

(Anti)gay utopian fiction in English and Romance languages: an overview

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Abstract

While exclusively female societies are often sympathetically portrayed in modern utopian narrative and in science fiction, imaginary societies where male homosexuality is the norm have usually been portrayed as dystopias. Already in the Middle Ages, the attempted establishment of an exclusively homosexual male community by a fictional prince in the romance *Berinus* is violently rejected. Some modern narratives present an apocalyptic and dystopian future where masculinism, misogyny and normative sex/love between human males are conflated. Moreover, normative male gayness in speculative fiction often involves the totalitarian oppression of (heterosexual) “natural” impulses. Confronted with such negative depictions of male homosexuality in its collective dimension, gay-minded writers have rarely provided interesting alternative utopian scenarios until recently. Furthermore, most of these have favored inclusion in an ideally open and inclusive society within our world, rather than to propose full-fledged utopias as free-standing societal constructions.

Keywords

Gay utopian fiction, homosexuality in speculative fiction, satire

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Ficção utópica (anti)gay em línguas inglesa e românicas: uma visão geral

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Resumo

Enquanto sociedades exclusivamente femininas são frequentemente descritas em termos positivos na narrativa utópica moderna e na ficção científica, as sociedades imaginárias onde a homossexualidade masculina é a norma têm sido descritas geralmente como distopias. Já na Idade Média, a tentativa de estabelecimento de uma comunidade masculina exclusivamente homossexual, por um príncipe, no romance *Berinus*, é violentamente rejeitada. Algumas narrativas modernas apresentam um futuro apocalíptico e distópico onde masculinismo, misoginia e sexo/amor entre homens são confundidos. Além disso, a homossexualidade masculina na ficção especulativa envolve frequentemente a opressão totalitária dos impulsos “naturais” (heterossexuais). Confrontados com tais representações negativas da homossexualidade masculina na sua dimensão coletiva, escritores atentos à homossexualidade masculina têm raramente fornecido cenários utópicos alternativos interessantes até tempos recentes. A maioria destes tem atuado em prol da integração em uma sociedade idealmente aberta e inclusiva no nosso mundo, em vez de propor utopias completas como construções sociais autônomas.

Palavras-chave

Ficção utópica gay, homossexualidade na ficção especulativa, sátira

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Exclusively female societies have often been sympathetically portrayed in modern utopian narrative and in science fiction. Female-only utopian classics such as James Tiptree, Jr.'s "Houston, Houston, Do You Read?" (1976) or Nicola Griffith's *Ammonite* (1992) have often been commented on by scholars. However, it has rarely been mentioned that some of them might have developed a *novum* consisting in the full exclusion or disappearance of the male half of mankind, especially for ideological purposes.¹ It would seem that it has even become a stereotype in certain instances of utopian narrative and its successor, science fiction, to claim that female-only societies would be inherently peaceful, as well as more respectful of nature and of human differences. This often implies as well that any society ruled by men would be viciously patriarchal: "So it seems [...] that all-male worlds should be dystopias and all-female ones at least evolving toward utopia" (Attebery, 2002, p. 114). This assumption in *genderized* utopian fiction² does not take into account the existence of a particular category of males that hardly correspond to the image of the patriarchal *macho* portrayed in "ritualized, hierarchical, homosocial, legalistic, misogynistic utopias" (p. 121).

Due to their sexual orientation, there is an entire group of men that would seem little interested in oppressing women, at least sexually: homosexual men, usually called gays. Theirs is an identity that exists both for many homosexual men forming a sort of liquid 'gay nation' and for homophobes who have subjected them to more or less severe punishments and social rejection. In the real world of the past, gays have been not only a discrete part of an otherwise undefined queer community of free sexual/gender choice and welcome diversity, but they have constituted a veritable non-territorial nation with symbolic and operative borders fixed by a long history of suffering and misrepresentations.³ Such misrepresentations have also been frequent in

¹ "[S]ome women not surprisingly link the disappearance of the existing gender/sex system with the disappearance of those who, consciously or unconsciously, maintain and profit from this inequality [...]. In imagining a world without men (i.e. without gender) they are able to imagine themselves doing anything they want" (Fitting, 1987, p. 108). Further studies on this kind of extreme feminist separatist utopias (Relf, 1991) do not question the procedure used to obtain such male-cleansed imaginary world, nor the fate of gay men before the cleansing. An exception is Stein, who asks "[h]ow do women living in a single-sex society get rid of the men" (2013, p. 120).

² "Their assumption appears to be that these negative traits ['violence and sexual aggressiveness'] are genetically inherent, not amenable to change through education or socialization in the future women-based society" (Stein, 2013, p. 120).

³ According to Michel Foucault's disciple and biographer Didier Eribon, "il y a bel et bien des « personnes » homosexuelles, en tout cas des individus qui sont identifiés de l'extérieur ou s'identifient eux-mêmes en ces termes, et les « actes » homosexuels ne sont que l'un des éléments qui permettent de les définir ainsi" [there are, indeed, homosexual 'persons' or, at any case, individuals who are

utopia, understood as the imaginary place where the hopes and fears of the body politic have usually become manifest through a process of estrangement that requests readers to see beyond fiction in order to reflect on the kind of society portrayed. Unlike homosexual females in feminist modern utopias, gays have often been abused in this literary mode as well.

Utopian fiction has been defined in many ways. Since Thomas More, utopia in literature is, at least as regards rhetoric, a pure description of an imaginary land:

Une utopie est la description d'un monde imaginaire, en dehors de notre espace ou de notre temps, ou en tout cas, de l'espace et du temps historiques et géographiques. C'est la description d'un monde constitué sur des principes différents de ceux qui sont à l'œuvre dans le monde réel. (Ruyer, 1950, p. 3)⁴

Stricto sensu, utopia is a type of descriptive fiction. Actually, the concept of literary utopia has been expanded to encompass all kinds of fiction with *utopian* content, this is to say, to all fictions where an alternative societal order is presented. On that ground, this all too superficial and mostly descriptive overview of gay utopias will consider fictions using any sort of rhetorical discourse; the main criteria for determining this corpus of texts are the facts that homosexual human men⁵ are their main characters, and that their ways and sexuality⁶ constitute central features of the actual or planned society in the fictional world portrayed (even though other categories of queer people, as well as heterosexual persons, may also live and act in

identified from outside or who identify themselves in those terms, the homosexual 'acts' being just one of the elements allowing to define them this way] (2012, p. 79). A gay man's identification as a gay person within a gay community is what makes possible "l'affirmation de sa propre *singularité* contre l'*identité* façonnée de l'extérieur par l'ordre sexuel qui à la fois institue les homosexuels comme un collectif et les isole les uns des autres" [the affirmation of his own *singularity* against the *identity* fashioned from outside by the sexual order, which both establishes the homosexuals as a group and isolates them from each other] (p. 119). All translations are mine.

⁴ A Utopia is a description of an imaginary world, outside our space and our time or, in any case, outside the historical and geographical time. It is the description of a world based on different principles from those at work in the real world.

⁵ Societies of homosexual male humanoid aliens such as the Lunarians in Lucian of Samosata's ancient imaginary voyage *True History* (Λουκιανός ο Σαμοσατεύς), the Gnarsonians in Marsh Haris' story "The Escape," or the Lemmits in Neal Barrett Jr.'s novel *Highwood* (1972) are not considered in this overview.

⁶ Since a defining feature of the utopian mode is the political dimension, gay pornographic fantasies set in all-gay fictional worlds will not be considered in this paper. Gay sexuality is here relevant only as a meaningful element of the body politic.

it). A further criterion is of a linguistic nature: only texts existing in English or in any official Romance language will be considered here.

