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Communication in the World of Fantasy: A Case of Inez Haynes Gillmore's *Angel Island*

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ABSTRACT

One of the greatest classics of feminist fantasy science fiction, *Angel Island* by Inez Haynes Gillmore, tells the tragic story of what happens when a group of five shipwrecked sailors encounter on an Island five winged-women who have left their own race of winged-people. The men and women on this uncharted island are mutually attracted to each other. The bird-like language of the winged-women is as mysterious and fascinating as their graceful beauty. Enchantment turns to lust and the men possess these angel-like creatures in a rather horrific and uncouth manner. The men must come to terms with the language and culture of this extraordinary race of female creatures. The relationship that develops between the men and women in *Angel Island* work out as one would imagine they would in most feminist novels in the early part of the twentieth century. The relationship is characterized by romance, male dominance, gender inequality, revolts, rebellions and conflicts. The current study focuses on the communicative segment of this fantastic relationship.

Key words: Fantasy, science fiction, feminism, communication, characterization

INTRODUCTION

The literature of science fiction and fantasy has a rich history, with roots dating many years to the fantastic voyage popularized by such literary works as Gulliver's Travels, and continuing with an extensively varied production of narrative literature through the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Women writers have been drawn to science

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fiction in this period because it offers rich possibilities for exploring alternative modes of social experience. Science fiction enables women to imagine new and liberating alternatives for their experiences. They explored, for instance, explicitly feminist social arrangements in which they envisioned egalitarian gender relations. Fantasy fiction can be a way of describing an imperfect world and provoking social change. Women writers in particular have used the mode of fantasy to deal explicitly with women-centered issues such as male dominance, rape, gender inequality etc. Feminist science fiction fantasy works expressing this new consciousness surfaced quite early. In 1914 Inez Haynes Gillmore published her novel *Angel Island* “ a radical feminist swiftian fantasy “ (Davin, 2006) at a time when women had very little freedom. *Angel Island* is a fantastic tale about relations between men and women; their differences, their struggles, and their mutual attraction. Inez Haynes uses fantasy as a stylistic device to create an imaginary world in which conditions and circumstances may be better for women than they were in the real world of the pre-1914 period. In the present work, I shall explore and analyze the nature of the communication between the male and female characters as they interact in the new world created by the novelist.

BACKGROUND

The novelist of *Angel Island*, Inez Haynes Gillmore was an American feminist author, journalist, member of the National Women’s Party and President of the Authors Guild (Showalter, 1989). Inez Haynes was militant in the suffragist movement in the early 1900s and Showalter described her as a rebellious and a daring woman. Inez Haynes

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Gillmore, later, changed her name to Inez Haynes Irwin when she got remarried to William Henry Irwin (although she continued publishing under her former name, Inez Haynes Gillmore). Inez Haynes Irwin was a feminist leader and a political activist. She wrote a history of American women, *Angles and Amazons: A Hundred Years of American Women* (1933). She published over 30 novels, including *Angel Island* (1914) “a radical feminist science fiction fantasy”. Inez Haynes Irwin’s fiction often addressed feminist issues and the plight of women including divorce, single parenthood and problems involving women in the job environment. *Angel Island* is classified under the Plume American Women Writer’s series. In the novel, Inez Haynes Gillmore perceives life from a different perspective and she analyzes the status of women more vividly than usual. By 1914 when the novel was first published, women in America were not yet given the legal right to exercise their franchise. As a feminist science fiction fantasist, Inez Haynes thought women in America could be given freedom and equal right like men. She therefore chose fantasy as the channel through which she could deal with egalitarian gender relation issues.

In *Angel Island*, Inez Haynes Gillmore presents ten characters: five males and five females and she puts them in the world of her novel to interact. The male characters are: Ralph Addington, Frank Merrill, Billy Fairfax, Honey Smith and Pete Murphy. They are representatives of people in the real world; they exhibit characteristics of their class. The male characters form an element of realism in the novel. The female characters are strange women with wings. They add a touch of fantasy to the novel. The female

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characters are Lulu, Chiquita, Clara, Peachy and Julia, and it is the males who gave them these names. It is worth noting that the five winged-women had rebelled when their people (winged-humans) decided to migrate south, and they flew north instead. The winged-women found “Angel Island” deserted and inviting.

