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The Invisible Can Or, Gendering Corporate Globalization Trouble: Technological Utopianism and the Language of Erasure

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<1> I turn to Judith Butler to clarify my term "corporate globalization
trouble" as well as to explain why this trouble should be situated in
gendered terms regarding power, visibility, and subjectivity inequities.[1]
Butler describes deviant gender identities failing to coincide with the
"matrix of intelligibility": "precisely because certain kinds of 'gender
identities' fail to conform to those norms of cultural intelligibility, they
appear only as developmental failures or logical impossibilities from within
that domain. Their persistence and proliferation, however, provide critical
opportunities to expose the limits and regulatory aims of that domain of
intelligibility and, hence, to open up within the very terms of that matrix
of intelligibility rival and subversive matrices of gender disorder" (Butler
24). Women and the feminine do not conform to the norms of how
globalization's critics describe its cultural impact and consequences; women
are, with few exceptions, silenced within the domain of this discourse.
However, since globalization most certainly impacts upon women, their
presence provides a feminist theorist with opportunities to critique anti-
globalization discourse and, by doing so, to coin "globalization trouble" to
subvert the silences subversives perpetuate.

<2> Globalization trouble emphasizes that arguments against globalization are
presented in terms of men and omit women -- i.e. the masculine is, in terms
of Butler's comments about Monique Wittig's understanding of the category of
sex, "unmarked and, hence, synonymous with the universal" (Butler 24-25).
Globalization trouble, in other words, signals that anti-globalization
discourse treats women in the way MacDonald's treats local culinary culture.
Women/*fruits de la mer avec vinaigrette* (for example) are positioned outside
the matrix of intelligibility; men/hamburgers are synonymous with
universality.

<3> To illustrate this point about the "language of erasure" (Butler's term),
I will discuss the major conference (called "Technology and Globalization in
the New Millennium: Do We Know Where We're Going?" -- February 24-25 2001,
Hunter College, New York City) sponsored by the International Forum on
Globalization, the New York Open Center, *Lapis* magazine, and the
International Center for Technology Assessment. Here is how a Conference
advertisement (published in *Lapis*, Fall 2000) described its aims:

Technological utopianism may not be living up to its advertising. The
interface between technologies, economic globalization, and centralized
corporate power is arguably leading the earth toward the brink of
environmental, social and political traumas unprecedented in history.
Biotechnology, human eugenics, robotics, nanotechnology, new communications
technologies, e-commerce and the Internet, new military technologies and the
entire web of corporate megatechnologies now encircling the globe may well be
causing more harm than good. Is it time to re-evaluate our direction? What
are the appropriate technological choices for an environmentally and socially
sustainable future? The recent mass demonstrations that began in Seattle last
year have plainly revealed the depths of discontent with many aspects of the
current global economic and technological system. It is crucial that we now
take a deeper look, and re-examine our assumptions about the technologies
that are helping drive the globalization juggernaut.

When I take a deeper look and re-examine the Conference discourse about technology and globalization, I plainly see that the speakers' questioning of technological utopianism constitutes a language of erasure regarding women's relationship to their queries. They also fail to see the interface between science fiction, technology, and globalization.

<4> Butler's understanding of universality seems to point to situating the speakers' concerns in terms of science fiction and conceptions of what constitutes the real: "I came to understand how the assertion of universality can be proleptic and performative, conjuring a reality that does not yet exist, and holding out the possibility for a convergence of cultural horizons that have not yet met. Thus, I arrived at a second view of universality in which it is defined as a future-oriented labor of cultural translation" (Butler xvii-viii). This "future-oriented" potential convergence and second view of universality constitutes science fiction. Since we inhabit a world in which the formerly technologically unreal is real, globalization and techno-culture is science fiction reborn as universality. The Conference focuses upon a future-oriented labor of cultural translation -- i.e. how to humanize real science fiction. How to, for example, relate space exploration to pursuing knowledge -- to exploring new life and new civilizations -- instead of manifesting new weapons systems and new ways to rape nature. Since we encounter what was once science fiction, "it becomes unclear how to distinguish the real from the unreal. And this is the occasion in which we come to understand that what we take to be 'real,'...is, in fact, a changeable and revisable reality" (Butler xxiii).

<5> Hence, corporate techno-culture is, in fact, as revisable as fictitious science fiction text. In terms of Marjorie Garber's notion of "ventriloquacity" (Garber 15), emphasis can be directed toward something other than the mainstream view of the story: Tom Stoppard enabled Rosencrantz and Guildenstern to become central to *Hamlet*; Isaac Asimov's Susan Calvin, and her fellow women scientists, can become central to the fact that *I, Robot* (1950) is becoming reality. Those who seek alternatives to corporate techno-culture can treat recently made real science fiction technology in the manner of editors revising texts and writers creating new texts based upon existing texts. The new science fictional real is subject to revisions and new versions. "[N]o political revolution is possible without a radical shift in one's notion of the possible and the real" (Butler xxiii).

<6> The language of erasure regarding bridging technological utopianism with women's reality and science fiction is evident in the pictorial image which dominates the aforementioned Conference advertisement: a yellow beam illuminates an urban landscape. The beam resembles a search light emanating from a hovering flying machine, which might either be a terrestrial helicopter or an extraterrestrial flying saucer. But, because the beam's overhead source is not pictured, its real or science fictional origin remains undisclosed. The urban landscape the beam reveals is clear, however: smoke stacks tower over buildings and the bridge that links them. According to my view, the phallic smoke stacks stand erect above a bridge that offers no connection between technological utopianism, science fiction, and feminism/women's reality. I bridge the divide between these separate and related discourse edifices which the pictured bridged buildings might represent. I, in other words, explain how the holistic and ecological world view can meet postmodern feminist critical theory. First, I explain that the Conference advertisement's picture is certainly not false advertising regarding how its discourse erases connections to women and science fiction.

