V.

La collana intende investigare la centralità del concetto di interculturalità nei paesi di lingua inglese offrendo una prospettiva interdisciplinare tra lingue, letterature, culture e media. Il termine "traduzione" è dunque inteso nella sua accezione più ampia che prende in considerazione non solo gli studi di traduzione interlinguistica ma anche intersemiotica e si apre ad un discorso sulla traduzione come trasposizione, adattamento e ibridazione tra generi e arti. Il discorso sull'interculturalità, sempre più centrale anche in un'Europa multietnica e multilinguistica, è fondamentale nelle aree anglofone dove il processo di decolonizzazione poi globalizzazione ha portato ad un ripensamento dei concetti di lingua, identità, nazione e cultura. La collana intende proporre strumenti di analisi per approfondire competenze linguistiche e culturali muovendosi tra diverse aree di studio come gli studi di traduzione, gli studi postcoloniali e di genere, gli studi culturali, la sociolinguistica (in particolare le varietà della lingua inglese), la critical discourse analysis e i linguaggi specialistici. Se come afferma Adrienne Rich "negli interstizi delle lingue si nascondono significativi segreti della cultura" è proprio dallo studio di diverse tipologie testuali che può iniziare un percorso critico verso un approfondimento di ciò che viene definito come interculturalità.

The Body Metaphor

Cultural Images, Literary Perceptions, Linguistic Representations

edited by Eleonora Federici, Marilena Parlati

Table of contents

Space, Time and Body: the Genderization of the Chronotope

[*Andrea Bernardelli, Eleonora Federici*[1]]

1. Introduction: Body and Chronotope

What is the relationship between the body and the chronotope in Bakhtin's theory? He gets the notion of chronotope from scientific research in biology, geophysics and neurophysiology carried on in the U.S.S.R. in the 30s, in particular, the work of Vladimir Vernadskij and Aleksei Uchtomskij (Tagliagambe 1986; Diddi 2009). This 'biological' origin of the concept is declared by Bakhtin in his essay "Forms of Time and Chronotope in the Novel" (Bakhtin 1979: 231). The general idea that he extrapolates from these studies is that: 1) the relationship between the body and the external world is dialectical, 2) the answer of the living organism is a constant elaboration of the external data of the world or context it inhabits. The organism is inseparable from the surrounding world, they are in a continuous relationship of reciprocal action. The individual, a body in a physical context, represents the indissoluble relationship through cognitive frames that are

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1. The essay has been thought and discussed by the two authors. Andrea Bernardelli wrote part 1 and 2, Eleonora Federici part 3, 4, 5 and 6.

necessary in order to understand the world, or rather, in order to understand the relationship between the individual and his/her context.

The artistical and literary chronotopes are part of these models. The literary chronotope, in fact, is a way to understand experience, it offers models of the world in which determinate relationships between the context and real persons that live an act in it (bodies in a context) are reflected.

2. The Division of Dominions

The categories of *space* and *time* are the principal elements of any narrative. The spatial-temporal axes define the coordinates of the story and delineate the background on which the characters' actions and multiple events are placed. The development of the plot would be impossible without a previous setting of specific spatial and temporal elements. How can the reader understand the relationship between the action of a character X and the specific reaction of a character Y if the author does not previously define the possibility of determining their physical positions within the space and time of the story? As Umberto Eco (1981) states, the *fictional possible world* is 'overfurnished', or filled by characters, objects and events on the basis of a specific time and place. Nevertheless, the meaning of the relationship between time and space in a story is much more complex. These elements, in fact, do not only delineate the 'frame' within which the story is told, but can acquire a specific meaning directly connected to the story and its events. Therefore, some characters and

facts become meaningful specifically for their relationship to space and time in the novel; for example, in *La Chartreuse de Parme* (1839) the battle of Waterloo becomes a narrative element that acquires a specific connotation according to its spatial and temporal location within the story. In this novel, Stendhal utilizes the battle as a sort of 'character', as an element that not only functions as a milestone that signposts the place and time from which the narrative begins, but as a device that projects its historic meaning onto the story and onto the main character, Fabrizio Del Dongo.

