UNCOVERING A TRADITION: FEMALE UTOPIAS

BEFORE HERLAND

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Introduction:

Where the Tradition Begins

Although studies in feminist utopias are becoming increasingly more common, the complexities that accompany such work can be daunting. Despite a lengthy history, the genre of utopian fiction presents multiple problems that naturally extend to the more specialized focus on women writers. Richard Gerber, in one of the first full treatments of utopian literature, Utopian Fantasy: A Study of English Utopian Fiction since the End of the Nineteenth Century (1955), notes the "inherent ambiguity of the term" that leads to the difficulty in categorizing and defining utopian literature (3). Other critics have acknowledged a blurring of boundaries in the overlap between utopias and science fiction. In their preface to Women and Utopia, a 1983 essay collection, Marleen Barr and Nicholas D. Smith broadly distinguish between some science fiction and the utopian genre by noting that utopian visions must deal with "the institutions and interactions of persons," while science fiction might treat "alien creatures" (1). But Barr and Smith also acknowledge that there is often an overlap between the visions presented in the two genres. Ann J. Lane, in her 1978 introduction to Charlotte Perkins Gilman's utopian vision Herland (1915), argues that later works by Marge Piercy, Joanna Russ, Ursula K. LeGuin, and others are often "so fantastic, in the genre of science fiction, that as a new kind of feminist expression they are in important ways not comparable to the classic

utopian form" (xx). However, Lane does not attempt to explain at what point a work becomes too "fantastic." And the definition and components of the "classic form" of utopia have been so broadly described that the line between science fiction and utopian literature is still not firmly drawn.

Still other problems arise as critics try to determine how extensively a work must revise society before it be dubbed utopian. Citing an intent to "err on the side of inclusiveness and breadth of usefulness" in his annotated bibliography of British and American utopias by men and women, Lyman Tower Sargent addresses part of these problems by listing works that are utopian, dystopian, or a combination; works that have only short utopian sketches; obscure single-copy manuscripts; and "borderline" works that have somehow influenced utopian thought (ix). Although many of Sargent's annotations are brief and some are ambiguous (one work is described solely with the phrase, "Weird but a eutopia"), the descriptions and chronological ordering allow researchers to follow trends such as the increasing popularity of dystopias during volatile periods of war, depression, and freedom movements. Other bibliographers, such as Glenn Negley, contribute occasional additions by extending the focus to other countries besides England and America, but without annotations the reader is lost in a sea of titles (1,608 total in Negley's work, counting both utopias and "influential works"). Therefore, Sargent's detailed work preserves his bibliography as a useful tool for researchers interested in the genre as a whole or in specialized areas.

Obviously, an inclusive approach such as Sargent's does not allow for complete analyses of every text, yet attempts to more thoroughly describe "representative" titles have left noticeable gaps that restrict the canon and all too often seem to sift out women writers, particularly those writing before the twentieth century. Few critics have studied texts spanning the entire history of the utopian genre--perhaps because the diversity of examples almost inevitably skews such a survey with utopian elements found in science fiction, the sentimental novel, and other forms. Some texts, such as Robert Elliott's The Shapes of Utopia: Studies in a Literary Genre (1970), are introduced with more disclaimers than definitions:

> . . . utopia is notoriously a tricky term as, given its birth in ambiguity, it must be. The word has broad and restricted meanings, positive and pejorative ones. Except that I write Utopia with a capital to indicate a place, I can make no claim to consistency of usage . . . . (xi)

Elliott's work is useful, despite these ambiguities, for a general understanding of what utopian literature attempts to accomplish. He provides an interesting link between satire and utopia through examples that show common ameliorative purposes. Whereas satire has a "predominating negative part," which attacks vice, and an "understated positive part," which provides an ideal alternative, utopia reverses these proportions so that the negative commentary on society is understated (22). This shift in proportion may be seen within a

single work as well, such as Swift's Gulliver's Travels. The voyage to Brobdingnag, summarized in chapter one, focuses more on political ideals through the representation of the king; however, there is a sharp, satirical tone in many of the descriptions of women.

Elliott also clarifies some of the difficulties in writing utopia when conflict, an almost essential element of fiction, is removed. Most utopian writers describe worlds in which there is little or no violence nor disagreement because the citizens have all committed to working toward the common good, and they have a clear vision of what that involves. Conflict is restored in utopian literature, Elliott suggests, by introducing an outsider whom utopian residents must assimilate into their society as they explicitly or implicitly criticize the intruder's world.

Finally, Elliott notes the twentieth-century trend of presenting a limited utopia, or a world still in process, to make the utopia more palatable to modern readers (152). Annotated bibliographies such as Sargent's support the existence of such a trend as so many twentieth-century works are noted for dystopian, instead of utopian, elements. For a theoretical base, then, Elliott's work is helpful, but the examples he cites are limited both in overall number and in focus. That more attention is given to the development of the form than to specific texts may be seen as a reflection of Elliott's purpose, not a flaw in his approach. However, the briefest of allusions to Mary McCarthy's The Oasis represents his only effort to include women writers. Thus Elliott's analysis, like

many other analyses of utopian texts, follows a disturbing pattern of choosing only male writers as "representative."

Other studies, while not always more comprehensive, announce their limitations in chronology or region more carefully. Kenneth Roemer's collection of essays, America as Utopia (1981), offers one good example as each title focuses on one or two utopian works, usually by male writers, or on a limited time period or theme. Within this collection of over twenty essays, only two give special attention to woman's place in utopian visions--Barbara Quissell's analysis of nineteenth-century feminist utopias and Jean Pfaelzer's analysis of political theory as it relates to the narrative structure of nineteenth-century utopias. Sarah Webster Goodwin and Libby Falk Jones, in their preface to Feminism, Utopia, and Narrative (1990), explain the diversity of the critical approaches in their text by pointing to the gaps in utopian literature--"between what we have and what we'd like to have; between what we would like to have and what someone else would prefer" (ix). Most noticeably, these gaps omit almost all references to utopian texts written before the nineteenth century. Other recent studies, such as Natalie Rosinsky's Feminist Futures (1984) and Frances Barkowski's Feminist Utopias (1989) draw parallels across twentieth-century works to reveal a greater sense of unity amongst recent utopian texts; however, there is little indication of how earlier texts relate to the contemporary visions. Carol Pearson and Joanna Russ also contribute useful analyses of contemporary works through their articles in Marleen Barr's Future Females

(1981), but neither of these analyses deals with works preceding the nineteenth century, and the sharpest focus is on post-1970 works. Typically, Gilman's Herland is one of the earliest texts mentioned in any "survey" of women's utopias.

Such scanty background material on early women writers' utopias might lead researchers to surmise that women were responsible for creating few utopian fictions and that, when they were, the creations were little different than those of their male counterparts. And, in fact, this is true to some degree. For a review of the primary sources listed in comprehensive bibliographies such as Sargent's, and of secondary sources relevant to women's studies, reveals that until the twentieth century, utopian fictions *by* and *about* women were rare.

The limited role of women writers in this genre is not surprising if we consider the publishing history for women in any literary field. Whether restricted by the number of domestic tasks, by a male-dominated publishing industry, or by a combination of these and other reasons, few women produced significant literary contributions to the genre before the 1800s. And those who did often modeled their styles and themes after those of prominent male writers. Unfortunately, in the case of utopian fiction, this meant that women's issues were rarely the focus even when a woman writer depicted the "ideal" society. But this does not mean that early utopian texts are void of commentary about how woman's station might be changed.

A literary tradition, previously overlooked, surfaces in the contrast

between the historical and literary representations of woman in the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries and the depictions of woman in these utopian texts. While early writers do not present utopian societies in which women have complete equality with men, they do encourage new opportunities in education, employment, and within the family structure. Furthermore, they work to break down barriers of silence that had kept women from communicating with other women.

In contrast to the non-fiction of the period (treatises, pamphlets, letters) and with other utopian fiction by male writers, early female utopists recognize that an ideal society will involve changes for women as well as men. All too often, reviews of utopian literature, which will be summarized throughout this text, identify only twentieth-century texts as significant in the creation of the New Woman. It is time to "uncover the tradition," so that the early women writers who laid the groundwork for utopias to follow will be given the recognition they deserve and readers can begin to see the ways in which women writers have repeatedly returned to issues of community, silence, passivity, and equality.

The purpose of this study is to analyze early utopian texts by women that make significant contributions to the sub-genre of feminist utopias. Chapter one analyzes texts by male writers, including Sir Thomas More, Francis Bacon, Jonathan Swift, and Edward Bellamy, to illustrate how often these classic utopias from the sixteenth to the nineteenth century depicted women little different from the stereotypes for women of the writers' times. While male

characters in these utopias take active roles in revising political, social, and religious institutions, women, when they are described at all, are described within the home, fulfilling their traditional roles as wives and mothers.

✓ Chapter two examines three utopian texts written by women in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Although Sargent's annotated bibliography lists five women utopists from the seventeenth century, I have chosen to focus on two seventeenth-century texts--Margaret Cavendish's "Blazing New World" (1666) and Mary Astell's "A Serious Proposal to the Ladies" (1692)--for their direct commentary on woman's position and their suggestions for active, civic roles for women. According to Sargent, Sarah Scott's Millenium Hall (1762) is the only eighteenth-century utopia written by a woman in Britain or America. Like Cavendish's and Astell's texts, Millenium Hall is noteworthy because it posits woman as a leader in creating a new society. These three early works are further linked by their common arguments for greater educational opportunities for women, communal decision making, and alternatives to marriage and motherhood.

✓ Chapter three illustrates how nineteenth-century women utopists incorporated elements of the earlier utopias by women and added more direct pleas for new employment opportunities. Like their seventeenth- and eighteenth-century predecessors, four nineteenth-century utopists--Elizabeth Gaskell (Cranford, 1853), Mary Bradley Lane (Mizora, 1880), and Alice Ilgenfritz Jones and Ella Merchant (Unveiling a Parallel, 1893)--create communities of

women who are leaders within their societies. Each of these texts also describes the qualities that women must adopt or abandon if they are to make significant contributions in their work. Gaskell suggests that women may have to ignore many rules of social decorum that have made women "proper" and yet often unhappy and unproductive. Mary Bradley Lane describes an all-female society that allows women entry into scientific fields and that values communal progress more than individual progress. And Alice Ilgenfritz Jones and Ella Merchant create two alternate worlds in which, first, traditionally "male" qualities dominate and, second, traditionally "female" qualities dominate. What Jones and Merchant ultimately suggest is that men and women are capable of the same virtues and vices and that an ideal world will be built upon neither male nor female qualities, but the human quality of compassion for others.

✓ Chapter four describes two feminist utopias that combine the earlier arguments for equal opportunities in education and employment with new definitions of woman's role within the domestic sphere. Olive Schreiner's 1890 allegory "Three Dreams in a Desert" warns women that they may have to leave behind traditional roles of motherhood and marriage if they are to find their Land of Freedom. Similarly, Charlotte Perkins Gilman's 1915 utopian text Herland presents a world in which women must reevaluate their roles as mothers. Some of Gilman's characters sacrifice motherhood and devote themselves more fully to their work, and all of the Herlanders recognize, as does Schreiner's allegorical heroine, that motherhood does not replace woman's need to work.

In her recent text, Charlotte Perkins Gilman: Her Progress Toward Utopia with Selected Writings (1995), Carol Farley Kessler notes that scholarship sometimes defines utopia as "a fictionalized society in the process of becoming better" (7). By defining utopia as a world in process, Kessler distinguishes the work of Gilman (author of Herland, 1915) from that of classic writers such as Sir Thomas More, who describes in his sixteenth-century utopia a society already shaped by "past" decisions. But Kessler also comments on the value of "realizable possibilities" (8). A world in process reflects the gradual change needed for utopian ideals to become realities.

It is with this definition in mind that I would like to reexamine the utopian visions of British and American women writing before Charlotte Perkins Gilman. When critics such as Lane have bothered to mention these early writers, it has been most often to dismiss them. At times, their texts have been criticized for unrealistic plots; more often, they have been neglected because their reforms have been deemed too minor to be significant. Yet several of the early women utopists, from the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries, distinguish themselves from their male counterparts in much the same way that twentieth-century women utopists do. They deal expressly with women characters, argue for a greater sense of community among women, establish expanded views of woman's capabilities, and criticize institutions that have unnecessarily restricted women.

More specifically, these works are linked in their common pursuit of a new

image and new opportunities for women. To encourage change, they pose many of the same questions: In what ways does the stereotype of the silent and passive woman fail to serve society? How might communities of women reinforce reason and act as a model for communal decision making? Can the presumably "feminine" act of nurturing be adapted as a human value for a more peaceful and productive society? What educational and employment options must be opened to women so that they can contribute to society beyond their roles as wives and mothers? Furthermore, why should women be allowed alternatives to these roles? If the early women utopists do not portray societies completely reformed, we must acknowledge that quite often these writers were also presenting a world in process. And, as with any process, the later changes in the New Woman are made possible only through these first glimpses of what she may become.

Chapter One

Woman in Man's Utopia:

Pre- and Post-Bellamy

> *The progressive world is necessarily divided into two classes--those who take the best of what there is and enjoy it--those who wish for something better and try to create it. Without these two classes, the world would be badly off. They are the very conditions of progress, both the one and the other. Were there none who were discontented with what they have, the world would never reach anything better. And, through the other class, which is constantly taking the best of what the first is creating for them, a balance is secured, and that which is conquered is held fast.*
>
> (Florence Nightingale, Cassandra)

Utopian literature is often dismissed for its fantastical elements, superficial character development, and contrived plot. Its ability to transcend these criticisms is rooted in its link with social reform. Utopian writers often use allegory and satire, rather than more realistic fictional techniques, so that their message resounds. In so far as utopian writers envision and try to create a better world, they might be excused for missing some of the finer points of fiction. But what of the writers who present an incomplete reform of society as

well? Is a work progressive that moves forward only one-half of the human race? These are questions that modern readers of classic utopian texts often ask. The answers become more difficult to provide when, as readers, we must consider the historical context in which each work appeared.

When Sir Thomas More named the genre of utopian writing with his 1516 publication of Utopia, the only commonly-recognized precedent was Plato's Republic, then almost two thousand years old. In many ways, then, More was responsible for shaping the form and content of the works to follow. But utopian literature remained a rare form until the latter half of the nineteenth century. Charles J. Rooney, Jr., notes, "This absence of a tradition of utopian writing before 1865 in America was partly due to the Puritan antipathy to all things speculative" (5). The same attitudes might explain the paucity of British utopian texts, although More's critics have never sufficiently explained the impulse that led a man who, as Paul Turner notes in his introduction to Utopia, "secretly wore a hairshirt . . . until the day he died" (14). Unfortunately, neither do we have clear answers as to why the male visionaries of the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth century could not see in their utopian dreams a higher place for woman.

In his article in Future Females, "An Ambiguous Legacy: The Role and Position of Women in the English Eutopia," Lyman Tower Sargent argues that "authors of most eutopias up to 1887 believe that woman's position would be exactly the same in an ideal society as it is in contemporary society" (90).

Whether they saw no need for change or feared that woman's advancement might interfere with their own, many male utopists presented characterizations of women very similar to historical or literary representations of their time, or they did not mention women characters at all. Jean Pfaelzer asserts that "Utopian authors [in the eighteenth century] did not understand that social and economic equality would imply new forms of female characterizations" (123). For now, we will exempt Edward Bellamy from these observations (Looking Backward was published in 1888) and say that the generalizations are fairly accurate representations of early utopian writing by men. But to appreciate fully the accomplishments of women utopian writers, we must first recognize how these "classic" texts characterized women and how these characterizations compared with the social positions of women during the time each text was published. The distinctions of early women utopists become clearer as we see the limited degree of change for woman in man's utopia. To illustrate the similarities between the utopian woman and the European or American woman, I will discuss texts representative of several time periods: Thomas More's Utopia (1516), Francis Bacon's "New Atlantis" (1627), Jonathan Swift's Gulliver's Travels (1726), and Edward Bellamy's Looking Backward (1888). In each of these texts, the utopian writers address woman's condition, but their characterizations of women suggest views scarcely different from the standards of their time.

Sargent dismisses pre-1800 utopias by writers such as Thomas More and

Francis Bacon as they present women in "a distinctly inferior position" (88), an observation difficult to counter, for women are not represented as equals in the earlier works. In describing the social organization of Utopia, for example, More's narrator, Raphael Nonsenso (Hytholoday, in other translations) says simply, "Wives are subordinate to their husbands, children to their parents, and younger people generally to their elders" (80). Social practices during More's life present little contrast. Writing about the state of European women in Renaissance society, Lawrence Stone comments that the first half of the sixteenth century revealed the "growing authority of the husband . . . in a relatively pure form" (136). We can question whether More is presenting Utopia as an ideal, and, in fact, his critics have found this question exercise enough for many decades, but there is little evidence in Raphael's wording to suggest otherwise. Given woman's subordination at the time, Raphael's description of the husband-wife relationship is not exaggerated enough to be dubbed satire:

> But before going to church at an Ending Feast, wives kneel down at home before their husbands, and children before their parents, to confess all their sins of omission and commission, and ask to be forgiven. This gets rid of any little grudges that may have clouded the domestic atmosphere, so that everyone can attend divine service with an absolutely clear mind. (126)

In his introduction to Utopia, Paul Turner posits the question asked by so many readers of More, "Can a devout Catholic . . . have advocated such things as

euthanasia, the marriage of priests, and divorce by mutual consent on grounds of incompatibility?" (11) But it would seem that few have questioned why men such as More and Bacon, both humanists arguing for the worth of each individual, are so accepting of the current state of women.

The most ready explanation, perhaps, for More's and other utopian writers' restrictive view of woman is found in Christian ideology, but readers have often dissociated More from this influence. Richard Gerber, for example, explains the impulse behind early utopian literature as humanistic rather than religious, with writers attempting to create another nature instead of imitating nature. Expanding on this idea some thirty years later, Rooney argues that the utopian writer "sought to create a new religion in his utopia, hoping to imbue it with the zeal of the early Christians and, at the same time, to dissociate it from two thousand years of religious history" (24). Gerber also uses More and Bacon as examples to suggest that utopian humanism is linked with the later theory of evolution in the common emphasis on continual social progress (5-8).[1] Nineteenth and twentieth-century texts more clearly expound the belief that social equality can be reached through this evolution, but More is often cited for his faith in progress through equal educational opportunities for men and women. Yet More, like the other humanists of his time, yields many paradoxes in his discussions of woman's capabilities and opportunities.

The literary and historical representation of the Renaissance woman has been well documented in recent years. Seminal works such as Ruth Kelso's

Doctrine of the Lady of the Renaissance (1956) compile massive bibliographies of pamphlets and other genres designed to create a composite of expectations and criticisms for the Renaissance lady.[2] Later critics, such as Linda Woodbridge, Phyllis Rackin, and Constance Jordan, have filled in details, drawing specific examples from Renaissance defenses for and attacks on women to establish expectations for silence, modesty, chastity (in action and appearance), and a host of other standards.[3] These studies have enlightened us about Renaissance society and offered new avenues for approaching the literature of the time. But how do they illuminate the works of Sir Thomas More?

While More's humanistic philosophy has been gleaned primarily from his letters to his daughter, his ideas are often compared to those found in more direct defenses of women such as Juan Luis Vives' De Institutione Feminae Christianae (1523) and Thomas Elyot's Defense of the Good Woman (1545). These tracts, and the many replies they bred, attempt to justify some new educational and civic opportunities for women, but they also recognize the "natural" weaknesses that still were believed to be part of woman's basic nature: lustfulness, duplicity, irrationality, and unsuitability for dealing in public affairs.

Queen Elizabeth I's reign might have encouraged a greater faith in woman's ability, but it also served as fodder for misogynists such as John Knox. In his criticism of the queen , "The First Blast of the Trumpet," Knox alludes to the supposedly common belief that nature paints women to be "weake, fraile, impacient, feble and foolishe . . . unconstant, variable, cruell and lacking the

spirit of counsel and regiment" (22). It was the biting tone of attacks similar to Knox's that most frequently prompted humanists to present their defenses of women.

Ironically, for modern readers, these "defenses" stand as testimony enough that women were thought less capable than men in several areas. In Defense of Good Women, for example, Elyot presents a dialogue between Caninius, a misogynist, and Candidus, the defender of women. Candidus does not question the expectations for women to be silent, modest, and chaste as much as he points to examples of women who *did* fit the ideal. Furthermore, his ideal women are typically those who are willing to sacrifice their lives to honor their husbands, even after the men's deaths, rather than those who have made sacrifices for the state. While his catalogue of good women ends with the service of Queen Zenobia, most of his examples are of wives who stay faithful to their husbands, such as Penelope, or who prefer death over separation from their husbands, such as Brutus' wife and Seneca's wife (13-16).

Similarly, in his educational treatise Positions (1581), Richard Mulcaster defends a young girl's right to an education, but makes clear his view that women are not suited for public office. Although he encourages men to educate women so that they will be physically and mentally stronger wives and mothers, he warns women not to overreach their abilities and their station. Even if their justification is to marry better, he cautions, "To hope for high marriages is good meat, but not for mowers" (141).

As Linda Woodbridge notes, the humanists rarely contradicted the idea that women naturally possessed mental and sometimes spiritual weaknesses; rather, they accomplished "little more for women's cause than to create a stereotype of the 'good' women to counter the misogynist's stereotype of the 'bad'" (38). In contrast with these other humanists, Sir Thomas More has been viewed as more progressive. In The Invention of the Renaissance Woman, for example, Pamela Joseph Benson argues that the connection between More's views and those of Vives is not as strong as has been suggested. More's model, evidenced by his correspondence with his children's tutor and with his daughter Margaret, advocates learning for its own sake, while Vives' model centers around the preparation of interesting companions and spouses. As Benson convincingly argues, More believed that education was necessary for woman to provide "her with spiritual autonomy within a society that provides her with no social autonomy" (158-9). As further defense, Benson asserts that More would have been jealous of woman's opportunity to lead a restricted life, to work toward spiritual attunement, to be free of social expectations (168-169). For More, then, confinement may well have been woman's salvation, not her punishment.

If we picture the persecuted More, eventually murdered for betraying King Henry VIII (although he never directly accused the King), perhaps we can find More's reasoning defensible. Yet, in Utopia, Catholic and Jewish sects intermingle peaceably, political disharmony is settled objectively, and only the most extreme views (i.e., atheism, for More) are punished. Free expressions of

opinion are not punished as in More's Europe; therefore, public servants would not need the protection of silence that women were allowed through their restrictive code of behavior. Yet still, women lead very similar lives in the real and "ideal" societies.

More's visionary world opens educational opportunities to all. Everyone is given a primary education, and as adults, "Most people spend these free periods [after their six-hour workday] on further education, for there are public lectures first thing every morning. Attendance is quite voluntary, except for those picked out for academic training, but men and women of all classes go crowding in to hear them" (76). This educational opportunity offered some concessions for the time. It would be several decades before Catholic reform movements brought education to urban areas previously controlled by Protestants, and it would not be until the turn of the seventeenth century that the same reformers recognized the importance of morally educating women so that they could, in turn, educate their children (Sonnet 103-104). But what did women of Utopia do with their newfound freedom to learn? No detail is given on the nature of these lessons or how their educations matched them to certain work; we only learn later that the priests were the primary educators.[4] Fitting with the beliefs of More's time, this meant a special focus in education: "Priests are also responsible for the education of children and adolescents, in which quite as much stress is laid on moral as on academic training" (123). The exceptions, again, would be those "picked out for academic training" and no

women are mentioned as such exceptions (76). We must ask, therefore, if their education allowed women greater civic opportunities, improved domestic relations, or provided for any significant changes. Or, despite the enlightened views about education, were women to become educated only to fulfill the same roles as before?

In employment opportunities, Utopians again reinforce most prevailing stereotypes. The one job that all citizens perform is farming; in other areas, there are "natural" restrictions. When Raphael describes the options for men and women, he says, "So everybody learns one of the other trades I mentioned, and by everybody I mean the women as well as the men--though the weaker sex are given the lighter job, like spinning and weaving, while the men do the heavier ones" (75). In Renaissance society, women were already entering the agricultural and servicing labor market in growing numbers in the sixteenth and seventeenth century, but as Lawrence Stone notes, they were "everywhere paid at a rate which was at most only half of that of men" (137). We cannot compare wages in Utopia; like many other visionary societies, the Utopian government has abolished wages and, instead, gives all workers what they need to survive. However, the domestic structure suggests a system very similar to that already intact for Renaissance couples. Women work to be helpmates to their husbands. Never does More mention alternatives to marriage, and in marriage and motherhood, Utopian women vary little from British women of the time.

The rule of order in Utopia is that "When a girl grows up and gets married,

she joins her husband's household, but the boys of each generation stay at home, under the control of their oldest male relative--unless he becomes senile, in which case the next oldest takes over" (79). And if married women are later offered opportunities that European women were not at the time, the justification is always so that they may be better wives and mothers, not merely better citizens. Utopian women may, for example, receive training for wars so that they can fight alongside their husbands, the theory being that women will not want to be separated from their husbands and will fight harder for those they hold dearest (109, 114).