With this caveat in mind, the purpose of this study is to describe a representative sample of gay literary utopias from different times and countries in order to make better known a series of works that would warrant further and deeper critical attention. This exercise merely aims at unveiling a long tradition of gay utopianism so far little studied as such. Or, maybe, one should say ‘a long tradition of anti-gay utopianism,’ since gay eutopias seem to be rare, whereas there is a much higher number of gay dystopias.⁷ It could even be argued that one of the very first dystopias is, indeed, clearly anti-sodomitic, if we are to use the most common term before the nineteenth century to designate gays as a community, usually to be violently repressed (Fone, 2000):

C’est le seul texte du moyen âge où, à notre connaissance, l’homosexualité soit présenté comme accomplie, et ce, d’emblée, à une vaste échelle, puisqu’elle devient la pratique sexuelle de tous les hommes du royaume, c’est aussi l’une des toutes premières utopies de la littérature européenne (Marchello-Nizia, 1990, p. 231).⁸

This text is included in the fourteenth century anonymous French romance *Berinus* though it has full autonomy as fiction. It can be read, indeed, as a stand-alone story, presented as a historical narrative told by a secondary character to Berinus. Accordingly, whereas it has some important features of the genre inaugurated by Thomas More’s *Utopia* in 1516, such as its presentation of a fictional societal experiment set on an imaginary island, the rhetoric of both works is, however, very different. While *Utopia* is depicted as a static world, Gamel, the island ruled by king Agriano, appears as a place where History, here intended as *magistra vitae*, is played out. The story begins with a deviation from the natural course of things,

⁷ “Eutopia or positive utopia: a non-existent society described in considerable detail and normally located in time and space that the author intended a contemporaneous reader to view as considerably better than the society in which that reader lived. Dystopia or negative utopia: a non-existent society described in considerable detail and normally located in time and space that the author intended a contemporaneous reader to view as considerably worse than the society in which that reader lived” (Sargent, 2005, p. 154).

⁸ This is the only text from the Middle Ages where, to our knowledge, homosexuality is presented as accomplished, and this right away, on a large scale, since it is the sexual practice of all men of the kingdom. It is also one of the very first utopias in European literature.

“deshonorable et contre raison”⁹ (*Berinus*, 1931, vol. 1, p. 116). Agriano orders all women to be expelled from his kingdom to a neighboring island, together with the few males who oppose his rule, after cutting off the noses of the dissenting men. The new male-only society on Gamel island does not follow similar male-only models such as the religious monastery, where chastity would exclude all ‘unnatural acts’ — at least in theory. Agriano’s subjects are practicing sodomites,¹⁰ whose misogyny is due to a desire to recreate Eden on Earth through the exclusion of Eve’s daughters. However, since this gay paradise is based on cruelty inflicted onto others, it eventually receives a just punishment from the same people violently excluded from it. The rival heterosexual island grows in number of inhabitants and in military might, while Agriano’s men become effeminized and increasingly unable to keep their superiority in arms. Agriano is finally defeated by his earlier subjects and put into a dungeon, where he cannot propagate his ‘heresy.’ The sodomitic danger is thus conjured away, although it remains a feared possibility: the king’s imposition of male homosexuality on his subjects, reveals not only the frailty of human nature but also that heterosexuality might not be as natural as it has been assumed so far. How else could most men in Agriano’s kingdom have been turned into sodomites so easily? A further anxiety is of a more political nature: in a monarchical society, the will of kings cannot be opposed, even if it leads to situations like that experienced in Agriano’s kingdom. This story is not only a parable denouncing alleged sins against nature: it can also be read as a warning against an unrestrained use of power. From this perspective, the parable of Agriano can also be considered the first of several Ancient Regime satires using homosexuality as a political metaphor (McFarlane, 1997, p. 69-107).

Perhaps the most notorious of them is *The Farce of Sodom or The Quintessence of Debauchery*, published in 1684 and traditionally attributed to John Wilmot, second Earl of Rochester. In this short closet play (explicit sex would hardly be put publicly on stage back then), Bolloximian, king of a Sodom that bears little resemblance to the Biblical one, tires of sex with women and establishes that men will bugger each other; women will have to find satisfaction also among themselves, with the help of dildos. All inhabitants of this Sodom readily obey their king, even though women seem less happy with this arrangement than men as desire is still centered in

⁹ Dishonorable and against reason.

¹⁰ The word itself occurs in most manuscripts of *Berinus* to designate them.

the phallus. After a time of happy debauchery, a plague visits the land as a sort of divine punishment. Sodom returns then to heterosexuality, except for the king, who prefers to retire to some dark cavern, bugging his way to his end. In the figure of king Bolloximian, some critics have seen a satirical portray of king Charles II, whose attempts at imposing tolerance of the Catholics in the English kingdom, which could spread among Britons as readily as buggery among the Sodomites, was then considered a tyrannical overstepping of his powers: “Bolloxinon’s turning to sodomy figures Charles suspected turning to Catholicism” (McFarlane, 1997, p. 87, following Elias, 1978). Homosexuality is not presented in the same proto-dystopian terms as in Agriano’s story. Having chosen the rhetorical model of the farce, its carnivalesque eroticism entails a certain deconstruction of normative sexuality, while desecrating the Biblical myth so often used to condemn ‘sodomy.’ As in some modern gay fictions, Bolloximian and the other characters “freely choose ‘buggery’ because it enhances their sensation of being alive and allows them to enjoy a sexual carnival even while fully conscious of how dark that carnival may finally prove” (Frontain, 1997, p. 88-89). The final divine intervention seems so grotesque, with its “fiery demons” and “horrid apparitions” (Rochester, 1993, p. 153) that the return to heteronormativity appears rather as a comic device, as a farce within the farce. This is a real libertine work in more senses than one.

Divine retribution did not seem as terrible in Rochester’s time as it did when *Berinus* was written. Religion was losing its influence among the educated classes. This process culminated with the French Revolution. Among the many pamphlets published back then, one of interest¹¹ as a further expression of the satirical use of homosexuality for political purposes is the anonymous *Bordel apostolique institué par Pie VI, pape, en faveur du clergé de France* (1790), which has been described as “une vraie boîte de Pandore d’où sortent toute une série de joyaux sémantiques quant

¹¹ Although they are not fully utopias, the series of sodomitic pamphlets begun with *Les enfants de Sodome à l’Assemblée Nationale* (1790) is also of interest. The ‘children of Sodom’, united in a mock order (“Ordre de la Manchette”), request the revolutionary National Assembly their recognition as a group, as well as their equality of rights. According to their modern editor, “[o]n peut lire ces pamphlets comme des attaques de caractère homophobe contre les Jacobins. Mais rien n’interdit de les voir comme une critique constructive et contributive” [we can read these pamphlets as homophobic attacks against the Jacobins. But nothing prevents us to see them as constructive and contributive criticism] (Cardon, 2005, p. 13). Their conveyed ideology is, actually, not too different from the non-separatist, inclusive approach usually adopted in gay utopianism, as we shall see.

aux nouveaux ordres (sexuels) du temps”¹² (Cardon, 2007, p. 10). In this pornographic satire, the City of God has become the city of unrestrained homosexual practices, with an orgiastic freedom of body and mind that might have had utopian undertones for those still persecuted for their unorthodox sexual practices. This pamphlet depicts, indeed, a further libertine and liberating carnivalesque gay social order where the church structure of power has ceased repressing male homosexuality, adopting it instead. This freedom is, however, short-lived. In the final dialogue, nuns turn the bugging Pope and priests back into heterosexuality, this time with no recalcitrant sodomite left. The bourgeois regime brought about by the French Revolution could not even conceive of any ‘sexual order’ where women were not the natural target of desire, at least until the new visibility of gays brought about by an increasing ‘Uranian’ activism—as well as by the conviction of Oscar Wilde and of what he represented, both as a sexual deviant and as a ‘decadent’ artist. It also brought about literary and other reactions to the perceived assertiveness of gays (Tamagne, 2001, p. 133-171).