In this essay we want to demonstrate how the relationship between space and time in modern and contemporary novels is fundamental to the development of the narrative structure. We will utilize, as a frame, a well-known theoretical notion that indicates this linked function of space and time, Mikhail M. Bakhtin's "chronotope":

> We will give the name *chronotope* (literally, "time space") to the intrinsic connectedness of temporal and spatial relationships that are artistically expressed in literature. This term (space-time) is employed in mathematics, and was introduced as part of Einstein's theory of relativity. The special meaning it has in relativity theory is not important for our purposes; we are borrowing it for literary criticism almost as a metaphor (almost, but not entirely). What counts for us is the fact that it expresses the inseparability of space and time (time as the fourth dimension of space). We understand the chronotope as a formally constitutive category of literature [...] in the literary artistic chronotope, spatial and temporal indicators are fused into one carefully thought-out, concrete whole. Time, as it were, thickens, takes on flesh, becomes artistically visible; likewise, space becomes charged and responsive to the movements of time, plot and history. This interaction

of axis and fusion of indicators characterizes the artistic chronotope. (Bakhtin 1981: 84)

From this perspective, space and time are tools that the author utilizes to give a specific meaning to actions and events in his/her text. The traditional novel - which Wayne Booth (1961) defined as "well made novel" – gives us an example of a specific utilization of chronotope within the text as the 'engine' of the narrative development. We will outline different examples of novels where the relationship between the categories of space and time – the chronotope – is connected to the categories of gender of the main characters. From this perspective, we can talk of a *genderization* of space and time in the chronotope in Bakhtinian terms. If the concept of chronotope in Bakhtin implied that:

a) The relationship between space and time in the novel becomes fundamental for the structure of the narrative;

what we want to show is a more specific narrative function, a rhetorical device, that is part of the general Bakhtinian notion but can be extrapolated in its specificity. It is a specific meaning of the chronotope according to which:

b) Some novels present a significant relationship between the categories of *gender* (*male/female*) of the characters and the *chronotope.*

The first example of our genderization of the chronotope can be found in a typical story of *persecution and entrapment* in

a foregrounding novel, Samuel Richardson's *Pamela* (1740). In this text we find the classic schema of the *persecuted* woman: Mr. B., the villain, tries to seduce Pamela after having kidnapped her, and "moving her in different places". In fact, in order to persuade Pamela to surrender to his will, Mr. B. moves her from place to place: first she is taken to the house of Mr. B's bailiff, Monkton, then in one of his residences in the countryside where she is kept prisoner by Mrs. Jewkes. In spite of this Pamela reacts and wins Mr. B., taking time before giving him her answer to his proposal. Pamela waits and spends her waiting time writing. She writes the same letters the reader is reading and that at a certain point in the plot Mr. B. will read as well. Therefore, her time is filled with writing, and writing becomes the way for taking, or maybe, losing or gaining time. In the structure of this specific chronotope, "taking time" means at the same time "not to move", in fact Pamela remains in the same place waiting for her destiny to be fulfilled, that is to say, marrying Mr B. In thus playing the persecuted woman Pamela outlines her reaction to her entrapment, writing to her parents that she will not do anything more than write, cry, fear and pray, evidently waiting for her persecutor's surrender of (Letter XXXII):

> *O my dearest Father and Mother,*
> Let me write, and bewail my miserable hard Fate, tho' I have no Hope how what I write can be convey'd to your Hands! – I have now nothing to do but write, and weep, and fear, and pray. But yet what can I hope for, when I seem to be devoted as a Victim to the Will of a wicked Violator of all the Laws of God and Man! (Richardson 1980: 130)

This novel gives us a model of the genderization of this chronotope, where, generally speaking, the male character

seems to have the necessity to be "master of space", while the female character needs to hold on to her role of "mistress of time". The male character tries to win the woman by "moving her from place to place" or by making her believe she will be able to master space; for example, acquiring properties and thus becoming independent, or giving her the opportunity to travel and therefore to escape from domestic entrapment. The illusion of achieving independence and "space" brings the woman to a complete defeat. In order to avoid being defeated the woman must react by maintaining control of time. The woman must "take time" – "she must take her time" – in order to overcome the dangerous masculine space. If the woman, trying to acquire the power of space, dares to trespass or, more simply, believes she can move freely in space, the tone of the novel becomes tragic: she will "fall" and be defeated by life. A perfect counterbalance to *Pamela* can be found in another novel by Richardson, *Clarissa* (1748). Here, the female character decides to move in space losing, this way, her power on time, and she is once again defeated. Going against the rules of society, Clarissa leaves her home and moves towards other spaces. Firstly, she decides to escape with Lovelace; secondly, she is kidnapped by him and taken to a house of ill repute where she is raped by the villain. From that moment her decline is signaled and her destiny can be foreseen. The woman's desire for independence is constantly repaid by social decline and death. Consequently, the feminine character needs to master time, which becomes her only ally within the narrative. Wilkie Collins deploys a similar strategy for his heroine, Miss Marian Halcombe, while she tries to reassure her sister Laura, tormented by the villain, Sir Percival in *The Woman in White* (1859):