I show that the speakers, with the exception of Charlene Spretnak (discussed below), fail to equate "gender trouble" with their anti-globalization critique -- with their notions of globalization trouble. Next, I connect feminist utopias and other women's stories to the anti-globalization debate. I then expand upon this discussion by showing how applying globalization theory to literary praxis applies to women. Finally, after considering women's real techno-utopian stories, I conclude by returning to Judith Butler's lectures. An explanation of my title's "invisible can" begins the discussion.

The Invisible Can

<7> To anchor the advertisement's pictured yellow beam -- to illuminate how to connect globalization critics' words to the lives women live -- I will interpret (in a manner which Butler never intended) two lectures which she presented in New York City. In her New York University lecture, "Doing Justice to Someone: Intersexual Allegories" (March 8, 2001), Butler inadvertently epitomized the interface between economic globalization and centralized corporate power and literally embodies women's invisibility in regard to this interface. In her CUNY Graduate Center lecture, "Is Kinship Always Already Heterosexual?" (March 9, 2001), she theorizes how to position gender within the discourse of technological utopianism.

<8> Butler's New York University lecture refers to John Colapinto's *As Nature Made Him: The Boy Who Was Raised as a Girl* (2000) to describe how an infant named John, due to a botched circumcision which resulted in the loss of his penis, was brought up as a girl named Joan. John/Joan, then, becomes the invisible man. For my purposes, an inadvertent aspect of Butler's lecture -- not invisible man John/Joan -- is most crucial to the technological utopianism critique's invisible woman. I refer to Butler's lecture's invisible can.

<9> An empty Coca Cola can was perched on Butler's lectern throughout her lecture. During the question period, she was asked why she did not remove the can. Her response: "I didn't notice the can. I thought it was an advertisement." Centralized corporate power is pervasive to the extent that this particular Coke becomes, in relation to Butler, the invisible can. She categorizes its presence as normal and not worth removing-i.e. unseen. Contrast this invisible can to the Coke bottle in *The Gods Must Be Crazy* (1980); the bottle is technologically alien and visible to the unusual extent that it becomes an item of worship. Both the exaggeratedly visible bottle and the exaggeratedly invisible can are trash. The former is a spectacle and the latter is unnoticed. It is crazy to present a formal lecture while allowing trash to remain positioned in front of your mouth. This craziness symbolizes environmental, social, and political trauma. An exceedingly astute culture critic fails to see a corporate presence when it stares her in the face. Hence, we have globalization trouble -- and Butler's response to the Coke can epitomizes this trouble. Before turning to how Butler herself exemplifies and supplies a theoretical corrective to the anti-globalization critique's language of erasure regarding women and science fiction, I will point to how this silencing pervades the Conference -- and, by extension, American culture's silencing of women in relation to technological utopianism. I will discuss the failure to gender globalization trouble.

The Science Fiction and Women the Conference Participants Don't See

<10> J. P. Harpignies' "The Genome and the Perils of Eugenic Techno-Utopianism" (2000) offers a model for bringing science fiction and women to bear upon critiquing the prospect of an increasingly genetically engineered world. Harpignies chooses Diane Arbus' picture of two identical twin girls to represent his article. Direct references to science fiction inform his argument: "A naïve techno-utopianism now so permeates our worldview that we seem to be stumbling toward a version of *Brave New World* or *Gattaca* without even a serious society-wide debate. . . . Cyberpunk science fiction's dystopian visions of prosthetically-enhanced specialists using part living, part silicon 'wetware' in a world dominated by artificial intelligences and savage megacorporations are seemingly evermore prophetic" (Harpignies 39, 40). Although Harpignies shows that women and science fiction certainly are applicable to the technological utopianism critique (with the aforementioned exception Spretnak provides), they constitute an absent presence regarding relevance to the Conference. Although their direct mention would enhance the discussion, their relevance is silenced. I will endeavor to break this silence.

<11> The Conference's silencing in regard to science fiction is apparent when Walden Bello (the director of Focus on the Global South, a Bangkok-based research, analysis, and advocacy institute) discusses the eroding legitimacy of power structures. "Another future is possible," he proclaims while disregarding the science fiction which chronicles alternative futures. Jane M. Healy, an educational psychologist and author of *Failure to Connect: How Computers Affect Children's Minds* (1999), also dismisses science fiction when she emphasizes the detrimental effects of the science fiction inspired educational software which fails to enhance education. She describes computer based teaching tools (called "edu-tainment") which reward children who correctly solve math problems with the chance to blast aliens. According to Healy, because children choose easy math problems to facilitate their access to entertainment, edu-tainment turns them into "droids" who think in terms of media images.[2] Her argument would be enhanced if it were placed in the context of the literature which describes droids who desire to become human. (I think of Philip K. Dick's *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* [1972]) Further: Healey mentions children who are denied their full human intellectual potential because schools now deplete book budgets to purchase computers and teachers spend more time fixing computers than teaching. The science fiction which imagines humans divided into elite and subhuman categories (such as Wells' *The Time Machine* [1895]) would illuminate her points.

<12> Similarly, references to science fiction would broaden Andrew Kimbrell's and Karl Grossman's discussions of government's relationship to new technologies. Kimbrell (a public interest attorney, activist, and author) argues that we live in a corporate oligarchy in which technocracies control technologies. He views corporations as dictatorships and American democracy as a façade for the "soft tyranny" which characterizes our national life and functions as an ideology we export via blurring the distinction between the police and the military. Kimbrell's understanding of the corporate domination existing during the year 2001 is an updated version of the domination George Orwell depicted in *1984* (1948). Grossman (the SUNY journalism professor who broke the story that the ill-fated *Challenger*'s next mission was to involve a space probe containing twenty-four pounds of plutonium) understands Kimbrell's 2001 scenario in terms of a space odyssey. His term "astro-imperialism" describes how the United States is creating an arms race which will turn outer space into a war zone. He states that the new American

manifest destiny is one in which outer space becomes a new war arena whose battles are fought by a space corps based upon the Marine Corps. According to Grossman, the NASA motto "Master of Space" alludes to the attitude of the American power structure which seeks to use space weapons as an enforcement arm in relation to power and the global economy. He views President Bush's emphasis upon Reagan's Star Wars weapon system as an initiative to use space to control the global economy by keeping the have-nots in line. His argument can be best understood in terms of two science fiction works: George Lucas' *Star Wars* (1977) and Robert Heinlein's *Starship Troopers* (1959).