In peace time, women are relieved from some domestic chores, but their roles as wives and mothers again dictate their behavior more than any other factor. In the public dining halls, even the seating arrangement emphasizes woman's chief concerns:

> . . . all the tough and dirty work is done by slaves, but the actual business of preparing and cooking the food, and planning the menus, is left entirely to the women of the household on duty . . . . The rest of the adults sit at three tables or more, according to their numbers, with the men against the wall and the women on the outside--so that if they suddenly feel sick, as pregnant women do from time to time, they can get up without disturbing anyone else, and retire to the nursery. (82)

The nursery does feature "a good fire and plenty of clean water" so that mothers

can better care for their children, but the implications of this and the following passages are all too clear (82). Women have lost more control over their own bodies as the utopians require all mothers to breastfeed their babies, "except when death or illness makes this impossible" (82). And utopians suggest that women will be pregnant often, and men must not be inconvenienced by woman's condition.

Other sections of More's Utopia present even more dubious advancements for women. Raphael notes that both men and women can become priests, "although women aren't often chosen for the job" (124). And, in his notes to Utopia, Paul Turner refers readers to More's A Dialogue concerning Heresies (1528) to clarify the motivation for allowing women the opportunity to hear confessions:

> Yes, yes, quoth I, a woman can keep a counsel well enough. For though she tell a gossip, she telleth it but in counsel [i.e. in confidence] yet, nor her gossip to her gossip neither, and so when all the gossips in the town know it, yet it is but counsel still. (Turner 146, qtd. from English Works, 249C-D; 250C)

Similarly, More's descriptions of Utopian marriage rites suggest a move toward equality while undercutting such a move through the following details. In Utopia, both men and women are presented naked to one another before marriage so that they can better evaluate their future mates. This practice does imply that men and women are equally empowered to choose their mates, scarcely the

case in sixteenth-century Europe.[5] But the following discussion quickly shifts to the benefits the practice will offer men:

> When you're buying a horse, and there's nothing at stake but a small sum of money, you take every possible precaution . . . . But when you're choosing a wife, an article that for better or worse has got to last you a lifetime, you're unbelievably careless. You don't even bother to take it out of its wrappings. You judge the whole woman from a few square inches of face, which is all you can see of her, and then proceed to marry her--at the risk of finding her most disagreeable, when you see what she's really like. No doubt you needn't worry, if moral character is the only thing that interests you--but we're not all as wise as that, and even those who are sometimes find, when they get married, that a beautiful body can be quite a useful addition to a beautiful soul. (103)[6]

Explanations for More's views might be multifold. Sara Eaton argues that stereotypes of women were a convenient tool even for the humanist treatise writers who wanted to reflect abstract ideas as quickly as possible.[7] In addition, More never claims that Utopia is an ideal state of being; "utopia" means only "not place" or nowhere (Turner 8). Many readers, in fact, view the work not as a "positive ideal, but a negative attack on European wickedness" (11). Turner defends the value of More's Utopia by arguing that "surely the whole emphasis of the book is on the rightness of Utopian institutions, not on their wrongness

when judged by Christian standards" (12). But his defense does not fully account for the fact that Utopia is a place still plagued with problems--war, social inequality, and disease. Furthermore, if More's intention is for us to wrest woman from the confines found even in Utopia, his descriptions give few hints of this desire.

One hundred years later, when Francis Bacon wrote his "New Atlantis" (1627), conditions had scarcely improved for European women. Stone notes, "The ideal woman in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was weak, submissive, charitable, virtuous and modest . . . . Her function was housekeeping, and the breeding and rearing of children." There may even have been a decline in the status of women in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries with the parallel decline of kinship and the growing emphasis on an authoritarian state and family. As Stone argues, women were "exposed to exploitation by their husbands, since they lost the continuing protection of their own kin" (141). Therefore, there is little reason to expect a substantially different characterization of women in Bacon's work unless Bacon himself saw woman in a different light. Yet while perfect strands of fruits have been rendered through the Bensalemites' engineering, no new hybrid of woman has emerged.

Tracing the development of early utopian fiction, Paul Turner identifies Bacon's major contribution as dramatic tension. Bacon, he argues, "replaces Raphael's logically organized account of Utopia recollected in tranquility by a narrative tracing his visitors' gradual acquisition of knowledge about Bensalem"

(18). Although the account is not as compelling as the description of dramatic tension suggests, what Bacon does do is establish a pattern that many future utopian writers will follow. In the short sketch about Bensalem, Bacon's narrator and crew become lost at sea and, by accident, discover a land hidden in a cove away from Europe and the rest of the world. Through the remainder of the work, the narrator's prime function is to act chagrined each time the residents of Bensalem describe what they do in contrast with Europe. Bacon's narrator is a more active participant than More's; rather than objectively reporting the utopian activities, as Raphael does, Bacon's narrator shares his surprise at each step of the learning process. Like a child who has gleefully discovered a new toy, he recounts the wonderful accomplishments of the Bensalemites. Yet Bensalem and Europe of the time still retain many similarities.

Bacon's utopia, like More's, still recognizes social class distinctions. The more important visitors are allowed more space, with one man per room rather than two (262), and even the newcomers can readily discern from the Bensalemite's clothing who is the "governor" and which people are of the "high places." Furthermore, the natives all recognize "the king is debtor to no man, but for propagation of his subjects" (281).

As for its advancements in society, Bensalem supposedly represents the "ideal" in many other areas. When the Bensalemites are assured of the visitors' good will, they reward the narrator with a visit by the Father of Salomon's House, made up of the elders who observe other lands' accomplishments and bring the

best back to Bensalem. The Father begins a long catalogue of accomplishments derived from their insight into nature and technology, including air control, genetic engineering, and refinements in music, muskets, and math.

These vague descriptions of their technological accomplishments (little more really than "We're advanced in this, and this, and this . . . ") and a lengthy discussion of how Bensalem was separated from outside traders by a flood, yet through divine intervention became Christianized, together account for the majority of the utopian sketch. But this is not to say that Bacon does not address issues related to women. He merely shows little advancement from More in describing the contributions of these women. Bensalemite women are silent and passive.

In their periodic ritual, the Feast of Family, Bensalemites honor the eldest male with a procession of the entire family. The women's gifts to the community are seen in the lovely stitching as "the state is curiously wrought with silver and silk of divers colours, broiding or binding in the ivy; and is ever the work of some of the daughters of the family . . . ." (280). While defenses for European women of the sixteenth and seventeenth century argued that women, like men, were capable of studying academic subjects--Latin, Greek, and rhetoric--even the most hardened misogynist would have allowed needlework as part of woman's domain (Dunn 18). In the visionary world of Bensalem, such handiwork may be woman's crowning achievement as well, for few other activities are mentioned for her. But perhaps the description of the procession itself most clearly illustrates

the position for women that Bacon envisioned in his ideal world:

> The Tirsan [the honored elder] cometh forth with all his generation or lineage, the males before him, and the females following him; and if there be a mother from whose body the whole lineage is descended, there is a traverse placed in a loft above, on the right hand of the chair, with a privy door, and a carved window of glass, leaded with gold and blue where she sitteth, but is not seen. (280)

As a mother, woman may be honored, but she must not be seen nor heard. Showing no difference from the countless defenses for good women of the Renaissance, the most honored Bensalemite woman is beautifully adorned but encouraged to remain silent.

Similarly, status quo reigns in the description of marriage rites. Arranged marriages are still the norm for practical purposes: "Marriage without consent of parents they do not make void, but they mulct it in the inheritors; for the children of such marriages are not admitted to inherit above a third part of their parents' inheritance . . . ." (285) Barbara Diefendorf's sociological study of marriage in the Renaissance reveals similar practices. England passed legislation requiring parental consent for marriages in 1753; however, up to that time, those who were privy to clandestine marriages risked ex-communication (671). In the real and ideal society of the seventeenth century, the parents' wishes were usually respected even if such wishes pushed young couples into loveless marriages.[8]

In one of the passages sometimes omitted from "New Atlantis," readers

see a description that more clearly owes to More's example with only a slight revision. Bacon's narrator explains the Bensalemite practice for engaged couples thus:

> I have read in a book of one of your men, of a Feigned Commonwealth, where the married couple are permitted, before they contract, to see one another naked. This they dislike; for they think it a scorn to give a refusal after so familiar knowledge: but because of many hidden defects in men and women's bodies, they have a more civil way; for they have near every town a couple of pools (which they call Adam and Eve's Pools), where it is permitted to one of the friends of the man, and another of the friends of the woman, to see them severally bathe naked. (xxi)

Apparently, both More and Bacon wanted to reform the uncivil practice of marrying without knowledge of physical defects. More, in addition, wanted to correct spiritual defects through universal education via the priesthood. Unfortunately, neither of the visionaries showed concern for the intellectual defects that still plagued women of the sixteenth and seventeenth century.

By the early eighteenth century, when Jonathan Swift wrote Gulliver's Travels, several significant changes had occurred for women, but that does not mean that women enjoyed steady progress in achieving their goals. In A Short History of Women, John Langdon-Davies, like other Renaissance critics, argues that just the opposite may have been true. While Queen Elizabeth's reign

spurred a movement to educate women in classical knowledge (Latin, Greek, rhetoric), the following years saw a decline "until in about 1750, women in England had reached a new low level hardly in advance of their position in the twelfth century" (305). Caught between Puritanism, which revived the view of woman as "a snare and a delusion for males" and the prevailing belief at court that women should be "beautiful and none at all educated," women in the eighteenth century found a number of past opportunities closed to them (Langdon-Davies 316-17).

Felicity Nussbaum describes a "burgeoning" of satires about women from the Restoration to the mid 1700s as a sign of a "revolutionary reconsideration of the position of women in society and the relationship between the sexes" (8). In satires, women were often represented as temptresses whose main function was to bring disorder to man's world. In real life, women were expected to be chaste in action and appearance, and their opportunities for education and employment were limited to that which was appropriate given their most important roles. Katherine Rogers sums up the historical data on eighteenth-century woman with a succinct quotation by Richard Steele: "All she has to do in this World, is contained within the Duties of a Daughter, a Sister, a Wife, and a Mother" (7).[9] But while the requirements of domestic roles alone may have kept earlier women busy, eighteenth-century woman was further restricted in her activities. Langdon-Davies writes,

> . . . the gentlewoman of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries

> prided herself upon busy and skilful fingers; in the eighteenth century it became genteel to have idle hands resting upon one's lap and all activity reduced to a clacking tongue. The tyranny of leisure closed its chains about the wrists and hearts of an ever-growing section of womankind, who were useless by men's choice rather than their own and by social convention rather than natural necessity. (323-324)

Even the pastimes (e.g. needlework) encouraged in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were discouraged during the eighteenth century, and working class women often felt guilt from earning money. Fanny Burney is one good example. Despite the large readership she gained, she wrote despairingly of her work and felt "degraded even at receiving her salary from the Queen" (Rogers 17). Writing was one of the few new professions for women, from the appearance of Aphra Behn's novels in the 1670s to the numerous writers of sentimental romances in the eighteenth century: Delarivier Manley, Ann Radcliffe, and others. Since most women were not trained in Latin, the language of poetry, the novel was perhaps the most natural form for writers. And, it is not surprising that there should be a larger readership for novels with the growth of the leisure class. But clearly this one new field did not offer women full independence. With limited educational and employment opportunities, many women were confined to the indolence of the leisure class or the greater restrictions of poverty, their fate determined by the level of support from male

relatives. Such extremes are mirrored in Swift's satire about the alternate society Brobdingnag.

Brobdingnag is considered the ideal of Gulliver's four travels because it is a society based more on reality. Robert Elliott writes, "No, Swift was not of the Houyhnhmn party: a utopian without illusions, he hoped that man could live in Brobdingnag" (67). And man may live well in Brobdingnag, where reason is the rule of order. But Swift seems to view woman as an irrational creature whose place in an improved society would be little different from her place in reality. Whereas Brobdingnag's king is a model of reason in contrast to the English politicians that Swift satirizes, women in Brobdingnag are portrayed as grotesque characters.

Gulliver's diminutive size in Brobdingnag is the primary source of conflict and amusement. Soon after he lands on the new shore, Gulliver is discovered by a farmer who quickly realizes the profit to be gained through his small treasure. While the farmer's young daughter, Glumdalitch, treats Gulliver kindly, the farmer's greed nearly kills Gulliver, who is expected to perform in one town showing after another. When Gulliver is asked to perform in front of the Queen, she is so delighted with the little creature that she offers to buy him from his previous owner. The farmer agrees, fearing that Gulliver will die soon anyway. Gulliver easily procures a position at court for his young friend Glumdalitch, and much of the story's entertainment value comes through his descriptions of their time spent together: she doing her best to keep him from trouble, he alternately

battling the Queen's dwarf, a frog, and a monkey.

Amidst these misadventures, the King, a most rational man, asks Gulliver to describe Europe's political system, and as typical in utopian texts, the ideals of Brobdingnag are made apparent in contrast with England.[10] Gulliver reports:

> He [the king] was perfectly astonished with the historical Account I gave him of our Affairs during the last Century; protesting it was only an Heap of Conspiracies, Rebellions, Murders, Massacres, Revolutions, Banishments; the very worst Effects that Avarice, Faction, Hypocrisy, Perfidiousness, Cruelty, Rage, Madness, Hatred, Envy, Lust, Malice, and Ambition could produce. (125)

Brobdingnag's superiority becomes evident through the King's horror when he discovers that English nobility are rarely educated or trained to lead, that justice and public office can be bought, and that one of the country's most valued inventions is a tool for destruction--the cannon. In contrast, Brobdingnag prides itself on what Gulliver satirically refers to as the "narrow Bounds" of government: "to common Sense and Reason, to Justice and Lenity, to the Speedy Determination of Civil and criminal Causes" (130). Laws are worded so simply that all citizens can understand them, reducing the need for arbiters of justice, and civil war has been eliminated through a stricter control of militia. In short, reason has been applied to almost every facet of man's life. But women are another story.

While the King allows Gulliver his one outlet for reasonable

conversations, the ladies of the court fritter away their time with Gulliver as their plaything. But more than their idleness, it is their physical attributes and wantonness that Gulliver criticizes. The Maids of Honour entertain themselves by stripping Gulliver naked and laying him across their breasts; they undress in front of him, and even relieve themselves of too much liquid in his presence. And one "frolicksome Girl" does tricks he cannot bring himself to describe to the reader (112).

Because of their size, women throughout the section are viewed as grotesque in appearance. John Richetti notes that "A disgust with human bodies and their functions is a recurrent theme in Swift's works, but a quite traditional one if we remember the Christian emphasis on such matters that was his cultural inheritance" (79). However, in Brobdingnag, it is the female body in particular that reaps the most scorn. Even the description of a hideous frog does not rival the vivid details Gulliver repeatedly invokes in describing the breasts of the different women he meets. The farmer's wife is overly indulgent, giving Gulliver to her baby as a plaything, and the wet nurse must give the infant suck as a diversion. Gulliver says, "No Object ever disgusted me so much as the Sight of her monstrous Breast . . . . The Nipple was about half the Bigness of my Head, and the Hue both of that and the Dug so varified with Spots, Pimples and Freckles, that nothing could appear more nauseous" (82). He concludes that English women must appear beautiful only because they are of man's size and "their Defects not to be seen but through a magnifying Glass" (82). When he

later goes shopping with the ladies of court, a beggar provokes a similar response because of a "Cancer in her Breast, swelled to a monstrous Size, full of Holes, in two or three of which I could have easily crept, and covered my whole Body" (105). Even the Queen herself, to whom he awards such telling accolades as "the Ornament of Nature, the Darling of the World," repulses him with her eating habits: "She would craunch the Wing of a Lark, Bones and all, between her Teeth, although it were nine Times as large as that of a full grown Turkey" (93, 97-98). Carol Houlihan Flynn describes one of Swift's letters in which he writes that a woman just getting about after her lying-in had turned his stomach because she had no "paint" on (110). Swift concluded that the woman would look beautiful again once she had painted her face. Apparently, he held little store in the power of makeup to cover the serious flaws of the women in Brobdingnag.

Men do not escape the razor of Swift's satire. The farmer is greedy; the "scholars" are dunces who use scientific deduction to arrive at meaningless conclusions. But through the King, Swift portrays a model character, guided by reason and good motives. Swift's women, in contrast, whether of low or high class, are unrestrained by reason. Often they are also cruel, from the farmer's wife who indulges her baby, to the ladies at court who make him a plaything, to his own Glumdalitch. Katharine Roger argues that Swift "accepted women as equals, and indeed greatly enjoyed their friendship--but only to the extent that they made themselves like men by divesting themselves of distinctively feminine

characteristics" (62). Rogers' view might explain the grotesque details Swift uses to describe the female body. But more interesting, her explanations might be used to clarify why Gulliver reserves his affection almost solely for one female, the young Glumdalitch. She remains dear to him in her girlhood, separate from the wiles of womanhood, and becomes a threat only when the influence of the court ladies leads her to consider Gulliver's mishaps as amusement.

Felicity Nussbaum summarizes Swift's characterization of women effectively when she notes that Swift reveals his faith "that women are capable of improvement--they simply fail to exercise the reason God gave them" (113). Fitting Swift's views, Glumdalitch is a compassionate girl and useful tutor, until the excesses of the courtly ladies influence her as well. Isolated from female companionship, Glumdalitch serves Gulliver's educational and emotional needs well; however, with that female companionship, she is no better than the other silly women. Through his satire, Swift sends the message that, even in an ideal kingdom, women will probably not live up to their potential.

With Bellamy, we may expect everything to change. Looking Backward was considered such a seminal work that many post-1888 utopias are labeled "post-Bellamy." Utopian texts become more prolific, with forty-six produced in the U.S. alone between the years 1889 and 1900 (Fromm v). There is also some indication that following Bellamy more utopian texts deal with women's issues--suffrage, domestic relations, domestic chores, and so forth (Rooney

46-47). This is not to say, however, that there is a direct cause-effect relationship. For all of its innovations, Bellamy's utopia reveals a very traditional woman.

In regard to many other social issues, Bellamy's work is considered so nearly perfect that there is "no need for further development, that there are no conflicts and human problems which transcend the existing order" (Fromm xii). Fromm disagrees, but only on the basis that Bellamy did not concern himself with the needs of the future; he just "wanted to show what life could be if it were organized rationally" (xii). But where do women fit in this picture of rational society? Most commonly, they provide the counterpoint.

Looking Backward tells the story of an 1880s man, Julian West, who awakens in the year 2000 after having taken a too-strong sleeping potion. The servant who was supposed to wake him died in a fire that destroyed most of his home. Because his fiancé Edith Bartlett and all of his acquaintances assumed that he died in the fire, no one attempted to rescue him from the subconscious trance the sleeping potion brought on. In the year 2000, the new owners of Julian's home unearth his sleeping chamber and manage to awake him to a new world that little resembles the Boston of his memory. As with most utopias, the text unravels as Julian discovers from his host, Dr. Leete, the many accomplishments of the new society.

Boston 2000 does represent a society much improved from earlier utopias. In the near classless society, servants are valued as much as doctors

because all citizens realize the importance of each job, and with that recognition, comes a new wage system through which the government extends an equal share of credit to each worker. Labor conditions have also been extensively reformed with shorter hours and more breaks for difficult jobs. Furthermore, all work is assigned on a voluntary basis, and working conditions are improved constantly for undesirable jobs so that a sufficient number of volunteers regularly apply (61). With a stronger work ethic, Bostonians in the year 2000 have solved many labor and economic problems while making the quality of life richer in all areas. A rigorous and universal higher education allows more opportunity for citizens to choose the work they're suited to, rather than the work poverty has chained them to, and all Bostonians have access to the arts--music piped in to their homes and a wealth of books, censored only if no audience exists to pay for their publication. Yet at first glance, particularly, Boston's women have changed little from 1880 to 2000.

Early in the novel, Julian offers his first impression of the "modern" women. In contrast with the clothing of the 1800s, he notes, the ladies he now sees are "lovely demonstrations of the effect of appropriate drapery in accenting feminine graces" (29). In the 1880s, clothing was a serious concern for women. In addition to the heavy weight of a typical outfit (something around thirty pounds), the corseting and lacing that was fashionable for upper-class women was so restrictive that a common side effect was a prolapsed uterus (Lewes 50). Therefore, women had cause to complain and seek new designs. But in contrast

to Bellamy's women, real women were concerned with comfort and health, not merely how their features might be accented.

While Julian and Dr. Leete do eventually discuss women as an "issue," the strongest characterization of women comes through Julian's love interest, Dr. Leete's daughter Edith. In sharp contrast to the stoic Dr. Leete, Edith is ever ready to weep with sympathy at Julian's confused state. Unlike his fiancé, Edith Bartlett, who was beautiful but lived in a time when "it was enough for a woman to be rich to have suitors," Edith Leete has beauty, charm, and modesty. These qualities and a healthy glow are enough to attract Julian (46).

Edith's intellect is neither discussed nor challenged. Twice she and her mother leave the room as the men begin their serious conversations about the differences in the two societies (47, 71). Another time, when Julian and Dr. Leete are discussing the banking system, Mrs. Leete turns the conversation to the fashions of the 1880s. Only after the women have left the room are the men able to resume their intellectual talk (92). And throughout the work, Dr. Leete represents the rational approach to Julian's situation, assuring him he will be able to find work after a brief period of adjustment, whereas Edith responds at a purely emotional level: "Father never thinks anything ought to astonish us when it can be explained scientifically, as I suppose this long sleep of yours can be, but even to fancy myself in your place makes my head swim. I know that I could not have borne it at all" (123). Julian finds Edith all the more beautiful for her sympathy and is ready to marry her even before she confesses that she is

actually the great-granddaughter of his former fiancé, Edith Bartlett. Edith Leete had always felt destined to marry the passionate young man her great-grandmother had described in her letters. Although the rest of the work has the tone of a socialist manifesto, through the characterizations of Edith Leete, Bellamy's work more closely resembles a sentimental romance of a century before.

As Jean Pfaelzer notes, rarely do women help orient newcomers to utopia, no matter how large the part they presumably play in society ("Impact of Political Theory" 124). Edith Leete is scarcely an exception. When she is finally summoned by her father to help enlighten Mr. West, it is about the new Bostonian's shopping habits (79). The "improvements" are that women no longer need to deal with "impertinent" clerks as no one works on commission (81).

Later in the novel, when Julian and Dr. Leete discuss the advancement of women as an "issue," the intended effect is diminished in part by these earlier characterizations, but it is also clear from the descriptions that women have not achieved more than a semblance of equality through these advancements. Although women work in the industrial army, they are not allowed to help choose the president of the army, and only one woman can vote in the army to represent her sex (134). Furthermore, their domestic roles remain dominant as "the higher positions in the feminine army of industry are entrusted only to women who have been both wives and mothers, as they alone fully represent their sex"

(175). Women are allowed only the lightest occupations as they are "inferior in strength to men, and further disqualified industrially in special ways"; and, "Under no circumstances is a woman permitted to follow any employment not perfectly adapted, both as to kind and degree of labor, to her sex" (179). The women are also given shorter work weeks and more opportunity for vacations and rest.

All of these opportunities for work are "allowed" with the awareness that men "owe to the beauty and grace of women the chief zest of their lives and their main incentive to effort, that they permit them to work at all only because it is fully understood that a certain regular requirement of labor, of a sort adapted to their powers, is well for body and mind." And Bellamy clearly criticizes more pointed efforts at equalizing men and women in the nineteenth century. Dr. Leete contends,

> It is in giving full play to the differences of sex than in seeking to obliterate them, as was apparently the effort of some reformers in your day, that the enjoyment of each by itself and the piquancy which each has for the other, are alike enhanced. In your day there was no career for women except in an unnatural rivalry with men. We have given them a world of their own, with its emulations, ambitions, and careers, and I assure you they are very happy in it. (174)

Since Edith and Mrs. Leete are the only female characters that readers see in

action, the basis for Dr. Leete's proclamation is suspect. The motive for allowing women work seems to be appeasement more than a true appreciation of what women can contribute to society, with the greatest reward being that "their power of giving happiness to men has been of course increased in proportion" (175). Through Edith Leete, the only fully-developed female character, readers see a woman so enamored with the male protagonist that she rises early to watch for him, blushes at his compliments, and cries freely when she discovers that he loves her. In Looking Backward, as in many of the classic utopian tales, the new woman is hard to find.

When critics such as Sargent and Pfaelzer comment that women are little different in utopia than they are in real life, they are primarily commenting on the treatment of women by male writers such as Bellamy; however, a number of other critics would agree that there were no serious feminist utopias before Charlotte Perkins Gilman's Herland, published in 1915. Ann J. Lane, for example, declares in her introduction to Herland that Mizora (1890) is the "only self-consciously feminist utopia published before Herland . . . [and] It is an utterly preposterous story" (xix).