The novelist makes the male characters portray the attitude men in America in the pre-1914 period adopt towards women. The male characters think women must be subdued and controlled. This explains partly why they capture and hack off the wings of the women. The men’s action is also due to the fact that they perceive the females as primitive people who must be tamed and exposed to modern civilization. Nevertheless, the male characters do not seem to understand the women. They think by allowing the women to fly, they will no longer have dominance over them. The women, on the other hand, want to do what they are capable of doing; they want to be free like the men. Ralph Addington, for instance, can be likened to men of authority in the political arena of America who did not want to grant women their right to exercise their franchise. However, Frank Merrill has a different opinion from Ralph’s: Frank upholds the principle of equal rights of the sexes. It should be noted that the female characters discover and settle on Angle Island before the men did. The women are in fact, hiding in a cave on the island before the men are shipwrecked and the former reveal themselves to the latter in a subtle fashion. It is also worth noting that the novelist makes Julia an exceptional female character in order to achieve a particular goal. Julia can be regarded as representative of a female political activist in the real world. She is the back-bone of her

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colleagues in their fight for equality. She is the architect and the driving force of the women's rebellion. The novelist makes the winged-women revolt and win concessions and this is hope for her American female counterparts in their fight for equality.

SCIENCE FICTION

Science fiction works to persuade the reader that things which seem impossible are actually scientifically explainable; that is they really are subject to natural law, once we understand them correctly (Attebery, 1980). The first noteworthy feature of early women's science fiction is the tradition of socialist and feminist utopias. The science fiction literature remained a place where most female writers continued their social agitations. It is worth noting that the speculations and grievances of these women writers were profoundly different from the earlier utopian tradition. Consequently, they explored explicitly feminist social arrangements in which they fantasized gender equality relations. They also portrayed strong female characters who liberated themselves from their stereotypical situations to become active agents of social transformation in their own right. Their themes and their treatment of gender relations show that they did not echo late nineteenth century utopia prophecies but a new wave of feminism that had emerged in the twentieth century. Stories expressing this new consciousness appeared quite early. In 1914, Inez Haynes Gillmore published *Angel Island* which was in consonance with the literature of fantasy and science fiction. *Angel Island* is a feminist fantasy adventure novel about a group of five men who are shipwrecked on an Island where they meet five shy but beautiful winged women. The novel is an allegory about women's freedom

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(Bleiler et al., 1990) and the restraint imposed by heterosexual relationship. The current study explores the communicative aspect of this interaction. The feminist science fiction of the first half of the twentieth century called into question certain assumptions about gender and sexuality and imagined alternative forms of relationship between men and women. Another noteworthy aspect of early feminine science fiction writers is that, as a group with a common goal, they made their depictions of people and gender issues more emphatic and with a new approach.

FANTASY

Despite its arguable longer history as a mode of writing, fantasy particularly by women, did not have as much presence in the market of the 1960s and early 1970s as did science fiction (Reid, 2009). Many women have written in both genres, particularly during this period, often in the subgenre of science fantasy. Fantasy is a tradition in American Literature. Attebery (1980) suggests that America's fantasy tradition is an attempt at creating an American "fairyland". Attebery (ibid) perceives fantasy from a literary point of view. According to him, fantasy is a form of prose narrative which evokes wonder through the consistent treatment of the impossible as though it were possible. *Angel Island* is part of the fantasy tradition in American literature. In the novel, the writer presents strange women with wings who are from a race of winged-humans. The wings of the female characters are the principal element of fantasy in the novel. They show that the novelist is presenting a world of her imagination, a fantastic world with different situations other than what exist in the real world. The wings are also symbolic; they stand for freedom, independence and feminine maturity. The women's wings represent

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feminism; they imply that the flying–women are mature enough to exist in the world of their own.

