

Atwood's *The Year of The Flood* : A Dystopian Novel

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Abstract :

Atwood's uses in *The Year of the Flood*, the dynamic of dystopian society to show that while women with immeasurable strength and conviction. Atwood views patriarchy as the true enemy of gender equality under everything: even the post flood world within the novel contains patriarchal elements. This excessive consumerism and deregulation, coupled with a disregard for human rights. Results in the struggles of women such as Ren and Toby. Because patriarchy continues to exist even when the world has literally been "scrubbed clean", patriarchy seems to be a result of human nature. Social and fiscal conservative policies only allow for patriarchy to subsist further.

Keywords : Dystopi, myth, patriarchy, corporate capitalism, utopian vision.

Margaret Atwood's *The Year of The Flood* takes place in a near future dystopia that is collapsing under its own weight. In this world, corporate capitalism governs and regulates every human transaction. The commons has been replaced by the mall, the police by a ubiquitous experience and their survival. Both characters lose their mothers at the hand of the corporations where Jimmy and Crake's parents worked. Unlike those boys, Ren and Toby grow up outside of the compounds for the most part. Their sides of the story intersect with their involvements in God's Gardeners, and environmental and religious group opposed to the corporate entities that have been ruling society, carelessly destroying the environment and experimenting with genetic modifications.

God's Gardeners take a communal approach to childrearing, this method stands as a possible alternative way to adapt to changing times that still seems caring and effective. Toby possibly voices Atwood's intent when she ponders her survival: "She ought to trust she's here for a reason, to bear witness, to transmit a message, to salvage at least something from the general wreck". (95) Toby is first seen working for an violent man named Blanco, whose abusive, dominating, and terrorizing actions almost kill Toby. Toby has no legal alternative because of the corrupt for profit corpsecorp police. Because Blanco has power within the CorpSeCorp, she has no one to turn to while she is being sexually abused. This, her body is at the mercy of a patriarchal power structure. Outside of the Garden, there are many example of women abused and exploited due to some monetary incentive . For example, Amanda recalls one of Mo' Hair Shop that : "lured girls in, and once you were in the scalp-transplant room they'd knock you out, and when you woke up you'd not only have different hair but different fingerprints, and then you'd be locked in a membrane house and forced into bristle work, and even if you escaped you'd never be able to prove who you were because they'd stolen your identity." (142)

Amanda is a force of power. She is more powerful than any other female in the novel, easily taking down men with street fighting skills. Though she is raped at the end of the novel, showing that even the strongest women are still susceptible to sexual violence. She impresses the children of the Garden and even looking back, Ren realizes that Amanda doesn't judge. She understands the pragmatic reasons when Ren works at scales, knowing that women must make sacrifices. Early in the novel Amanda attempts to use her sexuality as a form of exchange for drugs, though the cost is considerable. Yet instead of becoming a street thug or a prostitute, Amanda becomes an artist, synthesizing nature and art together to create powerful messages about the human condition. Her art inadvertently saves her from the waterless Flood. Amanda is one of the more intriguing characters in Atwood's novels because she recognizes the value of her body in the eyes

of patriarchy, yet rebels against conventional norms through her art. In a way, she is similar to Ren in that she must reject societal norms in order to find herself. Yet unlike Ren, she finds a much more expressive and less oppressive way of coming into her own.

Atwood's *The Year of Flood*, is a book about radicalism and resistance in the Americas. The novel returns to the dystopian future of *Oryx and Crake*, significantly expanding the scope of that earlier novel. A "Simultanequel" narrated from multiple points of view. *The Year of Flood* expands the story of *Oryx and Crake*, offering a more thorough set of critical perspectives on capitalism and collapse. The novel constitutes "critical dystopia", insofar as they operate, in Tom Moylan's terms, "inside the ambient zone of anti-utopian pessimism with new textual tricks, "exposing the" horror of the present moment". (196)

In the novel, this utopian horizon moves to center stage in the form of the "God's Gardeners" intentional community. The Gardeners represent a form of radical resistance, and through their Prayis, they offer a vision of change. Atwood's portrayal of radicalism in the novel is decidedly agrarian, radicalism in this novel is about roots, about growing resistance from the ground up, starting with the realm of necessity. For Atwood's *Gardner's*, radical change reconstructs our engagement with the realm of necessary, necessity, food, water, clothing, shelter, sex, to produce a principled social order. Through her portrayal of the Gardeners, Atwood raises critical questions about the role of subsistence in resistance, about the importance of ritual and myth, and about the never-ending influence of gender and sexuality on human relationships. Atwood's collectivistic ideas and her general preference for the survival of the human race make her a more pragmatic writer rather than an idealistic one and as a consequence she is less inclined to engage in Utopian visions. Hope is not explicitly developed in her tales, but rather implied by emphasizing a minimal change in her protagonist's lives ' it is true that they do survive but almost every time they find themselves in situations similar to their anterior near-death experiences and presenting no progress whatsoever. Atwood defends herself from charges of pessimism by describing her work as being like. Atwood seems to view religious optimistically to the point that it delayed this process of calcification.