The carnivalesque approach of *Sodom* and *Bordel apostolique* was renewed using an avant-garde style of writing in *L’isola dei baci* (1918), an interesting Italian novel written at the apex of Futurism by Filippo Tommaso Marinetti himself and by another important Futurist, Bruno Corra. This work adopted “a literary form that more closely resembles a play or a variety show” (Van Ness, 2010, p. 181), with plenty of dialogue and constant changes of scenery, within the mundane society of wealthy tourists and expatriates enjoying Capri’s beauty and mild climate. Both authors feature as characters in the book, finally saving the day by bringing a number of prostitutes to break up a secret “Congresso Rosa”¹³ of formerly closeted male homosexuals; these were meeting on an islet to discuss how to save mankind from war and bad taste, as well as from the hero worship allegedly sustained by women. According to one of the speakers, “[n]oi amiamo la vigliaccheria, la pace ad ogni costo, le passeggiate archeologiche, gli amorevoli conversari tra uomini, l’antica Grecia e la sterilità”¹⁴ (Marinetti, Corra, 2003, p. 118-119). All these habits and values could not be farther from the Futurist cult for speed, machines and war, as well

¹² A real Pandora’s box from which emerge a series of semantic gems about the new (sexual) order of the time.

¹³ Pink Congress.

¹⁴ We love cowardice, peace at any price, archeological walks, loving conversations between men, ancient Greece and infertility.

as from their proposals to bring down all remains from the past, especially in art. Although the novel is certainly a “*pamphlet antiomossessuale volutamente derisorio*”¹⁵ (Lambiase, 2003, p. 15), homosexual deviancy is mostly condemned for being adverse to the aggressive modernity embraced by the Futurists, and eventually by Fascism. This political system required violent males for war, as well as high birth rates in order to generate even more male cannon fodder. On the contrary, the anti-nationalist and pacifist participants in the Pink Congress would have created a world to their image: an effete society unable to withstand any attack, even by a bunch of indignant whores, fearful for their trade and eager to reassert their patriarchal role of women as sole acceptable sexual partners for men.

Although Marinetti and Italian Futurism in general were particularly misogynistic, they attribute their own female-bashing to the unsuspecting gays, probably following the idea that men unable to partake in the common masculine admiration for feminine beauty must necessarily be perverted enough to find women ugly and thus to demean them, while adopting their mannerisms. Although there can be misogynistic gays, it would be exaggerated, to say the least, to present misogyny as a defining feature of the gay nation, which appears, perhaps for the first time, as a global, supranational possibility (or threat) in *L'isola dei baci*. Nevertheless, the conflation of male homosexuality and misogyny sometimes occurs in the kind of utopian narratives now being considered, especially when written by feminist women authors. As an early example of that feminist anti-gay stance, one could mention a beautifully written biblical tale by Rachilde, “Les Vendanges de Sodome” (1883; *Le Démon de l'absurde*, 1894). In this story the origin of male homosexuality in that symbolic city is attributed to a violent refusal by the working males of the tempting, desirable women in order to save their energy for labor: “their individual desires are thus subordinated to the collective good of the state” (Hawthorne, 1997, p. 37). In this context, the male homosexual act that follows the murder of a woman is a powerful symbol for the repression of the feminine entailed by the willing submittal of men to a patriarchal totalitarian order. Fear and the hatred of women, then, allegedly lead to male homosexuality, on the one hand, and to fascism, on the other.

This notion became a stereotype in anti-gay utopias by women. It also appears in Katharine Burdekin's novel *Swastika Night* (1937, published under the penname

¹⁵ A deliberately derisory anti-homosexual pamphlet.

Murray Constantine), which is considered today a classic of feminist speculative fiction. Seven hundred years after the Hitlerian millennium, the Nazi empire is above all a nightmare for women, who are segregated, stripped of their rights, raped and considered mere reproduction machines. Male homosexuality is a secondary concern in the book, but it is interesting to note that for Burdekin the extreme form of patriarchy portrayed has led to romantic and sexual bonds among males, because “male homosexuality may involve embracing, not rejecting, the male gender role” (Patai, 1985, p. iv). Actually, the Nazis of the future are willingly gay, contrary to factual reality as it could already be seen in 1937. Nazism and Fascism were essentially anti-gay (for Italian Fascism, see Benadusi, 2000). Gays were perceived, perhaps rightly, as internationalist, pacifist weaklings who represented everything Fascism stood against, as Marinetti and Corra had clearly shown in *L'isola dei baci*. Burdekin, however, seems to have been blinded by a homophobic belief in male homosexual misogyny, since “[i]n this novel, [...] male homosexuality seemed like an extremist commitment to masculinity, an aversion to femininity virtually synonymous with misogyny. A man who loved men might be demonstrating his hatred of women” (Woods, 1998, p. 208).

After World War II, gays presented as the quintessence of patriarchy and secretly responsible for Fascism — according to Theodor Adorno and other luminaries of modern thought (Hewitt) — still appear in some feminist dystopias, such as Suzy McKee Charnas' *Walk to the End of the World* (1974). In this first novel of the *Holdfast* tetralogy, females are treated exactly as in Burdekin's *Swastika Night*, whereas male homosexuality is normative — at least among members of the same age groups — and it is even enforced by ritual rape. In fact, “sexual orientation is not a matter of choice, but it is artificially designed” (Mohr, 2005, p. 196) to fully replace women in every aspect, except reproduction. In the novel, the traditional valorization of the masculine gender is brought to the extreme in which women become so degraded that homosexuality follows as a logical consequence for men. Why it should be thus is never explained, nor how male homosexuality comes to be the norm contrary to most patriarchal societies in existence, unless here it is modeled after homoerotic prison sex.¹⁶ The two male characters have actually a love relationship

¹⁶ Homosexual intercourse as a mere substitute for sex with women in a community exclusively made up of male political prisoners sent back to the Late Cambrian period is alluded to by Robert Silverberg

that partly reproduces male versus female stereotypes in the form of dominant/submissive partner. The author, however, finally succeeds in overcoming her preconceptions and in presenting a credible partnership in a sophisticated and detailed way, thanks to a prose able to express minute nuances of emotion in the manner of the great realist and feminist tradition represented by Ursula K. Le Guin. Charnas' writing helps us to admit her rather implausible, but artistically effective world.

In contrast, the flat writing usual in pre-New Wave science fiction does not help to redeem in literary terms a novel quite similar to Charnas' regarding the shape of its gay masculinist utopia. A. Bertram Chandler's *False Fatherland* (1968), later more aptly entitled *Spartan Planet* (1969), is set, indeed, in a pseudo-Spartan world, if we understand by Spartan the usual image of this old Greek city as a society ruled by a male warrior elite, to which Chandler adds the homosexual component, rather reminiscent of the sacred band of Thebes.¹⁷ On the planet called New Sparta, females are literally unknown among the warrior elite, which is composed of hyper-masculine males, usually coupled with effeminate and less powerful men. The story is told from the perspective of one of the warriors, who discovers the existence of female quarters controlled by the priest caste, where women are used as little more than sexual toys and reproducing vessels. Nature reasserts its alleged ways as soon as women are revealed,¹⁸ turning the former society into a traditionally heterosexual one, and denying male homosexuality as just the result of the misguided, perverted will of the founder of New Sparta (he had created this society following his particular views of military, masculinist gayness symbolized by the ancient city). Although the protagonist's sense of honor overcomes his attraction towards the main female character in order to help his mate and his fellow warriors to adapt to the new reality, Chandler conflates masculinism and homosexuality in a dystopian way similar to

in "Hawksbill Station" (1967; *The Reality Trip and Other Implausibilities*, 1972), later expanded and reprinted as a novel under the same title in 1968.

¹⁷ In the context of the controversy surrounding the service of homosexuals in the British and American military, Charles Sheffield's story "Brooks Too Broad for Leaping" (1998; *The Lady Vanishes and Other Oddities of Nature*, 2002) adopted the ancient Theban army system; he presented a human-colonized planet where soldiers, both male and female, are exclusively homosexual and form their own segregated society, as opposed to the rather homophobic civilians.