<13> The absence of science fiction from Krimbell's and Grossman's understanding of the new role of military and space technology also characterizes Sarah Anderson's, Jerry Mander's, and John Stauber's analysis of the homogenization of global consciousness in relation to media, telecommunications, and culture. When Anderson (the Director of the Global Economy Program at the Institute for Policy Studies) states that "e-commerce hurts personal transactions because it encourages people to inhabit a virtual reality," she does not link her ideas to *The Truman Show* (1998). Stauber (who founded the Center for Media and Democracy) offers humorous remarks which contain a similar omission. He explains that he choose to call his book *Toxic Sludge Is Good For You: Lies, Damn Lies and the Public Relations Industry* (1995) because he could not fathom that corporations would have the gall to tout the benefits of toxic sludge. His imagination proves to be short sighted: he explains that toxic sludge is now called "bio-solid" which is promoted as an excellent fertilizer. *Soylent Green*, (1973) the science fiction film about how corpses are promoted as a food source, adroitly conveys Stauber's point that, in relation to corporate propaganda, cynicism knows no bounds.

<14> References to *1984* would also effectively illuminate Stauber's notion that the simultaneous rise of democracy and corporate propaganda against democracy (as well as the new interpenetration of corporate propaganda in the form of advertising and the news) characterizes the twentieth century. Big Brother figures in Stauber's comment that both the preponderance of advertising propaganda and entertainment which presents itself as news "means we are governed by men we never heard of."

<15> Jerry Mander, the President of the International Forum on Globalization, makes the point that we watch Big Brother. When arguing that television is the main thing that people do in that it constitutes the environment and the culture, he casts the television induced "homogenization inside our brains" as a science fiction scenario without reference to specific science fiction texts. According to Mander, "TV clones global consciousness and this situation is science fictional in its possibility for control." He describes immobile and unthinking "alien" television viewers who sit in dark rooms staring at light as they receive images of toothpaste and bathing suits. His notions that "TV clones culture" and "life has become a nonstop stream of commodity satisfaction" can be augmented by references to, for example, Pamela Sargent's *Cloned Lives* (1976) and Frederik Pohl's and C.M. Kornbluth's *The Space Merchants* (1953). Science fiction cloning stories involve what Mander calls "remaking human beings" to fit "global homogenization rules." *The Space Merchants* emphasizes the implications of Mander's statement that "all of these televised images are sent out by small numbers of corporations; a handful of billionaires tell people to hate where they live, worship Coca Cola, and have corporations solve their problems."

<16> The Conference participants fail to consider the specific science fiction texts which facilitate a better understanding of the fact that we now experience science fiction made real. Randall Hayes, the President of the Rainforest Action Network, summarizes both the Conference's agenda and its language of erasure regarding science fiction and women: "Technologies are not neutral; they are the shapers and they shape us. Just say no to technology and globalization." He does not call the technologically shaped society a *"Blade Runner* society." Women are silenced vis-à-vis articulating Hayes' particular social "no." Mander asks the crucial question in regard to Hayes' conception of technological shaping and globalization: "Who benefits most?" His question omits women's exclusion from the benefits.

<17> Hence, in addition to silencing science fiction in general, the Conference participants also do not elucidate fictional stories involving women. Kirkpatrick Sale, for example, describes computers as "boxes on desks which are Pandora's boxes" without considering the implications of the Pandora myth -- i.e. the notion that women are responsible for unleashing evil. Does techno-utopianism imply that male centered technological imperatives act as a corrective to Pandora's action? The Conference participants never say that they just say "no" to masculine control, not to feminine curiosity. Computer boxes on desks, then, are no Pandora's boxes; they are, for the most part, wrought by men. Helena Norberg-Hodge, the Director of the International Society for Ecology and Culture, inspires me to designate one of the Stepford Wives, not Pandora, as the fictitious female who most aptly symbolize the failure of techno-utopianism. Norberg-Hodge states that "we live in an era of manufactured mind." We are, in other words, all Stepford Wives. She believes that technology and globalization lead to "individualizing and fragmenting issues" in which we are told "you are the problem." "You are the problem" is exactly what patriarchy says to women. Norberg-Hodge offers a solution to blaming the victim: "beware of the manufactured mind set and seek authentic information." She does not mention that feminists have already named her particular solution: consciousness raising.

<18> Feminists have also named other issues the Conference participants discuss. Stephanie Mills, who the *Utne Reader* named as one of its "Visionaries," states that "technology seeks to control the flourishing of wildness." Elaine Showalter understood this flourishing in terms of women and situated it within the demarcated area she called "the wild zone." Ditto for Zora Neale Hurston who used the word "spunk" to describe black women's wildness. Ellie Ragland would describe spunk and the wild zone as being situated outside Lacan's understanding of the symbolic order. Drug companies now profit from controlling the spunk of women and men alike -- from defining the symbolic order and cordoning off the wild zone. More specifically, Langdon Winner, a Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute political scientist, discusses the invention of a new disease called Social Anxiety Disorder which Paxol can cure. Women have always been the people afflicted by supposed new diseases and subjected to their new cures. If Paxol marketers had access to the Star Trek holodeck, they would try to sell their pills to the heroine of Charlotte Perkins Gilman's *The Yellow Wallpaper* (1892).

<19> Bruce Gagnon, the coordinator of the Global Network Against Weapons and Nuclear Power in Space, views outer space as a wild zone which must be safeguarded: "Space is a wilderness that needs to be protected," he says. He specifically states that space needs to be protected from the aerospace industry's desire to profit from nuclear mining on Mars. He describes bases

built on the moon to prevent unauthorized persons from profiting from outer space mining and he designates as "bullshit" the story of exploring Mars to seek the origins of life. Traveling to Mars, then, involves profit, domination, and control -- not enhancing life and respecting nature. Mars, in other words, is positioned as a wild zone which mining/raping the planet will control. Space exploration pollutes space, makes it into a "junk yard." "Launches poke holes in the environment," Gagnon informs the audience. In terms of Susan Griffin's *Woman and Nature* (1978) and Carolyn Merchant's *The Death of Nature* (1980) (which links raping nature to raping women), I position rockets as the rapists of space. Mining Mars and raping women are part and parcel of the same patriarchal control imperative.