She sighed bitterly, and still held my dress.

"No!" she said faintly. "Too late, Marian, too late!"

"Not a minute too late," I retorted. "The question of time is *our* question – and trust me, laura, to take a woman's full advantage of it."

I unclasped her hand from my gown while I spoke; but she slipped both her arms round my waist at the same moment, and held me more effectually than ever.

"It will only involves us in more trouble and more confusion," she said. "It will set you and my uncle at variance, and bring Sir Percival here again with fresh causes of complaint".

"So much the better!" I cried out passionately. "Who cares for his causes of complaint? Are you to break your heart to set his mind at ease? No men under heaven deserves this sacrifice from us women. Men! They are the enemies of our innocence and our peace – they drag us away from our parents' love and our sisters' friendship – they take us body and soul to themselves, and fasten our helpless lips to theirs as they chain up a dog to his kennel. And what does the best of them give us in return? Let me go, Laura – I'm mad when I think of it!" (Collins 1994:158-159)

As Marian underlines, time is an ally for the woman ("the question of time is our question"), while men take away women from their domestic spaces ("they drag us way") in order to make them fall into their power ("[they] fasten our helpless lives to theirs as they chain up a dog to his kennel"). Miss Halcombe also highlights the impossibility to act within 'space' as is made clear when she considers the possibility to behave as a male character in order to join her sister Laura:

If I only has the privileges of a man, I would order out Sir Percival's best horse instantly, and tear away on a night-gallop, eastward, to meet the rising sun – a long, hard, heavy, ceaseless

gallop of hours and hours, like the famous highwayman's ride to York. Being, however, nothing but a woman, condemned to patience, propriety and petticoats for life, I must respect the housekeeper's opinions, and try to compose myself in some feeble and feminine way (Collins 1994: 174)

As a result, Miss Halcombe waits and, in so doing, activates the dramatic development of the ensuing events. On the other hand, the wicked count Fosco, ally of the villain Sir Percival, describes with the following words the way in which a woman can destroy men's resolution:

it holds with animals, it holds with children, and it holds with women, who are nothing but children grown up. Quiet resolution is the one quality, the animals, the children and the women all fail in. If they can once shake this superior quality in their master, they get the better of *him*. If they can never success in disturbing it, he gets the better of *them*. (Collins 1994: 290-91)

This portrayal clearly recalls the frustrating attitude of constant waiting, endured by women who must oppose men's resolution. The act of waiting, anyway, repays the women, who at the end of the novel, are recompensed with the happy ending.

We can find many examples of "defeats" of women characters who dared to possess the power of space in the traditional novel. Among the many possible examples these include Victor Hugo's Esmeralda, the gypsy in *Notre Dame de Paris* (1831), Tolstoi's *Anna Karenina* (1877), and Flaubert's *Madame Bovary* (1856). Moreover, we can think about the many Gothic and Victorian novels that present entrapped, kidnapped, raped and "defeated" women. Madame Bovary, the well-known protagonist of Flaubert's novel, leaves her

home and her domestic entrapment in the little village of Tostes, in order to meet her lovers. She goes to the manor of her first lover, Rodolphe Boulanger de la Huchette, and then to Rouen to meet her second lover, Léon Dupuis. The topographic movement in space corresponds to a distance from the domestic role and to the protagonist's defeat, in this case, suicide. Similar to the position of Emma Bovary is Anna Karenina's story. Anna, who dares to conquer the power of space leaving her family and following her lover, is punished by the separation from her son and her inevitable suicide.

