, the environment, the overall health of the individual, and the breaking of traditional gender roles.

Faith Popcorn, a futurist trying to predict consumer trends for the next decade, suggests that our whole concept of food and eating will change, opening up new possibilities for our tired economy. In her book



Photo C: Mixing business and residential uses; restaurant in the City of Ecstasy would be for residents.

*The Popcorn Report*, she states:

We are rethinking how we feel about food. With polluted water and pesticide-contaminated soil—not to mention pesticide-contaminated plants themselves—fresh produce has entered that big "question mark" area once inhabited by processed food alone. . . . Soon the standard of health and reliability will not be grown, but laboratory-engineered. Produce grown hydroponically in "clinically controlled" conditions. . . . We may soon be harvesting most of our fish for food, from shrimp, lobster, and crayfish to tilapia, out of water-source-controlled fish—the biggest source for cultured catfish already. Look for meat, fish and poultry tagged with their growing history: where they were raised (including soil and water conditions), what they were fed, how they were treated.<sup>11</sup>

Popcorn suggests the advent of an even greater preoccupation with food as it relates to health. She proposes that foods will become "engineered for health,"<sup>12</sup> that they will be "prescribed in doses," as "preventive medicine."<sup>13</sup> Furthermore, she suggests that "Old wives' medicinal recipes will work their way back into post-modern mythology."<sup>14</sup>

I have incorporated some of Popcorn's suggestions into my City of Ecstasy. In return for free access to healthful meals, the residents are responsible for growing organic foods or cultivating fish farms in a laboratory environment that is built into every condo, hence my reasoning for allotting up to 3500 square feet

of space to one single person. Although everyone who is able is required by their condo-community restaurant(s) to produce some form of food, certain people prefer to continue their careers in other fields. A smaller organic complex requires, with the help of advanced technology, no more than an hour a day to maintain. For other people in this society, the new way of farming has become a career in itself. It is more likely then, for a person who prefers to farm as a career, to choose the 3500 square foot condo, while the individual who just makes a contribution to one of the condo-community restaurants will choose a 1600 square foot condo.

The Ecstasians have journeyed far enough into the Background to realize that the "Old wives'" more holistic approach to preventative medicine and curing medicine furnishes the foundation for an altogether healthier style of living. The male doctors who had previously usurped the positions of women healers have themselves been displaced. Part of the new self sustaining economy in the City of Ecstasy involves the employment of nutritionists, dietitians, personal exercise trainers and female/male healers who combine modern technology with ancient remedies of the past.

The Ecstasians, for the most part, live alone. The elderly Ecstasians who can no longer have the capability of complete independence still remain in their condos with the help of various community members and healers who schedule daily volunteer visits to provide them with the best possible care. Marriage no longer exists because the concept of relationships has changed. The Ecstasians realize that marriage is the patriarchal contract to produce children, a contract drafted for the benefit of a moralizing abstract male god who usurped the position of earthy human goddesses—the "old wives" who knew of the medicinal properties of plants, for example. The metaphorical journey beyond the figurative patriarchal mazes involves the annulment of marriage and the nuclear family. These traditions have prevented women from having a true space and identity of their own. The personalized dinner plans replace the "one meal for all" concept behind the family dinner. The social experiences of dining out with various individuals also reflect the disappearance of the mundane nuclear family structure, and the gender roles that came with it.

This displacement of the nuclear family does not translate into the death of sincere caring relationships. Rather, it encourages them on many levels. The abolition of biological motherhood, a phenomenon which I will shortly discuss in more detail, promises, according to Shulamith Firestone, the liberation of people trapped in the dichotomized roles of the reproductive drama. She suggests that technological reproduction will stamp out the need to impose heterosexuality as a means of ensuring the continuation of humanity. Following this line of argumentation, lesbianism or homosexuality would no longer be viewed as freely chosen or perverse alternatives to the norm of heterosexuality. Instead these categories defining sexuality would be abandoned.<sup>15</sup>

In my eutopia, the Ecstasians enjoy this liberation from sexuality categories. They choose their



partners freely and benefit from these healthy relationships. As well, the disappearance of pornographic images founded upon the socially constructed gender roles of master/servant, subject/object has greatly improved relations between the sexes. I have not allotted any space to the sex trade institutions of patriarchal society, nor have I allotted space for depictions of the skimpily clothed, anorexic model stereotype in the markets. The dehumanizing experience of seeing fragmented versions of the nude female body plastered all over the city scape, the humiliating experience of women finding themselves verbally objectified as they pass by groups of men (the experience described by Dolores Hayden, of two women on their way to work)<sup>16</sup> no longer occurs in the City of Ecstasy. People have started to view gender as a continuum, not a split dichotomy. Their newfound sense of Self, integrated in communities of other Selves, no longer permits the harmful objectification of one person by another.