<20> Feminists insist that women can take back the night -- and their words can be used to explain how to take back the extended blackness which constitutes outer space. To explain this point, I return to Jane M. Healy's discussion of computers' impact upon education. Healy states that "children can ultimately turn against the industries and advertisers who are turning them into droids." Women do turn against the patriarchal imperatives that retard their subjectivity. For example, women now routinely ignore the fashion industry and dress as they like. And the Greenham Common women prevented nuclear devices from being installed. Women, in other words, often do just say "no." Their "no" provides the answer to technological and corporate world domination. The fiction which articulates this answer should not be silenced.

Feminist Utopia as Invisible Discourse

<21> The January 1995 position statement of the International Forum On Globalization (an alliance of sixty leading activists, scholars, economists and writers formed to stimulate new thinking in response to the new political arrangement called the global economy) contains the following description:

The International Forum on Globalization advocates equitable, democratic, and ecologically sustainable economics....We believe that the creation of a more equitable economic order will require new international agreements that place the needs of people, local economies and the natural world ahead of the interest of corporations. It is possible, necessary, and in the long run far more viable to seek such paths rather than a globalized economic system doomed to fail.

This emphasis upon democracy, equity, ecology, and nature smacks of feminist utopian science fiction's agenda. Yet the Conference participants do not connect feminist utopian literature to their critique of technological utopianism. They fail to consider Butler's comment about feminist utopia: creators of feminist utopia manifest a "willingness to imagine alternatively gendered worlds" (Butler xxxii-xxxiii). They fail to consider that these alternatively gendered worlds point to future possibilities that counter dystopic globalized techno-culture: "Some feminists have found in the prejudicial past traces of a utopian future, a potential resource for subversion or insurrection that promises to lead to the destruction of the law and the instatement of a new order" (Butler 46). To speak in the place of this silence, I perform a genre fission exercise which connects the Conference participants' ideas to feminist utopian imaginative visions. I construct a discourse bridge which moves feminist utopia from the literary margins to the center of current debates about technological utopianism.

<22> John Cavanagh, the Director of the Institute for Policy Studies, advocates developing alternative principles and politics (such as "living democracy" and economic sustainability) to mitigate against bigger growth rates and technologies. "We can imagine and build a different future," he says. Writers such as Marge Piercy and the late James Tiptree Jr. (Alice Sheldon) imagined these different futures. Tiptree described economically sustainable spaceships (in "Houston, Houston do You Read?" [1976]). Piercy's Mattapoisett, a principle setting in *Woman On the Edge of Time* (1976), places at its foundation the alternative principles and politics Cavanagh promotes. Victoria Tauli-Corpuz (an indigenous activist of the Kankanaey peoples of the Cordillera region in the Philippines and the Director of the Indigenous Peoples' International Center for Policy Research and Education) implies that her ancestors acted in the manner of Tiptree's separatist feminist utopian protagonists. Tiptree's women, the commanders of technologically advanced spaceships, kill the men they encounter in outer space. Their reason: they recognize that these men are dangerous because they do not advocate what Tauli-Corpuz calls being "one with nature and the mystery of life." She explains that her ancestors also eradicated a dangerous invader who traveled via ship: "My ancestors cut off Magellan's head. Only his boat made it around the world," she says. Both Tiptree's women and Tauli-Corpuz's ancestors wanted to live in separatist utopias which preserve their indigenous characteristics. They epitomize a reality and a fiction which retells the same story.

<23> Frances Moore Lappe, the author of *Diet for a Small Planet* (1971), believes that the biggest obstacle to creating new equitable social paradigms exists within our heads -- i.e. it is necessary to counter the belief that there are no new alternatives. She states that "our job is to create new stories for generating new directions. Stories help us see with new eyes and to create new mental maps of living democracy. We all must become storytellers to counter the dominant map to push the edge of hope." She echoes Ursula Le Guin's notion that "thought experiments" can remove blinders located in people's minds. Both Le Guin and Lappe insist upon the importance of story. Le Guin's "churten transilience," spaceship fuel manufactured from stories (described in *A Fisherman of the Inland Sea* [1994]), is her new story about how failed discourse yields grounded spaceships which counters the dominant technological map. She establishes a new definition of hope which differs from Bill Clinton's notion of a place called "Hope." For Le Guin and Lappe, juxtaposing story with hope has nothing to do with politics as usual and subsidies for corporations.

<24> A new story also lies at the heart of Fritjof Capra's antidote for what he sees as an obstacle to change: society's dominant corporate values. To counter these values, he calls for a unified understanding of the biological, cognitive, and social dimensions of life. Capra speaks in tandem with Joan Slonczewski's *A Door Into Ocean* (1985) when he advocates eco-design principles (designs which shape the flows of energy and matter for human purposes) and ecological literacy, and argues that sustainability means sustaining the entire web of life.

<25> Capra emphasizes the word "flow" when he discusses the aforementioned flows of energy and when he coins the term "network society." The network society, no utopian technological alternative, involves a new capitalism structured around networks of financial flows in which capital becomes informational rather than financial. Slonczewski's feminist protagonists, who themselves emphasize "flow" in that they inhabit rafts which float on an

ocean planet, live in a sustainable, alternative network society. These protagonists embrace ecology and the web of life to initiate a new communicative design principle: they communicate via "click flies," real insects who provide a natural/technological alternative to mouse clicks.