¹⁸ At this point in time, heterosexuality was still commonly viewed as the only natural expression of sexuality, despite the obvious fact that everything that exists in nature is per definition 'natural.' As early as the nineteenth century, Jean Richepin had inverted this stereotype: in his short play "Le monstre" (*Théâtre chimérique*, 1896) a heterosexual male is presented at an academic meeting in the far future as a 'monster.' In this future homosexuality is the only acceptable sexual behavior – all reproduction is conducted exclusively through artificial means.

Charnas', albeit with less acrimony: most New Spartans do not willingly oppress women as Charnas' Holdfasters do, but they simply ignore their very existence. Once this is known, male homosexuality is simply over.

The stereotype of the militaristic male, allegedly fond of being among his same sex fellows to avoid the corrupting influence of inferior women, is refuted in a couple of very different novels dealing with masculinity in all-male speculative societies. *Món mascle* (1971; rewritten by the author in Spanish as *Mundo macho*, 1998), by Catalan gay writer Terenci Moix, offers one of the most extreme *macho* worlds in literature, a lost or alternate allegorical world where masculinity is celebrated "as the supreme ideal by means of an exaggerated violence" (Hughes, 2004, p. 965); this includes human sacrifices, cannibalism and refined torture among the males of the superior classes, whereas women are virtually non-existent except for ceremonial mating, once a year. Men are described as peplum muscular hyper-masculine figures directly out of a gay wet dream, but Moix deconstructs the possible gay utopia by showing that this all-male world is highly repressive of all kinds of sexuality incompatible with their cult of violence and pain, instead of placing homosexuality as a central tenet of its masculinism. Erotic love between males remains only a possibility hinted at, but it is immediately rejected.¹⁹ For Moix, homosexual sex, as well as all kinds of sex, has been replaced in this society by a sadist-masochist cult of violence, which can be seen as fascist in nature. This is a puritan form of Fascism (or Communism, as both hold equivalent doctrines in their actual practice regarding gays and unorthodox sexualities) perhaps closer to the historical reality of modern totalitarianism than to the abusive and historically unfounded confusion between gayness and patriarchal misogyny seen in the above discussed feminist novels.

¹⁹ Moix's is not the only example of men-only fictional worlds without explicit gay sex. An important narrative of segregation along gender lines without a meaningful portrayal of male homosexuality is, for instance, Philip Wylie's *The Disappearance* (1951), in which an unexplained phenomenon splits reality into two, each one populated by a single gender. Although homosexuality in the male world is hinted at, "Wylie's men [...] were locked into conventional behaviors and acceptable character variations. Acceptable behavior included violence but not acknowledged sexual desire toward other men" (Attebery 126). In some further narratives of single-gendered male worlds through full segregation, such as Berilo Neves' future history "O divórcio de Adão e Eva" (*A Mulher e o Diabo*, 1931), Sylvain Jouty's imaginary voyage "Au pays des Amazones" (*Voyages aux pays évanouis*, 2000) and Carol Emshwiller's feminist story "Boys" (2003; *I Live with You*, 2005), male homosexuality is absent, whereas it is repressed in others, such as Ursula K. Le Guin's "The Matter of Seggri" (1994; *The Birthday of the World and Other Stories*, 2002). In contrast, full gender segregation with no inter-gender contacts and prevalent homosexuality among men features in Ward Michaels' "The Moons of Sirius" (1979).

A further answer, within the genre of science fiction proper (and within feminism as well), is Lois McMaster Bujold's *Ethan of Athos* (1986). This world of Athos is also the product of a societal experiment. A gay religious group settles on that planet in order to create an all-male society along monastic lines similar to the Athos monastic republic in Greece. Although chastity is theoretically preferred, male homoeroticism is the norm. Reproduction is secured by the use of imported feminine tissues maintained in uterine machines until the birth of the male-only offspring, nurtured by their fathers with extraordinary love and dedication. Violence is virtually unknown. This is not fully a utopia, though. Misogyny is the official doctrine on Athos, as females are believed to be some kind of monsters. Ethan, the main character of the novel is a doctor charged with the mission of obtaining new female genetic material to guarantee the future of his society. In his adventures on a space station he learns to appreciate the value of women thanks to a female warrior and spy who helps him to save his planet from a larger conspiracy.²⁰ Bujold subverts sexual patriarchal gender roles by describing such opposite types as the strong and assertive amazon, who is heterosexual, and the peaceful, non-violent and caring male, who is homosexual. She also subverts the traditional natural ways by showing how the gay character does not become heterosexual following his first sight of a female member of the species. These two facts suggest the double influence on the author of feminism and of the growing post-Stonewall gay activism, which was instrumental in offering alternative, fairer images of homosexuality.

Among canonical science-fiction novels published shortly after the 1969 liberating queer riots in New York City, only Joe Haldeman's *The Forever War* series (1974-1997) presents homosexual normativity in one of the chronological stages into which a story of constant war between humans and an alien civilization is divided. Due to relativistic effects, the main male character, a space voyager and warrior, is confronted with an Earth civilization where homosexuality is the norm in order to curb population growth; he then feels compelled to adapt, although his cherished heterosexuality finally reasserts itself: the male hero can finally retire in marital bliss on another planet with his female warrior sweetheart. As it happens in Bujold's novel,

²⁰ This conspiracy is not primarily homophobic. In contrast, in Francis Berthelot's mystic space-opera *La Lune noire d'Orion* (1980), heterosexuals ('Hétrogs') are intent on repressing the 'Holoms' (homosexuals) following a crisis that fosters a sort of universal evil principle. After many adventures, the gay redeemer succeeds in restoring a peaceful co-existence among planets and their inhabitants, both homosexual and heterosexual, thanks to his advancing the principle of good. This principle is worshipped, among others, by the 'Taïgrs', a community reflecting contemporary gay SM subculture.

gays are not portrayed as vicious masculinists. They are shown at least superficial respect as rather peaceful people. Their world is not a utopia, however. The future homosexual Earthlings rather dislike the heterosexuality of the main character, showing prevalent heterophobia among homosexuals.²¹ In this, both *Ethan of Athos* and *The Forever War* still reflect in part some of the charges laid against gays in a series of dystopian narratives where heterosexual drives are actively discouraged for a variety of reasons. Although their approaches can differ, such stories are often based on a dramatic opposition between socially enforced homosexuality and the resistance of the oppressed heterosexual individual. The heterosexual predicament might be understood as a reflection of the oppressed condition of homosexual individuals in actual patriarchal and heterosexist society and, therefore, as an invitation to adopt an estranged perspective, to put oneself in the shoes of the persecuted sexual minority. However, it often seems as though writers would invite readers, instead, to imagine how awful our world would be if ruled by lesbians or gay men.

This frightening prospect is, indeed, exploited as a source of horror in one of the first occurrences of modern homosexual dystopia, the classic story by master of the macabre Charles Beaumont entitled “The Crooked Man” (1955), which also introduces overpopulation as the rationale for the reversal of power relationships between sexual orientations. In this context, heterosexual activity is unrelentingly persecuted. The ‘crooked,’ closeted heterosexual male assumes his social inferiority, but he still tries to have sex with his female lover, conveniently disguised as a man. The tragedy happens when they are caught in the act by the vice squad led by a member of the secret police who had tried to seduce him earlier. The story is told from the point of view of the heterosexual victim, whose mixed feelings of fear, guilt and sexual defiance are graphically described in the text, along with his repugnance for gay men, who look rather disgusting, as well as universally cruel. The world portrayed is nightmarish. This tends to exclude the possibility of a reading that could be more sympathetic to the very people who were back then suffering exactly the same kind of harassment endured by heterosexuals in Beaumont’s effective narrative, at least as a masterful piece of dystopian atmosphere and horror.

²¹ Although rarely portrayed in both gay and anti-gay utopias, gay intolerance regarding other sexual orientations is also a central feature in Barry N. Malzberg’s “In the Stocks” (1977; *The Man Who Loved the Midnight Lady*, 1980), which shows an all-male homosexual community excluding one of its members, now bisexually-oriented.