Views similar to Lane's have led several decades of critics to focus almost exclusively on twentieth-century utopias by women, but fortunately some critics have worked to expand the canon so that earlier works, if not given the same attention as contemporary texts, at least are not neglected entirely. In Utopian and Science Fiction by Women, a collection of essays published in

1994, Jane L. Donawerth and Carol Kolmerten argue that a tradition of women's utopias extends back to the seventeenth century. As so few early texts by women writers have been recovered, the tradition has been overlooked. In their introduction, Donawerth and Kolmerten claim, "Although a great deal of work has been done on women's utopian and science fiction, this volume is the first, to our knowledge, to argue that these fictions historically speak to one another and together amount to a literary tradition of women's writing about a better place" (1). Donawerth and Kolmerten further suggest a distinction between women's and men's utopias epitomized in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries by women writers calling for equal opportunities in education for women, in the nineteenth century by technological utopias that encouraged more civic opportunities for women, and in the twentieth century by works that offer more extensive role revisions for women (4-9). While these connections are still tenuous because of the brevity of their discussion, Donawerth and Kolmerten offer one of their greatest contributions in drawing attention to how early women writers dealt with many of the same issues--including new educational and employment options--seen in later utopias by women. Furthermore, a close examination of utopian texts extending back to the seventeenth century reveals even more elaborate descriptions for reform than is suggested by Donawerth and Kolmerten's listing of each century's contribution.

In addition to calling for educational reform, women writers in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries reverse Renaissance and Enlightenment

stereotypes of communities of women as dangerous, even grotesque. These early works do not propose the extensive reforms seen in later utopian works by women. It would seem that women dared not hope for complete equality in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. But if we label works "progressive" in the context of their own times instead of our own and if we fully appreciate the subtler forms of persuasion, the early works might rival twentieth-century utopias in the degree to which they shift our view of woman's capabilities. A closer examination of the treatises, pamphlets, and other prose of the period leads to such an appreciation as we see the torrent of negative portrayals from which the New Woman must emerge.

Notes

[1] Whereas Gerber uses the connection between More and Bacon as utopian humanists to illustrate their common faith in individual advancement, we should not ignore the fact that the two writers subscribed to different forms of humanism. More was a humanist who believed that individuals could greatly improve their conditions because all people are created with the same potential. Fenn Sherwin links More to Plato's influence in setting up occupations in utopia; however, he notes that More's "Christian ideals" would not allow him to view women and children the same way that Plato does, as common property (178).

Bacon, on the other hand, advocates scientific humanism, which centered around technical training. It is interesting to note that Bacon was banished from Queen Elizabeth's court because of an annoying speech he had made (F.H. Anderson 5) and fared only slightly better during the rule of James. James and others feared that such a focus on technical learning would supplant university learning with trade skills alone; therefore, they were indifferent to his utopian vision (24).

[2] Despite the obviously thorough review of scholarship in Kelso's work, her self-admitted purpose was to create a smooth synthesis of Renaissance documents so that she rarely cites specific works through her text. This detailing she leaves to later critics, who may treat aspects of her research with a sharper focus.

[3] Besides a careful analysis of almost a century of works related to the

"woman controversy," Woodbridge's text offers valuable insight into the motives of misogynist satirists. Of particular interest is her suggestion that many of the attacks on woman's lustfulness were prompted by fears of wives entering the workforce and of their socialization with other women, who might promote wicked ways (174-77). Women who stayed deep in the recesses of their homes were "safe" if only the servants could be trusted to report on improper behavior. (Warnicke traces this argument to Vives, who cautions that young girls are weak by nature and must be guarded by chaperones at all times.)

Rackin offers the historical perspective on lustfulness. Renaissance society viewed the displaying of passion, even between husband and wife, as a sign of weakness. Thus the "weaker sex" must be more subject to lust, while men who were passionate were often marked as effeminate (47).

Jordan adds that chastity *and* silence were required of women to keep them tending families and out of public affairs (243). As seen in the descriptions by Kelso and Woodbridge, chastity implied far more than virginity. Women were taught that the appearance of innocence, and not just purity itself, had to be cultivated for the truly chaste. What better way to avoid suspicions than to stay out of the public eye.

[4] John Hale argues that More sees education as little more than "benign recreation for many . . . preparation for diplomacy or high office for a few" (418). Nor did this elitist government allow room for women in office.

[5] By the end of the century, women could usually choose their own mates,

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Rackin offers the historical perspective on lustfulness. Renaissance society viewed the displaying of passion, even between husband and wife, as a sign of weakness. Thus the "weaker sex" must be more subject to lust, while men who were passionate were often marked as effeminate (47).

Jordan adds that chastity *and* silence were required of women to keep them tending families and out of public affairs (243). As seen in the descriptions by Kelso and Woodbridge, chastity implied far more than virginity. Women were taught that the appearance of innocence, and not just purity itself, had to be cultivated for the truly chaste. What better way to avoid suspicions than to stay out of the public eye.

[4] John Hale argues that More sees education as little more than "benign recreation for many . . . preparation for diplomacy or high office for a few" (418). Nor did this elitist government allow room for women in office.

[5] By the end of the century, women could usually choose their own mates,

though their choices were still often based on the need for financial support (Dunn 17). More's system would theoretically do away with this necessity as it did away with currency; however, there is little indication that social classes have been eliminated.

[6] Langdon-Davies argues that marriage practices change once "we reach the licence and flippancy of Charles II and his circle, in which women were not merely a temptation but a temptation to which one must incessantly and gleefully succumb; a temptation, which could be thrown away or forgotten once it had served this useful and solitary purpose" (317). Therefore, More does offer greater financial security to women in allowing for divorce only through mutual consent.

[7] Eaton also suggests that some Renaissance tracts can be viewed as rhetorical exercises instead of accurate reflections of popular attitudes. However, the prevalence of such tracts suggests the prevalence of the stereotypical views as well.

[8] Arranged marriages were more common among daughters of wealthy tradesmen, while "Marriages of personal choice took place farther down the social scale and were more egalitarian matches" (Diefendorf 669). Women who could provide their own dowry could also exercise more free will in their choice of mate.

[9] This description differs little from John Richetti's analysis of the Renaissance, a time in which women were "male appendages, restrictively

identified as daughters, wives, mothers, or mistresses" (66).

[10] Robert Elliot describes the structure of Gulliver's Travels as "prescriptive pattern of the genre":

> In each of the four books the central character embarks on a voyage, lands alone in a strange country, makes contact with the inhabitants, learns about the customs and institutions of their land, makes certain comparisons with Europe, returns home. (108)

While later writers do seem to model this pattern with only slight revisions, from Sarah Scott's 1762 novel Millenium Hall to twentieth-century works such as Marge Piercy's Woman on the Edge of Time (1976), it would be unfair to More and Bacon to say that Swift created the structure.

Chapter Two

From Confines to Community:

Early Utopian Fiction by Women

> *From what I've said, it seems evident, that we were not created wholly for our selves, but design'd to be serviceable to each other, to do Good to all within the Circle of our Acquaintance, and some way or other render ourselves useful to those we converse with; for which reason Solitude ought never to be our Choice, an active Life including in it much greater Perfection: But if it is our Fortune to live retir'd, to be shut up in a Corner of the World, and deny'd the Pleasures of Conversation, I mean those Delights which naturally result from rational and instructive Discourses, we ought to endeavor to become good Company to our selves . . . .* (Mary Chudleigh, "Of Solitude," 386)[1]

Through the nineteenth century and beyond, the arguments against women being given equal opportunities for education and employment were often predicated on fears. Early writers voiced the fear that women were such irrational creatures that they dare not stray far from their homes nor from the guidance of their mates or fathers lest they fall into temptations from which their weak minds could not deliver them. Later writers maintained that changes in woman's role would damage the very threads of society. Given other options,

would women ever choose to marry and be confined to the domestic sphere? Would they continue to suffer the pains of childbirth? Or would the race simply die out?[2]

While the nature of utopia is to present a changed society, the examples by More, Bacon, Swift, and Bellamy show that woman in man's utopia evolved at a much slower rate than did man. In Europe and America, women were petitioning for more educational opportunities in the seventeenth century, more options for supporting themselves in the eighteenth century, the right to vote and access to birth control in the nineteenth century. Yet, women characters in man's utopia never forget their most important roles as wives and mothers, nor their destined place in the home. The education they are granted by More will save their souls for the next world but will have little real impact on the roles they fill in this world. The work they are permitted by Bellamy will make them more agreeable companions for their husbands but should not be confused with the work men might do. In all of the classic utopias examined in chapter one, men organize in groups to create more efficient governments; women find occasional diversions, but never compromise their individual domestic positions. Therefore, the contributions of early utopias by women must begin at the very basic level of presenting communities of women as positive forces, capable of contributing to society. They must show that women can reinforce "good" qualities in each other, such as rationality and a concern for others; however, at the same time, they must contradict the view that a woman is "good" to the same degree that

she is passive.

Early women utopists often do write in a self-deprecating tone, and their descriptions of ideal worlds are layered with one defense after another. Their fictions are often less chronological than those of their male counterparts as they stockpile rationales for the changes they propose. However, they oppose stereotypical views with long and powerful histories. They must argue that the dangers of women socializing are not as great as the dangers of women left morally uneducated. And they must destroy the wall of silence that has kept women from sharing their experiences with each other. If their defenses are elaborate, perhaps it is because the view of the irrational, incapable woman is so pervasive that they must defend themselves not only to male readers, but to their own sex as well. At times, it seems that the writers themselves view women as "naturally" weak; however, for sixteenth and seventeenth-century audiences, to suggest otherwise might have been so startling that their readers would have been unreceptive to any further defense.

When Renaissance writers cautioned men to keep their wives at home, they were building on an age-old belief that woman away from man's influence could find nothing but trouble, particularly if that woman strayed from the domestic sphere. Nina Auerbach traces the portrayal of women socializing back to Greek myths: "The endless age of the Graie [the three mythical sisters from Hesiod's Theogony] and the indominatable vigor of the Amazons are opposites that meet at important points. Both are communities of women without men and,

as such, they are seen immediately as mutilated . . . ." (4) With their training in the classics, writers such as More and Bacon would certainly have been familiar with the legends of the Graie and the Amazons, as well as the many other Greek women who became a liability once away from their husband's guard. The sisters of the Trojan War stories, Helen and Clytaemnestra, leap immediately to mind. For More and Bacon, however, a more obvious influence comes from the Christian story of Adam and Eve. Eve, the weaker sex, fell prey to temptation as soon as she stepped away from her husband's guard. She was seen not only as a cohort in crime, but the temptress who also led her husband to sin as well. When Renaissance writers could point to the woman responsible for the entire world's fall from grace, what more evidence was needed to keep women at home, safely tucked away from the temptations of the world?

One of the many voices that women writers had to counter was that of Juan Luis Vives, who wrote the educational treatise "The Instruction of a Christian Woman" (1592) for Queen Catherine of Aragon. In the preface to this work, Vives argues that men need many rules for guidance because they are occupied both at home and abroad with their "owne matters and for the comon weale" (iii). Women, on the other hand, do not have this double obligation and can be guided with fewer rules. For young men, we may make exceptions, but "the mayde, whom we wolde have specially good" requires the attendance of her father and mother. Young girls, he argues, require guardians to monitor their play and teach them better judgment, for as women, they will be "more disposed

to pleasure" (4). It would seem that this circular reasoning--women must be protected because we would have them be good--never gave pause to Renaissance writers.

Citing Vives and others, Stallybrass, in Rewriting the Renaissance, connects the fear of women socializing to the overall emphasis on silence and chastity as woman's most desirable traits: "The surveillance of women concentrated upon three specific areas: the mouth, chastity, the threshold of the house. . . ." (126) In legal discourse, conduct books, Vives' treatise, and Samuel Rowlands' poem "Salomons Harlot," women are warned to stay within the home so that their speech can be contained as well (127). Retha Warnicke notes the same advice in sermons, with ministers warning women "whether puritan or conformist, to remain in the household and to go into public areas only rarely" so that they may not be influenced by gossips (129). An obvious advantage of this advice for men was that women had less opportunity to share complaints about their current station; without the emotional support of other women, wives and mothers had less power to change. Without the benefit of multiple perspectives, perhaps they also saw less reason to change.

Linda Woodbridge links the newly reawakened fear of women socializing with evolving work patterns. During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, more middle-class wives and widows worked outside the home; thus, they were "viewed more suspiciously . . . . If even widows were suspect, the only place a woman was really safe from seducers was deep in the bowels of her house,

preferably surrounded by six children and no gossips" (174, 176). Frequent satires of women's friendships reenforced fears that made a sense of community more difficult for women; as Woodbridge notes, "Advice is central to the tradition: what literary husbands feared most from gossips was the wicked tricks women might learn from each other" (231). David Latt further describes the effect of these attitudes on husband-wife relations in the seventeenth century:

> With the insistence on feminine passivity and the prevalent attitude that women should remain 'indoors,' individual women were effectively isolated from one another, thereby enforcing their dependence on their husbands, who in turn were then able to limit their social contacts, making themselves the focus of their wives' intellectual and emotional lives. (43-44)

It is in this climate that the earliest women writers of utopia make their most significant, although largely unrecognized, contributions. They assert the benefits both for individual women and for society when women are allowed a sense of community with other women. If some women are "naturally" weak, they can be instructed by other women whose actions are well-reasoned, whose purity is unquestioned.

Women writers were not alone in their attempt to promulgate a new conception of women separate from Eve. A number of religious groups in the seventeenth century both directly and indirectly influenced the view of women in their contradictions of Puritanism. As J. C. Davis writes in his 1986 analysis

Fear, Myth and History: The Ranters and the Historians, Puritanism encouraged strong self-control:

> The risks of allowing the people free rein were too great for those who had participated in inciting them to action. In a society with very limited coercive resources, internalised controls, self-control on the part of the masses, were seen to be vital. Puritanism, by internalising the sense of sin was, in part at least, a sustained attempt to develop such control. (8)

Although there is a great deal of diversity among the religious sects of the seventeenth century, many of them are linked in their attempts to counter this internalization of sin. As J.C. Davis explains, "After 1649 the Diggers, the Fifth Monarchists, the Seekers and the Ranters could be seen to be seeking ways of liberating the oppressed from the burden of their own sense of sin and sinfulness" (9). Indirectly, the work of these religious groups suggested a new image for women as well. By de-emphasizing the fall from grace and placing new emphasis on the individual's unity with God, these sects helped to break the connection between women and Eve, their sinful mother.

There is evidence to believe that some Renaissance writers saw this revision of women as particularly threatening. Fears of women socializing, as illustrated throughout the literature of the time, had led to tighter controls on their behavior. Davis argues that the Puritans created a "Ranter myth" meant to counter any loosening of that control. For instance, Renaissance pamphlets

warned that Ranter women "knew no sexual limit" (106). The Ranters' belief in individual moral responsibility may have allowed women more freedom in controlling their own actions, but their doctrine does not particularly focus on equality of the sexes. While the Puritans feared that Ranter beliefs would encourage a complete "inversion of sexual roles," the movement created a stir for only two years, 1649-1650 (Davis 105). Furthermore, so many fears were associated with their beliefs that the Ranters' influence in revising woman's role was minimalized.

A more direct influence on the new conception of women may be seen in communal groups such as the Quakers, who worked to contradict misogynists and advocate woman's rights (Latt 58). Although condemned for supporting woman's place in worship service, the Quaker leader George Fox continued to teach that women should take a more active role in religion. Whereas Orthodox Christians believed that woman should always be punished with Eve for her sin, Fox taught that Christ had restored both man and woman to their original state before the fall (Lloyd 107-108). Women were still to confer with men in matters that they could not resolve, and the Quakers still accepted the Biblical teaching in I Peter iii.7 that describes woman as "the weaker vessel," but the Quaker faith granted women freedom in many areas otherwise restricted.

Women were encouraged to hold their own monthly meetings through which they could provide moral instruction and advice on household management, and Quaker women also took a much more active role in whole

community services. They were among the first preachers of their faith, and even within the confines of domestic life, Margaret Fell served as a religious leader, opening her home to traveling Friends (Braithwaite 134). Furthermore, women were allowed to speak at whole community services and travel as missionaries. Yet this is not to say that society as a whole approved of their roles as religious leaders. Many Quaker women were imprisoned and persecuted for preaching in town centers, and on numerous occasions, they were charged with being "witches" because of their religious enthusiasm (220, 245), an accusation that had served Renaissance misogynists well to restrict women in many areas.

Perhaps women were granted liberties in the Quaker faith because so many of the Friends were drawn from the trading classes (512); in the working class, Renaissance women necessarily had more freedom to travel and engage in the business affairs needed to support the family. However, there is reason to believe that the precedent set by the Quakers was not common for most classes of society in the seventeenth century. The many defenses for female equality before and during the time serve as one reminder that active civic participation was an exception for women, not the norm.

Women writing of women during the seventeenth century were well aware of the models with which they were compared, and they found their "defenses" in unusual approaches. Aemelia Lanyer, possibly the first Englishwoman to publish a book of poems, had inherited financial support and access to the court

circles from her father, a court musician. Her education, including "some familiarity with the classical tradition and with the techniques of rhetoric," was atypical for a seventeenth-century woman, but her yearning for more opportunities was not (Woods xvii). Throughout her works, she illustrates the many-faceted defenses women employed to counter the negative portrayals of their sex. "Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum" is one key example. Published in 1611, the same year as the King James Bible, Lanyer's long poetic defense for women is addressed both to the women who forget that they are "in danger to be condemned by the words of their owne mouthes" and to the men who forget that "they were borne of women, nourished by women, and that if it were not by the means of women . . . would be quite extinguished out of the world" (48). Through content and form, Lanyer builds upon this defense.

Similar to the more traditional approaches seen in works such as Thomas Elyot's The Defense of Good Women, Lanyer's defense focuses on an example of the truly chaste woman, Queen Elizabeth: "But your chaste breast, guarded with strength of mind, / Hates the imbracements of unchaste desires" (ll. 1545-1555, p. 117). However, she also employs other approaches, such as shifting the blame for the fall from grace to man: "Her weakenesse did the Serpents words obay; / But you in malice Gods deare Sonne betray" (ll. 815-816, p. 86). By suggesting man's greater culpability in knowing right from wrong, and yet choosing wrong anyway, Lanyer illustrates the weakness in the argument that women are weakened when away from man's moral guidance. Women must

become responsible for their own morality.

Lanyer's rhetorical strategies are further strengthened by form. Renaissance writers used the dedication to their patrons as a means of ennobling their own middle-class perspectives. In the sixteenth-century epic The Faerie Queene, for example, Edmund Spenser includes a series of dedicatory sonnets meant to ennoble his work. In the sonnet to Sir Christopher Hatton, Lord High Chauncelor of England, Spenser writes, "And to these ydle rymes lend little space, / Which for their titles sake may find more grace" (25). Similarly, in the sonnet to the "Earle of Oxenford, Lord High Chamberlayne of England," Spencer requests, "Receive most Noble Lord in gentle gree, / The unripe fruit of an unready wit: / Which by thy countenaunce doth crave to bee / Defended from foule Envies poisnous bit" (26). As Susanne Woods notes, it was a tradition for Renaissance poets to "valorize their own role as definers of, as well as speakers for, their society" (xxxiii). In her dedicatory verses, however, Lanyer draws attention not only to her social class but to her role as a woman poet as well:

> To thee great Countesse now I will applie
> My Pen, to write thy never dying fame;
> That when to Heav'n thy blessed Soul shall flie,
> These lines on earth record thy reverend name:
> And to this taske I meane my Muse to tie,
> Thou wanting skill I shall but purchase blame:

Pardon (deere Ladie) want of womans wit

To pen thy praise, when few can equall it. (ll. 9-16, p. 51)

By combining the two, in the traditionally apologetic tone of a dedication, she "renders the happenstance of gender as visible as, and as ultimately inconsequential as, the male poet's happenstance of birth" (Woods xxxiii). In other words, through structure, Lanyer offers no more apology for her defense of women than a male poet might offer on any topic.

Rather than openly contradicting the numerous male writers who would have agreed women were more susceptible to evil influence, Lanyer and other women writers employed rhetoric to argue for educational equality by admitting to woman's "natural" weakness and then using the weakness as justification for moral education. Queen Elizabeth herself accomplished a great deal through a similar ploy in persuasion, prefacing her arguments with an acknowledgment that she was *just* a woman, but she knew a bit about government.[3] Many women writers, like Queen Elizabeth, used subtle means of persuasion that must be recognized to appreciate their efforts in securing more educational and employment opportunities for women.

The argument for educational equality, while a significant hallmark of women's utopia, began long before the seventeenth and eighteenth century women utopists commonly studied--Thomas More made this argument in 1516. More was not specific, however, about how women might apply their education to form a better society. Were women merely to amuse themselves with

education until an opportunity to marry arose? Or were they to educate themselves so that they might be more suitable wives and mothers? Both explanations seem reasonable given that women in More's utopia are seen as nothing but mothers, wives, or prospective wives. In contrast, some early women writers show a keen awareness that education is a political tool that women desperately need, both for their own advancement and society's advancement. And if they admit to "natural" weaknesses, it is largely to convince their male readers that it is dangerous to leave half of the population uneducated and thus spiritually and intellectually bankrupt.

While Sargent mentions five utopian works by women writers in the seventeenth century, I have chosen to focus on two--Margaret Cavendish's "The Blazing World" (1666) and Mary Astell's "A Serious Proposal to the Ladies" (1692)--because of their more specific suggestions for a revised role for women. Of the other three works that Sargent mentions, I have dismissed the first two because they offer no direct commentary on how women's lives might change in this world. Margaret Cavendish's The World's Olio (1655) includes a list of instructions to princes for specific reforms but does not specifically address changes for women. Mary Cary's The Little Horns Doom (1681), a now out-of-print text, describes life in Millenium but does not suggest revisions for women out of the spiritual realm.

Aphra Behn's Oroonoko (1688), which Sargent calls a "borderline" utopia, is focused principally on the life of a "naturally good man" (British and American

Utopian Literature 1-15). Behn's work suggests social reform through its focus on the immorality of slavery. But the work can scarcely be read as a feminist or even woman-centered utopia. In the adventures of the African prince Oroonoko, his love Imoinda is praised for her "lovely Modesty" and the "Additions to Beauty" she puts on to be worthy of Oroonoko's attention. Being allowed to receive him as her husband was "the greatest Honour the Gods could do her," but far from being a utopia, marriage fails to offer even traditional security as she is still powerless against the King's sexual advances (Behn 137-42). Thus, in its treatment of women's issues, Behn's work might better be described as a dystopia.

In contrast, Cavendish and Astell deal more directly with what changes must occur in the world and in woman herself before she can contribute to society. Although they do not fully contradict the stereotypical notion that women are weak in many ways, Cavendish and Astell argue not only that women may be educated, but that women may learn from each other and reenforce rational thought and morality. And, again, if their tone is often self-deprecating, it may stand as evidence of the common view of woman they were working to counter.

The critical reception to Margaret Cavendish's work illustrates the opposition that early women writers faced. Paul Salzman suggests that much of Cavendish's work--including plays, poems, and treatises--drew ridicule because she was an "eccentric" character "capable of ignoring varying degrees of

prejudice about female roles that surrounded her" (xvii). While the biography she produced of her husband, The Life of William Cavendish, Duke of Newcastle, went through three editions (Firth vii), her fictions never gained popularity. In fact, Cavendish was known by her contemporaries as "Mad Madge," a label that, as Gilbert and Gubar argue in The Madwoman in the Attic, she tried to counter through "self-deprecatory misogyny" characteristic of many early women writers (62-63). Gilbert and Gubar build on Virginia Woolf's analysis of Cavendish to illustrate that "women who did *not* apologize for their literary efforts were defined as mad and monstrous" (63, their emphasis). (Thus, Lanyer's clever disclaimer, in the traditional form of the dedicatory verses, both met current expectations and reduced the impact of the disclaimer.) Salzman's own take on Cavendish's writing reveals the fresh perspective with which we can now view her efforts:

> It is often difficult to determine whether her "madness" might not have consisted mostly of her daring to enter the masculine worlds of letters, science, and philosophy, coupled with her determination to maintain her own individuality, whether in matters of dress, or opinion. (xvii)

Viewed in this light, Cavendish's work takes on more significance as one of the first efforts to break down the barriers that prevented women from more active participation in the world.

Cavendish's "The Blazing World" is an allegory of a beautiful lady,

kidnapped by a merchant and then stranded in a world beyond the North Pole when her kidnapper and other seamen die from the elements. Naomi Jacobs, writing in Donawerth and Kolmerten's 1994 collection of essays Utopian and Science Fiction by Women: Worlds of Difference, presents an interesting view of Cavendish's setting in her suggestion that the North Pole represents a frozen landscape that will free women from traditional expectations for fertility because of the impossibility of physical growth and / or decay (91).[4] Similar to its precedents in the genre, Cavendish's utopia also illustrates, through setting, a world distant from our current perceptions and beliefs. The narrator's perilous journey to a far-off land symbolizes the difficulty of change.

In Cavendish's new world, the lady traveler so impresses the Emperor that she is made Empress, and this new position allows her the liberty of engaging in dialogue with the city's residents (most of whom are half animal and half male) about the sea, chemistry, mathematics, religion, and many other topics. The autobiographical connection is difficult to ignore here as Cavendish herself was allowed much more liberty in writing because of her marriage to the Duke of Newcastle. Virginia Woolf described the mixed results of such liberty as great productivity and a weakened style: "Order, continuity, the logical development of her argument are all unknown to her. No fears impede her. She has the irresponsibility of a child and the arrogance of a Duchess" (83). Yet it is because of this liberty that Cavendish can see the potential for a more active civic role for women.