Fantasists have always transgressed boundaries of both gender and genre, a trend especially celebrated by women writers who have found in fantasy the freedom to explore the diversity of sexual identities. Some female fantasists created secondary world in which women could be warriors, wizards, and rulers, whether they had to fight for that right or were accepted as such. Patricia Mckillip's *The Forgotten Beast of Eld* (1974) is a story of a young female wizard who enters the world of men to take revenge for an attempted rape. In their attempt to recuperate archetypal roles played by female characters, many authors have turned to narrative traditions of the past. Fairy Tales and Folklore have proven to be rich sources of feminist fantasy and ever–growing market since the publications in 1979 of Angela Carter's *Bloody Chamber*.

COMMUNICATION IN ANGEL ISLAND

The issue of communication is perceived from different perspectives. In one way, communication is a process by which two or more people exchange ideas, facts, feelings or impressions in such a way that they gain understanding. Joshi (1999) views communication as a process of social interaction through which people are influenced by ideas, attitudes, knowledge and behaviour. According to McQuail (1975), communication is a process which increases commonality and also requires elements of commonality for it to occur at all. McQuail added that various factors contribute to bringing about the

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commonality: the shared symbolic environment and a social relationship among those who participate in the communication. Stephen Covey says “communication is simply mutual understanding” (Quoted in *College Communication*, p.4). It is worth noting that communication in *Angel Island* “a feminist science fiction fantasy adventure novel” is unique. Communication in *Angel Island* can be divided into four categories: communication between the male characters before they discover the female characters, communication between the winged-women before they reveal themselves to the shipwrecked sailors, communication between the men and the flying-ladies without a common language and communication between the men and women after the former has taught the latter the English language.

In *Angel Island*, the male characters are the first to be exposed to the reader. They are survivors of a South Sea’s shipwreck and are deposited on the beach of a seemingly uninhabited island. After coming to terms with their predicament, communication becomes vital for the survival of the men. They brood over memories of their shipwreck experience and they consider their chances of rescue from this seemingly deserted island. It is worth noting that for two or more people to engage in a common, cooperative effort, they must be able to communicate with one another (Joshi, 1999). The men speak honestly about their relationship with women and they almost convinced themselves that they can survive without them. By making the male characters occupy the initial part of the novel, the writer as it were, creates a world for them. The men prepare the ground to admit the women; the latter is therefore integrated into the world of the former.

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Ralph Addington is a careful and intelligent observer of men and things around him. He is widely read and an interesting talker. He has certain common interests with his other four companions. His knowledge in sociology and racism make him compatible with Frank Merrill. His interest in all athletic sports bring him and Billy Fairfax together. He talks business adventure and romance with Smith. With Pete Murphy he talks about German Opera, French literature, American Muck-raking and Japanese Art. In his native country, Ralph Addington is highly interested in women. In fact, every woman attracts his attention. He does not keep one female partner; any new woman however plain immediately eclipses her predecessor-however beautiful. Ralph cannot imagine being on an island where there are no women. So when he realizes their chances of rescue are very small he exclaims, "Think of being in a place like this months or a year without a woman around! Why, we'll be savages at the end of three months".¹

Ralph has much knowledge in terms of the behaviour and attitude of women. This is evident in his initiation of the capture of the winged-women. As bait to capture the ladies he says to his companions, "Did you ever see a woman yet who wouldn't fall for ribbons?"². Ralph also suggests the use of mirrors, which he claims can attract the ladies' attention. When the flying-ladies do not show up on the Island because there has been a conflict between them. Ralph says to his colleagues, "As to their Coming back why, it stands to reason that they'll have just as much curiosity about us as we have about them"³Ralph also interprets the winged-women's action on another occasion to his

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companions and says the former will come back to them. Following this interpretation, the winged-ladies indeed return the next day and this makes Ralph's forecast about them come true. In another instance, Ralph applies his knowledge about women to explain an aspect of the ladies' behaviour to his friends. He says that when a woman begins to let her hair down it means she's interested. Meaning in communication is indeed negotiated through the use of language (Griffin, 2000).