This was soon followed by a further masterpiece in the same vein, Anthony Burgess' *The Wanting Seed* (1962). Here, a suffering male heterosexual is also the central figure of the novel, which is also narrated from his perspective. Homosexuality has become the social norm also due to the overcrowding of the planet. Although heterosexuality is not a criminal offence, it is socially discouraged: promotions will go to homosexuals first. Thomas, the married and openly heterosexual main character, is bypassed in his career, whereas his brother Derek, an effeminate gay, keeps climbing the social ladder in the powerful Ministry of Infertility. This anti-natural social order fails soon: "The blight of the land is linked not with the failing (sexual) condition of its king,²² but of the sexually based population controls of the entire populace" (Murdoch, 1973, p. 208-209). The result is terrifying. Since nature has become as infertile as man, famine and societal collapse ensue. Humanity has to resort to cannibalism, soon officially endorsed and organized. Cannibalism allows for the lift of further population controls, the Ministry of Infertility becomes the Ministry of Fertility, and life goes on in its eternal cycle of more and less liberal political structures. Burgess' position is not as easy to pinpoint as his alleged Catholic conservatism would allow us to think, not even regarding homosexuality, which ends up being just a secondary element in the oscillation of social orders due to our sinful nature, only exceptionally visited by grace. Real male homosexuals are conspicuously absent from this gay dystopia. Derek is a false gay having a very erotic affair with his sister-in-law, and it would seem that other gays are just pretending as he is, in order to advance in the system. Gays are not really Burgess' target, but any utopia based on superimposing a theory on the reality of human identity, which "seems to include the fruition of desire in fertility" (Jobling, 2008, p. 51), even if it leads men to eating each other. Would it imply that, for the author, officially supported cannibalism is to be preferred to officially supported homosexuality to solve the population crisis? To believe this would perhaps mean misreading this highly ironic novel.

For similar reasons, a further misanthropic masterpiece with male homosexuals as an acting collective group would be misread if taken as a fully serious work: Virgilio Martini's *Il mondo senza donne*, first published in 1936 and translated into English as *The World Without Women* in 1971. Gays are described here as

²² It refers to the Fisher King of Arthurian romances.

misogynist and effeminate queens who are responsible for the disappearance of women, after having developed a virus that lethally attacks female genitalia, in order to force males to embrace homosexuality. Instead, the gays are all lynched by the heterosexual men, who soon begin to fight each other, especially when it is discovered that only a single female has survived. This female is sold by his father to be *menkind's* whore, until she and her daughter impose an absolute matriarchy, not necessarily better than the former patriarchy. The book, written as a piece of prospective historiography, presents these atrocities with such black humor that it is clear that we are not dealing with a homophobic and misogynist satire, but with “un lungo apologo sulle qualità e i difetti dell'uomo, sempre uguale a se stesso”²³ (De Turris, 1987, p. 11-12). As such, its characters appear like archetypes from a fable. This apologue can certainly be seen as offensive by those unable to understand that *gaycide* is, after all, the result of masculinity gone amok. And this masculinity is none other than a result of humans being as they are, at least as they could be perceived in 1936, when mass violence was a threatening prospect soon to become real.

Il mondo senza donne is only one of several fictional works portraying men-only worlds following a man-made, natural (often due to a pandemic affecting women) or unexplained gynocide. In several of them, homosexuality is absent²⁴ or is quickly dismissed (and punished) in female apocalypses such as the one narrated in Pierre Bourgeade's *La Fin du monde* (1984), where zoophilia inflicted upon female non-human animals seems to be the preferred option. In other instances, male homosexuality is embraced, as it happens on the planet unable to sustain female life described in Cordwainer Smith's gripping story “The Crime and the Glory of Commander Suzdal,” where ‘homosexuals’ (in reality, women turned into altered men called ‘klopts’) are genocidal monsters eager to kill everyone conforming to traditional gender roles. Even considering its time of publication, this tale seems extremely homophobic: “The klopts and their enforced homosexuality are murderously wrong and unnatural” (Hellekson, 2001, p. 31). In contrast, similar alterations in order to allow for biological reproduction among men-only crews stranded on alien planets bring about positive outcomes in stories such as Marion

²³ A long fable about the qualities and the flaws of man, always the same.

²⁴ Among others, Jack London's “The Strange Experience of a Misogynist” (written in 1897), Thomas S. Gardner's “The Last Woman” (1932), Aimé Blanc's *Le Drame de l'an 3000* (1946), Day Keene and Leonard Prunyn's *World Without Women* (1960), and James Tiptree Jr.'s “The Screwfly Solution” (1977; *Out of the Everywhere and Other Extraordinary Visions*, 1981).

Zimmer Bradley and John Jay Wells' "Another Rib" (1963), and Jeff Watkins' "A Second Eden" (1979), as well as in a bizarre gay novel set on Earth, *AE: the Open Persuader* (1969) by an effectively unknown Auctor Ignotus.

There is also a couple of interesting post-Stonewall female-less world narratives set on Earth. J. J. Russ' "Aurelia" (1975) reads as an answer to Martini's narrative, supposing Russ ever read it. A viral pandemic has killed all women, except Aurelia, who strips nightly before a cheering crowd of recalcitrant heterosexual males still refusing the lesser evil of gayness. One of them, who appears to be starkly homophobic, tells his story: how he eventually discovered that the last surviving woman was not a transvestite, but an android; at the end, he admits having taken a lover, of course male. Jon Inouye's story "Last Man" (1976) aims to be controversial from its very title: the last 'man' is really the last heterosexual man, kept in stasis in a museum, after male homosexuality has become universal, following a general gynocide in order to control population growth. Gays are not real men, according to this tongue-in-cheek text, which shows homosexuality again as the dire consequence of a demographic dystopia. In spite of the tragic tone of the experimental poetic prose of the text, an ironic intention is not to be excluded, since the rebellious last heterosexual, after waking up and fleeing the damned 'perverts' to join the free 'nonfags,' discovers that these are devolved hominids, and accepts being returned to the new male homosexual, and rather dystopian, civilization.

Despite its final ambiguity, Inouye's tale still seems a further example of the debatable link between homosexuality and birth control, both condemned by religious conservatives. Trying to explain why writers imagine systemic homosexuality as a solution for overpopulation scenarios rather than other easier policies would perhaps require a deeper, psychological study that cannot be undertaken here. From the perspective of literary history, it can be said that this soon became, after Burgess at least, a fictional and rather sensational chronotope. In Italy, Mario Soldati also used it in his scientific romance *Lo smeraldo* (1975). In the main character's nightmare of a future dystopian Northern Italy, control of demographics, along with the militaristic mentality, is again the reason for considering homosexuality the norm,²⁵ although this

²⁵ "[A]l Nord si pratica, liberamente (è l'unica attività libera), la bisessualità, e che anzi gli amori omosessuali sono incoraggiati. Ciò per due motivi: Uno 'salutista', relativo alla limitazione delle nascite, e l'altro 'oggettivo', dovuto al clima da caserma e al conseguente culto della virilità." [in the North, bisexuality is freely practiced (it is the only free activity), and homosexual love affairs are

is just a detail in this rich and multilayered novel. Much later, in 1998, an obscure author, Leslie Lupien, published “The Malthusian Code,” a title which suggests what kind of code is intended: compulsory homosexuality is the radical solution to overpopulation in the future, as if condoms, pills or vasectomies had never existed. The point seems, however, to describe a further instance of the dystopian rewriting of history for social engineering purposes.