The discussions with the animal men extend for more than half of the story, leaving little space for discussion of utopian ideals, but the Empress does conclude that the city's harmonious order does not justify the practice of excluding the women from public religious activities. She offers them an alternative to their habit of saying "their prayers by themselves in their closets" (263) by setting up two chapels in which she preaches sermons teaching fear and love for God. The Empress finds the women quick witted and eager to learn, thus implying criticism of the deprivation the women had suffered before. However, she later admits the city is less quiet for her intrusion. She is willing to let the residents return to their former practice of one male-dominated religion when she recognizes that the "nature of women being much delighted with change and variety," she had acted too hastily (326).

While the city returns to its utopian harmony, the Empress' admission that she should have left well enough alone may weaken the plea for woman's equality in religious education. Gilbert and Gubar comment that as late as the nineteenth century, women writers rarely overtly criticize the patriarchy, but "over and over again they project what seems to be the energy of their own despair into passionate, even melodramatic characters who act out . . . [their] subversive impulses" (77). Cavendish's Empress may fit this description initially in her desire to reform the city, although ultimately, she is hesitant about criticizing the status quo. Lee Cullen Khanna admits that this act "seems to draw back from the revisionist daring" of the earlier portions of the text yet argues that the

Empress' act not only shows her flexibility as a leader, but also her "concern for both individual authority and community--or the desire both to assume power and share it" (27-32). Because the Empress voices the reversal in such loaded, stereotypical language--women are flighty and change without forethought--readers might be impressed most by her indecisiveness. However, I agree with Khanna that the reversal also illustrates fair-mindedness. When the Empress first examines religious practices of the Blazing World, she immediately decides to "convert" them. Atypical for the time, she does not do so through "enforcement or bloodshed, for she knew well that belief was a thing not to be forced or pressed upon the people, but to be instilled into their minds by gentle persuasions" (290). Similar to other women's utopias which followed, Cavendish's utopia emphasizes communal decision-making and a less-centralized seat of power when her heroine encourages the citizens once again to make their own religious choices. But whether the Empress used physical or persuasive power, the fact remains that she did, at first, hastily convert the country to a new religion, with little discussion or planning.

In contrast, the Empress reverses her decision only after a detailed discussion with the Duchess (a character who represents Cavendish herself). The Empress is concerned that the many different factions--the worm-men, bear-men, fly-men, etc.--will incite a rebellion and ruin the government. She has seen the resulting chaos when multiple viewpoints reign and is proactive in solving the problem. We cannot credit her with envisioning a future when all citizens could

exercise religious freedom without the control of government, but we can credit her with showing that women in communities with other women are able rationally to examine and to solve problems before they become too damaging. The Duchess warns the Empress that in time the Blazing World may become as the world she came from:

> . . . wherein are more sovereigns than worlds and more pretended governors than governments; more religions than gods and more opinions in those religions than truths; more laws than rights and more bribes than justices; more policies than necessities and more fears than dangers; more covetousness than riches; more ambitions than merits . . . . (326)

In short, the Duchess warns the Empress of a world in which men and women exercise more power than judgment, with all promoting their own special interests. In most utopian literature, a parallel or a contrast with British or American society is explicitly given. The readers' own vices are mirrored through dystopian elements or by suffering through a comparison. At one level, the description of what the Blazing World could become represents this standard contrast. Cavendish connects the utopian description more closely to British society by implying criticism of the religious turmoil between Puritans and other sects in seventeenth century England, a time in which "bloodshed" all too often replaced "gentle persuasion." In addition to Braithwaite's descriptions of the Protestant-Quaker conflicts that were common during the time, Diane Willen's

description of "late medieval Lollardy" (a sect following Wycliffe's doctrines) is evidence of the religious turmoil in England. Willen estimates that women made up about one-third of the promoters of this sect, and many were burned during the Kent heresy proceedings (142). Occasionally women escaped punishment for expressing their religious views because they were seen as powerless to affect others' opinions.

In a more common link with women's utopian fiction, the description of the Blazing World and what it may become emphasizes the rationality that women can reenforce in each other, given the opportunity for socialization. If women are faulty or hasty in their reasoning, they can help correct each other; they will not automatically adopt the worst vices of their companions. Although the Empress ultimately dismisses woman's public place in religion, she encourages a more serious private role in her consultations with the Duchess about how to handle religious matters. The Duchess consistently offers what the Empress considers sound advice, and the women enjoy a lengthy friendship that culminates in their common decision to establish a new world in each of their minds. The Duchess rejects past philosophers' advice in her formulation of this new world and finally creates a society of her own invention "composed only of the rational" (313). The Empress follows suit although almost no detail is given of either of these imagined worlds.

The second part of the story presents the Empress in a more serious civic role, rescuing her former world from its enemies by having the animal-men

attack with fire-stones, but the Empress does not find a permanent place in her former world and must return to the utopian city. Again the temporary revision of woman's role is undercut, this time by the necessity of employing the animal-men to restore her country to peace and the necessity of violence, rather than reason, to convince the enemies. Furthermore, we are left with the author's justification for creating the story in the epilogue. Similar to what she does in the introduction, in which she asked readers not to blame her for creating another world "since it is in everyone's power to do the like" (253), Cavendish closes her story by inviting readers to join her world or to create their own, but allow her power in the world she's created in her imagination. Instead of specifically connecting her story to the potential it illustrates for women, Cavendish pardons her representation of woman as more powerful by emphasizing its confines within her imagination. Again, though, we must be mindful of the period in which Cavendish wrote. At a time when women had very little religious freedom and very few opportunities for education, Cavendish proposes through her fiction that women become religious and political leaders. If she does not insist upon a reality in line with her fiction, she does at least show readers ways in which women can be rational leaders within their own company. Through the contrasts between parts one and two of the novel, Cavendish also suggests that women will need to participate actively in creating a new world, for there is no real place for them in the world of their past.

Moira Ferguson comments that Cavendish, throughout her works,

alternately "praises or upbraids women," a contradiction that indicates Cavendish's own doubts about the best position for women (14). Even a cursory look at Cavendish's writings reveals the aptness of Ferguson's analysis; however, it is also interesting to trace the progression of her ideas. In one of her most direct statements about woman's abilities, Cavendish writes in The World's Olio (1655),

> It cannot be expected I should write so wisely or wittily as men, being of the effeminate sex, whose brains Nature hath mixed with the coldest and softest elements; and to give my reason why we cannot be so wise as men, I take leave and ask pardon of my own sex, and present my reasons to the judgment of Truth; but I believe all of my own sex will be against me out of partiality to themselves . . . . (276)

One year later, when she published "A True Relation of My Birth, Breeding, and Life," Cavendish describes her upbringing as that which was "according to my birth, and the nature of my sex" (156).[5] She gives few details, however, that would suggest what part of her breeding was tied to her sex. Although she mentions that she was bred "modestly," she also adds "civilly, honourably, and on honest principles" (156). In contrasting the breeding of her brothers, she says simply that "the breeding of men were after different manner of ways from those of women" (158). At these times, Cavendish seems to accept fully woman's position, or at least, the position of a woman in her social class, the

aristocracy.

At other times, Cavendish more clearly criticizes the restrictions of her sex. In the first "Female Oration," printed in 1662, Cavendish urges women to "make frequent Assemblies, Associations, and Combinations amongst our Sex . . . to make our selves as Free, Happy and Famous, as Men" (Ferguson 315). Similarly, Cavendish shows in The Blazing World (1666) the benefits of such associations, and, as Khanna argues effectively, the conclusion derives in part from Cavendish's recognition that "the desires of women can best be achieved by claiming discursive rather than material power" (32). Tracing the chronology of her writing also leads to the speculation that "The Blazing New World" represents Cavendish's increasing faith in woman's ability to solve problems rationally if she can uncover a world more receptive to her power. While the Empress' old world is not such a place, she finds hope through her experience in the new world.

The structure of "The Blazing New World" may lend further support to this interpretation. The sixteenth and seventeenth-century examples by More and Bacon illustrate worlds that have already been shaped by the actions of their male rulers. Their structures, typical for most classic utopias, center around revelation as the male narrators discover the existing order in another patriarchal society. In contrast, Cavendish describes a world in flux. Part two of the utopia shows the female ruler revising her earlier decisions in a communal effort with another woman. Because Cavendish's utopia is a world still in

process, her female characters are presented as more active participants in shaping that world. Her suggestions for change may seem tentative as she restricts the world to the confines of her imagination, but in calling for others to create their own worlds as well, she emphasizes the individual's potential to shape her world. Women need not see themselves in the same way that society as a whole has traditionally seen them.

In her treatise "A Serious Proposal to the Ladies" (1692), Mary Astell is more focused than Cavendish in advocating educational reform for women, but her proposal may be considered less a utopian fiction than a straightforward plea for society to reconsider woman's need for education. Both of her treatises, "A Serious Proposal" and "Some Reflections upon Marriage," went through several editions, suggesting that Astell's work fared better with her contemporaries than did Cavendish's. However, even though she was respected by the clergy for her defenses of the Church of England, one clergyman "deplored her tendency to be 'now and then a little offensive and shocking in her expressions'" (Rogers, Before Their Time, 26). Although Astell came from a middle-class family, she presumably learned Latin from a clergyman uncle and she later became good friends with upper-class women such as Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, whom Rogers describes simply as a "less unconventional feminist" (26). While Astell's ideas might have been accepted more readily than Cavendish's because "A Serious Proposal" targets single women, the fact that Astell herself chose never to marry may illustrate her

conviction that women will fare better if they choose roles other than the traditional ones of wife and mother.

Astell proposes to establish a religious retirement so that women who have chosen not to marry or who have not yet married may retreat *from* the world for education that will better prepare their defenses *for* the world. In their retreat, the women would engage in intense prayer sessions, morally instruct each other, and--as religion must be accompanied by wisdom--gain a general education as well (74-75). Striking a tone that might rival feminist voices of the 1960s, Astell argues that women must first establish an identity through introspection; they must "look into themselves, to be acquainted at home, and no longer the greatest strangers to their own hearts" (62-63). Furthermore, Astell counters the image of a good woman as simply silent and chaste (meaning, at the time, above suspicion) and promotes a more active role in society. Her seminary would train women for this role through education and through the moral role models women might set for each other.

Throughout the introduction to her proposal, Astell bemoans the restrictions of society that encourage women to be passive in their virtue, to allow it to be "buried in silence and forgetfulness!" (10) And although she notes women would be free to leave the ideal society to marry, when more directly addressing the ladies, rather than the many who may object to her proposal, Astell clearly shows her belief that women need not be confined to this option. She says of men, "We value *them* too much, and our *selves* too little, if we place

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any part of our worth in their Opinion; and do not think our selves capable of Nobler Things than the pitiful Conquest of some worthless heart" (14-15, her emphasis). No longer would women feel compelled to marry any "who tells her she has those Perfections which she naturally longs for" if she began to value her intelligence over her beauty (35). Her society would ensure as one key advantage that women would no longer be bought, sold, nor forced to marry unless they desired to do so (146). As Astell's later writing suggests, she could not see why women would desire marriage anyway. Her second treatise for women, Some Reflections upon Marriage, Occasioned by the Duchess of Mazarine's Case (1700), offers support for her own decision to remain single, as she argues for the difficulty of subjection in marriage, particularly if woman's supposed weaknesses are to be believed:

> And if men, learned, wise, and discreet as they are, who have, as Is said, all the advantages of nature, and without controversy have, or may have, all the assistance of art, are so far from acquitting themselves as they ought, from living according to that reason and excellent understanding they so much boast of, can it be expected that a woman, who is reckoned silly enough in herself, at least comparatively, and whom men take care to make yet more so, can it be expected that she should constantly perform so difficult a duty as entire subjection, to which corrupt Nature is so averse? (44-45)

The tongue-in-cheek reasoning is evident in this passage, particularly when read in conjunction with A Serious Proposal. As men justify controlling and guarding women because of woman's perceived weaknesses, Astell argues for more freedom for women who might be too "weak" to be a good wife and mother anyway.

In "A Serious Proposal," Astell further addresses the charge against woman's reasoning power. As for the belief that women are naturally "incapable of acting Prudently," Astell says she cannot "grant it," for if there is a weakness, it is acquired from lack of education, not "natural" (22-23). Women, Astell argues, need only to cultivate their God-given abilities: "For, since GOD has given Women as well as Men intelligent Souls, why should they be forbidden to improve them?" (79) With God, not man, as a guide, women could be responsible for their own moral education. And Astell's arguments are not limited to a recitation of woman's individual capabilities. In addition to countering the current view that women were less capable of learning, she refutes the notion that women in community adopt each other's vices. At a time when husbands were advised to keep their wives at home lest they learn evil habits from other women, Astell proposes that women be joined in a community where they "shall suffer no other confinement, but to be kept out of the road of sin" (64). She further notes the selfless attitude that communal living will reenforce, "for how can she repine at anothers wel-fare, who reckons it the greatest part of her own?" (69) Women's friendship, far from being a danger to

each woman's virtue, will "deliver them from that vicious selfishness and the rest of those sordid passions" (136). Through such friendships, they will learn to care better for others, and from this practice, they will become stewards in the world.

In a distinction that separates "A Serious Proposal" from many of the feminist utopias that follow, Astell implies that women may be religious leaders not only within their own community, but in the world at large. The religious retirement will not sequester women away from the vices of the world so that they can remain pure only in the absence of temptation; it will provide a training ground through which women can educate and morally strengthen each other. Astell says, "It shall not so cut you off from the world, as to hinder you from bettering and improving it; but rather qualify you to do it the greatest Good, and be a Seminary to stock the Kingdom with pious and prudent Ladies" (73). Women may seek new fields of knowledge if only they temporarily "remove the little Toys and Vanities of the world" (113). As an added benefit to society, these newly educated women could then educate daughters of gentlemen fallen from the higher classes of society. At several points, Astell suggests such a leadership position that could be transferred as the ladies are reintegrated into society. Even though she draws back from specific assertions about what jobs women might hold, she clearly identifies woman's ability to reason and to teach others, and she identifies their only true guide. God, not man, should exert control over woman's actions. God, not man, must be the one to whom woman

answers.

After arguing the benefits of such a community to women, Astell more directly addresses the male readers, saying, "The Ladies, I'm sure, have no reason to dislike this Proposal, but I know not how the Men will resent it, to have their enclosure broke down" with women allowed to taste the "Tree of Knowledge they have so long unjustly monopolized" (86-87). As a concession to these fears, Astell asks that women be allowed at least to instruct each other, just as she sets up the argument with the assurance that "We pretend not that women should teach in the church, or usurp authority where it is not allowed them; permit us only to understand our own duty" (84). Astell also emphasizes the benefits of education for wives and mothers although both earlier and later arguments clearly show these roles are not her only concerns. Astell later writes, for instance, that only "fools" would reproach a woman with the title of "Old Maid" (160). For readers who would object that women do not need education, she points out what "a good and prudent Wife, would wonderfully work on an ill man" (155). And, addressing the fears of how education for women will disrupt the domestic sphere, she suggests,

> The only danger is, that the Wife be more knowing than the Husband; but if she be, 'tis his own fault, since he wants no opportunities of improvement; unless he be a natural blockhead, and then such an one will need a wise Woman to govern him, whose prudence will conceal it from publick Observation, and at

once both cover and supply his defects. (156)

Astell follows Aristotle's classic advice, then, in employing rhetoric that allows for all available means of persuasion. While she sees the need for change, Astell also recognizes the stronghold of custom, that force which has "usurpt such an unaccountable Authority" (122). She knows that change will not come easily and provides elaborate defenses for each possible objection. Since Astell's work is a treatise instead of a fiction, the utopian elements described take a considerably different form than that of classic utopian texts. However, through the layering of defenses--the multiple approaches to the argument based on each possible objection--Astell establishes a pattern that several later women utopists will use.

Through multiple perspectives, Astell illustrates the many benefits such a training ground for women could offer to all of society--the woman needing more spiritual guidance, the young girl waiting to marry, the "old maid" resistant to marriage, the husband needing a more intellectual wife to cover his errors, and the morally poor needing strong religious models. These rationales might temporarily distract from her principal concern to educate women for the mere sake of education, but they leave almost no objection unaddressed. Furthermore, in systematically countering each opposing argument, Astell provides an example through her own writing style of the order and reason that women can be taught.

Like Cavendish, Astell seems conservative at times in her suggestions for reform, but Astell's contributions are significant in two areas. First, she explicitly

calls for change in society, rather than excusing her vision as the workings of her imagination. Second, she is more open in confronting those who have unnecessarily restricted women in the past. If she does not argue for the sweeping changes that twentieth-century readers seek, she does lay the groundwork. And as she notes in the conclusion, her proposal will have served its purpose if it but inspires "wiser heads to improve and perfect it" (171).

Working with definitions of feminist utopias as those that depict societies "free of oppression and discrimination based on sex, race, age, class, religion, and sexual orientation," critics such as Lucy Friebert ("World Views in Utopian Novels by Women," Women and Utopia) often overlook writers such as Cavendish and Astell who describe societies with less complete reforms (67). Like Ann J. Lane, Friebert asserts that there were no serious feminist utopias before Herland, published in 1915. Therefore, the critical analysis in Donawerth and Kolmerten's 1994 text, Utopian and Science Fiction by Women: Worlds of Difference, is particularly refreshing because it recognizes seventeenth-century precedents. The eighteenth century, however, presents an additional stumbling block to tracing a tradition. It appears that only one utopian text was written by a British or American woman between Astell's 1694 proposal and texts in the 1800s.[6] As perhaps the sole utopian work by a woman during a century, Sarah Scott's 1762 novel Millenium Hall might be expected to garner a great deal of attention from historians of the utopian genre, but this has hardly been the case. It might even be argued, despite the early writers' contributions, that Scott's work

is the *first* feminist utopian novel since Cavendish presents a brief, and ultimately refuted, description of a feminine society, and Astell presents her views through a non-fictionalized treatise. Yet, to my knowledge, Scott's work has never been awarded this title. Scott's novel falls short in many of the areas Friebert mentions in that her utopia suggests an incomplete reform. But it seems an oversight that neither Friebert nor Lane mentions Millenium Hall in their lists of utopias by women writers, given the nature of Scott's work when compared with other women writers of the time.

Donawerth and Kolmerten point out that Scott builds on the educational reforms suggested by Cavendish and Astell and then adds an alternative to marriage through a model based on "seclusion from the world" (6). Barbara Schnorrenberg, in her 1982 study of eighteenth-century women's utopias ("A Paradise Like Eve's"), groups Scott with Astell and another eighteenth-century educational reformer, Clara Reeve; but while she acknowledges Scott's work is distinct as a novel, she does not treat it as a full-fledged utopia. She says of all three writers, their schemes were not for "an entirely new world . . . . They hoped rather to change the lives and thoughts of the women who came to their communities, so that they could deal better with society as it was" (270). In a recent treatment of Millenium Hall as a feminist text, Linda Dunne recognizes it as an early example of a structure Carol Pearson identifies in post-1970 works, through which male narrators experience a conversion of their biases after visiting a female society (56).[7] But Scott is still largely ignored for her

accomplishments in creating a fully-functioning world, directed by women.

Carol Pearson, in an analysis of four feminist utopias in the twentieth-century (Future Females, 1981), offers a more inclusive definition of feminist utopian fiction as that which "implicitly or explicitly criticizes the patriarchy while it emphasizes society's habit of restricting and alienating women" (63). With this definition, we can call Scott's work a feminist vision not only in contrast with her contemporaries but also because of its commentary on woman's situation.

On one level, Millenium Hall is noteworthy simply because it is the work of one of the few British women during the eighteenth century to make a large part of her income by writing (Aphra Behn being perhaps the most prominent among this group). Women who needed to earn an income were still stigmatized, and writing was one of the few professional careers that offered them opportunities (Rogers, Feminism in Eighteenth-Century England, 17-21). But, as John Richetti argues in his essay on eighteenth-century reading habits, along with this opportunity came the expectation that women would write the kind of sentimental novels that the growing female leisure class could appreciate (68). Although not formally educated, Scott was able to supplement the small income provided by her husband after their separation through the publication of eight books, and she gained a reputation for her charity comparable to that of the ladies in Millenium Hall (one of her more popular works, appearing in four editions by 1778) (Spencer vii-viii).[8]

Although few women could be classified as professional writers during the

time, what is even more remarkable than Scott's productivity is the nature of Millenium Hall. Scott's work represents one of the first sustained efforts at utopian writing by a woman in English, and her heroines differ from those found in the sentimental novel and in other early attempts at utopian writing. Margaret Cavendish's work has utopian elements but, in overemphasizing the role of the imagination, draws back from a more complete revision of society. Mary Astell calls for specific educational reforms; however, this treatise is less comparable to other utopian fiction in which characters must be developed to enact the vision in a detailed setting.

Scott distinguishes herself from other eighteenth-century writers in presenting a feminist vision of a new world. The prominent feminist essayist Mary Wollstonecraft was only three years old when Scott published Millenium Hall. Fanny Burney, one of Scott's nearest female literary contemporaries, presents a morality lesson in Evelina (1778), as a young woman of obscure birth encounters difficulty in rising in society and maintaining her virtue. In this epistolary novel, as in Richardson's Pamela (1740),[9] to which Burney is obviously indebted, the character finds that secure position, and has her virtue rewarded, through marriage. Throughout much of the early portion of the book, her greatest concern is that she will commit a faux pas that will suggest she is ill-bred, whether it be her manner of dancing or her inappropriate laughter. Burney's self-admitted intention for writing, as she indicates in her preface, is to create a work that young women might read "without injury," though this follows a

suggestion that "Perhaps were it possible to effect the total extirpation of novels, our young ladies in general, and boarding-school damsels in particular, might profit by their annihilation" (7). Instead of using her fiction to promote social change, Burney seems content to adapt the sentimental novel so that it is not too damaging to female readers. I would argue that Millenium Hall accomplishes a great deal more.

Millenium Hall describes a community of women who have chosen to create their own society as an alternative to marriage or, in some cases, remarriage. The women are cultivated, as the narrator's opening description reveals them engaged in activities such as reading, translating French, painting, carving, and developing their musical talents (6-7), but their domain is not limited to these common pursuits for upper-class eighteenth-century women. For in the society they have created, the women have organized a communitarian style of living that keeps each person fed and clothed, and allows for education and communal child-rearing to assist the poor. While philanthropic activity was not unusual for eighteenth-century women, the level of organization, absence of male power, and opportunities unfettered by class distinctions, were unusual. As Katharine Rogers points out, in Feminism in Eighteenth-Century England (1982), many early eighteenth-century works emphasized woman's predisposition to certain weaknesses in chastity and self-control by focusing more on "the errors the heroine avoids rather than the good qualities she has" (169), but rarely do critics recognize exceptions to this convention of the

sentimental novel before Wollstonecraft's late eighteenth century writing. Through their involvement in community planning, the Millenium Hall ladies offer such an exception.

Scott does not ignore all traditional eighteenth-century values and concerns. Her characters speak of providence as their guide, much as Defoe's Robinson Crusoe does. Some of the residents are survivors of bad marriages rather than women who chose not to marry, and the histories of the residents focus more on why they would want an alternative to marriage instead of what the community may offer. Through each of these defenses, Scott criticizes, albeit indirectly, the subordination required of women in marriage.

In many areas, the women are traditionally modest. They are hesitant, for example, to speak of many of their accomplishments. The male narrator may have been left uninformed about their entire nature were it not for the women who were able to speak of their comrades or their mistresses because they did not participate in the activity under question. Furthermore, we must wonder if the narrator and his companion, Mr. Lamont, would have even been allowed to stay at Millenium Hall and uncover this well-organized, peaceful setting if the ladies had not discovered that the narrator was a distant cousin to Mrs. Maynard, a resident (9). It is because of this relationship that the men are invited to stay and only through Mrs. Maynard's pleading are they given evidence of the ladies' musical talents and other skills as a concession to their curiosity. However, these hesitations might be interpreted in more than one

way.

In all classic utopias, the main method of disclosure has been the narrator's prompting the inhabitants with questions. In one notable exception, Francis Bacon's "New Atlantis," the residents of Bensalem seem excessively boastful in their attempts to "educate" the narrator, who thinks it would be presumptuous to question the natives' methods. Instead of allowing the contrast between Bensalem and Europe to unfold more naturally through the plot, Bacon has a religious leader of Bensalem indoctrinate the visitors through a lecture on Bensalem's achievements. The descriptions seem long and tedious without the intervention of dialogue.

In contrast, Scott's method allows for many of the advantages seen in other classic texts. The revelations are integrated within the plot as the narrators' curiosity naturally leads them to discovery. Furthermore, the dialogue uncovers the visitors' (and often the readers') false assumptions about woman's capabilities. Although Scott may adhere to the eighteenth-century demand for woman's modesty, her novel also deals with many issues treated in much later works, both ones that we may call complete utopias and others with a mixture of utopian and dystopian visions. Through an emphasis on the values of female socialization, Scott illustrates the values that women might reenforce in each other.