When discussing the concept of a newfound sense of "Self" for women who defy the patriarchal assigning of dichotomized gender roles, the subject of child bearing and rearing inevitably surfaces. Until recently, men have convinced women that mothering is their one and only *raison d'être*. While many feminist scholars argue that motherhood could be a joyful experience if it were no longer imposed upon women by patriarchal society, the fact is that biological motherhood naturally constitutes a basis for the dichotomization of gender. Women give birth. Men do not. Hence, it becomes very easy to assign gender roles based upon what is "natural." Shulamith Firestone, in the *Dialectic of Sex*, argues that the "natural" desire to bear and rear children results, not from an "authentic liking" for children, but rather, a "displacement" of ego-extension needs. For men, children represent a means whereby names, property and ethnic identification become immortalized. For women, children provide a justification for their dreary homebound suburban existences.<sup>17</sup>

Even though a woman in today's society may manage to temporarily escape from suburbia during the day while she goes to work, she still returns home to perform her second job: taking care of the children who invade even the room that was supposed to have been her own. I've decided to take Virginia Woolf's idea that a woman should have a space of her own to the very extreme. I believe that the ideal of a woman having a room of her own is not achievable if she herself, or even she and a partner, find themselves entirely responsible for the care of a child. Although they can be quite adorable, very young children demand a lot of attention.

Everyone in the City of Ecstasy enjoys a diversity in roles that they themselves choose and define. Collective child care constitutes the basis of another community involvement option in the City of Ecstasy. Children are the precious resources of this society, each one having anywhere from three to five parents, of any gender combination. This arrangement explodes the traditional concept of family which involves the unhealthy socialization of children by often idiosyncratic, heterosexist parents who abide by the strict rules of their predefined roles. The child takes turns staying with each of the parents, an arrangement to be

determined among those individuals who have requested the child. During the day the child profits from socialization with other children and adults who work and stay in day care centres that have been incorporated into the work place. Again, it is not the responsibility of only a few people to mind the daycares, everyone in that particular work place must volunteer at least four hours a week to the care of the children. Once the child moves beyond the age where she/he needs a stable structure, perhaps somewhere between the ages of seven and ten, he/she moves into a small condominium shared by two older children and continues to attend school. The parents and any other community members provide any additional help if required.

Children, therefore, do not belong to anyone in particular. Although the parents may decide on a temporary name for the child, once she/he has given the subject some consideration, she/he may name her/himself.

As for the process of reproduction, I have decided to borrow some ideas from Marge Piercy's science fiction novel entitled *Woman on the Edge of Time*.<sup>18</sup> Piercy relates the story of Connie Ramos, a poverty stricken single mother living in misery. Connie is soon declared an unfit mother and she is committed to a mental hospital by her family. However, Connie is soon transported by a woman named Luciente to a world called "Mattapoissett." In this society, children are born from "brooders" and taken care of by women and men who have the equal responsibility of contributing either ova or sperm. The society of Mattapoissett gave up biological reproduction because they were convinced that it was the only way that sexism, racism and classism could be eliminated:

It was part of women's long revolution. When we were breaking all the old hierarchies. Finally there was that one thing we had to give up too, the only power we ever had, in return for no power for anyone. The original production: the power to give birth. Cause as long as we were biologically enchained, we'd never be equal. And males never would be humanized to be loving and tender. So we all became mothers. Every child has three. To break the nuclear bonding.<sup>19</sup>

Many feminist scholars are suspicious about the use of this kind of reproductive technology. Azizah al-Hibri, a critic of Piercy, argues that Mattapoissett is an undesirable society because:

Technological reproduction does not equalize the reproductive power structure—it inverts it. It appropriates the reproductive power from women and places it in the hands of men who now control both the sperm and the reproductive technology that could make it indispensable . . . It "liberates" them from their humiliating dependency on women in order to propagate.<sup>20</sup>

Clearly, any change in reproduction this dramatic must be handled carefully. However, to suggest, as al-Hibri does, that women should keep their reproductive powers because they ensure men's continued "humiliating dependency on women" is counter-productive. One only has to read Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*, or visit a Bosnian rape camp to discover that a woman's unique "reproductive powers" can just as easily be translated into a source of humiliation for her. Furthermore, the suggestion that reproductive technology

would automatically allow men more power over the reproductive process is misleading.