A chronotope can be used in different ways, not all necessarily bigoted, as the last important novel in which homosexuality is the preferred way to deactivate the perceived population bomb will show. The title of Naomi Mitchison’s *Solution Three* (1975) refers to the course followed by a utopian ruling council to eradicate evil through planning. Apart from the cloning of a model black man and a model white woman as the new elite, one of the basic components of the plan is homosexuality, which is also the clones’ sexual orientation.²⁶ People are conditioned to be gay and lesbian, although there is a minority of heterosexuals who are treated as deviants and, therefore, as second-class citizens. A world-threatening food crisis and some upsurges of violent heterosexual reaction in backward areas convince both clones and councilors of the necessity of adopting a more tolerant course towards heterosexual difference. *Solution Three*, which reads as a novel of ideas considering its extensive discussions between characters, has a happy ending very much unlike *The Wanting Seed*. Mitchison’s gentle utopia²⁷ has in common with this work the fact that homosexuality is, indeed, a secondary concern, although this is far more present in *Solution Three* than in Burgess’ novel:

Mitchison is using sexual orientation as a metaphor for the scientific and metaphysical issues that interest her. Homosexuality is an offshoot of the cloning policy and the cloning policy is an attempt to create gods, to achieve infallibility and immutability in human forms. If the scientific sin in this society is meiosis, then the human sin is knowledge of self and its corollary, knowledge of difference. (Lefanu, 1994, p. 164).

indeed encouraged. The reasons are two: one ‘health-related,’ due to the limitation of births, and the other ‘objective,’ due to the barracks atmosphere and the subsequent cult of masculinity] (Evangelisti, 2008, p. VII).

²⁶ Homosexuality in a micro-society of male clones is a defining and humanizing feature in L. Timmel Duchamp’s story “Obscure Relations” (2006).

²⁷ “Mitchison’s future world is attempting to eradicate aggression, sexism, heterosexism, and racism all at once. In short, it is attempting to wipe out difference—not only on the biological level, but on the social as well” (Squier, 1995, p. 173).

According to the novel, heterosexuality represents the biological embodiment of difference as a principle that utopia tends mistakenly to negate, even at the cost of truth, both personal and collective. In Mitchison, this celebration of heterosexuality as “shown as embracing difference” is clearly sincere. This is diversity truly celebrated, since both heterosexuals and homosexuals, clones and the children of meiosis are finally shown as able to live well together.

We can doubt whether the celebration of a hypothetically persecuted heterosexuality as a symbol of the right to difference in later gay dystopias is as well-intended as in *Solution Three*. Among them, there is a relatively recent one, written in Russian and translated into English in 2008, Rafael Grugman’s *Nontraditional Love*. As it is the case in earlier examples of homosexual domination, at least from “The Crooked Man” onwards, the heterosexual male hero-victim in this novel must come to terms with the fact that he is a member of a rejected minority, from which he and his female partner must hide their love through family arrangements with fellow-minded and orientated couples. In this future Earth, a global accident has turned most people from heterosexual to homosexual, as well as their descendants, while former homosexuals have become heterosexuals, bringing about a full reversal. Biological maternity had to be replaced by gestational surrogacy for both gay and lesbian couples, now forming the majority. Unfortunately, popular homophobia has also reverted into popular heterophobia. Except in the Netherlands and its colonies, heterosexuality is persecuted. National policy is dictated by popular considerations and remains at a level of (in)tolerance similar to that prevalent in post-soviet Russia, for instance. In this context, the protagonist is a victim of scandal, loses his real family and feels compelled to become homosexual and accept the love of a stereotyped effeminate man. This tragedy is not consummated, however. After a rather feeble intrigue and a few melodramatic twists, he can reunite his wife and enjoy a miraculously inherited wealth under the sun of Aruba, he and his heterosexuality rightly being vindicated as a return to the forgotten ‘natural’ way after the accident that changed it all, apparently for worse. No queer perspective of the conflict exists.²⁸

²⁸ Regarding Grugman’s heterosexist ‘traditional’ perspective, it may be of interest to compare *Nontraditional Love* with an earlier lesbian narrative, Cy Jung’s *Hétéro par-ci, homo par le rat* (1999), which is set in a fictional world similar to the one imagined by Grugman. A pandemic has wiped out most heterosexuals. Jung’s novel, narrated from the perspective of its lesbian main characters, celebrates the heterosexual liberation movement, which mirrors the LGTB one in our actual world, including pride parades. A more pessimistic outlook is presented in Gabriela Bustelo’s *Planeta hembra* (2001). A future Earth has become the ‘Female Planet’ of the title, since women (all cloned and

Gays are always seen as an exterior threat to the moral and bodily integrity of the male heterosexual hero, whose point of view is the same as the narrator's. Consciously or not, Grugman's narrative echoes current discourses against gay and lesbian assertiveness underlying legislation enacted to prevent any alleged gay proselytism, or to forbid same-sex marriage for traditional, patriarchal family's sake. Homosexuality is thus presented as a threat to society at large, and Grugman just turns this threat into reality in his dystopia, which can be considered as a lightly updated version of Beaumont's "The Crooked Man," minus the good writing. It is perhaps understandable that topics, such as homosexuality, which could not be freely treated in fiction under Communism had to belatedly follow the same historical course as they did in the West, with just a superficially updated appearance.²⁹ At any rate, Grugman offers a late specimen of anti-gay utopia in a period when homosexuality had virtually disappeared from the utopian genre, except for a few appropriations of it by the gays themselves, after the long silence in the closet.

Apparently, utopia is not a common mode within gay literature. This is understood here as the kind of literature, usually written by gays, where gay topics are treated in a manner congenial to this group's sensibility and interests. Stories of love between men and of learning how to negotiate life in a heteronormative environment have been the staple of gay narratives, according to several international surveys of gay literature (Fernandez, 1989; Lilly, 1993; Woods, 1998). Nevertheless, there is an extensive bibliographical survey on the "Uranian worlds" written in English or translated into this language, that is to say, on the possible worlds of alternative sexualities in speculative and fantastic literature (Garber and Paleo, 1990), where a few utopias can be gleaned. Some interesting gay utopias in other major Western languages are ignored, though. Among them, one of the earliest seems to be a wider-ranging erotic utopia entitled *El amor dentro de 200 años* (1932), by anarchist Spanish writer Alfonso Martínez Rizo. In the future libertarian communist order

homosexual) rule a world where men are also cloned and homosexual, but politically powerless, whereas heterosexuals are literally underground. The story, told from a female's perspective, ends with the utter destruction of the planet in a final war between genders. This novel, which is paradoxically comical, satirizes any kind of discrimination against any sexual orientation for essentialist reasons.

²⁹ Since I am not familiar with any of the languages of the former Eastern European Bloc, except Romanian, there might be more sympathetic utopias regarding gays that I might not be aware of. In Romanian, this subject seems to be taboo among writers of speculative fiction. I can only mention Radu Hallipa's "Dae-BOOT" (2002), a story dealing with a superficial cyberpunk topic in a future society where homosexuality is the norm. The gay journalist is erotically and professionally betrayed by his effeminate lover, who seems to be a new avatar of Burgess's Derek from *The Wanting Seed*. Otherwise, Hallipa's narrative does not seem too homophobic for its time and place.

preceding true anarchy described in this novel, love is fully free and homosexual relationships are accepted by all as a matter of fact. The gay infatuation of the scientist and *de facto* ruler for a young man, although unrequited, is never frowned upon, not even by its heterosexual object. In addition to probably being “one of the earliest examples of queer science fiction” (Martín Rodríguez, 2016, p. 16), Martínez Rizo already conceived of the sort of self-negated utopia frequent in gay literature: the utopia consisting of living in a world where acceptance of alternative sexual orientations would be universal, thus ruling out the need to create a fully isolated place of utopian gay normativity.