The setting itself serves as one example of what advantages may be offered in a female society. As with many utopian texts, Millenium Hall is

centered in a pastoral area that exemplifies the residents' ability to cultivate, order, and produce. When the narrator first describes the land surrounding this utopia, he notes "the remarkable verdure and neatness of the fields" (4). Natural beauty in its raw form is less the focus than cultivated beauty, and there is little left to chance. In the shady spots, the women chose carefully what to include as such areas were "not well calculated for the production of other flowers" (4). The narrator is surprised at the beauty of this setting and the gradual recognition that the simplicity reflects the women's capacity to plan and order without the assistance of men. Glenn Negley notes the commonality of an arcadian setting in much of eighteenth-century literature but does not treat the special features of men's and women's writing within this setting (xvi). Nor do his unannotated entries add clarification. In feminist utopias appearing after Scott's work, however, there are similar descriptions of the pastoral beauty and of the narrator's surprise at woman's achievements.[10] As Felicity Nussbaum points out, eighteenth century satires on women were particularly critical of the lack of reason and "disorder" represented by women (19). Scott shows that women are able to order nature itself and, furthermore, they can do so without abuses of power that men might be prone to.

As the narrator and Mr. Lamont approach Millenium Hall, a thunderstorm is rising. The women are described running back to the hall as to an "assured asylum against every evil" (6). While the connection is subtle, a description shortly following reenforces the symbolism of violence that the men represent

and the critical tone with which Scott is comparing the male and female response to nature. As he tours the area, the narrator comments, "The wood is well peopled with pheasant, wild turkeys, squirrels and hares, who live so unmolested, that they seem to have forgot all fear . . . . Man never appears there as a merciless destroyer; but the preserver, instead of the tyrant, of the inferior part of the creation" (17). While we must consider "man" a reference to all of humankind in an eighteenth-century work, the nearly all-woman society so distinctly represents the preserver of nature and the defender of the helpless that it is difficult to ignore the female values of nurturing and communal concern suggested here. Through these descriptions, Scott's work anticipates contemporary utopias.[11]

Later in the novel, when Mr Lamont comments that an area enclosed by shrubbery would be ideal for capturing wild animals so that they might be "tamed and subjected by the superior art of man," Miss Mancel replies that it would shock her nature to see an animal confined "within narrow inclosures whose happiness consisted in unbounded liberty" (18). Alluding to a God-given right to freedom that all creatures possess, she argues, "I imagine man has a right to use the animal race for his own preservation, perhaps for his convenience, but certainly not to treat them with wanton cruelty" (19). The link between the freedom of animal creatures and woman's own fight for freedom soon follows when Mrs. Morgan's history reveals a woman who had been trapped in marriage by a man intent upon cruelly isolating her from even her dearest friend (Miss

Mancel herself) so that she could serve his needs alone.

Sarah Scott's characters have undergone a revision to achieve their autonomous community and such changes would be viewed as progressive, perhaps even radical, for her time. While the eighteenth century allowed women increasing freedom in choosing their spouses, social and family pressures still forced many women into incompatible marriages for financial security (Rogers 11). And, once in these marriages, women were often viewed as their husband's property, with little power to assert control over their own lives (Nussbaum 12 and Richetti 93). It is therefore understandable that Scott felt compelled to offer extensive justification for the altered view of woman in Millenium Hall. As noted earlier, the largest portion of the text is spent not in describing what women might be or do as an alternative to marriage, but in describing the women's background as rationale for their unconventional choices. In the 1915 introduction to the text, Jane Spencer notes that while "the ladies declare themselves all in favour of marriage . . . unmarried life at Millenium Hall is evidently Scott's ideal" (xiv). Yet Scott seems hesitant to extend such an alternative without ample justification. When Lamont questions the ladies' choice not to marry, for example, Miss Trentham reasons at length that it is admirable at times because men and women encourage one another to spend money that might better be spent on the needy, and this common influence on one another in marriage sets an example that lower classes of society naturally follow, while depleting their resources in doing so (115-17). This elaborate

explanation is typical of all of Scott's revisions of woman's role. She encourages shared motherhood as an economic relief for the poverty-stricken who have had five or more children and not as a general provision for freeing women from traditional roles. Through this structuring, Scott is linked in another significant way to the women utopists who preceded and followed her.

By depicting characters involved in communal decision-making, Cavendish presents a world in process, a world being revised as its creators constantly reevaluate their own needs and the needs of others. Astell also considers multiple perspectives as she individually addresses the potential objections to her society, and how the world might be refocused to meet each of these needs. Similarly, Scott orders her society around the multiple perspectives of individual women. She draws back from a society with one central power and one preferred life. Women may choose to remain in the community with other women, or they may choose to marry, but, always, the women have the power to control their own lives.

In Millenium Hall, the voice of dissent that allows us a different view of the utopia comes from the narrator's companion, Mr. Lamont. Granted, Mr. Lamont does not very often provide a reasoned alternative to the ladies' views. The narrator initially prejudices our opinion of him by describing him as a conceited man, who likes to monopolize conversations (3). Furthermore, his objections to the ladies' manner of organizing their community are represented with few words, while the women's defenses may extend several pages, as illustrated by

Miss Mancel's fervent opposition to his attitude toward nature. But Lamont does occasionally question the feasibility of an entire world modeled after Millenium Hall, even if the appropriateness of the women's individual choices--for example, their decision to remain unmarried--is left untainted.

Perhaps, as Spencer suggests, the hesitancy to commit herself to more revolutionary views is a reflection of Scott's desire for "gentler changes in society" (x). But considering the period in which Scott wrote, we might also view any revisions of woman's role as innovative. Mary Wollstonecraft, considered a pioneer in the women's movement of the early nineteenth century (Warnock vii) also wrote in A Vindication of the Rights of Woman (1792) that it was not her intent to "violently . . . agitate," and she addressed the objections not only of her male readers, but also of the female readers whom she hoped would excuse her when she chose to "treat them like rational creatures, instead of flattering their *fascinating* graces . . . " (her emphasis) (4-5). If Wollstonecraft stands as a key figure in the women's movement for asserting that women should be allowed to rise in the world by virtue of their reason, and not solely by marriage, how can we view Scott's voice as any less assertive when she makes the same claim two and a half decades earlier?

The changes in woman's stature that Scott suggests must also be seen as more innovative when we consider the numerous controls established to counter the limited freedom that women enjoyed during this time. As Barbara Diefendorf points out, England may have been one of the last European countries to require

parental consent for marriage (legislation was not passed until 1753), but parties to marriages unapproved by family risked excommunication by the church (671). Rarely did women marry without the serious consideration of their financial security being uppermost in their minds. Furthermore, as many eighteenth-century studies indicate, women were still educated for domestic affairs, how to be a good wife, above all other concerns (Richetti 66, Nussbaum 10, and Rogers 7).

Scott's suggestions for change are by no means radical, but in viewing women as self-sufficient, reasonable creatures, whose contribution to society might extend far beyond bearing the next generation, she has taken a step in the direction of later, more elaborate revisions of womanhood. With the ladies of Millenium Hall, Scott creates a society in which every member feels responsible for nurturing the others. In this transferral of the function of motherhood to relationships other than biological parent and child, she anticipates the communal childrearing depicted in Charlotte Perkins Gilman's Herland (1915), Joanna Russ's The Female Man (1975), and Marge Piercy's Woman on the Edge of Time (1976).

Finally, and again, most significantly, Scott's work is innovative in its move to increase communication among women. Though the preceding century had seen many women move into the workforce, either helping manage their husbands' business or running them single-handedly if they had been widowed, women were still largely isolated from one another by fears of the irrationality

such communities would stir. As Rogers summarizes Swift, "Intelligent women should avoid the society of their sex, and feminine influence is always bad" (62). Scott counters the assumption that women could achieve a reasoned discipline only by isolating themselves from other women.

With such fears of women's autonomy prevalent in recent history, rarely did eighteenth-century texts present communities of women as a productive force. Utopian literature by women attempted to dissolve some of these fears. More specifically, Scott's work criticized the notion that men were endangered by women's socialization. Nowhere is this more clearly represented than in Mr. Morgan's unreasonable fear of his new wife remaining intimate with her friend Louisa:

> The day after their marriage, Mrs. Morgan asked his permission to invite Miss Mancel to his house, to which he answered, "Madam, my wife must have no other companion or friend but her husband; I shall never be averse to your seeing company, but intimates I forbid; I shall not choose to have my faults discussed between you and your friend." (80)

Spencer cites this same passage in her introduction but notes that there was little autobiographical connection between Mrs. Morgan's treatment and Scott herself. She happily reports that Scott was rarely separated from her dear friend, Lady Barbara Montagu, even during her short married life (vi). Regardless of what connection this passage may have had with Scott's life, the

prevalence of the view that Richetti and others describe is significant. Scott criticizes the unreasonable fears of a man who would isolate a woman from her closest friend, the one most capable of sharing her experiences. Perhaps if, as Spencer suggests, Scott's friendship with Lady Barbara was "the emotional centre of her life" (v), she was enabled to envision a community of women that most eighteenth-century writers could not.

Millenium Hall does not stand up to Lucy Friebert's definition of a feminist utopia as one that is free of all oppression, for a number of the residents come to the community only after being released from domestic roles that allowed them almost no liberty. And even in their new homes, they are mindful of propriety and the need not only to be modest but always to appear so. Yet, as Katharine Rogers argues for other eighteenth-century works by women writers, "Surely feminism need not be limited to single-minded, systematic campaigning for women's rights, but should include particular sensitivity to their needs, awareness of their problems, and concern for their situation" (4). In that it shows such sensitivity, Millenium Hall fills an important gap between the seventeenth-century texts that first petition for educational equality and later feminist utopias that treat woman's situation more fully.

Taken as a whole, these three early utopias establish a tradition of women writing utopia that has all too often been ignored because they advocate more subtle reforms, but that is not to say that their conservatism belies their significance. By positing women in leadership roles, Cavendish, Astell, and

Scott establish possibilities for women that their male contemporaries--and the majority of their female contemporaries--do not. As chapter one has shown, women characters in male utopias may be educated, but they are often educated to be companions to man, not autonomous creatures. The nature and quantity of their work is dictated by guidelines for their sex, not by their individual capabilities. And motherhood remains the sole fruit of their labors.

In contrast, early women utopists argue that women be educated for the sake of education and that their work be aimed at advancing society, not just biding time until marriage and motherhood--two significant statements given the prevailing beliefs about woman's capabilities as reflected in the literature of the time. While Astell, Cavendish, and Scott do not completely resolve the methods for obtaining work, nor all of the qualities that women must bring to their new work, these three women utopists are among the first to argue for woman's place outside the domestic sphere. They establish woman's need to work and be educated for her own advancement, not merely as a helpmate to her spouse, and they show how women might be nurtured through female companionship. Furthermore, they give ample evidence of woman's ability to use reason in ordering her world.

The stereotype of the passive and silent woman, they insisted, does not serve woman nor society because women cannot even account for their own moral code without access to learning. How can women be expected to move beyond the example set by Eve without direct religious training? Without more

education, they also cannot be responsible for instructing their own children or for serving as a model for others. Even within the domestic sphere (the boundaries for most women of the time) education is vital to the improvement of society, one generation at a time.

Through the communal decision-making advocated in each of their texts, these authors also create a model for utopian societies to follow. With a less-centralized seat of power, each individual works to improve conditions that will benefit them all. Chapter three will illustrate how nineteenth-century women writers, building on this foundation, address the qualities women must possess if their communal efforts are to succeed and question what virtues and vices are "feminine." Chapter four will show how women writers attempt to carve identities separate from their roles as childbearers by breaking down taboos surrounding motherhood and by redistributing the responsibilities that have tied women to the home.

Notes

[1] Interestingly, Chudleigh's essay, written about 1703, describes introspection as a "higher, a more masculine Pleasure" than conversation. However, Chudleigh also recommends studies, and the "rational Amusements" of reading as diversions during solitude (386-87). As the study of the eighteenth century will show, many of Chudleigh's contemporaries would have thought women less capable than men of these rational recourses.

[2] Banks and Banks, for example, focus their sociological study of the nineteenth century on the disputation of the commonly-held belief that the feminist movement was responsible for a decrease in population during the nineteenth century. Although anti-feminists commonly touted the dangers of allowing women suffrage--for then, women would show no control--feminists of the nineteenth century were hesitant to connect themselves with other controversial issues such as birth control or the Contagious Disease Acts for fear that the suffrage movement would be jeopardized.

[3] Somerset argues that, although Queen Elizabeth was "no feminist," she regularly balanced descriptions of her weak sex with reminders of her supreme power. In a meeting with King Henry IV of France, for instance, Elizabeth asked the King to forgive her for "giving him a lecture" when it would be more appropriate for a woman to listen, but added that her experience made her "stubborn" in the conviction that she was not unknowledgeable about the makeup of a king (59-60).

[4] Jacobs presents similar arguments for the "arctic stillness and sterility" of the nineteenth-century work Mizora and the twentieth-century science fictions of Ursula LeGuin.

[5] Cavendish writes that, in her childhood, she and her siblings were discouraged from speaking to the servants not because they were servants, "for many noble persons are forced to serve through necessity," but because they were the "vulgar sort of servants . . . [who] are as ill bred as meanly born, giving children ill examples and worse counsel" (Wilson 306-307).

[6] Scott's Millenium Hall is the only utopian work that Sargent mentions by a woman writer in the eighteenth century (26) although others may have since been recovered.

[7] The men of Herland offer good examples of the conversion Dunne describes with Jeff worshipfully adopting all of the Herlander practices and Van attempting to integrate Herlander methods with his own ideas about male-female relationships.

Dunne also provides an interesting commentary on the maimed characters and misfits who are protected by an isolated garden in the community. She argues that Scott, "Recognizing that communities of women who have rejected heterosexuality were generally seen as "maimed and outcast . . . appropriated these qualities . . . and created a safe, orderly, and clearly defined space for them" (69).

[8] Scott's publishing history includes five novels--The History of Cornelia

(1750), Agreeable Ugliness (1754), A Journey through Every Stage of Life (1754), A Description of Millenium Hall (1762), The History of Sir George Ellison (1766), and A Test of Filial Duty (1772). In addition, she wrote three actual histories--The History of Gustavus Erickson, King of Sweden (1761), The History of Mecklenburgh (1762), and The Life of Theodore Agripa D'Aubigne' (1772).

[9] John Richetti comments that the publication of Pamela (and thus the emergence of the novel) was "the single most important event in the century for the representation of women in literature. In theoretical terms, the novel is a preference for the literal and the actual over the generalized representations that neoclassical literary theory enforced" (86). In works such as Scott's, women characters may distinguish themselves from the "generalized representations" by choosing alternatives to marriage and a more active civic role. Characters such as Evelina still seem encased in those generalities.

[10] In Gilman's Herland (1915), the narrator expresses his astonishment at the grand cultivation of the landscape, noting that "even the forests looked as if they were cared for" (11) and their country was maintained "as a florist cares for his costliest orchid" (18). Similarly, in a much later work such as Marge Piercy's Woman on the Edge of Time (1976), Connie regards the utopian village of Mattapoisset as a *regression* to a simpler way of life until she recognizes that the inhabitants are always improving their environment--and the simplicity was one of those improvements.

[11] Herland (1915) envisions a land of women so strong that men are

incapable of overpowering them. And, in part, this is true of Joanna Russ' utopian novel The Female Man as one of the four principal characters, Janet, deftly floors her male attacker at a party (46), but this last encounter occurs on a version of earth more familiar to us. More commonly, women residents of utopia need not fear male violence because the values of the society as a whole have so drastically changed. In Piercy's novel, Woman on the Edge of Time, the residents must engage in warfare outside of their utopia to maintain the values within the society, but in their own village, violent acts such as rape never occur as the residents are trained not only in self-defense but in respect for others (200). Similarly, the narrator of The Female Man notes that there is no violence in the all-female society of Whileaway--sexual or otherwise (82).

Chapter Three

Finding Work:

The Qualities to Succeed

> *I was your little skylark, your doll, which you would in the future treat with doubly gentle care because it was so brittle and fragile . . . . Perhaps--if your doll is taken from you.* (Ibsen's A Doll's House, 70)

Nineteenth-century women desired new work opportunities for a number of reasons. For many, work was a necessity. Sociological studies of England in the nineteenth century reveal an increasing number of single women compared to single men. While many women may have wanted the traditional job of wife and mother, they were forced to support themselves until an appropriate mate came along (Banks and Banks 30). It was acceptable for middle-class women to work until they found this mate; however, upper-class women did not have financial straits as an excuse for even temporary employment. With so many women competing for so few jobs, those who chose to work although they didn't need to were stigmatized. As Margetta Greg writes in her 1853 diary, a lady "must not work for profit, or engage in any occupation that money can command, lest she invade the rights of the working classes" (qtd. in Banks and Banks 30). The "perfect lady," Myra Stark adds, "was encouraged to leave work to her less fortunate sisters, to be 'disfunctional and idle,' an ornament to the family" (5).

A number of organizations arose during the nineteenth century to make the search for work less difficult for the needy. In 1849, the National Benevolent Emigration Society began its efforts to help women go to the colonies, where there was more work for governesses. The Society for the Employment of Women and The Educated Woman's Emigration Society were formed in the following ten years, and gradually employment opportunities expanded to include options for clerks, telegraphists, and nurses (Banks and Banks 31-33). These fields and new colleges opened their doors to single women, but married women and the more financially stable were still discouraged from entering. Banks and Banks note the primary focus of reforms in saying, "Even the movement for an improvement in the education of the middle-class girl was motivated largely, although not exclusively, by the need to provide extended employment opportunities for the 'surplus' woman" (37). And this "surplus" woman was one who had not yet found a husband, not one who chose to work instead of marrying.

For some women, then, work was not a financial necessity, but explaining their desire to work was a necessity. When Florence Nightingale wrote the essay "Cassandra" in 1852, she exclaimed, "Widowhood, ill-health, or want of bread, these three explanations or excuses are supposed to justify a woman in taking up an occupation" (33). But even if these reasons "justified" woman's desire for employment, they did not erase the stigma often attached to women working outside of the home. W.R. Greg complains in 1862, "There are

hundreds of thousands of women . . . who, not having the natural duties and labour of wives and mothers, have to carve out artificial and painfully-sought occupations for themselves; who, in place of completing, sweetening, and embellishing the existence of others, are compelled to lead an independent and incomplete existence of their own . . . ." (W.R. Greg, "Why are Women Redundant?" The National Review, April 1862, qtd. in Banks and Banks, p. 28).

Greg's attitude, it would seem, was not uncommon. Nina Auerbach, in her 1978 Communities of Women: An Idea in Fiction, paints a similar picture of Victorian reform movements, noting, "Freedom for women is freedom in the sphere of the soul, not society; freedom is attaining access to the heavens, not the professions" (26). And Myra Stark describes Victorian England as a "country in the grip of an ideology that worshiped the woman in the home. Women were viewed as wives and mothers, as potential wives and mothers, or as failed wives and mothers" (4). Work may have been possible for women falling into the last categories but was often viewed as a temporary measure or a last resort.

In the post-Bellamy period, the focus of utopia changed considerably with the growing faith in science, but specific changes for women in utopia--preceding and immediately following Bellamy's work--were rarely as dramatic. Regarding male writers, Jean Pfaelzer comments that female characterization in utopias of the late nineteenth century was still very much akin to the sentimental novel. Though more than four million women held jobs in 1880, "on the level of fictional activity, utopian women exist to inspire utopian men" ("The Impact of

Political Theory" 123).

As for women's utopias, some of the secondary works dealing with the period cite women authors and the social changes they advocated, but more often than not the women writers they discuss create utopias exhibiting minimal differences from those of their male counterparts. Charles Rooney, Jr., for example, summarizes a few women's rights issues addressed in the utopias of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century ("inequality of women," "overburdened housewife," "poor marriage relations," and "women denied vote"); however, his discussion of works by women writers almost always reflects less gender-specific issues such as the effects of technology, faith in evolution as a dissolver of social class distinctions, and economic reform. The utopian values Rooney identifies as most prevalent during this period--equality, work, morality, progress, and individualism--may be considered gender issues, but he does not discuss them as such. And, apparently, few writers treated them as such based on Rooney's descriptions of male and female utopists who people their societies principally with male characters interacting in industries and government controlled by other men (54).

On the surface, this might suggest that women had already made a great deal of progress in that a hard work ethic was a quality recognized as an ideal for both sexes; therefore, woman's special interest in work need not be mentioned. But, many nineteenth century utopias consistently relegated woman and her contributions to the home. Utopias by male writers might deal with labor

reform, but rarely did changes for women extend beyond time-saving home appliances (Rooney 54). Equally rare was the female character who ventured outside of the home.

Perhaps the male utopists were showing some sympathy toward their female characters. Women had complained that they could not develop their minds and talents with the constant demands of home life, and so technology was championed as a means for freeing time devoted to these domestic chores. But the lack of time was only one part of restrictions in woman's intellectual activities. In her 1852 essay "Cassandra," Florence Nightingale writes, "The stimulus, the training, the time, are all three wanting to us" (30). Amidst her own fight to secure work more fitting to her capabilities, Nightingale comments on the work restrictions for the nineteenth-century woman:

> Mrs. A has the imagination, the poetry of a Murillo . . . . Why is she not a Murillo? . . . . If she has a knife and fork in her hands during three hours of the day, she cannot have a pencil or brush. Dinner is the great sacred ceremony of this day, the great sacrament. (30)

If Nightingale's suggestion is correct--that a Victorian woman's table setting would always be evaluated more critically than any of her intellect--it is no wonder that women such as Nightingale were frustrated. She was capable of so much more than she was allowed to do.

Nightingale founded two institutions that allowed more employment opportunities for women: the Nightingale School and Home for Nurses in 1860

and the Training School for Midwives in 1861 (Stark 2). These schools not only added to the limited employment options for Victorian women (governess or factory worker being the two most common professions), but also focused on a better-educated woman. While the poor often were "forced" to work, middle- and upper-class women were encouraged to be idle and limited in their education to what might better prepare them to be wives and mothers (5-6). Nightingale was one of many women frustrated by these expectations, one of few to establish a career despite them. She went against what her mother considered "suitable" and studied mathematics instead of needlework (6). She rejected marriage, believing that it "would make a life of heroic service impossible" (9). In "Cassandra," she notes, "Some few sacrifice marriage, because they must sacrifice all other life if they accept that" (40). And she criticized the system that allowed untrained women to dabble in caring for the sick as a simple extension of their nurturing. She insisted upon well-educated workers (10).

Although Nightingale was uncommon in her accomplishments, her yearning for more intellectual stimulation was not. Stark notes that "The discrepancy between what she was capable of doing and what she was permitted to do in her young womanhood was torture for her" (7). Nightingale also feared that her frequent daydreaming, an escape from restrictions in reality, was "either a symptom of mental illness or a sin. 'I see,' she wrote, 'so many of my kind who have gone mad for want of something to do'" (Stark 8). In "Cassandra," Nightingale laments, "We fast mentally, scourge ourselves morally,

use the intellectual hair-shirt, in order to subdue the perpetual day-dreaming, which is so dangerous!" (27). Other descriptions by Victorian women suggest similar frustrations as noted in the following descriptions.

In firsthand accounts of their stays in mental asylums, American women of the nineteenth century often point to the restrictions that were, in part, responsible for their hospitalizations. Phyllis Chesler, in the foreword to Women of the Asylum, describes the laws governing commitments as an open door for husbands and fathers to restrict female activity: "Any sign of economic independence or simple human pride in a woman could be used against her, both legally and physically" (xxi). Women could also be committed for choosing occupations unsuited to them--in other words, anything besides wife and mother. Medical practitioners explained that "unfeminine activities caused uterine derangement, which in turn caused mental illness" (Geller and Harris 97). Such "unfeminine" activities might include expression of personal beliefs, particularly if those beliefs contradicted the views of husbands and fathers. The women who were themselves institutionalized explain these restrictions.

In their introduction to the personal accounts of patients who had spent time in mental asylums (during the period from 1840 to 1865), Geller and Harris write, "For women in the mid-nineteenth century, the message was clear: stay within the domestic sphere and be adored and loved, venture outside and be despised" (13-14). One past resident, Elizabeth Parsons Ware Packard, was institutionalized in an Illinois asylum for three years after being "kidnapped" from

her bed early one morning (59). She reports that the doctor, accompanied by another physician, felt her pulse and determined she was insane. Initial suspicions had arisen when she "defended some religious opinions which conflicted with the Creed of the Presbyterian Church" (58). She had mentioned her own religious views in a Bible class, later to find that in her "ignorance" she had falsely assumed that religious tolerance was a right "protected to all American citizens, even to the wives of clergymen" (59). She learned instead that silence was the virtue most rewarded in women.

Another past resident, Phebe B. Davis, was imprisoned for two years and three months (1850-1853) in the New York Lunatic Asylum at Utica. While acknowledging that her nervous system had been thrown out of balance, she offered reasons tied to the confines of many Victorian women. Specifically, she described a stifling of female intellect, observing that "Society compels them [women] to make their mouth a sealed book, for you must consult fashion at the expense of your reason" (51). Illustrating the prevalent view that the only good woman was a silent woman, Davis lamented,

> There is one old fact that I would like to have die out, which is, that a woman must not speak a loud word because St. Paul said that they must not. What if he did say so, he was only one man in the world, and that was only his opinion; and who cares for the opinion of one love sick old bachelor, after he has been dead for centuries. I have been imprisoned over two years simply because I presumed

to claim my individual rights. (51)

Women who became depressed because of this forced silence could fall prey to a vicious cycle as doctors connected their depression with neurasthenia, a condition brought on by "excessive mental labor" (98). Charlotte Perkins Gilman's account, which will be dealt with more extensively in chapter 4, reveals the great irony in symptoms and treatment. While Gilman believed the "cure" for her depression involved greater independence, doctors insisted that women could be cured only by returning to their "traditional role" of wife and mother (100). Just as Nightingale describes, the safest recourse for women who wanted more intellectual stimulation than society allowed for their sex was to daydream and wonder if it was "a symptom of mental illness or a sin" (Stark 8).