<26> *A Door Into Ocean* is a thought experiment about how, in Capra's words, to "change the value systems of the network society to make it compatible with human sustainability." Both Slonczewski and Capra, then, advocate juxtaposing technology with the natural world. Slonczewski describes the feminist utopian planet Ocean and the planet which is its patriarchal nemesis. Capra describes two new opposing developments which both involve technologies: (1) the rise of global capitalism and the network society and (2) the potential to develop sustainable communities. When Capra states that these developments respectively involve the best interests of the elite and the best interests of the entire human community and -- when he maintains that these two scenarios are on a collision course -- his ideas coincide with those of feminist utopias' creators who, in the manner of Slonczewski, depict a choice between social oppositions. (I think of Le Guin's planets Annarres and Urras in *The Dispossessed* [1974] and Piercy's aforementioned Mattapoisett and its dystopian alternative.) Paul Hawken, the environmentalist and author of *Natural Capitalism* (1999) (which focuses upon the need to reevaluate all economic and business systems in light of the decline of natural and social capital), echoes Capra's and feminist utopias' discussion about designating two opposing utopian and dystopian categories. Hawken discusses the "choice" between "ruin or renaissance" when he explains that "every living system on our planet is in a rate of decline." Enabling feminist utopian thought to address the critique of technological utopianism is a locutionary close encounter between unnecessarily alien verbiage. A discourse renaissance occurs when this example of genre fission ensues.

Telling A Mother's Story

<27> In the manner of Le Guin, Anuradha Mittal, the Co-director of the Institute for Food and Development Policy, advocates "telling our stories; they are the correct stories." Mittal's story of the critique of techno-utopianism -- which exemplifies men's penchant for cutting to the chase -- is quite short: "we don't need biotechnology; we need an antipoverty pill." The Conference's most poignant mention of women occurs when a man tells a woman's personal story -- when Satish Kumar tells his mother's story about a particularly appropriate alternative to new technologies. Kumar (a leading figure in the British spiritual and environmental movement who walked across India successfully to persuade landlords to donate over five million acres of land to the landless) relates the story of how his mother gives his sister a beautiful shawl she made by hand. This is how Kumar's mother responded after his sister expressed her desire to exhibit the shawl on a wall instead of wearing it: "No. If you put a beautiful shawl on the wall you will put ugly garments on your body." His sister reacts to the word "no" by offering to give her mother a sewing machine to save time. The mother responds, "Why? Is there a shortage of time?" Kumar interprets his mother's response as a message to America to slow down -- as a needed anti-stress pill.

<28> Kumar's version of Mittal's fictitious pharmaceutical solution entails defining the rich rather than the poor as the problem. He suggests that the rich and poor join "to become brothers and sisters together" and that the newly bonded brothers and sisters should break bread. "Our hands are an alternative to technological intervention," he states. Kumar's feminine and

maternal story ends when he notes that the British brand name Mother's Pride Bread involves neither mothers not pride. According to Kumar, "the bread should be called Mother's shame. We should eat homemade bread." Mothers' homemade bread can provide a viable solution to corporate world domination. After all, Italo Calvino (in "All At One Point" [1968]) imagined that the entire universe emanates from the efforts of a noodle making Italian mother.[3]

<29> Kumar and Calvino offer stories about mothers and cooking to critique men's formulations of techno-utopianism and globalization. Literary scholars now also participate in this discussion in that they have lately linked their interpretive enterprise to globalization. In his introduction to the *PMLA* special topic issue "Globaliziing Literary Studies," Giles Gunn explains that what is needed vis-à-vis conceptualizing literary studies in terms of globalization is "less a demonstration of the fact that literary studies is....being rapidly globalized -- who can seriously deny, for example, that academic specialties have become more nationally borderless of late, that the territories of knowledge can no longer be construed as geographically discrete? -- than an exploration of what, in given circumstances, this may amount to" (Gunn 18). Gunn concludes that the "challenge for students of the humanities, then, is not to decide whether globalization deserves to be taken seriously but how best to engage it critically" (Gunn 21). I will discuss the literary practitioners who use technology to relate globalization to literature in terms of praxis rather than theory -- i.e. the editors who use computer technology to position poetry as an alternative to corporate world domination and the writers who define local communities as refuges for their persecuted fellows.

Globalization/Literature/Praxis

<30> The International Parliament of Writers, the group coinciding with the latter category, was created in 1993 to, in the words of the organization's brochure, create "a new international structure capable of organizing a concrete solidarity with persecuted writers, in the form of a Cities of Asylum Network" and "to defend the freedom of creation wherever it is threatened, and to undertake investigation and research on the new forms of censorship." This global approach to writers and writing emphasizes the importance of individual creativity and particular location (in the sense that a specific city can become a place of asylum). Russell Banks, the President of the Parliament (who explains that he is President because he considers himself "an anti-American American") describes writing as simultaneously global and individual: "Writing is transnational. It reflects the individual writer's view of the universe. The Parliament helps writers regardless of national affiliation."

<31> The Parliament's journal, *Autodafe*, exemplifies a global effort to counter threats to languages and cultures the media presents:

Autodafe's vocation is to reactivate exchange -- nowadays injured not only by censorship but also by the hegemony of the media -- between writers of the five continents. This journal unites world renowned writers with those who are being silenced by censorship, imprisonment, or threats. Beyond individuals, *Autodafe* intends to give a voice to peoples and experiences struck mute, to vanishing cultures, to endangered languages (*Autodafe* Spring 2001).

Although "peoples mute voices" is meant to include silenced women writers, the Parliament's pamphlet silences women -- does not extend "global" to women. The following people provide blurbs: Russell Banks, Jacques Derrida, Edouard Glissant, Salman Rushdie, Wole Soyinka, and Christian Salmon. All of the Parliament's honorary presidents are men. The brochure's blurb writers are all the male presidents' men.

<32> The United Nations is also involved with globalization and literature in that its 2001 Year of Dialogue Among Civilizations initiative includes a literary conference (held March 24-26 2001) comprised of journal editors from throughout the world who gather to create a new web site for poetry (called "Poetryint" [URL]) and to investigate "ways to stimulate dialogue among cultures through poetry using new technologies and international resources." The editors' central focus involves "developing an internet portal for poetry through Poetry International and an organizational structure to facilitate interaction and events programming." They wish to formulate the conception and inception of Poetryint, a new technological entity to foster what *Kenyon Review* international editor John Kinsella calls an "international regionalism" emphasizing dialogue and collaboration to facilitate the movement of poetry across cultures and borders. Poetryint is envisioned as an international website which will disseminate information about poetry from all different countries. The aim is to establish crossovers between the national and international by creating specific national sites a national editor will manage. The editors conclude that "poetry is a globalizing force which enables different poetries from different cultures to speak to each other."