This inclusive approach was embraced by gay utopian thinkers in the early queer cultural magazine *One*, where two descriptions of a future America where homosexuals enjoy full integration (Curt Merrick’s “Half a World,” 1954), as well as their own community services (Roger Barth’s “The Homosexual Aid Society in the Middle of the 21st Century,” 1962), were published. In the 1950s and early 1960s, this prospect was certainly utopian. Barth had proposed, however, a feasible utopia,³⁰ taking into account the contradiction inherent in a liberal, democratic system oppressing one of its minorities. This contradiction has been overcome in most free Western countries in a historically short period. This process, nonetheless, was not always smooth. Anti-gay bias had to be fought against, also in literature. This is perhaps why gay utopianism seemed to be reactive in the years following the Stonewall protests currently commemorated as the beginning of queer liberation. Apart from a few narratives imagining a geographical and political space free from the homophobic backlash prompted by Reaganism in the 1980s (e.g., an independent gay-ruled Key West as a haven in a legally homophobic future Earth in William K. Eakins’ sentimental/erotic science fiction novel *Key West, 2270, A.D.*, 1989), it might be interesting to see how gays have deconstructed some of the chronotopes and subtexts of anti-gay and anti-male utopias.

Already in 1969, gay pulp writer Marcus Miller produced an enjoyable and articulate piece of gay science fiction imagining the homophobic male’s worst nightmare: being turned into a gay. A scientist discovers a substance that induces homosexuality and, after having tried it himself, he succeeds in bringing about

³⁰ In Barth’s futures cities, “lesbians and gay men have developed their own culture and institutions, which include a cultural museum, a gay history school, gay bars, and computer dating services” (Garber and Paleo, 1990, p. 12). The fact that all these institutions already exist in our world suggests the high level of *possibility* of this inclusive utopianism.

universal ‘transformation,’ in spite of the efforts of two male inspectors, and eventually lovers, to stop it. Contrary to the fears lately expressed by Grugman in *Nontraditional Love*, this ‘transformation’ “actually brings about positive change: Crime has nearly disappeared, sex has replaced violence, and the world is returning to something that looks safe and reasonable” (Bronski, 2003, p. 278). People really make love and not war once heterosexuality is left behind. Although there are sociological studies showing how little violence existed in venues where gays used to socialize (Guasch, 1991), this prospect of world peace through global homosexuality may seem naïve. Miller did not write a real utopia, however. His is a very entertaining tongue-in-cheek exercise in ironically turning upside down the apocalyptic warnings against same-sex equality of rights made by defenders of heteronormativity. His endeavor was parallel to further attempts at fighting anti-gay utopianism on its own arena.

Terenci Moix’s “La caiguda de l’imperi sodomita” (in the collection *La caiguda de l’imperi sodomita*, 1976) subverts Sodom as the main religious myth used for centuries to condemn male homosexuality³¹ by proposing a camp and pro-gay rewriting of the destruction of the sinful cities of the plain. Cultural and sexual difference was diffidently embraced by the Sodomites until the tragic, supernatural destruction of their cities by a repressive God. In Moix’s short story, which uses postmodern literary techniques, “the prescriptive content of straight culture is reversed by queer readings and manipulations [...], in such a manner that the new meanings assigned by the reader’s displacements are not only empowering but pleasurable” (Fernández, 1998, p. 74).

In Geoff Ryman’s novella “O Happy Day!” (1985; *Unconquered Countries*, 1994), the view of human males as universally violent and oppressive toward women is deconstructed in this fictional answer to feminist separatist utopias. Since it is understood that violence can only be suppressed if men are eliminated, women have

³¹ Homosexuality among biblical Sodomites is either omitted or concealed in some classic modern fictional treatments of this mythical matter, such as Leopoldo Lugones’ tale “La lluvia de fuego” (*Las fuerzas extrañas*, 1906), Jean Giraudoux’s play *Sodome et Gomorrhe* (1943) and Michel Tournier’s novel *Gaspard, Melchior & Balthazar* (1980). In José María Camps’ *El caso Sodoma* (published in Mexico in the volume entitled *Tres obras dramáticas* in 1961), however, homosexuality appears as a respectable cultural feature in the society of Sodom. This feature precluded the staging of the play in Francoist Spain, due to the fact that it was for its censors “un tratamiento irreverente hacia el texto bíblico en el que está basada una defensa explícita de la homosexualidad” [an irreverent treatment for the biblical text on which it is based and a defense of homosexuality] (Muñoz Cáliz, 2009, p. 572). Indeed, Bara, the king of Sodom, defended homosexuality as the right solution “para dar respuesta al problema que suponía la superpoblación” [to address the problem entailed by overpopulation] (p. 574).

taken over government in Ryman's world and have begun exterminating males in a literally Nazi way. Only gays (including heterosexuals who might parade as gays in order to escape their fate) are spared, because their orientation prevents them from being defined as purely male and, therefore, violent. Nevertheless, they are segregated and used as hands for the dirty work of gendercide. Their uneasy position reflects their ambiguous status in a feminist society still based on a sexual binary mirroring and reproducing, in a feminist version, the preconceptions underpinning patriarchal misogyny. Feminist essentialism ignores here the liberating potential of free desire, homosexual or otherwise, valorizing biological sex over sexuality, in such a way that male homosexuality is seen "as quintessentially masculinist, even in a culture which predominantly defines homosexuality as a failure of masculinity" (Pearson, 2003, p. 89-90), as Italian futurists conspicuously did, among many others. In "O Happy Day!," the traditional doubt on gays' true 'masculinity' saves them, at least for the time being. However, their biological sex still makes them suspicious, relegating them to such functions as being guards in death camps, where their debased situation turns them into those rapists that human males are supposed to be. Ryman shows how violence is produced by particular structures rather than by any biological programming.³²

Ryman's story is seen by Pearson as representative of a gay stance seemingly uncongenial to utopia, at least to the separatist kind once and again embraced by extreme feminists. She sees as the main reason to account for "the lack of gay male equivalents to the lesbian separatist utopia" the fact that "the power dynamic they explore is not defined by sexual difference, but by sexual dissidence." As such, gay men, "as a group, fail to be seduced, even as a thought experiment, by the temptation 'to kill in order to put an end to all killing'" (p. 93), preferring instead to believe that there is room for them in a potential pan-sexual utopia where each one would be defined not as belonging to a particular gender, but as persons freely engaging in diverse ways to desire. This is the sense of androgyny in Aguinaldo Silva's *Primeira carta aos andróginos* (1975), which is "used with exactitude to describe an Edenic androgyny whereby all members of an entire human community can interact

³² "[H]e is able to make a pointed analysis, not so much of the *potential* of violence (read: *threat*, which was the sociobiological point) but of the *propagation* of violence: He is able to show how, as a structure, violence moves from outside to inside, completely ignoring the fence the women have erected to contain it; thus, it is revealed as a structure that has little to do with hormones" (Delany, 1994, p. X). The case against gender essentialism in separatist feminist utopias seems clear.

erotically” (Foster, 1991, p. 128). This lyrical (and highly experimental) novel tells the story of an abused gay in the context of the latest military dictatorship in Brazil. In fantasy or in (fictional) reality, he is transported to the lost planet of Phaeton, where the formerly exclusively gay man encounters a new Eve with whom he founds a new pansexually oriented and incestuous³³ humanity, forgetting his former humiliations when seeking homosexual fulfilment on homophobic old Earth. As a result, however, the exclusive sexual attraction of males toward other males as a respectable possibility is effectively refuted through a posited constructed pan-sexualism that negates gays their own identity. By becoming bisexual, rather than pansexual, Silva’s hero implies that gayness would pass away in a world where no sexual oppression would exist. The wish for inclusion leads to a utopia where gays, as a sexual category and as a collective defined precisely by the exclusivity of their inherent sexual orientation (biologically inherent or lived as such in actual practice), would indeed be extinguished. Positing universal bisexuality, as most religions and totalitarian ideologies have posited compulsory heterosexuality, as the sexual ingredient of utopia or paradise may not make, indeed, a meaningful difference for gay men who feel no sexual attraction to women.