Finding new work opportunities, then, was a difficult enterprise with sometimes high stakes. The women utopists who succeeded in reinventing a new woman to match the new man in utopia were those who, like their seventeenth and eighteenth-century predecessors, used all available means of persuasion. Many women, desperate for work and a sense of usefulness, had argued that they could transfer their skills in nurturing outside of the home. They would do what they did best; they would "mother" the world. Geller and Harris observe that the "reform-minded New Women of the 1880s . . . believed that a woman's work should not be confined to her home, but rather that women needed to extend the harmony and nurturance of a female sensibility to all worldly endeavors." As Stark suggests, this approach to reform, while far too

little for women such as Nightingale, did allow for an expansion of nineteenth-century woman's activities:

> Victorian women were encouraged to do needlework and "fancy work"; to dabble in drawing, painting, and music; to read and write letters; and to visit. The sphere of the lady was extended to include cultural events and such charitable work as visiting the sick and carrying soup and clothing to the poor--activities that were seen as extensions of innately female qualities of nurturing. (6)

Toward the end of the nineteenth century, the New Woman also took on responsibility for "battered wives, prostitutes, criminals, and insane persons" (Geller and Harris 92). But these efforts at caring for those society had often neglected required women to organize together in communal efforts that were still suspect. Because female camaraderie was "central to both the women's club movement and the more activist reform movement," the ideal woman for many men became not the New Woman but the "weak woman, the neurasthenic, debilitated, and frail woman who was unable to perform any of her household tasks," much less venture away from the home to help others (Geller and Harris 95). Pfaelzer also identifies the neurasthenic woman in utopian literature by nineteenth-century male writers. Building on an increasing interest in communal living in society, some male writers diminished woman's control at home so that "utopia represents a sexual exchange in which women still lacked political power yet also lost authority over domestic life" ("Subjectivity as Feminist Utopia" 94).

Thus, far from liberating them to explore more intellectual activities, the view of the frail female further restricted women. Banks and Banks, exploring this effect in their 1964 sociological study of English Victorians, report,

> Emancipation from the constraints of the domestic routine, however, should not be confused with emancipation from dependence upon the male members of the family. If anything, the changes of the prosperous decades of the nineteenth century, increased the middle-class woman's subservience by relegating her to the position of a status object. (12)

This position as status object was so disempowering that some women saw the only counter in disclaiming all feminine attributes. In other words, if being feminine meant being powerless, some women asserted that females would have to become less feminine. Wollstonecraft was one of the first writers to acknowledge the motivation of women using this approach. As Nussbaum notes,

> Wollstonecraft recognizes in the romantic impulse a declaration of woman's inferiority, an insidious counterpart to satire. The only logical way to introduce a paragon is to make her more than her sisters, better than her sex, or to divest her of qualities inherent in the sex. The new myth of womanhood at the end of the eighteenth century urged--even required--women to transcend the female experience. (166-167)

Whether through direct influence or as an indication of common sentiment, the writings of nineteenth-century women utopists reflect Mary Wollstonecraft's ideas, along with numerous others. Nineteenth-century utopists often show disdain for the romantic view of woman, as seen in A Vindication of the Rights of Woman (1792), and disdain for global nurturing, as seen in Cassandra (1852). Women writers of the nineteenth century sought labor opportunities through new avenues. They wanted human work, not woman's work, and argued that women could succeed in any position held by man. Although connected with earlier utopias in their pleas for more active, civic roles for women, nineteenth-century utopias often distinguish themselves in their closer examination of what, if any, values are exclusively feminine.

Should women bring their supposed "natural" gifts as nurturers into civic roles or adapt "human" values (often interpreted as those currently seen in men) and divest themselves of all vestiges of femininity? Three women utopists address these questions as they comment on the qualities that women might bring into the workforce. Elizabeth Gaskell's 1853 novel Cranford satirizes the codes of social decorum that restricted female activity. Mary Bradley Lane's 1880 novel Mizora suggests that women possess certain virtues (that men failed to develop) which are inextricably tied to utopian ideals. And Alice Ilgenfritz Jones and Ella Merchant's 1893 novel Unveiling a Parallel describes alternate worlds in which women are equal to men in all opportunities because they share the same qualities. Ultimately, Unveiling suggests men and women are also

capable of the same vices. All three of the women's utopias distinguish themselves from most nineteenth-century utopias by male writers in arguing that women must have work that extends beyond the dinner table. They differ in their evaluation of what presumably "feminine" qualities that society must value before women may attain this work.

Almost a century separates Millenium Hall from other utopias by and chiefly about women. And a number of the texts treated as utopias could be as readily classed with another form, such as the sentimental novel. Elizabeth Gaskell's Cranford (1853) serves as one example. Perhaps Gaskell was frustrated by the same concerns that plagued Charlotte Bronte. As Gilbert and Gubar report, Bronte had once told Gaskell that, in relation to the "so-called condition of women question," there were "evils--deep-rooted in the foundation of the social system--which no efforts of ours can touch; of which we cannot complain: of which it is advisable not too often to think" (206). If Gaskell took Bronte's advice entirely, Cranford might be viewed as another attempt at modeling Pamela, minus the successful marriages. However, despite some surface similarities between this utopian text and the sentimental novel, Gaskell's work comments on how women might change through communal efforts to produce an improved society. Furthermore, it criticizes current "feminine" values that supported the social codes of decorum. In an 1854 letter, Gaskell confided that she had a "deep hatred to my species about whom I [am] obliged to write as if I loved 'em" (qtd. in Gilbert and Gubar, 484). The satiric

tone of Cranford often belies her true feelings.

The novel opens with the line, "In the first place, Cranford is in possession of the Amazons; all the holders of houses, above a certain rent, are women" (1). But Cranford is not without men, and, in fact, a number of the male characters described are admirable. Despite the narrator's claim that the ladies are "quite sufficient" in most matters, such as "deciding all questions of literature and politics without troubling themselves with unnecessary reasons or arguments" (1), men figure frequently into the plot, and the criticism of their actions is no stronger than that of female actions.

As much as anything, the novel is a satire on the rules for decorum that the ladies adhere to in their society of friends. The narrator, who is a frequent guest to Miss Deborah and Miss Mathilda Jenkyns' home, tells us that Cranford ladies visit each other regularly but always restrict themselves to "short sentences of small talk" and never discuss anything vulgar such as money. When a widower, Captain Brown, brings his two daughters (one an invalid) into Cranford, the ladies are at first appalled that he openly discusses his poverty. Yet the pattern developed here is one that repeats itself throughout the novel as the ladies band together to help the less fortunate, despite their social rules, while offering some commentary on the restricted options for women in nineteenth-century society.

When the Captain is killed by a train in his successful attempt to save a child, the women offer assistance to Miss Jessie, left to care for her invalid

sister. The plot turns in line with a sentimental romance in that the sister dies, leaving Miss Jessie alone until an old suitor shows up and "rescues" her with an offer of marriage. But the scene is less dramatic than it might be as Miss Jenkyns has also invited her to share her home as a second option to marriage, and it is Miss Jessie's true love for Mr. Gordon that shapes her decision, not solely the need for financial provision.

Other plot elements emphasize the restrictions of society more clearly. After her sister's death, Mathilda Jenkyns (known as Miss Matty by most) also runs across an old suitor, Mr. Holbrook. Their plans to marry had earlier been thwarted by her family's disapproval of Holbrook's social standing; and even now, with Holbrook over seventy years of age, Miss Matty cannot accept his dinner invitation unless accompanied by the narrator and Miss Pole, Holbrook's cousin. Matty comments, "It is very pleasant dining with a bachelor . . . . I only hope it is not improper; so many pleasant things are!" (34) Unlike Jessie, Miss Matty is not given a second chance at marriage as Holbrook becomes ill and dies after visiting Paris, but the incident does make Miss Matty question the importance of appearing proper as she reverses her previously staunch decision about her maid receiving gentlemen callers. Miss Matty does not want propriety to stand in the way of true love again.

The next few incidents extend the satire on "rules" of society but with less serious consequences. The ladies are invited to Miss Betty Barker's party in order of their social standing, "uninvited" to Mrs. Jamieson's home when her

guest, Lady Glenmire, is thought too high class to socialize with them, and reinvited when Mrs. Jamieson realizes that high society is unimpressed by her guest. The ladies attend the performance of Signor Brunoni, a magician touring through Cranford, but worry about it being proper, and they are all convinced that thieves (directed by Brunoni) have overrun Cranford when one or two small items are misplaced. In each of these incidents, the ladies' pettiness and superstition become a source of humor. However, they are also willing to join efforts and help Brunoni's family when they find he has been injured for six weeks. Their spirit of communal giving repeatedly ennobles them, and this spirit extends to the story's conclusion, despite the ladies' frivolous behavior in other areas.

In the midst of another social debate--whether to sanction Lady Glenmire's marriage to the surgeon, Mr. Hoggins, whom they all feel is beneath her because of his unrefined manners--Miss Matty learns that her share in the Town and County Bank has become worthless with the bank's fall. She is faced with a drop in income from 149 to 13 pounds per year and few options for compensating for the lost income. The narrator, finally identified as Mary Smith, concludes that Miss Matty is unsuited for teaching and the only "proper" item for her to sell would be tea, and even this must be done most discreetly so as not to place Matty on the level of common shopholders. Because of her age and Holbrook's death, Matty cannot turn to marriage to save her, and the restricted alternatives she faces provide one of the most obvious commentaries on

woman's limited opportunities in nineteenth-century society. The story ultimately turns again to the pattern of the sentimental novel when Matty's long-lost brother Peter returns one year later to rescue her from shopkeeping and her financial restrictions. But the Cranford ladies have long ago met and determined to combine their resources so that they can secretly contribute to Matty's income, allowing her a suitable social position and the dignity of thinking the money has come from another investment. Furthermore, Matty had done better than anyone expected with the tea business so that the "rescue" by her brother was not necessary.

In a number of incidents, then, the Cranford ladies show their resourcefulness and self-sufficiency in solving problems without the assistance of men. They make provisions for Miss Jessie, Signor Brunoni's family, and Miss Matty through communal efforts and their selfless desire to nurture others. These examples illustrate well such values as cooperation, collective decision making, and generosity that Rae Rosenthal identifies as female virtues espoused through the work (75-81). However, Rosenthal and other critics that she cites have also found the work a feminist utopia in its rejection of "male infiltration," and these arguments, I believe, are based on a number of weaknesses.

Rosenthal argues that "for the women of Cranford and for the future of their utopia, [Captain] Brown's death is imperative" (85), that it is a "strikingly convenient stroke of fate" that Brunoni is injured before he can further disrupt

Cranford (85), and that Peter's intrusion is acceptable only because he was invited into Cranford and he was "not particularly masculine or patriarchal" (87). I would argue that each of these men rather than threatening the female values of Cranford inspire those values. Rosenthal cites, as evidence of Captain Brown's threat to Cranford, his argument with Deborah Jenkyns about whether Dr. Johnson or Mr. Boz is the better writer, and she depicts Deborah as valiant in her effort to "champion the status quo against Captain Brown and Boz, both of whom represent external change and the inherent dangers therein" (84). Yet Rosenthal has earlier argued that Deborah herself represents masculine tactics--"intimidation, aggression, and open directives" (81)--and that Cranford is greatly improved by Matty's less assertive leadership. Furthermore, Brown attempts to counter not a consensus reached among the women, but Deborah's own views. Deborah had largely been inspired by her father's opinion, and when Brown sees what a disturbance he has created, he attempts to change the subject to a "more pleasing" one (10). He even makes a wooden fire-shovel as a gift to ease the tension between them. Deborah remains adamant, however, unwilling to agree to disagree, until she hears of Brown's noble act in sacrificing his life for the life of a child. Only then does she admit that her views were too harsh and offer her assistance to the two orphaned girls.

In regard to Signor Brown's "threat" to the community, Rosenthal criticizes those who have labeled the ladies' fear as "irrational," arguing that such an assumption "ignores a fundamental reality of Cranford life and one the women

know well: while the Cranfordians may control Cranford, outside of Cranford in the dominant male culture, they have virtually no power" (85). Although I don't argue that the women would have reason to fear male violence without husbands acting in the role Matty describes as "a great protector" (Cranford 106), the descriptions in the novel seem so clearly aimed at depicting the women's irrationality that it is hard to ignore this aspect. Miss Pole insists upon believing Mr. Hoggins was robbed even though he denies it himself. When Lady Glenmire discounts many of the other rumors, Miss Pole congratulates Miss Matty that "they had escaped marriage, which she noticed always made people [such as the widowed Lady Glenmire] credulous to the last degree" (105). Their lack of reasoning in this matter discourages the readers from ever viewing Signor Brunoni as a serious threat. In addition, when Brunoni's wife tells of their life in India, she emphasizes his consideration in helping to save for her return to England (even though he was unable to go) so that their baby might be saved from illness. Brunoni's injuries do bring out the best in the women as they join efforts and assist a family in need, but that his accident was a "convenient stroke of fate" for their safety is certainly arguable (85). Furthermore, considering the positive traits that Gaskell attributes to Captain Brown and Signor Brunoni, Peter is not an *exception* in his non-threatening demeanor; he is as much the rule for men recognizing the needs of Cranfordian women.

While I see Cranford as a less direct attack on male domination than Rosenthal proposes, I believe the novel can be grouped with other nineteenth-

century utopias for its emphasis on communal efforts and the feminine values, such as concern for others and communal decision making, that encourage such efforts. Barbara Quissell's classifications for feminist literature of the period seem particularly useful in application to Cranford and other nineteenth-century works. Gaskell may be placed in the first group of writers that Quissell identifies as "women focused on the laws, cultural attitudes, and social conditioning that confined their sex" (149). These women did not concern themselves as extensively with political or economic reforms as with woman's empowerment within society as it existed. Gaskell suggests that the first step to empowerment is a reevaluation of "feminine" virtue and a rejection of the social class distinctions by which "proper" behavior is determined. Although the structure of Cranford is strikingly similar to the sentimental novel, complete with a "rescue" of the heroine at the end, the satiric tone throughout distinguishes Cranford from this form. Gaskell's novel is linked with earlier utopias by Cavendish, Astell, and Scott, in its realistic depiction of a group of women who make improvements in society through communal efforts. It is linked with later nineteenth-century utopias through its critical view of then-current codes of behavior for women.

In his discussion of late nineteenth-century utopias, one of the women writers that Rooney mentions most frequently is Mary Bradley Lane, yet very little is known about Lane herself. Stuart Teitler, in his introduction to Mizora, draws attention to the publication dates 1880-1881 when the utopian text was serialized in four parts in the Cincinnati Commercial. These dates are

significant in establishing that Lane was a forerunner to the Bellamy movement beginning in 1888. However, Teitler also notes that the Cincinnati Public Library could furnish no other information about Mary Bradley Lane than that she was probably not from Ohio (ix). There were also no readers' comments available about the serial and how Lane was first received. Teitler speculates that Mizora might have been the prompt for an 1882 reply in Pantaletta, a burlesque of the women's rights movement written by Mrs. J. Wood (vii). Otherwise, the work seems to have created little stir among Lane's contemporaries. Later critics, while acknowledging the work as a utopian text, have been scarcely more receptive to what the work accomplishes.

In each of his discussions of Mizora, Rooney emphasizes Lane's faith in scientific advancements as panacea but does not acknowledge her efforts to present a feminist vision. Still, his discussion of Mizora is more comprehensive and benevolent than others'. Sargent does not even mention Lane's work in his seemingly-comprehensive annotated bibliography of British and American texts, and Ann J. Lane, in her introduction to Herland, comments that Mizora, while a feminist utopia, is a preposterous story about a "thin-lipped, well-bred, upper-class world" for which the "author's claim that this world is without class privilege is something less than convincing" (xx).

Since Ann Lane's criticism focuses more on the weak social reform achieved in Mizora, as opposed to the new role it suggests for women, we might consider Jill Ker Conway's definition of feminist as "all those, male or female,

who want to increase women's power and social status, regardless of their stance in matters of social philosophy concerned with other social issues" (285). Conway notes that nineteenth-century feminists fall along a spectrum from those wanting to "improve women's position within the existing pattern of social boundaries to those . . . who wanted to improve women's position by altering the social territories assigned to women and men" (286). While not dealing specifically with Mizora, Conway recognizes a range of views similar to those shown by Quissell, who places Mizora in a second category of full reformers who believed that "First, the condition of women had to be changed, and then once they were free to exercise their abilities, they would take part in or take charge of the transformation from the imperfect contemporary society to the ideal world" (149-50).[1] Quissell asserts that Mizora "presents the most extreme rejection of male leadership and the most thorough condemnation of patriarchal government" of any work in the period (167), and the novel appears at the beginning of one of the most prolific periods for utopian literature. Teitler observes, in the introduction to Mizora, that "A mere trickle of American utopian novels appeared before Bellamy, compared to the torrent that followed" (v). He estimates that more than 160 utopian or near-utopian works were published in America alone from 1888-1900 (ix), and Carol Kolmerten, in her introduction to Unveiling a Parallel, classifies the novels published from 1888 to 1918 as "the largest single body of utopian writing in history" (xxiv). While the limited publicity of Lane's work makes it difficult to argue that she influenced this prolific

period, Lane was one of the first writers to describe the kind of scientific utopia that gained great popularity during the years following her work.

In further analyzing Mizora, we might consider Richard Gerber's comment that a classless society was "an 18th-century arcadian dream," and no longer a prevalent concern by the end of the nineteenth century (66). Victorian writers more commonly focused on one specific area of reform, instead of attempting to show a world without bias. With the recognition that expectations for social reform varied a great deal in the nineteenth century, we might better focus on the successes Mary Bradley Lane's work achieves as a feminist utopia, while not ignoring the incomplete reform of social class barriers nor the unrealistic elements in her fiction.

The narrator of Mizora, Vera Zarovitch, is exiled from Russia when she unmindfully discloses confidential information to the French government. Playing off of the arguments used to silence women in the past, Vera comments that "The tongue of woman has long been celebrated as an unruly member, and perhaps, in some of the domestic affairs of life, it has been unnecessarily active" (8). But Vera also notes that her nature has led her to the "grandest discovery of the age" (8). She leaves her husband and child behind and sails to another land where she lives within an all-female community for fifteen years. Vera frequently wonders but feels it rude to ask why there are no men in the land. Because of her silence, the first section of the novel is less specific in its statement as a feminist utopia. This subtlety, however, does not preclude

commentary on woman's role in the world. Lane posits her protagonist in an adventure quest similar to those undertaken by the Greek heroes, all male. Vera undertakes what she refers to as "a journey no other of my sex has ever attempted" (8); later, she notes that it is a little "astonishing" that a woman should discover what explorers and scientists had tried to find for years (19). Not unlike Odysseus' flight from the one-eyed giant Polyphemus after the great chief discloses his identity, Vera flees because she has said too much. Leaving her family behind, she embarks on the unknown. She is not the faithful Penelope, guarding the home front. She becomes the adventurer. And whatever fantastical elements exist in the society she exposes to the readers, the initial framework is based in realistic detail.

The society depicted in Mizora itself has been criticized by critics such as Ann J. Lane because of its weak social reform. Lane also calls the work "preposterous" in its depiction of a society of all-blond women, seemingly "fashioned after Brunhilde" (xix). Mary Bradley Lane does seem obsessed with the fair skin and hair of her fictional creations, repeatedly calling attention to their beauty. But the description of the utopia also relies upon many traditional values for mothers. Mizoran mothers do not give birth to children; however, once the children have been asexually reproduced, the mothers feel the same sense of duty, and the same need to sacrifice self, that would have been expected of any nineteenth-century mother. The worst offense still known to the Mizorans is a mother mistreating her daughter, and the last known criminal was

a woman who had struck her child.

Unlike many other utopias, Mizorans do not rely upon communal childrearing. Individual mothers must still shoulder the difficulties of childrearing; furthermore, they must not voice their dissatisfactions nor frustrations. As Vera learns early in the novel, "If a [Mizoran] mother should ever feel her children as burdens upon her, she would never give it expression, as any dereliction of duty would be severely rebuked by the whole community, if not punished by banishment" (33). In contrast, the framing story of Vera, like Ibsen's tale of Nora Torvold (A Doll's House, 1879), represents the shocking revelation that women may have to abandon traditional home life to uncover a new world. Yet, most readers have chosen to focus on the fantastical elements in Mizoran society and not the social commentary in the framing story.

Although Vera wonders how the residents have survived without men, almost every reform is described in terms of social, not gender-specific advantages. In Mizora, both the public school and universities are free to anyone with the necessary intellectual capabilities and interest, but Vera mentions the rich, not males, as the privileged who were allowed the best education in her country (25). Through advanced studies in chemistry, the residents have also been able to provide cheap, healthy food to everyone and rid their land of disease. Mizora, like other technological utopias of the nineteenth century, values labor and scientific advancements that make work more efficient; science is, in fact, their only religion, and they consider their

studies the most sacred of responsibilities as they work to make improvements for the next generation. Mizorans also claim that their workload is evenly distributed because they do not make social class distinctions. Again and again, residents tout government-supported education and the wonders of chemistry as the main reasons for their successes, a focus no different than that of countless other utopias by men and women in the nineteenth century (Rooney 57-93).

In what way, then, is Lane's utopia significant? While many of the reforms in Mizora seem to be more class-oriented than gender-oriented, a nineteenth-century woman utopist who shows a special interest in science might be doing more than parroting the interests of her male counterparts. In his introduction to "Sultana's Dream," a 1905 utopia written by a Bengali woman, Roushan Jahan reminds us that even those turn-of-the-century advocates of education for women did not encourage their proficiency in science and mathematics (5).[2] Lane not only promotes the advantages of scientific development in creating an ideal society; she avoids the assumption that only men might engineer such a world.

In the last portion of the novel, the tone shifts to a more decisively feminist perspective when Vera finally asks what became of the men in their land. Unfortunately, the explanations are often vague and dissatisfying even allowing for the fantastical element in a utopian work. The preceptress tells of the crime, disease, and poverty that were rampant when men still existed 3000 years ago, and how unethical rulers gained excessive power. Mizoran women,

who had never had power before, decided to take over the government and exclude men from all offices. They also gain entry into new fields of education such as science. The preceptress does not explain, however, what force they used to accomplish these feats. After a hundred years of such exclusion from political offices, the men had all mysteriously died, and the only explanation given is that a woman scientist proposed to let the male race die out.[3] Jonathan Rose's description of eugenics, in The Edwardian Temperament (1986), might clarify Lane's proposal in part. Although Francis Galton did not invent the term "eugenics" until 1883, the concept of selective breeding can be traced back to Plato's Republic. In the years following the publication of Lane's Mizora, a number of well-known figures offered for consideration their own methods in eugenics. Winston Churchill suggested the use of x-rays to sterilize the mentally ill. Bernard Shaw proposed the gas chamber to rid society of "social undesirables," and H. G. Wells recommended that all "base and servile types" be put to death (Rose 137). Lane's ambiguity in describing how the men died out might be intentional. To suggest a specific means of disposal would be to reintroduce the violence to which she claims women are less prone.

Later in Mizora, the preceptress explains to Vera that the female scientists had discovered that only mothers were needed for reproduction, just as "in the lowest organisms no other sex is apparent" (103). Although the Mizoran method of reproduction is never fully explained, Vera is assured that the women did not try to "supercede Nature" (105). The preceptress explains, "We

cannot *create* Life. We cannot develop it. But we can control Nature's processes of development as we will" (105). Kristine Anderson provides an excellent summary of problems with all-female utopias such as Mizora when she notes, "Rumors of a utopia's foundation in androcide cannot fail to sully its reputation. Furthermore, can we really assume that women are incorruptible by the temptations of power, or that the oppressed have none of the faults of the oppressors?" ("The Great Divorce" 86) Lane's work demands this assumption as the criminal element is almost exclusively connected with the male race. While Cranford illustrates the ways in which women must change to be more productive in society, Mizora suggests that women need only to gain control, and all of their existing values will almost automatically improve the world.

The preceptress alludes to the many scientific wonders women have been working, having gained the knowledge to recreate life asexually. Mizorans claim that they have fully adhered to Nature's law in all of their experiments although critics such as Anderson point to a natural consequence of their practices that the Mizorans seem to ignore. With parthenogenesis, each child would have the exact genetic makeup of one parent, creating the dilemma of "how to preserve individual difference while eradicating sexual difference" ("The Great Divorce" 86). But Mary Bradley Lane, like Gilman later in Herland, does address this problem in her many discussions about the value of education.