In the City of Ecstasy, both men and women share this technology equally. The group of parents who request a child must present arguments to a jury made up of community members (this jury changes from week to week) as to why they wish to bring a child into the world, what personal qualifications justify their potential role as parents, and how they all plan to take care of the child once she/he is born.

Although my suggestion to conduct interviews to determine the suitability of individuals for parenthood may sound cold and callous, I believe it represents a more responsible alternative to the arrangement we currently have. Too often, people become parents in our society when they really did not want children in the first place. As well, there are a certain number of parents who, because of their abusive tendencies, seriously harm their children and thus create a whole domino effect of unpleasant social issues for the rest of the community to deal with. Furthermore, if people must be interviewed for even the most insignificant job, why should they not be interviewed for something as fundamental to the continuation of society as parenthood, whose consequences are far reaching?

Ironically, shopping centres and some suburban homes, traditionally the domains of the overburdened mother, become the liberating technological birthing centres. Although the advent of reproductive technology could admittedly be risky business, I think that if it is carefully used, it could have a liberating, dichotomy shattering effect on all members of society. In my eutopia, this technology has the same effect as it does in "Mattapoissett." It leads to a breaking of the "nuclear bonding." The women in the City of Ecstasy have access to safe herbal methods of birth control that are 100 percent effective. However, should they decide that technological reproduction does not serve their best interests, they may again experience, if they so choose, biological motherhood.

Even though the Ecstasians live alone they enjoy the social benefits of working together to rehabilitate the environment, they enjoy dining together, their meals individually planned to correspond with their body chemistry, providing them each with the maximum nutritional benefit. Each individual participates in a wide range of entertainment activities, at various times during the day or evening. As Jane Jacobs proposed years ago, diversity on city streets contributes to a safe environment.<sup>21</sup> Because I have decided to keep the skyscrapers, potential public space for restaurants, lounges of all kinds, gyms and small markets abound. The main floor lobbies in all tall buildings provide the space for these establishments. Glass windows have replaced concrete walls so that everyone from time to time can have their eyes on the streets, all named after feminist scholars, goddesses, community women and feminist men. Since the economy of my city does not rest on traditional nine-to-five jobs, the area will always be frequented by people, either for work related or entertainment related reasons. Crime, however, does not constitute much of a problem. Should any person commit a crime, subsequent consequences are at the discretion of members of the condo-community in which

he/she resides. In the rare cases of serious offenses, it is recognized that the offender belongs in a patriarchal city, not in the feminist City of Ecstasy. The offender must leave.

As I have suggested, the economy in the City of Ecstasy rests, principally, upon environment, health, entertainment and education related issues. The people in this city work together as a community, and thus recognize the important interrelation of the work that everyone does. Unemployment, the other half of the employed/unemployed dichotomy, does not exist. The new needs and concerns of this society must be addressed by all people, all of whom have the capacity to develop, through education, their talents. Although the Ecstasians do have a form of monetary currency, people all benefit from a high level of comfortable living. The dichotomy between wealth and poverty does not exist.

Since many people in the City of Ecstasy live alone on busy work and social schedules, the issue of housekeeping is dealt with by the use of technology. Instead of carpets and furniture that require special care, hardwood floors, walls, ceilings and new furniture fabrics and surfaces repel dust or dirt into air filters. Each condo has an automatic laundry sort that determines, by scanning the fabrics and the stains, the kind of care that an article of clothing will need. It then sends the clothes to be washed, dried, and if need be, pressed. Best of all, these devices, since they only have to process the clothing and towelling of single people, do not take up much space. Technology has replaced the mindless work formerly performed by maids, usually women.