<33> These editors (like the Parliament members) wish to mitigate against silencing in that Poetryint will include translations in as many languages as possible. They expect myriad translations to foster "a new vision of the poetry of the world and a future vision of poetry" and they confront the notion of "national" by posing the following questions:

Who should represent the specific country? Who, for example, is the American poet? What about poets who reject the notion of nation? What do we do about editors in repressed countries where there is no freedom of speech? Why forget the fact that some of the best poetry interrogates the notion of nation? What if the site's emphasis is on language and not nation? Why should national categories define that nation's poetry?

The discourse surrounding the conception of the new Poetryint website, the birth of an electronic "nation" on the internet, does not take women into account. I asked two of the leaders of Poetryint's development, Erik Menkveld and Tatjana Daan (members of the Dutch organization Poetry International Foundation) if the Poetryint website will make a special effort to accommodate women's voices. Their response: "The degree of women's participation depends upon the suggestions the national editors make. These editors can be women." Their use of the word "can" constitutes another invisible can. Hence: the point that "many poets resist defining themselves in national terms" was publicly articulated; the point that many poets define themselves in gendered terms was silenced. I suspect that the Poetryint website's home page statement of ethics (which will state that "poetry is a universalizing entity which breaks down barriers") will not address the particular barriers that women poets must break down. Women poets will perhaps speak for themselves in the anthology which will emerge from the Year of Dialogue Among Civilizations. The contributors to the anthology, part of a

grass roots program open to everyone in which people will present poetry all over the world sans fee, will address this question: how do you feel as a member of a global community? A female poet might say that globalization impacts upon women's poetry in terms of the language of erasure.

<34> All members of the global poetry community should respond strongly to the corporate defacing of the most poetic face humans know. Robert Pinsky responds to this defacing by saying, "This will change poetry" (National Public Radio, April 1 2001). The word "this" refers to the fact that on April 1, 2001 Lunar Corp made its first attempt to use a laser to project a corporate image on the moon. Bruce Gagnon would certainly not be in favor of this occurrence:

[W]e should approach space exploration with a sense of awe and mystery...Space is...a place of wonder and life. It is the place where our spirit soars and our dreams live and grow...When we look up at that beautiful moon on a clear night we must remember that everyone on the entire planet has the same experience -- it is a unifying symbol for all the people (Gagnon 12).

Turning the moon into a billboard is certainly not in the spirit of Gagnon's equation of space with "awe and mystery," the Parliament's "new view of the poetry of the world," or Banks' "writers' view of the universe." The technology which enables corporations to replace the man in the moon with a Coke can -- to present the man in the moon as the invisible man -- is no answer to corporate and patriarchal imperatives. More positively, though, the corporate logo beamed up to the moon might fulfill the United Nation's agenda to "create dialogue among nations through poetry."

Dressing for Anti-Globalization Success: Women's Techno-Utopian Stories

<35> Fabrics designed by textile artist J. Michelle Hill-Campbell (who is known for her bold and innovative costumes featured in the Broadway production of *The Lion King*) are akin to Kumar's mother's shawl. When these women draw upon their individual imaginations to make garments, they create alternatives to the mind control corporate economic homogenization produces. Hill-Campbell's New School exhibition (called "New Age Fabrics: Tradition Meets Surface Design Technology" -- March 14-March 30, 2001) presents her designs which incorporate traditional and computer generated artwork with Moroccan and West African motif elements and Japanese Shibori and Dutch chemical resist techniques for cloth. Her textiles exemplify genre fission and counter globalization's homogenization in that they at once combine computer technology with craft and include elements from exceedingly disparate cultures. I counter the silence characterizing women's relation to the techno-utopian debate by allowing Hill-Campbell to speak for herself. This is her statement which accompanies the New School exhibition:

The new millennium challenges me as a modern designer to find solutions to problems connected to surface design innovation, the environment, and time management. Textile design techniques and materials are constantly changing to meet the demands of modern society. Computer-aided design and manufacture have begun to create materials for a new age. Fiber technology has enabled the textile industry to develop "smart" fabrics that retain a "memory," property or quality that is absent in natural fibers. For example, dye technology has created new and unusual colors with pigments that are capable

of emitting smell or changing color with stress, heat, or light. These advances are now linked to a demand for a more environmentally friendly product and a cost-effective but rapid response from the textile manufacturer. All these factors influence the materials and the type of imagery and patterns now used by textile designers....Now...designers and textile artists are exploring computer-generated imagery as the basis for their print ideas and the computer is being used as a method for producing exciting high quality design. Advancing will have an ever increasing influence on the fashion and textile world (as well as on our environment but it is unlikely that it will replace altogether the traditional design and techniques that have been built over the centuries. Rather, traditional textile design is being combined with the new technology to create a new generation of patterning techniques. As a textile consultant and fabric printer, I wish to continue to build upon my design skills and love of traditional folk design and other indigenous handicraft traditions. My design aesthetic has been based upon international consultant work consisting of the training of rural women in the development of cottage-industry hand crafts. The exposure to these craftsmen has influenced my work and compelled me to strengthen my interpretation of surface design and printed yardage.

The Conference participants argue that technology and globalization threaten the culture and livelihood of indigenous peoples. In contrast to this argument, Hill-Campbell trains rural women who, in turn, influence her computer-generated designs.