In every area of their lives, Mizorans illustrate their appreciation for a full education that develops individual talents. In the "infant schools," Vera sees the

children drilled In courtesy and kindness, but she is quick to point out that the universal concern for humanity that they are taught does not eliminate individual differences. The servants who clean her host's home and cook the food attend lectures and study constantly to learn more about their special interests. Political candidates are required to complete specialized training courses, and their examination scores are made public so that individual talent, not bribery, becomes their selling point. And all Mizorans are encouraged to specialize so that they might somehow advance their society in at least one small area. The preceptress explains this Mizoran value to Vera with the following: "If you do not enjoy the fruit of your labor in your own lifetime, the generation that follows you will be the happier for it. Be not so selfish as to think only of your own narrow span of life" (104). Mary Bradley Lane, like the female utopists who precede and follow her, emphasizes the value of a self-sacrificial nature that will finds its reward in community progress.

Mizorans connect all evils of their past world with men, but their arguments are not as convincing when *free* education and the scientific discoveries it leads to are depicted as the country's saving grace, and the connection between these reforms and the female values they represent is never clearly made. Jean Pfaelzer comments that Mizora might actually reenforce passivity because, while purporting to "transcend Victorian limitations on women's activity," the text continues to reflect a patriarchal structure in its emphasis on silence and woman as the defender of moral values ("A State of

Her Own" 148-49). Furthermore, by telling--presenting "offstage"--rather than showing the changes in government that women were responsible for 3000 years ago, Mizora "avoids showing us a women's army actually seizing the government" and thus does not contradict woman's passive role (150). However, this emphasis on "passivity" might actually result from Lane's attempt to show positive "female" values. While Lane is arguing that women would be less prone to use violence if they were in control of government, it was by a violent act that women gained control. As she does not explain this contradiction, Lane might be guilty of covering it up by presenting the violence offstage. Again, the real weakness of Mizora seems to be that Lane was able to recognize the restrictions in woman's current roles but could not project a way in which woman could peaceably alter that role.

In her introduction to Mizora, Anderson argues that "Like most utopias, Mizora is not a world to live in. Rather, it is an uncompromising vision of absolute female power in a world created by and for women" (xii-xiii). Obviously, Mizora is a problematic example of labor reform for women as it allows them their place in the work force only through the mass destruction of competitors. Yet the work does have value within the tradition of women's utopias. Part of this value comes through the simple assertion that women, like men, may be the adventurers who uncover new worlds if they reexamine roles in the existing world. Furthermore, Lane's end vision, like that of earlier writers such as Scott and later writers such as Gilman, is of a peaceful, pastoral setting

in which violence is ultimately eliminated. Mizorans value both scientific wonders, achieved through their study of chemistry, and natural beauty, such as "cascades, fountains, rustic arbors, rockeries, aquariums, tiny lakes, and every variety of landscape ornamenting" (41). Like its seventeenth and eighteenth-century predecessors, Mizora also recognizes the importance of education, not only for the elite, but for all classes of society, the highest class being the scientific "investigators" and teachers (64). These are the values that Mizora most encourages, and if Lane does not satisfactorily support her claim that women would demonstrate these values more than men, she does urge a reevaluation of the ways in which men and women define themselves.

Another late nineteenth-century work, Alice Ilgenfritz Jones and Ella Merchant's Unveiling a Parallel (1893), contrasts with Lane's work in that the authors more clearly identify the human values necessary to create a utopia, and they are not to be found in a patriarchal culture. In the introduction to Unveiling, Kolmerten comments that Bellamy and other male utopian writers of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century "proclaimed sexual equality to be an important goal in their utopian visions, [but] their version of 'equality' translated into a fictional utopia where men were served by utopian women, who looked and acted like submissive, passive 'angels' in the house" (xxvii). The male narrator in Unveiling reflects this expectation for women as well, although the Marsians, particularly the bold Elodia, counter the myth.

Unveiling was first published in 1893 by Arena Publishing Company in

Boston, a press known for publishing works of social reform. Unfortunately, it was also known as a "minor press for radicals and authors who paid to see their books published" (Kolmerten, Introduction, ix). The book came out in a second edition the following year after which it went out of print. Because of Arena's reputation, Kolmerten speculates, the book was not reviewed in mainstream magazines such as the Atlantic Monthly, but some audiences did understand that the overall theme of the book was that there should be one moral code for both men and women (x). Alice Ilgenfritz Jones knew some success as a writer both before and after the publication of Unveiling, having published sentimental romances (High-Water-Mark, 1879), short stories, and travel essays. Perhaps it was the last form that inspired her to write of a land never before seen, but it is interesting to note that she published nothing during the nine years between her first early works mentioned above and 1893, the publication date for Unveiling. Having married a widower with a small daughter, Jones became wife and mother in 1884 and her writing career was put on hold (Kolmerten xiv).[4] This biographical detail is difficult to ignore as Unveiling presents through Elodia a woman little hampered by her maternal duties. However, Unveiling also warns against a too-thorough revision of woman's role.

When the narrator of Unveiling travels to Mars, he is invited into the home of Severnius, an upper-class male resident of the city of Thursia. Through Severnius' comments and the narrator's observations of Severnius' sister, Elodia, the narrator learns that Marsians believe men and women are completely

equal, but in Thursia, this means women have adopted both positive and negative male values. As occupations are determined by talent and not by sex, Elodia can be a banker, president of the school board, and member of the city council. But she is also prone to drinking too much, vaporizing with chemicals, visiting male houses of prostitution, and shirking responsibility for her illegitimate child. The narrator is so full of preconceptions about what women's natures are like that Elodia's civic achievements and negative qualities are baffling and often offensive to him. He believes women "lack the inclination to assume grave public duties" (24), do not need the right to vote since their ideas are identical to men's anyway (28), and are more abominable than men when they drink to excess or practice any other bad habit. The narrator's beliefs about woman's nature fit perfectly, in fact, with the idealized image of women articulated by Coventry Patmore's phrase "the angel in the house." The narrator of Unveiling claims that women should be "the preserver of our ideals, the interpreters of our faith, the keepers of our consciences" (45) and men on Earth attempt to "defend them from danger and save them from every annoyance in our power" (48). It is inconceivable to him that women should want power for themselves, even after Elodia argues that men on Earth seem to have taken the desirable and powerful virtues for themselves and left the ineffectual ones for women (107).

The narrator is so firmly set in his views that he is little changed by witnessing the equality of Thursian women, but the typical utopian conversion of

the narrator might not be expected since Thursia is too flawed to be considered a true utopia. In addition to the vices that men and women share, social class distinctions are still firmly in place; in fact, the distinctions between classes are often stronger as a result of women's equality. When the narrator questions why women are not expected to stay home to attend to their children, the answer is not that men are equally responsible, but that neither parent need be bothered since there are servants for that task (66). Furthermore, the wealthy are still set apart by social clubs that allow them and their children "a better standing and greater influence in society" (38), and they are better able to cover their bad habits, such as visiting the houses of prostitution, by using gold to "seal the lips of servants and go-betweens" (78). The city of Thursia, then, does not represent a feminist or social utopia; it presents, in contrast, a universe that has eliminated the double standard for men and women but has not eliminated vice. However, this first visit may be seen as a necessary prelude to the narrator's enlightenment.

In January 1931, Virginia Woolf gave a speech to the London National Society for Women's Service about new professions for women. Describing her own struggles to become a writer, Woolf noted the powerful influence of the "angel of the house" stereotype. Woolf argued that when women tried to enter professions such as writing, traditionally dominated by men, they had to fight to leave behind the "arts and wiles" connected with their sex ("Professions" 59). In short, they had to kill the angel of the house. Woolf noted that she was lucky;

she was able to kill the angel because she had been left enough money by her ancestors that she did not need to depend upon charm for a living. She defends her act of murder with the following:

> My excuse, if I were to be had up in a court of law, would be that I acted in self-defence. Had I not killed her she would have killed me. She would have plucked the heart out of my writing . . . . She died hard. Her fictitious nature was of great assistance to her. It is far harder to kill a phantom than a reality. ("Professions" 59-69)

In many ways, the descriptions of Elodia reflect the efforts of Jones and Merchants, in 1893, to commit the same act of murder that Woolf does thirty-eight years later. Once the narrator of Unveiling is disillusioned, he is better prepared to see women for what they are, not what he wishes them to be.

It is not until the narrator travels to another city in Mars, Lunismar, that he finds the utopian ideals made possible by a change in values. The residents of Lunismar, the Caskians, also believe in male and female equality, but both sexes have transcended Earthly vices by their triple focus in education on the spiritual, the intellectual, and the physical (57). For their spiritual health, Caskians believe in chastity before and after marriage (60). In this emphasis, the Caskians are connected with a number of utopias of the period. Nan Bowman Albinski points out that many nineteenth-century women writers borrowed their views of celibacy as a utopian ideal from the actual communal

experiments of the Shakers and the Oneidans, who emphasized the new age edict of "no marrying or giving in marriage (Matthew 22:30)" (831). Both groups also influenced utopian thought with their belief in equal work and responsibility for men and women. The Caskians consider all of these beliefs the ideals they must move toward.

Caskians never condescend to their children but value and nurture them (116); and they insure that the basic needs of all citizens are provided for, after which residents may choose to enjoy their leisure or work harder for other luxuries (118-120). In addition, they, like the Mizorans, regard the teaching profession as the "highest and most honorable in our land" (130) and continue their cycle of progress by strengthening both the reasoning faculties and the consciences of their children (140). While the narrator's discussions with the Caskians place much less emphasis on woman's equality than do the descriptions of Thursia, the narrator becomes more accepting of this equality when men and women both display genuine concern for their community's physical, mental, and spiritual health. His faith in women is "not only restored but immeasurably increased" by the good example of Ariadne, a Caskian teacher, and although certainly not free from his earlier biases about woman's nature, he recognizes her wisdom as well as her beauty (147).

Through this contrast of cities, then, Unveiling a Parallel emphasizes not only the effect of equality between the sexes, but also what values of the patriarchal society must be changed for a utopia to emerge. Unveiling embodies

all of the characteristics that Carol Kolmerten identifies as distinctions of turn-of-the-century works. In her article "Texts and Contexts: American Women Envision Utopia, 1890-1920," Kolmerten summarizes, among others, works by Gilman (A Woman's Utopia, 1907; Moving the Mountain,1911), Agnes Bond Yourell (A Manless World, 1891), and Lois Waisbrooker (A Sex Revolution, 1894). The characteristics that these utopias share include a criticism of destructive "male" values, an elevation of "female" values such as the nurturing mother/child relationship, and meaningful work for women (108); however, Jones and Merchant employ some of the most innovative strategies for presenting these characteristics. Whereas many turn-of-the-century women utopists create worlds that are presumably superior just because men have no part in them (109), Jones and Merchant people their communities with both sexes acting out stereotypical male values in one city and stereotypical female values in the other city to make their criticism of the former even more evident. Unlike the typical utopian structure, the benefits of the new world are illustrated not only in a contrast with the current American or European society, but also through a juxtaposition with a society in which women abandon all of their past responsibilities. Barbara Quissell writes, in her 1981 study of nineteenth-century feminist utopias ("The New World That Eve Made"), that "For Jones and Merchant prevailing attitudes must be desentimentalized and then human rights extended to women before elevation to an ideal world is possible" (157).

Quissell's analysis seems to aptly describe the utopists' purpose:

> Because Jones and Merchant desire equality in practical terms, they ridicule a society that flatters and idealizes women and yet will not grant voting rights, just wages, and equal education; they condemn a society that in withholding political and social rights damages a woman's strength, dignity, and self respect. (157)

In other words, Jones and Merchant recognize what Virginia Woolf did in relation to women's professions and what later women utopists did in regard to motherhood. Before men and women can move toward reform, the image of the frail woman, the doll, the angel in the house must be destroyed. While they show no favor toward Elodia's particular method of destroying that image, Jones and Merchant provide a necessary model of disillusionment. The citizens of Lunismar have advanced beyond the narrator's interpretation of American ethics: "We are tolerably honest, as the word goes, but when honesty shades off into these hair-splitting theories, why--we leave it to the preachers, and--women" (134-135). The world will not improve simply because women take charge, but given equal opportunities and conditioned to respect individual differences, both men and women are capable of improving their world.

In many other ways, Unveiling a Parallel shows a progression from the emphasis on education that was a primary characteristic of other early utopian texts by women writers to the feminist utopias that follow, for it envisions women not only with knowledge but with the power to use it. As in Winnifred Harper

Cooley's 1902 utopian sketch, "A Dream of the Twenty-First Century," women have the power to vote,[5] but women are not merely empowered by suffrage; they are empowered by the same respect given men for their demonstrated leadership abilities.

In her introduction to Herland, the 1915 novel so often lauded as a seminal work in feminist utopias, Ann J. Lane lists common characteristics of twentieth-century feminist utopias that owe a great deal to Gilman's example:

> . . . class equality; some kind of communal child-rearing; absence of privilege by sex; freedom from fear of male violence; elimination of sex-linked work; the mother-child relationship and the idealized home as models for social institutions; and the use of persuasion and consensus to maintain social order. (xx)

While the influence of Jones and Merchants' Unveiling may not be as pronounced in all of these areas as Herland, the earlier text does include many of the same utopian features in its descriptions of the two cities. Both Thursia and Lunismar have eliminated privilege based on sex alone as well as sex-linked work, and Lunismar has made great strides in class equality and freedom from fear of any violence through its educational emphasis on respect for others.

In her introduction to Unveiling, Kolmerten suggests that Jones and Merchant may offer more opportunities for women in their utopia than Gilman does. Characters such as Elodia feel no compulsion to marry, while three of the

women in Herland do marry and are "affirmed" by conventional standards, "despite the fact that the sexual instinct has been bred out of the Herland women . . . and that the very existence of these three men threatens the welfare of the community" (xxxv).[6] However, I would argue that it is Ariadne, from Caskia, and not Elodia, from Lunismar, that most represents Jones and Merchant's ideal for woman. While neither woman marries, through Ariadne and through the Caskian society, the narrator sees men and women joining in their efforts to nurture the children and work toward a better future for all of the citizens. It is also through Ariadne's eyes that he sees "a new heaven and a new earth" (158). Furthermore, the accomplishments of Herland need not be downplayed to appreciate the contributions made not only by Unveiling, but by Cranford and Mizora as well.

Like the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century precedents, these three nineteenth-century texts rejected the stereotype for a silent and passive woman. Despite their entrapment in social codes, the Cranford women do not wait meekly for their male rescuers; they find active ways to improve their community. They also find new work (Matty's tea shop) and rediscover love's place within the social codes as they allow a servant girl to dismiss those codes. Through communal decision making, they find ways to nurture not only the helpless (the orphan Jessie) but also themselves.

Mary Bradley Lane dismisses the passive woman by depicting a world in which women are the scientists, the teachers, and the engineers. Lane also

shows in Vera a woman as the adventurer who can uncover this world. Lane does not counter the image of woman as "nurturer" nor does she devalue woman's role as mother; actually, she reenforces the importance of the mother-child bond. However, Lane also envisions a world in which woman's role as nurturer does not restrict her activities. In fact, the role empowers her. Because women have so long nurtured others, Lane argues, they are the ideal governors for a new world. They will be more concerned for the general welfare, and unlike men, they will promote peace. While Lane does not support any of these suppositions well, she does illustrate ways in which woman's traditional role as nurturer and traditional passivity might be replaced with more active, civic roles.

Finally, in Unveiling a Parallel, Jones and Merchant address the two alternatives, perhaps the two stages, for women who would escape their passive roles. Like Woolf and others, they debunk the myth of the angel in the house by picturing a woman such as Elodia, who has successfully adopted all the wrong values. She has entered the workplace, but only by abandoning all care and concern for family. The alternative described through part two in Caskia is not a society in which women remain passive, but one in which men and women are equally responsible for nurturing others. Jones and Merchant clearly favor the society in which a communal concern is taught to all. A tradition of feminist utopias, so often overlooked, becomes more evident as we examine later works such as Olive Schreiner's "Three Dreams" and Charlotte Perkins Gilman's Herland and recognize many of the same techniques--the same redefinition of

woman's role and her necessary values--evidenced in the earlier nineteenth-century works.

Notes

[1] Barbara Quissell's first group, again, consisted of nineteenth-century women who "focused on the laws, cultural attitudes, and social conditioning that confined their sex" (149), but worked for empowerment within society as it existed.

[2] Sultana's Dream attempts to explain how women achieved advancement through scientific inventions while the men focused on military power. While the explanations of how they drew water from the clouds and heat from the sun are brief, the narrator justifies the ambiguity by suggesting that it was her own limited scientific knowledge that made repeating the instructions difficult (12).

[3] While the men in Sultana's Dream are also connected to violent impulses, further explanation is offered for their near extinction. In a battle with a neighboring country, the strong men are destroyed, and the weaker men allow themselves to be entrapped by the women for their own protection. Afterwards, the women manipulate the fire they've harvested through their scientific advancements to burn the enemies and then they refuse to let the men come out again.

[4] Jones published two other novels after Unveiling, a sentimental-historical novel, Beatrice of Bayou Teche, in 1895, and The Chevalier de St. Denis, a story of a male Louisiana history hero, in 1900.

[5] In Cooley's work, an old woman dreams of a young girl who is the product of another time. The young girl reports that, as a result of equal

suffrage, women have taken the initiative in government and the poor are no longer overcharged for necessities such as electricity and oil, slums have been abolished, and free but compulsory college education has encouraged later and happier marriages. Only those especially well prepared to care for children are encouraged to have more than two, and education has eliminated past superstitions in religion. The narrator unfortunately awakens to reality in the early twentieth century as she hears a newsboy shouting tragic headlines.

[6] Ironically, it is also Kolmerten who later counters the view of Herland's ending as "conventional" by illustrating the unconventional nature of the three Herlanders' marriages. The women marry "on their terms" by refusing to take their husbands' names and by determining when and if the relationships are ever to be consummated ("Texts and Contexts" 123). By having the women marry, Gilman openly criticizes some of the above-mentioned conventions of marriage.

Chapter Four

A New Role:

Beyond Motherhood

> *Mothers have to sacrifice themselves to their children, both male and female, so that the children will be happy when they grow up; though the mothers themselves were once children and were sacrificed to in order that they might grow up and sacrifice themselves to others; and when the daughters grow up, they will have to sacrifice themselves for their children, so you begin to wonder whether the whole thing isn't a plot to make the world safe for (male) children . . . . But motherhood is sacred and mustn't be talked about.* (Russ 204)

In the 1975 feminist utopia The Female Man, Joanna Russ has her character Joanna describe some of the taboos surrounding motherhood. The protagonist suggests that even women speaking to other women have difficulty in honestly admitting to the burdens associated with the role of mother. While rarely as direct in their statements about role revisions, earlier women utopists share Russ' view that women must reconsider this traditional role if they are ever to gain new opportunities. But just as women writers had to counter centuries of stereotypical representations that suggested women were too irrational to enter many of the professions, they had to counter the long-held belief that a "good"

mother would not want to work anyway.

This chapter will focus on two female utopias--Olive Schreiner's 1890 allegory "Three Dreams in a Desert" and Charlotte Perkins Gilman's 1915 novel Herland--that suggest specific alternatives to traditional motherhood. While motherhood had been seen as antithetical to intellectual activity for many centuries, early female utopists such as Astell and Scott, did not directly address how motherhood itself might change. Their characters circumvented the problem by choosing not to marry. Gilman's private diary entries in the 1880s reflect her growing concern that motherhood and work do not mix; however, Schreiner's 1890 text marks one of the first attempts in female utopias to offer a solution for this centuries-old problem.

With increasing employment and educational options in the late nineteenth century, women were realizing more of the opportunities that their utopian fiction called for. Whether they had petitioned for more work especially suited to their sex (and their supposed "natural" gifts at nurturing) or more opportunities within the male-dominated industries, women were slowly gaining new employment options. As John Stuart Mill writes, in his 1869 The Subjection of Women,

> The claim of women to be educated as solidly, and in the same branches of knowledge, as men, is urged with growing intensity, and with a great prospect of success; while the demand for their admission into professions and occupations hitherto closed against

them, becomes every year more urgent. (231)

Although Mill complains that England has no organized parties to support such efforts, as there are in America, he notes a growing trend in European countries. The aspirations that some women had achieved were still dreams to others who might "silently cherish" them but had been "so strenuously taught to repress them as contrary to the properties of their sex" (231).

In her diary, on March 6, 1882, Gilman adds the simple note, "Finished John Stuart Mill's 'Subjection of Women['] (112). She does not comment on what impact Mill's writing might have had on her although, throughout her entries, we see the same conflict to which Mill refers--the great desire to exercise her intellect, the repression felt from within the family structure. Gilman had repressed her own desires so thoroughly, in fact, that even when her husband Walter offered to let her go in 1885, she writes, "No, unless he die and the baby die, or he change or I change there is no way out" (332). Through Gilman's private record of her emotions, we see the often unvoiced yearning that Mill describes. The late nineteenth century, therefore, can be described as a time when new employment options were possible although silent restrictions still applied. One such restriction was a confinement of the female sex that could not easily be escaped. While no doubt many women rejoiced in their ability to bring forth new life, others saw Nature itself as a conspirator, intent upon restricting them to the domestic sphere. The belief that motherhood would necessarily restrict intellectual activities had a long and powerful history.

The prominence of the womb in descriptions of women can be traced back to Plato's Timaeus, which views the womb as a separate creature with an internal power (Berriot-Salvadore 359). His description of the womb as an animal capable of violent reactions was still used as a premise for explaining hysteria through the sixteenth century. Specifically, the philosophy of the German physician Philippus Aureolus Paracelsus (1493-1541), known for introducing such unorthodox methods as the medical use of opium and sulphur, reflects Plato's influence (Berriot-Salvadore 361). In the Middle Ages, frequent pregnancies, despite the dangers and expense, were one means women could use to stave off "accusations that their behavior was masculine or, in some instances, possibly even hysterical, a condition thought to result from a wandering, unused uterus (hystera) pressing on the brain" (Haskell 4). And not all mothers, but only mothers, were regularly exempt from the accusations of witchcraft in the sixteenth and seventeenth century. The reason, as Shari Thurer explains, was that mothers were "reproductively correct" (140-141). The witch, as a matter of fact, may be seen in direct opposition to what the "good mother" supposedly represented:

> The good mother was silent; the witch was verbally aggressive. The good mother was chaste; the witch was promiscuous and perverted. The good mother was always obedient; the witch was wild and insubordinate. And the good mother was pious; the witch flamboyantly sacrilegious. (Thurer 155)

Witches were also related to barrenness, abortions, attempts at birth control, death of legitimate children, and any other influence which might make young girls hesitate to marry (155-156).[1] In short, women were distrusted if they wanted anything but to be a faithful wife and doting mother.

During the Renaissance, doctors gained a great deal of knowledge about the workings of the female reproductive system; however, the fears associated with it were not put to rest for centuries. Coppelia Kahn writes that, during Shakespeare's time, hysteria was also called "the mother" (34). Act II, scene iv of King Lear illustrates the synonymity between motherhood and hysteria when Lear begins to question whether his daughters' ingratitude will make him mad: "Oh how this mother swells up toward my heart! / [*Hysterica*] *passio*, down, thou climbing sorrow" (ll. 56-7). This is one of numerous connections made throughout history between medical conditions and the female reproductive system. As Kahn notes,

> From ancient times through the nineteenth century, women suffering variously from choking, feelings of suffocation, partial paralysis, convulsions similar to those of epilepsy, aphasia, numbness, and lethargy were said to be ill of hysteria, caused by a wandering womb. What sent the womb on its errant path through the female body, people thought, was either lack of sexual intercourse or retention of menstrual blood [in other words, not becoming pregnant]. In both cases, the same prescription

> obtained: the patient should get married. A husband would keep that wandering womb where it belonged. (33)

Many doctors in the seventeenth century also agreed that hysteria was a "disease of women without men" (Berriot-Salvadore 362). Siding with the second-century physician Galen in his view of woman, these doctors often saw women simply as half-cooked men. As Evelyne Berriot-Salvadore writes, in her 1993 analysis of Renaissance and Enlightenment medical practices ("The Discourse of Medicine and Science"), the medical explanation for woman could be described thus:

> . . . being of cold and humid temperament . . . equipped with spermatic organs colder and softer than those found in man, and since cold causes things to contract and tighten, it followed that these organs remain internal, like a flower that never opens for want of sunlight. (352)

Those supporting Galen's view also often still held to the sixteenth-century belief that "Sterility caused by a deficiency of heat or an imbalance of humours, was by definition a female disease" (Berriot-Salvadore 354). Even as physicians abandoned these outdated theories of the physiology of the uterus, they replaced them with other medical explanations that would equally restrict female activity. Raulin's 1758 "Treatise on the Vaporous Affections of the Sexual Organ," for example, identifies hysteria as a social disease caused by pollution and immorality. Because women were believed more vulnerable, more delicate,

more sensitive, they were affected by the disease more often than men (Berriot-Salvadore 363). The best cure, doctors agreed, was to keep women at home.

Through the nineteenth century, other medical treatments for hysteria included "pouring cold water from the height of four feet onto the patient's head," chemical treatments, and physical restraints--all with the same goal of soothing the female organs responsible (Geller and Harris 25). Perhaps doctors still believed, in connection with Galen, that women were colder versions of men; for women participating in unfeminine activities, the best treatment might be to restore their "natural" body temperature and restore them to their places, in the home, surrounded by children.