It is important to make a reference to a particular case of women trespassing, an allowed going beyond the limits: the eighteenth century national "marriage market" as historians define it. In his well-known study, *Atlas of the European Novel* (1998), Franco Moretti, analyzing Jane Austen's texts, points out that in these narratives women are allowed to acquire a precise form of mobility. They are allowed to move around the national territory in order to marry and create a family. In this case the possibility to move is linked to the idea of the Nation as a "home"-land.

But is it possible to make the man "fall" in his domain, space? This problem is elegantly solved by Stendhal with an interesting reversal of the stereotype of the persecuted woman. The protagonist of *La Chartreuse de Parme* (1839), Fabrizio del Dongo, at the beginning of the story can move freely but only in confined spaces; in fact since he has committed an offence he cannot trespass all the political borders he encounters. In this initial phase he is partially 'controlled' by a female character, the Countess Sanseverina. Later, in Parma, he is imprisoned in jail, the Cittadella. At this point he cannot move freely in space and

then becomes the prey of another female character, Clelia Conti. At this stage of the story Fabrizio is forced to 'wait' for juridical reasons, deprived of the power to control space, he becomes prey of time and of his love for Clelia.

Another variable of our gendered chronotope is the gender of the author, which can develop woman's conquest of space in a different way. For example, in Victor Hugo's novel, Esmeralda, the gypsy, is punished for her desire of independence in terms of movements from place to place. In Hugo's text, Esmeralda is defeated from the very beginning for being a gypsy, a woman who freely takes possession of the masculine space. But if we take another similar character, another gypsy, in a text by a woman writer, her fate seems to vary from Esmeralda's. In George Sand's novel, *Consuelo* (1842), the protagonist is a rebel who, in the development of the narrative, becomes a winner. Consuelo moves freely from place to place, also thanks to the 'otherness' inscribed in her character as an outsider from the very beginning of the story. She is a gypsy, a singer, and as a female character is not defeated because the author puts her outside social boundaries and rules. Therefore, summarizing the notion of gendered chronotope, we can say that:

1. The author can utilize a precise modality to represent the relationship between narrative space and time (the chronotope) in the novel, relatively to the category of the characters' gender (genderization of the chronotope);

2. To this model we can link two appendices:

a. The narrative model of the gendered chronotope functions only if in the text we find both a male and a female character opposed to each other.

b. The author's function can acquire a fundamental role in the characterization of the chronotope, also subverting the relationship between the two terms male/female and space/time as in the figure of the gypsy in Hugo and Sand.

The model of the chronotope we have analyzed up to now seems to be a mere textual and abstract device. On the contrary, the apparent formalism of this narrative device always refers to a precise historical and cultural context and to a series of stereotypes and ideologies of the period in which the analysedtext has been written. Thus, the genderization of the chronotope is not only finalized to the development of the story – it is not only a textual-rhetorical device – but mirrors the ideological ideas of a historical period including its gender roles. The philosophical and cultural dualism, male/female – positive/negative, analyzed by many feminist theorists also seems to emerge in this narrative model. Moreover, if space and time are the basis of any narrative – the coordinates of the story – the genderization of these categories outlines a deep influence of ideology on any narrative typology. Analysing the role of the narrative structures as ideological devices, we can also refer to Terry Eagleton's study on Richardson's work:

Richardson's novels are not mere images of conflicts fought out on another terrain, representations of a history which happens elsewhere; they are themselves a material part of those struggles, pitched standards around which battle is joined, instruments which help to constitute social interests

rather than lenses which reflect them. These novels are an agent, rather than mere account, of the English bourgeoisie's attempt to wrest a degree of ideological hegemony from the aristocracy in the decades which follow the political settlement of 1688. Pamela, Clarissa and Sir Charles Grandison are not only fictional characters: they are also public mythologies, coordinates of a mighty moral debate, symbolic spaces within which dialogues may be conducted, pacts concluded and ideological battle waged (Eagleton 1982:4).

Therefore, neither can our gendered chronotope be considered the innocent and innocuous device it seems at first sight. Also the narrative structure can become the field of ideological battle. Moreover, space is the place of action and is connected to subjectivity, the body and senses. The represented spaces are not only made of landscapes and settings but also of individuals whose mind and body act and are represented through a cultural and ideological filter shaping the characters, their bodies and their actions according to gender/class differences and the social role they incarnate. The cultural model of the literary chronotope analysed up to now represents the relationships between men's/women's bodies and the cultural system, i.e. the *semiosphere* (Lotman 1990:123; see also Lotman 2005), connected to a specific historical and cultural context.