Frank Merrill is a sociologist traveling in the orient to study prevailing conditions. He is a professor of a small university in the middle-west. He is, as it were, the scholar of the five-man group. Intellectually, Frank is a typical academic product. On Angel Island, his academic quality is manifested in several instances. When the men see the ladies walk for the first time, the countenances of the other colleagues of Frank change in form and expression; they were dumbfounded. Frank Merrill alone studied the phenomenon with the cool critical eye of scientific observation. If some of Frank's speeches are compared to his colleagues', it can be realized that he speaks in a formal and academic way. Most of the speeches of his colleagues are short and colloquial. As the men are not certain about the nature of the winged-ladies, Pete Murphy recites a list of animals which he thinks the winged-ladies may be. Pete does this in an orgy of Imaginative Conjecture. Frank expresses what he thinks the winged-ladies are in a more academic manner. He says they are some lost species; creatures from a prehistoric era. Later, when the men realize that what they see afar are winged-women, Frank says, "That extraordinary phenomenon of their wings interests me so much"⁴.

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Frank acts as leader of the five-man group. He instructs his colleagues during most of their working sessions. He assists and gives direction to his friends in most of their endeavours. He also presides over them on occasions such as the burial of the people who died out of the shipwreck and the weddings on the Island. Frank plays a kind of authoritative role over his companions. For instance, he gives the “green-light” before his colleagues embark on the capture of the ladies. Frank sometimes appears to reason differently from his friends. For example, when the women are fighting for their freedom and right to fly, he sides with them but his colleagues say it is unnatural for women to fly. Ralph Addington, for instance, does not want Angela, his daughter to fly. Frank does not agree with Ralph and the rest of his friends because he feels and thinks that since the women are flying creatures, they should be allowed to fly. According to Frank, as far as abstract justice was concerned he and his colleagues have no right to hold the winged-women bound to the earth. He adds that if the air is their natural habitat, it is criminal for them to keep the women out of it. Unlike his colleagues, Frank Merrill upholds the equal right of men and women. In an argument about equality Frank says the women own the Island just as much as the men do and that the former have been coming to the island for months before the latter discover it. Frank concludes that the women ought to have every kind of right, freedom and privilege on the island like the men have. Frank has not entered into any matrimony before in the world of his native country. Unlike Ralph Addington, Frank is not so conversant with women. When Frank sees the winged-women for the first time his interest is aroused towards informing the rest of the world about this

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discovery through writing. On one occasion, as Frank and his colleagues are sharing their views about these strange winged-ladies he points out, “I’m interested only in their ability to fly... I can think of them only as birds... I have to keep recalling to myself that they’re women. I can’t realize it”⁵.

Honey Smith is engaged in a number of business ventures in his native country. His business career makes him tour a lot of places, especially, the coastal areas. Honey is on one of his business trips by sea when the shipwreck occurs. Honey Smith is someone who is not taken seriously. For example, his companions on Angel Island, burst into roars of laughter when he tells them he has heard a woman’s laugh. Honey has something mysteriously compelling about his personality. According to the omniscient narrator, the whole world of creatures feels the charming effect of Honey’s personality. He has good looks and he attracts women greatly. He has a way of drawing women’s attention. For instance, as he finds it difficult to communicate with his female partner on Angel Island, he imitates the call of the mating male bird and indeed, the winged-lady girl-friend, naturally, responds in the mating female bird manner. On another occasion, when the men are faced with the problem of interacting with the women, Honey exhibits his swimming skills and this performance goes a long way to arouse the enthusiasm of the winged-women. Honey, however, does not want a woman to have absolute freedom. He therefore sides with Ralph Addington, Billy Fairfax and Pete Murphy in their refusal to allow the winged-ladies to fly again after their wings are cut. Honey’s assertion is that “It is not natural for women to fly. God never intends them to”⁶.

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Billy Fairfax is physically strong but unlike Honey, he is not all that handsome. Billy is the shy and slow-going type of person. He loves his Angel Island girl- friend (Julia), but he is too slow in his attempt to win her totally to his side. For instance, when Julia visits him at his usual solitary spot, he just stares at her and talks to her in his imagination. However, Billy's difficulty to win Julia's love is also due to Julia's reluctance to give in to Billy's advances and to accept his marriage proposal. Julia initially refuses to marry Billy because she is not satisfied with the status of women on Angel Island. Billy is in fact, the last of his colleagues to marry and bring forth a child.