IN on the Origin of Stories, Boyd argues that "Storytelling power has often been commandeered by the apparent promise of explanation. cohesion, conformity and control offered by fiction that has hardened into mythological and religious belief." (206).

On the other hand, Ran requires little coercion from others to choose a life of sex work; she chooses a life at scales because she "needed to be on her own" and she "wanted to be something else entirely without owing anyone anything, or being owed anything, or being owed anything, either. She wanted to strings , no past, and no questions asked. " (301) That is not to say that sex work is a profession that Ran dreamed of; rather, it was the only real option she had while biding her time of *And You*. She embraces the sex work at scales as a way for her finally to become her own person and shed the dependences she has long held. She views scales as a new life, where she does not have to be constrained by her mother or her past.

Because all three of these characters are sexes workers. This raises a question that strike at the heart of a feminist debate, it is possible for a person to be a se worker and a feminist? Sheila Jaffrey's sates that: "within the academy the 'sex work' position, that prostitution should be understood as legitimate work, and an expression of women's choice and agency, has become the dominant perspective. Most feminist scholars now take this point of view or show sympathy towards it. The critical approach to prostitution that was almost universal amongst feminists from the nineteenth century up till the 1980s, that prostitution arises from and symbolizes the subordination of women, is much less often expressed." (316)

She believes that by rejecting pornography and prostitution, feminists are adhering to the prudish and oppressive societal norms that are also the genesis of female oppression. According to this view, feminism should embrace on Expression of sexuality and the freedom of women to make their own choice with their bodies, not shy away from those expressions because they might happen to be filmed or paid for, Ren is able to use her body as a means of expressing female security and criticism and as a way to make a quick buck.

Ren sees the fundamental difference between her and Amanda as Amanda's natural strength, both physical and mental. Rne describes the distinction between her two friends at the Garden, saying that Amanda has an inner strength that allows her to avoid a life at a facility similar to scale even though she too "trades" while Amanda recognizes the value of trading. She is still able to find an occupation that does not require her to trade her body as a source of income. Her expression through art is a direct contrast to Ren's sexual agency, not only because of its societal acceptance but also because of the modes of expression. Ren conceals her true body and self behind her exotic costumes at scales becoming a mere fetish for a man's desire. Amanda engages in the most basic form of creative-self-expression, art, placing her work on a large stage for similar viewing. But even though Amanda and Ren originate from similar backgrounds within the Garden, only Amanda is able t escape the chaos of the plecblands. Even though Atwood may present Ren's work at scales and characters within the club somewhat positively, it is not an ideal. Phyllis Schlafly famously stated that "a positive woman cannot defeat a man in a wrestling or boxing match, but she can motivate him, inspire him, encourage him, teach him, restrain him, and reward him, and have power over him that he can never achieve over her with all his muscle. " (127)

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Atwood maintains a critical lens on the resistance by narrating the story from the commitment. This critical lens is important, Atwood thereby points to some of the problems associated with agrarianism as a form of resistance to capitalism, the way in which to be financially viable, the Gardener's market ente4rprise depend upon a bourgeois consumer ethics. Moreover, through a limited third person perspective, Atwood also levels a critique at violence.

It is nevertheless, a novel of substance, even if the speculative fiction set dressing is often threadbare and occasionally amateurish. Both Toby and Ren are fully fleshed characters, bootless in a world that alternately threatens and seduces them but offers little in the way of moral or spiritual comfort. They live in a culture that can synthesize anything from a new religion to a new species, except genuine human compassion, and their largely unconscious struggle to make meaningful contact with others and with themselves is vividly and heartbreakingly rendered. Atwood's near future dystopia may be sketched in crayon, but the concerns she raises are real and pertinent.

Atwood's The Year of The Flood's main objective is to open up new perspectives for imagining a poster-capitalist future through a satirical, science fictional staging of capitalism's ultimate breakdown and because of this it is based on a pattern of alternation between its narrative present and past. Rne and Toby's relationships with their mothers and mother figures in The Year of The Flood provide insight into more damaged bonds. Toby lost her mother when she was young ;Ran's mother was physically present but not nurturing or loving. Both characters' mothers suffered at the hands of the corporations and both girls find solace and nurturing when they join God's Gardeners. Toby reluctantly fills the role of her own mother figure pilar after pilan's death. Ren finds a sister in her friend Amends, and later Toby cares for Ren in a motherly way.

These women survive the pandemic with a combination of their adaptation skills and good luck. They reconnect after the plague in a way that reconstructs the community they both left, showing that the God's Gardener model of society had valuable components. The new models they have used to help themselves survive will also guide them as they care for one another and any children that will be born into the post-flood world. The end of the novel suggest that there are many who survived, including Blanco and his men, who

carry their misogyny with them, yet there is still a hope that Ran, Toby, Zeb and the other Madd Adam survivors can create a society much more idealistic that what proceeded. This survivors are unintended, yet the possibility still exists for them to build a new world. Each dystopian novel also ends in a hope that there is a better world not for these protagonists.

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