<36> *New York Times* columnist Thomas L. Friedman describes another example of the positive reciprocity between a woman's approach to technological innovation and indigenous peoples. This is his commentary about Viatru Inc. (URL), an internet venture Michelle Long founded:

Viatru uses the Internet to enable native peoples to stay at home and globally market their traditional crafts or farm products....Viatru is creating Internet linkages between stores in the U. S....and artisans in places like Jaipur, India. Visitors to the Boston museum shop Web site can see where their craft is being made. You can hear the villagers speaking in their own voices about the traditional block-printing that goes into their duvets, pillow shams and bed skirts, and then use your credit card to order one....It's still early. It's still small. But Viatru's on to something -- another example that globalization is everything and its opposite: homogenizing and particularizing, empowering and disenfranchising. It all depends on how its managed (Friedman A19).

Long and Hill-Campbell are women who invent their own positive uses of technology and globalization. Computers and corporations are here to stay. Long and Hill-Campbell epitomize how women can creatively work with these established entities simultaneously to make innovative products and enhance the lives of local populations. Hill-Campbell's designs, for example, appear in the Disney Corporation's *The Lion King* (1994). Regardless of this corporate affiliation, her designs would never be a part of the clothing sold in The Gap or Banana Republic! [4]

<37> A woman's story is literally a part of the aniti-globalization debate in general and the Conference in particular. As I have mentioned, Charlene Spretnak was the only Conference participant who made women the sole focus of her remarks. When calling for gender responsibility in policy analysis, Spretnak pointed out that women constitute seventy per cent of the world's

poor and that three out of four illiterate people are women. She insists that "women's rights are human rights." In the manner of Le Guin and Piercy, she gives women the right to imagine an appropriate future when she includes her story of a utopian vision, "News Clips From Sciotopia," in *The Resurgence of the Real: Body, Nature, and Place In A Hypermodern World* (1997).

<38> Marie, Spretnak's narrator, encounters a time traveling William Morris in a locally organized noncorporate future which emphasizes nature rather than technology. Marie explains that her utopian society was created when individuals (unemployed because manufacturing was moved to countries with cheap labor and computers replaced people) "finally realized that the mega-machine was never going to give them back their jobs, so they shifted their focus to community-based possibilities" (Spretnak 204). Sciotopia corrects circumstances the Conference participants rail against. (Such as Jane Healy's complaints about computerized education which Marie is shocked to recall "was actually used in elementary schools back in the 1990s!" -- Spretnak 203). I do not think that Spretnak imagined Lunar Corp's billboard on the moon when Marie explains that "[i]t got so that corporate logos and names were absolutely everywhere we looked" (Spretnak 204). Spretnak does imagine that utopia can emanate from a woman articulating a social story about how individual people, not money and machines, are exalted. Echoing the word "awe" Gagnon uses in relation to anchoring outer space to local community on Earth, Marie explains:

[H]appiness...comes from cultivating awe, joy, respect, wisdom, and compassion for all our relations in the Earth community....[E]very person is a miracle of the universe. Our society here is slowly and haltingly discovering what that could mean....We still have exasperation between the sexes at times. I feel that women still need to go further in finding our true voices of embodied experience, though that situation has definitely improved (Spretnak 212).

Spretnak replaces the language of erasure by articulating, both in her own voice the and the voice of her protagonist, women's true voice of embodied experience. When Marie tells Morris that "I'm writing the story this time, and we have all the time we need" (Spretnak 214), she asserts the power of women's words and stories in relation to creating alternative futures. Perhaps Marie also wears Hill-Campbell's designs and works for Long's Viatru Inc. Spretnak -- in the manner of Le Guin, Piercy, and their fellow creators of feminist utopian science fiction -- is a controlling articulator of the story of women's impact upon shaping the future.

Judith Butler's Lecture/Lectern -- and Judith Butler's Body

<39> Butler both purposefully and inadvertently tells stories about gender's relation to techno-culture and globalization. When Butler spoke at New York University, her body itself epitomizes how technology does not take woman into account -- obliterates woman, causes woman to become the Other in relation to technology. A tall lectern at once provided a platform for the Coke can and almost completely obliterated the petite Judith Butler. As I mentioned, Butler explains that John/Joan's doctor tries to show that castration does not matter in relation to gender roles. When delivering her New York University lecture, Butler symbolized the fact that size often does matter in relation to technology's lack of emphasis upon women. The lectern dwarves Butler, causes her to appear to be almost completely obliterated -- a present absence. While listening to Butler, I witnessed an appropriate

science fiction scenario: the nearly invisible woman doesn't see the visible can. The lectern positions Butler as a side show in relation to her lecture. The woman patriarchal technology doesn't see meets the "uncola" (the invisible Coke can as a symbol of centralized corporate power).

<40> Being almost visually obliterated by the New York University podium constitutes a social trauma for Butler. I make this claim because, when Butler spoke at the CUNY Graduate Center the following day, without a means to discern that her audience attended the previous day's lecture and could know to what she was referring, she began by saying this: "Oh great. Finally, a podium made for short people." Butler was relieved to encounter proof that the problem of technology erasing women's needs can be solved. Further: she articulated ideas which speak for women's concerns in place of -- and as a corrective for -- the Conference's pervasive silencing of these concerns.

<41> Bringing Butler to bear upon Jeremy Rifkin's remarks (which opened the Conference) illustrate this point. Rifkin describes a situation in which life becomes intellectual property and genotype will foster discrimination. According to Rifkin, during the new bio-tech century, living materials will become more valuable as commodities than materials of the Earth and, hence, warring over genes will replace warring over oil. He sees the new discrimination as genetic discrimination; the new civil rights movement will be a genetic civil rights movement. Rifkin also envisions that a new slavery will emerge when corporations are able to claim that cloned humans are inventions who can be owned from conception to death. For Rifkin, the twenty-first century eugenicists *par excellence* are, as opposed to a Hitlerian model, the parents who are the architects in relation to children as shopping experiments. When calling for a new politics applicable to the new age of biology, Rifkin questions what will happen to children who are not genetically engineered. His future scenario, however, excludes the female bodies needed to manufacture the genetically engineered children as product. When Rifkin describes the tension between the "intrinsic value" and the "utility value" of life, he omits women's reproductive role as producer.