In spite of his rather slow attitude towards women, Billy has his own opinion about how they are supposed to be treated. He says, "In my opinion there is only one law to govern a man's relation with a women - the law of chivalry. To love her and cherish her, to do all the hard work of the world for her, to stand between her and everything that is unbeautiful and unpleasant, to think for her, to put her on a pedestal and worship her"⁷. This speech of Billy is reflected in his behaviour towards Julia the girl-friend. It takes Julia a long time to accept Billy as the husband. But Billy shows his love for her. He gives her all the attention and care that she deserves. Unlike his colleagues whose attitude change towards their Angel Island wives, Billy's love for Julia is constant. Peachy, Ralph Addington's Angel Island wife, confirms Billy's love for Julia by saying to Julia "Billy loves you just as much as first"⁸.

Pete Murphy is described as an artist. In his native country, he is a journalist by profession, a musician and a painter. He also writes fiction, verse and drama. He has the courage of a lion; he is mercurial, sanguine and witty. Pete is travelling through the orient by sea to write a series of Muckraking articles. He has had a bitter marital experience in his native country. He has married twice and divorced twice. He is undertaking a trip by sea partly to forget his last unhappy marriage. According to the persona, Pete lacks the faculty of learning by experience especially where the opposite sex is concerned. Having experienced marital life before, one will expect that Pete's Marriage to winged-lady Clara will be a model for his friends. However, Pete can be seen to be more concerned about their new camp which is under construction than about his wife. He spends most of his leisure time designing structures writing and decorating. Being a literary professional, Pete Murphy takes up the responsibility of teaching the flying-ladies English. Like Frank who is writing a monograph about Angel Island, Pete also writes down his experiences. He writes poems for the winged-ladies to recite and he writes articles which he reads to his colleagues by way of entertaining them. Pete produces a number of paintings among which is Clara's portrait.

The male characters express their views about what they think the flying – women are: According to Pete Murphy, they are neither birds nor women; they are angels. It is the duty of his colleagues to fall down and worship them. Honey Smith emphasizes that they are girls, It is the duty of the men to buy them taxi-cabs, theatre tickets, late suppers, candy and flowers .In Ralph Addington's view, they are females, It is the duty of the men

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to tame, subjugate, infatuate and control them. Frank Merrill says they are an entirely new race of beings who require new laws.

The female characters in *Angel Island* are winged-women from a race of winged humans. They separate themselves from their people, migrate and discover Angel Island. They make this move in order to assert their freedom and independence. The winged-women in the novel reveal themselves to the shipwrecked men and to the reader in a mysterious, fantastic and subtle manner. The men start hearing strange voices which turn to visions and then to reality (five women with wondrous, colourful wings fly above the men in intricate configurations). It is worth noting that even though there is no common language that the men and women can communicate in, they understand one another through non-verbal means. The winged-women and their male counterparts exchange information without words. They express their thoughts and feelings with body language- gestures, facial expressions, body movements or positions (Camp and Satterwhite, 2000).

The women are fascinated by the winglessness of the men. To demonstrate their interest in the men each woman visits the man of her choice for non-verbal interaction; this visitation takes place when the men are alone or asleep. The women follow the men around, teasing them and exchanging smiles with them. Series of actions take place in the process of non-verbal communication. These involve types of expressions, interpretations and responses. In *Angel Island*, Lulu will pick a screw-driver and put it within the reach of Honey Smith, Chiquita will drop a flower on Frank Merrill's book, Clara will throw

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pebbles and sea shells at Pete Murphy in a wild-goose-chase game. Humans act toward people or things on the basis of the meanings they assign to those people or things (Blumer, 1969). The winged-women show so much interest and love for the men in diverse ways through non-verbal mode of communication. There are other instances to show the women's expression of interest in the men. For instance, on one occasion, Clara take Pete's collection of poems and she flew away with it, Chiquita plucks up courage and she kisses Frank Merrill on one of her visits. In one near-tragic event, Lulu cannot look on while a shark devours Honey Smith; she makes a swift attempt and her colleagues help her to rescue her boy-friend. The question is what do all these non-verbal actions communicate to the men? The winged-women aroused the men's interest in them and the men fall in love with the women. However, the men become frustrated by the women's aloofness and timidity and they decide to capture their winged girl-friends.