3. *Women Moving towards the "Conquest of Space"*

Jumping across centuries of the novel's development and focusing on our notion of genderization of chronotope, we can outline a change of perspective with Modernism. Generally speaking, in some Modernist novels, we can

find male characters that have to cope with time, such as, for example, the anonymous protagonist of Proust's *A la recherche du temps perdu* (1913-1929) who moves in his space through memory and therefore time, a time which is lost and regained. Proust's novel develops for 80% on the basis of the narrator's memories while he is half-asleep. The narrator is always immobile in the same place, 'trapped in the same place', but he is able to master time through his reminiscences. Another example can be found in James Joyce's *Ulysses* (1922) where the protagonist, Leopold Bloom, plays with space and time starting from the fact that all the events that the reader comes across happen in one day, the sixteenth of June 1904.

At the same time, Modernism is a divide for the representation of women characters too. With the beginning of the twentieth century women are looking for "a space" in society and outside the "gates" of the "angel in the house" ideal. As Virginia Woolf reminded the readers of her time, women are looking for "a room of one's own", a space to write which will enable them to move outside the house as public figures. The library of the Victorian man, the reign where he smoked, read and wrote and the woman's drawing room – a confined space constantly "invaded" by others –, were not closed spaces anymore. As many scholars such as Bonnie Kime Scott (1990) or Shari Benstock (1986) have outlined in their works, the beginning of the twentieth-century is a period of changes in women's lives, the fight for the vote, the introduction in the work sphere because of war and the geographical displacement of women who decide to leave their country, for example the communities of women writers in Paris, Harlem or England. Women's conquest of space and

time and its representation by feminine characters reflects what was happening in society or what the authors were fighting for in that specific historical period. The most emblematic examples are Virginia Woolf's *Orlando* (1928), the androgynous being constantly trespassing the borders of space, time and gender, and Djuna Barnes's *Nightwood* (1936), whose protagonist moves from Europe to the U.S.A and back more than once and overcomes sexual prejudices living a bisexual life.

Only later, with the postmodern novel, authors were able to totally deconstruct patriarchal myths and representations, often through the use of parody, as, for example, the representative case of Angela Carter and her subversive narratives. Like many authors writing in the 70s and 80s, Carter utilizes postmodern devices like the collage, the creation of parallel narrative voices, the mixing of different literary genres and inserting many visible, but also extremely subtle, intertextual references. In her stories women move freely in time and space and deconstruct patriarchal representations of the gendered body, for example in *The Passion of New Eve* (1977).

This demonstrates that women writers began to visualize different times and spaces in order to rethink the chronotope. The conquest of time and space is evident in a specific literary genre, usually considered a popular genre, that is to say, science fiction, where women entered on tiptoe but slowly began to play more and more an active role. This literary genre, thanks to its narrative elements and themes such as the creation of utopian/dystopian worlds, space travel, possible technological inventions, permit writers to create, as Tom Moylan (1986) says, "critical utopias" where the creation of a parallel world becomes the

metaphor of the context in which the authors live. Moylan refers to the Bakthinian term "ideologeme" and analyses utopias as representations of fights for civil rights and as critical messages for possible changes in society. From this perspective, utopias are histories of socio-political critique. Analysing science fiction novels by women writers such as Joanna Russ or Pamela Sargent, Marleen Barr states that:

> spaciousness […] means being free; freedom implies space. It means having the power and enough room in which to act … Trapped as she has been at home … woman has been unable to move … between private spaces and open spaces. The protagonists have enough room to move from private to public spaces and to act in public spaces. These powerful women live according to a feminist topoanalysis. They are able to ignore yellow wallpaper, engage in women's awakening to the public world, and transcend the experience of the madwoman in the attic. (Barr 1992: 115)

4. *The Body in Feminist Utopias of the 70s*

Science fiction is a literary genre that enables us to retrace a different perspective of the chronotope, in fact time and space become categories through which gender and identity are re-discussed aggiungere (see Federici 2015). Science fiction permits a total subversion of the linear time and space together with a deconstruction of our cultural gendered representations. According to Jenny Wolmark (1993) it is a genre where intersections and intertextuality are visible; it is a space where feminine identity can be re-imagined and represented through a different point of view. In their alternative spaces women writers re-imagine female

identity in opposition to cultural discourses; here the female body – always mediated through language - is transformed into a text, a symbolic sign. The "utopian language of the female body" is thus both a result and a process:

> as a product it is the material embodiment of ethnic, racial and gender identities, as well as a staged performance of personal identity, of beauty, of health […] as a process it is a way of knowing and marking the world, as well as a way of knowing and marking a self" (Balsamo 1996:3).