Unlike what transpires in Silva’s well-intended but dubious gay utopia, the existence of a gay nation is recognized and celebrated in a Spanish novel written in a period when some proposed that the cultural gay nation acquires its own ‘nation’ state. Luis Antonio de Villena’s *Huesos de Sodoma* (2004) reflects an ongoing discussion on queer nationalism (Walker, 1996). The bones in Villena’s novel are the last bodily remains of the inhabitants of a destroyed city that it is identified as the biblical Sodom, following the discovery of the inscribed Naucratis Stone, a long document similar to the famous Rosetta stone. In the novel that document reveals the Sodomitic tongue, as well as an inclusive culture and society which did not repress homosexuality. These discoveries are soon celebrated by gays, who adopt the ancient sodomites as the prestigious ancient foundation for their nationalism. A global gay movement is then born, asking for statehood on the old land of Sodom, as a compensation for the suffering inflicted by hetero-patriarchal regimes for centuries, following the model of Jewish Zionism. Villena describes this movement with an eye

³³ Silva’s new Adam has sexual intercourse with his sons. A similar kind of ritualized incest in a men-only world features in Rand B. Lee’s “Full Fathom Five My Father Lies” (1981), but the young son is rather reluctant to follow the traditional ways of his society. Incest, not homosexuality, is questioned in this subtly written tale.

to its inner diversity, reflecting at the same time the very diversity of contemporary gay communities as seen from within. The urge for a gay nation is contested by part of the gays themselves as reductive of their own identity. By adopting the ideological excuses for nationalism (language, manners as distinguishing features, territoriality), the would-be founding fathers of New Sodom (*Nea Sodoma*) seem to be creating a gay identity as exclusive and excluding as the ones posited by ethnic nationalisms. Therefore, this novel “evidencia el armazón de la nación, expone la invención disfrazada de veracidad y señala las falencias de la *intelligentsia* que se encarga de construir la nación”³⁴ (Flores-Páez, 2010, p. 76). This would be the thesis in this “novela de tesis”³⁵ (Drake, 2004, p. 14), if the book belonged to this type of novel defending a particular ideology throughout the narrative by using the characters as spokespersons. Instead, Villena has written, rather, an essayistic novel, following the strong tradition of the modern philosophical novel. *Huesos de Sodoma* is often essay-like, with many pages dedicated to conversations between its exclusively male characters confronting different views on the gay nation and on the New Sodom national project. These discussions offer a balanced view of it, as well as of the gay community that debates and ultimately supports it before the United Nations. Villena shows its doubts on the proposed national utopia, but he does not present it as a foolish or even as a negative development after all. The novel actually ends when a republic of Nea Sodoma is near proclamation, although not on the Near/Middle Eastern region, but on several Mediterranean islands already visited by many gay tourists, Sardinia, Ibiza and Mykonos. How would this Mediterranean New Sodom look like, also for their heterosexual inhabitants? Would be it eutopian, or its opposite? Villena does not imagine the shape of the potential gay utopia, but only its possibility and construction, in the same way as N. A. Diaman had not described earlier, in the novel *Ed Dean is Queer* (1978), the workings of a prospective gay and lesbian Pacific Republic following the secession of the formerly Californian San Francisco and San Mateo counties, although it is underlined that this new independent state is a haven for (sexual) minorities.

The answer to the above questions will arrive with the only full-fledged gay utopian novel I am aware of, published as recently as early 2016, Fabio Canino’s

³⁴ It shows the framework of the nation, it exposes invention disguised as truth, and it indicates the shortcomings of the intelligentsia responsible for building the nation.

³⁵ Thesis novel.

Rainbow Republic. Its subtitle, “romanzo distopico gay,”³⁶ is intended to be ironic. The expectations of a gay dystopia are soon dispelled. A heterosexual journalist from the aptly called “Repubblica Italo-Vaticana”³⁷ travels to Greece in order to report on the change brought about by gays taking over the governance of the country, after its financial failure sends many inhabitants into economic exile. The pink dollar (and euro) comes to the rescue: Canino tells the story of Greece soon becoming the main center for LGBT business, as well as the new home for gays and lesbians in such numbers that they become the majority, and the Rainbow Republic is proclaimed. Heterosexuals can freely live in this country, where only intolerance is not tolerated.

Rainbow Republic is certainly utopian. The state and its government are as good as one could hope for within the current capitalist and consumerist system, a system enthusiastically embraced by gays in the novel. Canino imagines his gay utopia as a picture of current Western reality in economic and social terms, written large.³⁸ His main reference is, however, his native Italy, whose backwardness regarding the pink nation is often contrasted with new Greece, thriving under the described gay and lesbian good governance and cool life-style based on tourism and fun. The novel is also utopian for its narrative structure, with the visitor from outside utopia (the Italian journalist) that is toured around by natives to discover the wonders of the utopian realm until the visitor is fully convinced of utopian superiority and settles down there. Each chapter presents different aspects of the gay eutopia. The visitor blandly objects to some in this novel, but the view of the good workings of the *Rainbow Republic* is irresistible. True freedom and happiness have there their abode, and this is also why the Italian journalist ends up moving to the Rainbow Republic to live with the woman he has fallen in love during his visit. It is thus shown that heterosexuals can also be happy under a gay rule that celebrates difference, instead of trying to suppress it as other utopian experiments have done (e.g., Mitchison’s *Solution Three*). It can also be read as a tacit answer to feminist separatists dreaming of getting rid of obnoxious human males in their female-only utopias. Canino’s encompassing utopia is one of inclusion, diversity and openness. Unlike its

³⁶ Gay dystopian novel.

³⁷ Italian-Vatican Republic.

³⁸ A different vision of the fate of gays, especially of the ‘effeminate’ ones, in a future purely neoliberal world is portrayed in Juan Sardá’s *Taksim* (2012): “The ‘corporative society’ vision for today’s readers might seem a utopia and a desired fantasy if they occupy a neoliberal or/and gay (as an identity) position for the dispossessed but for the queer the same vision might be a dystopic nightmare” (Sobolczyk, 2014, p. 368).

predecessors aiming at full integration in a society ruled by the heterosexual majority, the author turns the tables and tries to demonstrate how a liberal gay rule would work out much better in social and political practice than other systems tainted by patriarchy, with no need to have recourse to universal homosexuality, nor to pansexuality, in order to suggest the peace and happiness that would entail the free expression of everybody's desire in a post-national framework, avoiding also the ethnic pitfalls which Villena had warned against in *Huesos de Sodoma*.

Canino provides a gay utopian scenario that opposes the prevalent anti-gay misrepresentations in this influential literary mode. Unfortunately for gay culture, its flat, 'best-sellerish' writing and conventional comicality do not compare favorably with the literary sophistication of most anti-gay dystopian pieces discussed above. Gay utopias that can be enjoyed as literature, in a way similar to a number of feminist/lesbian utopias remain a desideratum. Canino's work is, nevertheless, important, due to the fact that it illustrates with crystal clarity a defining feature of gay (e)utopianism: its rejection of both masculinist patriarchy and feminist (moral) supremacism, as being both conducive to negative conceptions of the other. At least in utopian fiction, gays prefer to assume the role of the 'gentles' in Sally Miller Gearhart's *The Wanderground* (1979), in order to bridge the differences between diverse people, helping them to understand each other, instead of positing a separated and superior system along ideological, national or gender lines. Since the utopian mode usually implies a comparison between different systems, one considered much better (or much worse) than the other, this could perhaps be an explanation of its scarcity among gay-minded writers: they would prefer inclusion and compromise to confrontation³⁹ and the implied binarism of utopia.⁴⁰

³⁹ An exception could be "Gay Revolutionary" (1987), by Michael Swift. In this vision written in poetic prose, the oppressed gay minority dreams of a future violent reversal of current power relationship between gays and heterosexuals. However, the text states that it is a tragic fantasy dictated by madness. Before Swift, William S. Burroughs had imagined in *The Wild Boys* (1971) bands of gay boys using violence to bring about the downfall of western civilization, but this destructive process does not allow for the presentation of a fully constructed alternative society. Unlike Swift's, Burroughs narrative is hardly utopian.

⁴⁰ This paper was written within the framework of the research project HAR2015-65957-P, included in the Spanish R & D & I National Plan.

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