Among the female characters in the novel, Julia plays a major role. She is the leader of the five-woman group on "Angel Island". She has concern for her colleagues. She tries to know their problems and she finds the best possible way of arriving at a solution. For instance, when Ralph Addington threatens to cut off Angela's wings, there is the need for Julia to do something to save Peachy from emotional and psychological stress. Julia appeals to her colleague's conscience through speeches. It is worth realizing that the wings of Peachy's daughter are significant to the development of the novel. Angela's wings form the basis of the female fight for all girls with wings to be allowed to fly.

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Angela's wings are a source of comfort, hope and inspiration to the winged-women when their wings are constantly sheared by the men. Angela represents a future generation of winged females on Angel Island.

Julia is the most intelligent of her fellow winged-women. Billy Fairfax, her husband, christens her "Julia" on the basis of her intellectuality. Julia's thinking ability makes her stand out among her colleagues. Her mates claim they do not think. They therefore liken her to the men whom they regard as beings who make use of their reasoning faculty. Lulu says of Julia "Julia is like them; she likes to think"⁹. Frank Merrill, the leader of the men's group, admits that Julia thinks after analysing the circumstances that make the women learn to walk. Frank concludes "No question about that, Julia thinks"¹⁰. In fact, Julia is the brain behind the flying-women's fight for freedom and equal rights between the sexes on Angel Island. When Ralph Addington asks Peachy what their learning to walk means, Julia answers, "it means-rebellion, it means that we have decided among ourselves that we will not permit you to cut Angela's wings. If you will promise us that you will not cut Angela's wings nor the wings of any child born to us, we in our turn will promise to return to our homes and take our lives up with you just where we left off"¹¹.

Julia is the only one among her mates who correctly interprets the gifts of the men-fans, scarfs, mirrors-as baits for a trap to capture them. Ironically, she is overwhelmed by the big diamond "the Wilmington Blue" because according to her she has never before in her life seen anything that she wants. But this diamond is so exquisite, so chiseled and so

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perfect. The diamond seems like a living creature; it enchants Julia. This diamond is what lures Julia and she leads her mates to the club house where the men capture them and cut off their wings. Among her colleagues, Julia alone refuses to marry her lover, Billy Fairfax, until she is satisfied with the status-quo. She asks Billy to marry her at the time when there is going to be equal rights and freedom between the sexes. Julia gives birth to a winged-son and then dies. Her son marks the turning point in the situation on Angel Island after the ladies wings are cut. The wings of Julia's child shows that there is going to be flying and walking for both men and women.

It is worthy to note that the female characters discover Angle Island and settle there before the male characters have the misfortune of the shipwreck and are compelled to stay on it. Julia says "when we found these Islands, it seemed to us that they must have been created especially for us"¹². However, for stylistic purposes, the novelist makes the female characters enter the world of the male characters. The females do not stay on the part of the Island where the men have settled, they lodge in a cave: a kind of hide-out.

When the men discover the winged-women, initially, they give them descriptive titles: flying-girls, flying-queens, flying-maidens, winged-women. Then later the men christen the women with names that they like. The women, on their part, simply accept the names the men give them. Later, when the men capture and cut off the ladies' wings, the latter abandon their own native language and use the English the men teach them until the climactic moment of their rebellion when their leader calls them in "the language of

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flight". Apart from Frank Merrill who attempts to learn the language of the women out of curiosity, the rest of the men do not bother to learn.