The female body is analysed as an iconographic, esthetic and symbolic code of cultural/social discourses. Women writers use cultural archetypes, science fiction themes and structures to make the reader aware of gender issues, for example, the debate nature vs. technology is central in the feminist utopias of the 70s which were deeply influenced by social and scientific discourses of the time about the female body, sexuality and reproduction.[2] Feminist science fiction writers of the 70s generally follow two different critical perspectives on science and technology: the first favors technological progress as a means to free women from the maternal cage, the second believes in the profound influence of technology in the process of reproduction and therefore considers it as another way to manipulating women and their bodies. An important source for the themes around the female body discussed in feminist utopias is certainly Shulamith Firestone's *The Dialectics of Sex: The Case for Feminist Revolution* (1971) where the author emphasizes the positive aspects of technological progress. The text is a strong critique of biological

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2. The discussion on technology and the woman's body was a pivotal one in those years, see Firestone 1971 and Rich 1977.

reproduction and motherhood considered as means for women's oppression (and from our perspective, stasis). Similarly, in her touchstone text, *Of Woman Born*, Adrienne Rich affirmed that "the woman's body is the terrain on which patriarchy is erected" (Rich 1977: 55). Adored for her reproductive power the woman is also feared: "the woman's body with its potential for gestating, bringing forth and nourishing new life, has been through the ages a field of contradictions: a space invested with power, and an acute vulnerability" (Rich 1977: 102). The idea of a primary maternal function for women and the centrality of women's body and its functions is challenged in feminist utopias of that time where a new notion of chronotope permits a questioning of gender roles. As Anne Balsamo affirms, in feminist utopias/science fiction novels we can talk about an "articulation among reading effects, writing practices, relations of power, cultural stagings, material bodies and socially constructed perceptions" (Balsamo 1996: 35), a process "whereby meaning is constructed and assigned to particular configurations of practices" (Balsamo 1996: 115). Not surprisingly, women's re-appropriation of SF themes often revolves around a revision of the notion of family care. Family relations are not based on biological ties and family care is collective; reproduction is often detached from heterosexual marriage and sexuality is not regulated by heterosexuality. Bisexuality or homosexuality are explorations of out of the norm sexual relationships and androgyny becomes a mirror for a reflection on the gendered body and social roles. Sally Miller Gearhart, Marge Piercy and Joanna Russ, among others, visualize societies in future times/spaces where gender differences have no consequences in social life and where biological-

social determinism is called into question. The "practice of gender planning"[3] (Nadotti 1996) is unveiled through the vision of alternative chronotopes.

5. The Utopian Gendered Chronotope

We believe there is a female tradition of utopian/dystopian writing that, according to the different historical contexts, developed the "gendered" chronotope in different ways. In the interwar period writers like Katherine Burdekin developed important themes such as war, the rise of Nazism, scientific development and eugenics. In Burdekin's *Swastika Night* (1936) time and space are different for men and women. The projected future recalls Hitler's *Mein Kampf* and the Nunberg laws and an even more misogynist division of gender roles. In the same period, in the United States, many women writers, still unknown and not taken in consideration, were publishing in the *Early Pulps*, science fiction magazines such as *Argosy* or *Amazing Stories*. Let's take for example Lilith Lorraine, who in "Into the 28th century" (1930) develops themes that were already present in women's utopias of the late nineteenth-century, for instance, the transformation of domestic space and gender roles thanks to technological development. The conquest of space for these writers is linked to acquiring civil rights in their historical context and, at the same time, the themes and the structure of their stories are reversing the representation of the "woman character" as a "femme

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3. My translation for "pratica della programmazione di genere", by which Nadotti implies how cultural influences and education change according to gender.

fatale-monster" or the "beautiful and helpless heroine" the hero has to rescue from danger.