Similar to the Street City development, the Ashdown Warehouse has a huge full length skylight (Photo D) which also permits the growth of trees within the building. All of the condos within my ecofeminist city have skylights under which trees and other plant life grow. Some of the former offices and boardrooms in the skyscrapers have been converted into condominiums with balconies added onto each space, even those that have remained offices. The great height and physical structure of most skyscrapers necessitates the addition of personal balconies since a skylight at the very top may not have the same effect as it does in a lower warehouse building. While plant life can still exist within the skyscraper, people may also have their own personal gardens on their balconies (see the illustration by Ragini Dayal on p. 81). My insistence upon green spaces within the City of Ecstasy reflects not only a concern for the environment, but as well, a preoccupation with ending the traditional separation of nature and urban landscapes.

As well, The City of Ecstasy contains many marshes and other park like areas within its landscape. Many of the Ecstasians walk or use bicycles to get from point A to point B. When necessary, they use solar powered cars to cross long distances. The blending together of nature and culture helps the environment and the overall productivity and health of the community since trees function as natural air filters. The patriarchal separation of nature and culture has led to the current state of our environment. However, when nature and culture coexist in a smaller space, people are forced to take notice of the environmental consequences of their

actions. The onset of strange diseases in the plants, or their unexplained death, function as warning signs to the Ecstasians. After natural scientists determine what may be causing the problem, a potential solution is formulated by interested members of the community.

The social and physical design changes in the City of Ecstasy reflect the ongoing attempt to displace or break down the physical and psychological patriarchal mazes that have for too long prevented people, particularly women, from developing a sense of Self. While many of the exteriors of the old city buildings remain intact, the redefinition of their interior spaces suggests the first possible step taken towards a complete transformation of societal attitudes and lifestyles. While everyone has a room of their own, a personal space whereby they can renew themselves, the Ecstasians still benefit from an enriching communitarian social structure. The Ecstasians live in a state of exalted delight.



Photo D: Full length skylight also permits the growth of trees within the building.



Illustration: The kind of scene the Ecstasians cycle or walk by on their way to work or other destinations. Line drawing by Ragini Dayal.

**NOTES**

1. Leslie Kanés Weisman, *Discrimination by Design* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1994), p. 119.
2. Pamela B. DeVinne, ed., *Webster's Illustrated Encyclopedic Dictionary* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1982), p. 535.
3. Mary Daly, *Gyn/Ecology: The Metaethics of Radical Feminism* (Boston: Beacon, 1978, 1990), p. 2.
4. DeVinne, *Webster's*, p. 335.
5. Marcia Nozick, *No Place Like Home* (Ottawa: Canadian Council on Social Development, 1992), pp. 165-69.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 166.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 166.
8. Dolores Hayden, "What Would a Nonsexist City Be Like? Speculations on Housing, Urban Design and Human Work," *Ekistics*, 310 (January/February 1985): S183.
9. I recently toured a modern show home in the new development of Assiniboine Woods. On the second floor, beside the "master bedroom" was an office even larger than the adjacent bedroom. This office was clearly intended for the traditional business man. The decorator, to reinforce this, had placed a man's brief case, along with some pictures of a wife and children on the desk. These articles could not have belonged to the real estate agent, as she worked, ironically, in the kitchen on the first floor of the house.
10. In reality, this restaurant, along with a deli, have closed. However, the residents anticipate the opening of two new restaurants. The Ashdown also houses a beauty salon, another example of how residential and business areas can coexist.
11. Faith Popcorn, *The Popcorn Report* (New York: HarperBusiness, 1992), p. 65.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 65.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 65.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 66.
15. Rosemarie Tong, *Feminist Thought* (San Francisco: Westview Press, 1989), p. 74.
16. Dolores Hayden, *Redesigning the American Dream* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1973), pp. 226-27.
17. Shulamith Firestone, *The Dialectic of Sex* (New York: Bantam Books, 1970), p. 229.
18. Marge Piercy, *Woman of the Edge of Time* (New York: Fawcett Crest Books, 1976).

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20. Azizah al-Hibri in Paul T. Durbin, ed., *Research in Philosophy and Technology*, Volume 7 (London: JAL Press, 1984), p. 266.
21. Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (New York: Vintage Books, 1961).



## ABOUT THE AUTHORS

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