Like most women in the real world do, the winged ladies do not give in easily to the men. The ladies arouse the men's enthusiasm for them. The men, on the other hand, do not give up their process of courtship. They trap the ladies in the club house and cut off their wings because according to Honey smith God did not intend women to fly . Although the ladies are depressed and disappointed because they have become wingless , they do not react violently. Naturally, they weep, mourn and go a bit crazy. It is worthy to note that the ladies allow their wings to be sheared every six months for a period of four years. This shows the extent of the men's control and domination over them. When the women lose their wings, they become handicapped; they can neither fly nor walk. The ladies sit together and talk about their past experiences. They sometimes engage themselves in what Julia calls the "Do-you-remember game". In this discourse, Julia reminds her colleagues that they are referred to as incorruptible air-women who wish to escape the "Great Doom" of their people . From the novel, the reader realizes that the "Great Doom" the women are running away from is marriage. Paradoxically, the women plunge themselves into the "Great Doom" that they try to escape by separating themselves from their people . Consequently, they fall in love and marry the men.

The ladies confide much in one another; they do not hesitate to tell the truth and share secrets. For instance, they freely tell each other about what they do with their shorn

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wings. Lulu, says she turns her wings into little brooms for the hearth; Chiquita makes a fan with hers; Clara decorates the walls of their room with hers; Peachy throws hers into the sea and Julia says she set hers ablaze. What Julia does with her shorn wings makes her stand out as a radical and a rebel. She demonstrates her fury and disgust about what the men have done to them. The winged-women can also keep secrets. They promise one another that they will not tell anyone about the cave that they used to lodge in before their tragic capture by the men. Since none of them let the cat out of the bag, they are able to use the cave as a hiding place during the period of their strike action. When there is any issue at stake the women come together to take a unanimous decision. For example, they decide to rebel and to refuse to have Angela's wings cut. The women also act in concert for a common course. They fight together and win the right for all girls in Angela's generation to fly.

Communication bridges the gap between people with misunderstanding and it goes a long way to solidify a mutual sense of commitment (Torto, 2009). The winged-women are entangled in a conflict before their capture. This unfortunate incident occurred when Julia warns her colleagues against visiting the men's section of the Island, since she perceives the men as unpredictable creatures. Julia's mates refuse to take her advice probably because the men attract them extremely. There is therefore a clash of interest and misunderstanding between them and as a result, Julia feels so lonely that she attempts to commit suicide. This shows that Julia treats her relationship with her colleagues with passion. Nonetheless, Julia did not take her life since she realizes that she is in love with

Billy. Julia reconciles with her mates later and she takes up her position again as leader, commander, instructor and adviser.

The women study the men; they talk about them trying to figure them out. They create their own opinions about the men depending on the prevailing circumstances. The general opinion the ladies have about the men is that they are earth-creatures. Peachy describes the men as tyrants, despots and devils. Peachy is influenced by the neglect and the deprivation the men make the women experience and the way the men treat them after their wings are cut. To Peachy the men are so cruel in the first place for cutting off their wings and preventing them from flying. She refers to the men as despots because they refuse initially to grant the ladies request to fly. Peachy describes the men as tyrants and devils since they shear the women's wings periodically and ignore them. Julia perceives the men as discovers, explorers and conquerors. Julia is referring to the way the men realize the presence of the ladies on the Island; how they study and take control over the environment of the island; and how they study the women and succeed in capturing them.

CONCLUSION

Angel Island is a radical feminist science fiction fantasy novel. The novelist, Inez Haynes Gillmore, based her novel on science fiction and fantasy as they offered her the opportunity to imagine new and liberated alternatives to deal with gender inequality issues. In *Angel Island*, Inez Haynes presents strange women with wings who are from a race of winged-humans. The wings of the female characters symbolize equality, feminism, freedom and independence. In *Angel Island*, the novelist depicts a world of her

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imagination with different situations for women. Julia in the novel, stands out as a strong female character who become an active agent of change. The current study has also looked at the nature of the communication between the winged-women and the shipwrecked sailors. The most intriguing part of this interaction is the non-verbal mode of communication which reveals the mutual attraction that culminates in marriages on “Angel Island”. Meaning arises out of the social interaction on the island. Communication in *Angel Island* is unique but complex.

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