<42> Butler speaks in the space of Rifkin's silence vis-à-vis women -- as well as all people positioned outside the heterosexual reproductive paradigm. She asks questions relevant to the relationship between globalization and the emerging post-human world:

[W]hat will and will not constitute an intelligible life, and how do presumptions about normative gender and sexuality determine in advance what will qualify as the "human" the "livable?"...In other words, how do normative gender presumptions work to delimit the very field of description that we have for the human?...what are the categories through which one sees? (Butler xxii).

Butler emphasizes that "posthuman" is a new category which at once addresses gendered bodies and transcends them.

<43> She gives women a voice in relation to technology and globalization when she asks these questions: "Who is real and who is not? What does it mean to be human as the new techno-biology advances?" (CUNY lecture). In other words: Rifkin mentions bypassed natural biological boundaries in relation to the fact that human genes have been successfully placed within mice. Mark Deery,

providing another example of the mixing of different species' genes, states that

Oregon-based scientists announced that they had genetically engineered a rhesus monkey that possesses a jellyfish gene, a technology that may one day enable the creation of monkeys with human genes....Genetic engineering may soon create a monkey with human genes; xenotransplantation has already given us a man with baboon bone marrow. Cognitive scholars like Marc Hauser and legal scholars like Steven M. Wise are breaking with the time-honored anthropocentricity of Western culture to argue, respectively, that animals are thinking beings and that they should be granted legal personhood (Deery 119).

This new bio-technology induced gene genre fission relating to the break down of the fixed definition of "human" and "monkey" renders ridiculous efforts to use sex, gender, and race to exclude people from the category "human." In Butler's words, "if humans change into something new, than how do you argue against homosexual marriage?" (CUNY lecture). Butler correctly points out that now that humans can emanate from more than one reproductive technique -- now that new bio-technology breaks down the symbolic order in regard to human reproduction -- "science is being figured differently in different contexts" (CUNY lecture). For example: as Butler explains, when heterosexuals make use of new technology such as egg denotion, this use is called "assistance"; when homosexuals wish to use the very same technology, their desire for equal access is seen as a frightening specter (CUNY lecture). The link between technology and globalization makes obsolete such linguistic slippage as the multiple meanings of "assistance" when this word is applied to homosexuals and heterosexuals who desire to use reproductive technology (CUNY lecture). Further: if "genetic material is a commodity" how can arresting prostitutes (women who use their bodies as commodities) be justified? (CUNY lecture).

<44> Science fiction clarifies the point about discrimation against homosexuals Butler emphasizes: if the inception of a real version of *The Planet of the Apes* is imminent, then how can people justify the argument that homosexuals should not be allowed to marry and/or receive their partner's health insurance benefits? Bio-technology's rapid advances make promoting homophobic arguments as illogical as worshipping a Coke bottle or presenting a lecture without removing a Coke can from the lectern. Bio-technological innovations advances will generate new cultural stories which make old discriminatory stories about gender and sexual orientation irrelevant. John/Joan, for example, as she/he struggles to understand her/his gender identity, has a new technologically induced counterpart: the children born of IVF egg donorship techniques who will struggle to understand their origin. Due to this reproductive technology's newness, we do not yet know how the story of their struggle will be articulated. What is certain is that they will shortly have other counterparts -- who for a very brief time, are still relegated to science fiction's pages: the ape/humans and human clones who will grapple with their origins. While we, at this moment, do not know how these people will feel about and tell their stories, one fact is presently clear: the language of technological utopianism silences women, other Others, and science fiction. Cultural critics who share Butler's concern about gender issues should play a larger part in the critique of technological utopianism. Butler, after all, says what the Conference participants fail to say: "the fear of bio-technical change is displaced upon lesbians in Iowa who use frozen sperm when the woman is ovulating" (CUNY lecture).

<45> "Technology and Globalization in the New Millennium: Do We know Where We Are Going?" did not go there, to the lesbians in Iowa. The Conference advertisement's statement that it is "crucial that we now take a deeper look, and re-examine our assumptions about the technologies that are helping drive the globalization juggernaut" concerns a cultural look (or gaze) that positions women and other Others in the science fiction context of the simultaneously visible and invisible -- as the invisible can. Lunar Corp provides a new cultural gaze: the Coke can projected on the moon-as-billboard -- the exaggeratedly visible can that can transform the man in the moon into the invisible man.

Notes

1. In his lecture "Equity and Civil Society" (Globalization and Inequality Conference, Center for Place, Culture & Politics, CUNY Graduate Center, April 24, 2001), David C. Korten distinguishes between the positive impact of communicative and cultural globalization and the negative impact of corporate globalization. Throughout this paper when I discuss "globalization" in a negative vein I refer to Korten's understanding of detrimental corporate globalization.

2. Buzz Aldrin offers a comment pertinent to media images producing droids. When mentioning the conspiracy theories which assert that he did not land on the moon he says that "when entertaintainment raises a nation of doubters of the truth we have a sick society" (Aldrin May 7, 2001).

3. Malachy McCourt tells another story which links a mother and food to technology. He explains that when the first moon landing occurred he and his mother Angela were watching the televised coverage with a group of people in a bar his brother Alfie owned. The sound was turned down when Angela said loudly "I want a hamburger with onions." "To this day there is a group of people who think that the first words spoken when a human first set foot on the moon concern a woman talking about a hamburger, not a male astronaut talking about a small step for mankind," McCourt said (McCourt May 7, 2001).

4. Here is another example of how an institution can use technology to contribute something positive to individuals in terms of globalization ensuing outside the profit imperative: The New York Times reports that "Other universities may be striving to market their courses to the Internet masses in hopes of dot-com wealth. But the Massachusetts Institute of technology has chosen the opposite path: to post virtually all its course materials on the Web, free to everybody" (Goldberg A1). M.I.T. president Charles M. Vest says that he suspects that this initiative's "greatest impact might come overseas, among institutions that cannot attract world-class faculty" (Goldberg A16). The article includes a picture of Suzana Lisanti, Web director at M.I.T. Lisanti, via her participation in this not for profit project, is another woman who is creating alternative ways to link technology and globalization.

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