A change takes place in the science fiction of the 50s, still considered as a male domain, but where women were quickly moving towards "the conquest of space". Space operas of the 50s tell about travels in space and colonization of other worlds but women writers engaging in this literary genre begin to change the perspective of 'conquest' itself. An interesting example is Judith Merril and her stories about women explorers that travel through galaxies in order to find a new world where it will be possible to create a new society, far from patriarchal rules. In *Daughters of Earth* (1952), for example, the protagonist writes many letters to her niece in order to tell her the story of generations of women explorers and their conquest of a new space they can master. Merril, who was part of the "Futurians", a group of communist and socialist thinkers who believed in the creation of alternative societies, utilizes inter-galactic space, a space beyond imagination, in order to portray women protagonists totally free from gender roles. Merill's texts are overtly political and her use of time and space reveal her critical position towards her own social context and the utopian hope for a different society. Another writer to be mentioned is Naomi Mitchinson who in her *Memoirs of a Spacewoman* (1962) presents the adventures of women space explorers, travelers between planets who are looking for knowledge and whose conquest of space is seen as a personal and intellectual improvement. Mary, the protagonist of the novel, moves through different times and spaces in order to meet other species, aliens. Free to move from one space to the other and mistress of her time, Mary can experience the encounter with the "other". Erasing the

patriarchal notion of space and time these writers create a different chronotope where it is possible to deconstruct the notion of female subjectivity.

With their entrance in the science fiction realm women adopted new structures and inserted new narrative elements in the genre. This is particularly evident from the 70s when a strong utopian impulse emerges in the novels of women science fiction writers who create new worlds that strongly reflect the context in which they live. In these novels women characters are united by the same will: to create new spaces they can master and to escape patriarchal space and time through the creation of a different chronotope. Writers do not only create separatist utopias, worlds without men, as in, for example, Sally Miller Gearhart's *The Wanderground* (1979), but new worlds where women and men overcome the gender roles of patriarchal society and live in harmony. In these novels, women utilize temporal dislocations as a means of opening up narrative space for an alternative feminine perspective on society and ideology; for example, in Marge Piercy's *Woman on the Edge of Time* (1979) the protagonist becomes a "traveler in time" in order to discover a new space where she can move freely. Interestingly enough, Consuelo, who is confined in an asylum and contacted by Luciente, the inhabitant of a future world, will discover not only the utopian future but also a possible dystopic world where women are considered only for their sexual and reproductive role. Controlled in the external time of her existence the protagonist creates a new space through travelling in time to a possible future. If physically she is constrained in a place – like the madwoman in the attic – mentally she can visit a different space and time where she could live a totally different existence. Consuelo

explores different times and spaces trying to understand the cultural categories and values of the future society. Her marginality in the "real" world becomes a central element to understand this future time/space.

In the case of separatist utopias we have a "collective protagonist" (Du Plessis 1985:179) member of an "immortal female community" (Barr 1987: 3; see also Broner 1978 and Auerbach 1978). The idea of a totally feminine space is frequent in feminist utopias of the 70s; it is a completely feminine space and time where men, when present, either inhabit a dystopic misogynist space or are "feminized" and integrated into the utopian feminine space. Writers recover the space of "old utopia" of matriarchates, a mythical space and time where woman's role was central because of motherhood.

In a different way, through a postmodern play of chronotopes, Joanna Russ in her novel *Female Man* (1978) presents four versions of the same character living in four different times and spaces. Jeannine is the woman from the past linked to traditional roles, Joanna is a radical feminist of the 70s, Janet lives in a world without men and Jael in a world that is continuously at war with men. The device of parallel universes creates different laboratory-worlds where social and gender roles are reversed and questioned. The conquest of different spaces and times becomes the way to subvert the gender roles of patriarchal society. The woman's identity, split in four, demonstrates how social codes are inscribed on the body and how gender roles are codified according to sexuality. Russ's protagonists are in movement among different spaces and times eluding any possible seclusion. Their bodies project this movement in space, time and across gender.

6. Conclusions

In our essay we have chosen some examples which demonstrate the genderization of the chronotope as a narrative device which is visible in different literary genres. If the chronotope gives a representation of the collocation of the body in space and time, this representation can correspond or not with the real world (the context in which the author lives). In some of our examples the literary chronotope mirrored the external world chronotope, in others it was a subversion of it. These examples can be a first attempt to analyse the gendered chronotope in the novel, we believe a wider story of this mechanism can be traced in order to unveil ideological values and their development through time.

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