For new mothers, some of the "cures" for hysteria may have been particularly maddening. Geller and Harris write of 1850s reports that indicated "one in eleven insane women suffered a nervous breakdown either during or after pregnancy; something about the biological and psychological activities associated with birthing purportedly made women crazy" (15). As Charlotte Perkins Gilman so vividly describes, the restrictive confines of motherhood coupled with the "rest cure" for depression might well explain the commonality of "hysteria" in new mothers. Gilman's doctor, S.Weir Mitchell, had prescribed, "Live as domestic a life as possible. Have your child with you all the time" (Gilman, Women of the Asylum, 166). Gilman shows that her frustration and depression were only amplified with such advice:

> (Be it remarked that if I did but dress the baby it left me shaking

> and crying--certainly far from a healthy companionship for her, to say nothing of the effect on me.) "Lie down an hour after each meal. Have but two hours' intellectual life a day. And never touch pen, brush, or pencil as long as you live." (Women of the Asylum, 166-167)

The then-current medical explanations for women who may have been depressed and irritable after childbirth was that they were suffering from neurasthenia, often brought on by "excessive mental labor" (Geller and Harris 98). For a woman, such as Gilman, already concerned that the nature of her life forbade her to have marriage, motherhood, and her work, Mitchell's "solution" spelled doom.

In her diaries, Gilman reveals the great frustrations she felt as a new mother. She writes on March 23rd, 1885, "This day, at about five minuts [sic] to nine in the morning, was born my child, Katharine. Brief ecstasy. Long pain. Then years of joy again. Motherhood means--Giving" (326). While her earlier diary entries trace some of the monotony of married life, with almost daily reports of who did the dinner dishes, her later entries show the exhausting schedule that allowed all too little time for her writing. On April 18, 1885, she writes, "Get up and take a bath. Breakfast. Baby for nearly two hours. Then a long nap. Then dinner. Then Baby. Then supper." And on May 1, 1885, her next entry, she records, "She [her daughter Katharine] also has a cold. I wonder what people do who know even less than we about babies! And what women do whose

husbands are less--sufficient" (327). With the help of a hired woman in the home, Gilman temporarily regained health and hope. She writes on August 5, 1885, "I have long been ill; weak, nerveless, forced to be idle and let things drift. Perhaps now I can pick up the broken threads again and make out some kind of a career after all" (329). The final line of the entry, however, is equally telling: "Arose this morning at 5:30 and nursed the baby" (329).

Unfortunately, Gilman was not able to pick up the threads. It was later in the same month that her husband Walter read a letter in which Charlotte explained the suffocating confines that she felt in marriage and motherhood and offered to let her "go free." But Gilman felt so "irrevocably bound" that she continued to make efforts to combine her work and motherhood for almost two more years (332). In April of 1887, she was institutionalized under the care of Dr. S. Weir Mitchell (385).

Gilman later lamented, "You had health and strength and hope and glorious work before you--and you threw it all away. You were called to serve humanity, and you cannot serve yourself" (Women of the Asylum, 165). Obviously in despair, she recognized that the only way in which her institutionalization cured her depression was in taking her away from the restrictions of childrearing, the source of her depression. The "horror," she grew to realize, was that she was "well while away and sick while at home" (166). The support and encouragement that Gilman felt when her mother and her hired woman were there to assist with the baby foreshadow her "solution" to the

confines of motherhood. In Herland, all of the women join in the efforts to care for the children. With Gilman's description, readers may recognize the grand irony in institutionalization as cure, but alternatives were scarce.

Despite the growing number of reform movements in the nineteenth century, the dangers of childbirth and the restrictions of motherhood were not often addressed. Until the 1890s, the feminist movement was almost wholly disconnected from the struggle led by Bradlaugh and Besant for birth control rights (Banks and Banks 98). Similar to their position on the Contagious Diseases Act, the view of many feminists, it seemed, was that they would lose ground in the suffrage movement if they associated themselves with too many then-unsavory topics (92). In her diaries, Gilman records in numerous entries descriptions of her work with the Suffrage Movement, including writing about restrictive clothing, such as petticoats; however, she makes no mention of the Women's Movement's involvement in issues related to motherhood. As the discussion of Herland shows, Gilman would later espouse her belief that women should have children only when they feel a tremendous longing to do so. This is, in fact, the manner of "conception" in Herland.

Diane Willen writes that women in the sixteenth century had often turned to religion as a "means to cope emotionally with the perils of childbirth" (140). The following centuries saw little progress in reducing those perils. Forceps had been invented by a male physician in the sixteenth century but had been kept a "family secret" until 1733 (Thurer 171). Caesarean operations weren't

successfully performed until the eighteenth century (despite the legend in Shakespeare's Julius Caesar), and sterile procedures and ether for pain were another century away (171). As part of what Geller and Harris call a "backlash against women" involved in suffrage groups, Congress passed the Comstock laws in 1873, criminalizing discussions of conception and contraception (95). But Banks and Banks suggest that the attempts in the 1860s to educate about birth control had been limited anyway, confined "largely among the readers of the National Reformer" (25). In their sociological study of nineteenth-century England, Banks and Banks report,

> The financial cost of children *may* have been a factor in the trend towards the smaller family, but in so far as public discussion may be our guide, a growing consideration for the discomfort, pain and dangers faced by the mother certainly was not. (24)

Women were forced, then, to cope with multiple physical concerns related to the frequency and conditions of childbirth. But it was not only medical practices that would need reform to free women from the dangers of childrearing. Another grave concern was the disempowerment that seemed inextricably tied to the role of mother.

For centuries, intellectual activity had been seen as antithetical to motherhood. In classic Greek literature, Medea represents the grotesque character who allows her conniving nature to destroy her own children. In Renaissance drama, children conveniently appear in time to show the

destruction their mothers have reaped with their plotting, or again, to reveal the abhorrent nature of any wife who would go behind her husband's back. For co-plotting against King Duncan, Lady Macbeth is not unlike countless other usurpers that people Shakespeare's histories and tragedies. She becomes memorable and grotesque in her boast that she would bash her infant's brains out before breaking her promise.

In a discussion of how Renaissance figures acknowledged the conflict between intellect and childbearing, Thurer argues that Elizabeth I "flaunted her childlessness" because she recognized that "motherhood did not harmonize with real political power" (153-154). Critics such as Paula Berggren suggest a systematic approach to the Renaissance treatment of women as childbearers. Berggren writes,

> The comic world requires childbearers to perpetuate the race, to ensure community and continuity; the tragic world, which abhors such reassurance, consequently shrinks from a female protagonist. Such women as exist in tragedy must make their mark by rejecting their womanliness, by sublime sacrifice, or as midwives to the passion of the hero. (18-19)

While Berggren's description focuses primarily on the romantic heroines who dress themselves as men to be taken more seriously, an implication surfaces for all women--associations with the maternal are often not conducive to a position of power.

The nineteenth-century revision of this sentiment may best be seen in the reaction of Torvold Helmer, in Henrik Ibsen's A Doll's House (1879). Torvold represents the nineteenth-century view that a woman who dares act without her husband's guidance will destroy the family structure and, in Nora's case, may well breed criminals. In explaining why Krogstad had mismanaged bank affairs, Torvold tells Nora, "Almost everyone who has gone to the bad early in life has had a deceitful mother" (27). He later qualifies this, although not convincingly, "It seems most commonly to be the mother's influence, though naturally a bad father's would have the same result" (27). Nora is so upset with this interpretation that she refuses to let her children visit her when the nurse wishes to bring them in. She learns her lesson well: the good mother is the one who always heeds her husband's advice.

As we've already seen, male writers of classic utopias reshaped society in many ways, but woman's role as wife and mother remained a constant. Many nineteenth-century utopias advocated new educational and labor opportunities for women, but only in the surplus time beyond motherhood. Women might engage in intellectual activity to bide their time until motherhood or to become a better mother. As Bellamy's Doctor Leete argues,

> Our women have risen to the full height of their responsibility as the wardens of the world to come, to whose keeping the keys of the future are confided. Their feeling of duty in this respect amounts to a sense of religious consecration. It is a cult in which they educate

their daughters from childhood. (180)

Bellamy's women also recognize that their mates must be good breeders first, good companions second. Never is there a suggestion that the views of motherhood must change for the full development of woman herself, or in a broader sense, that women like men may choose to contribute to their world by nurturing their own individual talents. In this regard, the works of early women utopists distinguish themselves in their discussions of how motherhood itself might be revised. Astell, Scott, and Gaskell propose alternatives to marriage and motherhood through societies of women whose aim is to nurture each other. Jones and Merchant suggest that both men and women can be taught positive, "maternal" qualities such as nurturing. Just as women like Elodia, in Unveiling, may philander and neglect their children, men may take on the traditionally maternal role. In significant ways, turn-of-the-century women utopists build on this pattern of revising motherhood by suggesting means for loosening some of the confines of motherhood.

Frances Barkowski calls Herland (1915) the "mother-text" of feminist utopias reasoning that, even though it was only rediscovered in 1979, it serves as a model in which "women are not dismissed as one question among many, as in classical utopias; their place is everywhere" (23-24) It may be argued that Herland faces competition for this title given the models for female socialization, new employment options, and other contributions of the preceding texts. While I agree that Gilman undeniably contributes to the sub-genre of utopias by

women, I would point to one other turn-of-the-century utopia that predates Gilman's to show that in discussions of motherhood, as with other women's issues, early writers help to redefine the role of woman by expanding the view of her beyond motherhood.

Olive Schreiner's reputation as a writer rests largely upon one book--The Story of an African Farm (1883)--small in size, but large in its contribution to defining the New Woman. Yet Schreiner's readers need not confine themselves to this one work to glimpse her visions of a new world for women. Two themes central to much of Schreiner's work are the individual's struggle against tradition and power, and the sacrifices that--because they allow for progress--mark the character's successes more than their concessions. Both of these themes relate closely to a rethinking about motherhood and about woman's "natural" gifts as nurturer. Through her allegories, Schreiner creates a highly compact version that illustrates these themes.

Jean Pfaelzer writes that allegory is especially effective in the genre of utopian fiction, for "If we become concerned with characters in the novelistic sense, it would undermine our recognition that in utopia the individual is usually less important than the society as a whole" (119). Allegory is part of almost any utopian text in the sense that characters are rarely three-dimensional. Rather than emphasizing individual characteristics, utopists often focus on singular qualities such as reason and the concern for others that will allow for communal efforts. Schreiner builds on this tradition by using allegory to illustrate the

values that women must possess if they are to make a true difference in their world.

Through her allegories, Schreiner shows that women who define themselves solely as nurturer, whether of a child or a mate, will be denying other contributions they might make. Schreiner's world, like many great utopias, is a society in process. Because of this flux, utopian and dystopian elements are mixed. However, the utopian ideal comes through clearly: Women must first nurture themselves.

As First and Scott note in their biography of Schreiner, her habit was to write a great deal and then work feverishly at condensing. Schreiner believed that she greatly improved her work when she made it more compact (177-78). Her theory is lent credence by works such as "Three Dreams in a Desert" (1890). In this one short allegory, Schreiner concisely combines personal, social, and political elements into a futuristic woman, one who is capable of changes that Schreiner's earlier heroines are not. Through the development of setting and the metaphor of the man-child, Schreiner reveals a heroine who not only recognizes the fruitlessness of her current station, but is also aware of what powers must be controlled to advance from that station.

The setting alone, in "Three Dreams," reveals much about Schreiner's views of woman's position. Ruth Brandon speculates that Schreiner idealized the desert setting because water brought on her asthma, a condition that troubled her a great deal (93). And perhaps Schreiner's illness does explain, in

part, why so many of her stories are in the drier settings that allowed her to breathe more easily, but in "Three Dreams," the setting signifies much more. The woman in "Three Dreams" is coming out of the desert, about to enter the "dark river" (53). It seems implausible, then, that Schreiner is using the desert as an entirely idealized setting when the New Woman must leave it to find her utopia.

One possible explanation for Schreiner's setting may be found in its similarities with the setting of earlier utopias. Naomi Jacobs connects the seventeenth-century utopia by Margaret Cavendish, "A Brave New World," with the nineteenth-century utopia by Mary Bradley Lane (Mizora) and the twentieth-century utopia by Ursula LeGuin (The Left Hand of Darkness) in that all three works incorporate an "arctic stillness and sterility" that Jacobs suggests as one means of freeing women from traditional expectations for fertility because of the impossibility of physical growth and/or decay (91). The desert setting of "Three Dreams" might similarly emphasize this freedom from fertility; however, because Schreiner's heroine is leaving the desert, she seems to be using the setting in a different way than Cavendish, Lane, and LeGuin.

Schreiner's fascination with the Sermon on the Mount offers one further explanation for the symbolic move from the desert to the Land of Freedom. After forty days and nights of fasting, Christ was tempted by Satan in the desert, but He emerged to present the Sermon on the Mount, addressing the persecuted through the reassurances of the Beatitudes, suggesting that his followers should

give more to those who took from them rather than taking an "eye for an eye" (Matthew, Ch. 5). Throughout the sermon, Schreiner found support for her value in self-sacrifice as one of the important developmental stages of the soul. In The Story of an African Farm, the narrator describes how people turn to the fifth chapter of Matthew and "this new law sets us on fire. We will deny ourself [sic]" (116).

Building on the virtue of self-denial, "Three Dreams" allows Schreiner to show how her values fit in with the prospects of change. Richard Gerber's Utopian Fantasy identifies the common theme in utopian literature of "endless progressive evolution" leading to the newly envisioned lands (10-11). Countless other utopian writers and critics build on this idea, including Charlotte Perkins Gilman.[2] Nor is the notion of self-sacrifice foreign to any number of descriptions of the ideal nineteenth-century woman. Thurer argues that the Victorians established the standard for a "traditional mother" whose "needs are never considered" (185).[3] And John Stuart Mill writes in his 1869 The Subjection of Women,

> All women are brought up from the very earliest years in the belief that their ideal of character is the very opposite to that of men; not self-will, and government by self-control, but submission, and yielding to the control of others. All the moralities tell them that it is the duty of women, and all the current sentimentalities that it is their nature, to live for others; to make complete abnegation of

> themselves, and to have no life but in their affections. And by their affections are meant the only ones they are allowed to have--those to the men with whom they are connected, or to the children who constitute an additional and indefeasible tie between them and a man. (232)

A self-sacrificial nature, then, was a standard expectation for any Victorian mother, but it was a sacrificing of individual identity in the light of woman's role as mother. Work in the world must be sacrificed as it interferes with work in the home. Schreiner distinguishes herself not only in the nature of the sacrifice that she calls for, but also in the recognition that the restricting roles of wife and mother must be put aside if woman is to be truly free and productive. In a sense, woman must also sacrifice her defining characteristic--motherhood--without yet having the other work that may help her create a new definition of self.

In Schreiner's allegory, a progressive evolution is manifest through the journey of the locusts, symbolic of women's efforts and sacrifices to reach the Land of Freedom. The woman in "Three Dreams" approaches an old man at the bank of a dark river. When she tells him that she is seeking the Land of Freedom, he tells her that there is only one way to get there, through labor and suffering. The woman must discard the clothes and opinions that have dragged her down before in the desert as well as the man-child still clinging to her breast. Once she has given up her past life, she can attempt to cross the river, but there is no promise for success. She asks the old man, "And of those that come first,

some are swept away, and are heard of no more; their bodies do not even build the bridge?" (56) And Reason answers, "And what of that?" (56) She echoes his line and prepares to grab her staff for the journey. She accepts self-sacrifice as an essential part of progress, but it is not the sacrifice of a mother whose interests lie more in her child's journey or her husband's journey than in her own. It is the sacrifice of a woman who must give up her life to call attention to woman's journey. Richard Gerber points out that most characters in utopian fiction face death calmly; the utopist's intent, therefore, is to "save the individual not from death but from a sense of futility and frustration" (27-28). Schreiner's allegory describes how women might save themselves from the frustrations of an unproductive life.

Havelock Ellis, Schreiner's long-time correspondent and friend, had stipulated that if socialism and evolution were to fit together that socialism must provide values for the change (Hynes 156). Through her work, Schreiner agrees that the evolution necessary for a utopia must not be without values and direction, and she embodies those values in the notion of self-sacrifice. Just as Christ had to leave the fruitlessness of a desert to preach his lessons on self-denial, Schreiner pictures her characters leaving the desert before taking on the yokes of self-sacrifice themselves. The "dark river" that woman must cross in "Three Dreams" suggests a dark pool of blood, representative of the suffering waiting for those who would initiate change. In Herland, Charlotte Perkins Gilman later depicts a society in which characters have so developed their

sense of community that the individual is self-effaced. The women do not fear death, nor any other hardship because their society has so evolved that they know all members will continue to work toward the common good. Herlanders desire only community growth and the opportunity to be useful. In contrast, Schreiner describes the sometimes painful process--the struggle of individuals--by which such an ideal community is reached.

Beyond the move to self-denial, with its accompanying promise of some change, the woman's leaving the desert setting emphasizes the fruitlessness she feels in the desert. Schreiner shows that the Old Woman is barren; she has the capacity to reproduce, but does not exercise her ability to produce or work, and for this her body may be seen as unyielding as the desert fruit. Elaine Showalter describes the double meaning in many of Schreiner's settings: "The uncelebrated landscapes she was trying to record were both the barren Karoo and the claustrophobic, inner landscape of the new woman" (204). Schreiner suggests that only when woman dismisses for a moment her old functions of nurturing can she escape the claustrophobic confines and be nurtured herself in the Land of Freedom, an idea that has been built on by later feminist utopian writers.[4]

In the description of the desert and in her refutation of woman's "natural" weaknesses, Schreiner draws on Mary Wollstonecraft's A Vindication of the Rights of Woman. Schreiner had been asked to write an introduction to Wollstonecraft's work, although despite her intensive efforts, she never

successfully finished the task (Brandon 73). However, Wollstonecraft's influence upon Schreiner becomes clear in that section of Vindication which states,

> One cause of this barren blooming [of women] I attribute to a false system of education, gathered from the books written on this subject [women's conduct] by men who, considering females rather as women than human creatures, have been more anxious to make them alluring mistresses than affectionate wives and rational mothers. (139)

By placing woman in a desert setting, Schreiner picks up on Wollstonecraft's seemingly paradoxical description of the "barren blooming" to reflect her concern that women have neither work nor education to make them fit progenitors of the race or productive human beings.

The desolation of the desert setting is also fitting for the limited vision woman has of a new, more fruitful land. Even when she shades her eyes, the woman has difficulty seeing past the dark river (and the incumbent suffering associated with progress). While there may be trees and hills across the banks of the river, the woman can scarcely see a different life from her perspective in the barren desert. Perhaps Schreiner, like many other utopists, saw the need for change but could not foresee the necessary steps to change. Or perhaps Schreiner was suggesting through the allegory that women were a great distance from a life productive in other areas beyond childrearing. Only through

numerous sacrifices could they draw nearer to this new life.

While the setting serves to remind women of their present barrenness or unproductivity in the labor force, and their potential for fertile labor in the Land of Freedom, Schreiner uses another device as an even more potent symbol of the constraints that keep women from their own utopia. For clutched to the woman's breast is a tiny being, and the woman confesses her hopes to the voice of reason:

> I will carry him to the Land of Freedom. He has been a child so long, so long, I have carried him. In the land of Freedom he will be a man. We will walk together there, and his great white wings will overshadow me. He has lisped one word only to me in the desert--"Passion!" I have dreamed he might learn to say "Friendship" in that land. (54-55)

The contrast between the two words that the man-child might say epitomizes for Schreiner the struggle to become a New Woman, for neither in The Story of an African Farm nor in any other of her longer writings does Schreiner satisfactorily reconcile the desires for Passion and Friendship. Even in utopia, the woman must have one or the other.

Other women utopists, such as Gilman, address the same concern when they separate man and woman into different worlds. In Herland, for example, Ellador lives happily with the other women but cannot reconcile passion and friendship when the male visitors appear in their utopia. Mary Bradley Lane kills

off the male race in Mizora to take the trouble makers out of the picture. Without resorting to androcide, Olive Schreiner shows the importance of establishing a new relationship between man and woman if ever women are to escape the traditional role of "nurturer" and move on to self-fulfillment.

Schreiner's relationship with Karl Pearson offers a starting point for understanding her sense of conflict between passion and friendship with men. From the onset of their correspondence, Pearson made it clear to Schreiner that he wanted with her a relationship as men would have with men (First and Scott 159). Schreiner was anxious to have his input on such grave matters as how Darwinism related to woman's chance for progress, and she proclaimed a healthy disinterest in a man/woman relationship. But despite the fact that she addressed him as her "man-friend," Pearson suspected her interests in him were in part sexual and he broke the friendship (165).

The break between Schreiner and Pearson may have been one reason that Schreiner felt that a utopia where men and women were friends was possible only if the man/woman relationship was totally desexualized. Other female utopian writers such as Mary Bradley Lane and Gilman created utopias that displaced man from his sexual role. Schreiner countered the problem that sexual relations introduced by making the man in "Three Dreams" a child. Her suggestion, perhaps, is that from childhood we must be taught to view the relationship between the sexes in a different light. Or, at the least, women must establish this different relationship with men before falling into the traditional

dependency in marriage. This desexualization of the male broadened the possibilities for a utopia in several ways, and offered additional commentary on how motherhood might be revised.

First, man as a child offers no power threat. In The Story of an African Farm, Tant Sannie and Bonaparte lock Lyndall and Em in their room so that they may not come to Waldo's rescue when Bonaparte beats him. Lyndall bemoans the fact that she is powerless as a child and looks to the future when she may be strong. "I will hate everything that has power," she says, and "help everything that is weak" (67). The powerlessness of the child is also described when Otto is to be dismissed from his role as overseer of the farm. He refuses to fight for his possessions and meekly accepts Tant Sannie's condemnation (based on Bonaparte's lies). When Otto returns to his room for a final night, he sleeps "as a little child upon whose innocent soul sorrow and care cannot rest" (69). And when Death later comes for Otto, it cannot deal harshly with "the loving, simple, childlike old man" (71). Otto's purity and innocence are evident through the description, but also notable is his powerlessness to react against change. Children are incapable of taking control and redirecting what change in their lives is allowable. Similarly, in "Three Dreams," the man-child cannot keep the woman from leaving for the Land of Freedom. He may protest, and does so as he bites her breast when she tries to remove him (55), but he is powerless to keep her from putting him aside.

As Lyndall tells Waldo in The Story of an African Farm, "We [man and

woman] were equal once when we lay new-born babes on our nurse's knees" (176). While many feminist novelists tried to recreate the equality through what Elaine Showalter notes as a recurring motif to blind, maim, or otherwise blight man (150), Schreiner gives man childlike attributes so that she can envision a time when man and woman will once more be equal. By combining man and child into one being, Schreiner also suggests that being mother and wife are both restricting when woman must leave man and child behind; man cannot replace passion with a new relationship of mutual interests and responsibilities and the physical demands of the child make it impossible for woman to wade the river that leads to the land of freedom.

Second, the child analogy works well to show the dependency that the New Woman must put into perspective. She wants to take the man-child along on her journey, holding him with one hand and fighting the water with the other, but Reason tells her that she must leave some things behind if she is to reach the Land of Freedom. In The Story of an African Farm, Lyndall voices the allegorical woman's concern well--the whole race is dependent upon her being cultured enough to provide the young with a solid education, but her roles as mother and wife keep her from exploring new cultures. As Lyndall complains,

> *We* bear the world, and *we* make it. The souls of little children are marvelously delicate and tender things, and keep for ever the shadow that first falls on them, and that is the mother's or at best a woman's . . . . The mightiest and noblest of human work is given to

us, and we do it ill. (181)

Lyndall's lines find their comparison in "Three Dreams" in that the man-child gains nurture from the woman's breast, but she must put him down so that she can go to the Land of Freedom and be nurtured herself. Only then can she and man thrive. Other utopists from More to Bellamy recognize that women need education if they are to teach their children, but Schreiner is one of the first utopists, male or female, to recognize that women may need to forestall or relinquish motherhood and its confines if they are ever to develop fully their intellectual capabilities.

As a third use of the child analogy, Schreiner desexualizes the man to avoid the complications that sexual relations would introduce into this mutual dependency. Schreiner was by no means timid about discussing sex, evidenced by her open discussions with Havelock Ellis and her participation in the Men and Women's Club--a forum frequently used to boldly discuss differences between the sexes (Brandon 48), but Schreiner felt a conflict in personal relations. For all of her open talk about sex, she felt all sexual desires were at odds with acceptance into the intellectual world that man dominated (Brandon 69). As other critics argue, that same opposition applies between motherhood and the work. Above all, Schreiner felt she must not take the initiative in sexual relationships--a necessary stance to combat the Victorian notion of the femme fatale.

In No Man's Land, Gilbert and Gubar comment on one riddle that the New

Woman had to face. Victorians had created the "Ripper myth," according to Gilbert and Gubar, as a justification of male hostility toward female eroticism. Men who were violent toward women were justified in part because women had flaunted their sexual power (48). As one illustration of this attitude, the Contagious Disease Acts of 1864, 1866, and 1869, had subjected prostitutes, but not their customers, to physical examinations (48). Although Victorian feminists such as Josephine Butler led protests against these acts, as Banks and Banks mention, many feminists did not want to become involved in the protests for fear that the association would hurt their fight for suffrage. In this atmosphere, women became the victims of reputations that were created for them. As Gilbert and Gubar note, many women writers during the Edwardian Age had to face the fear that women "had been constructed in such a way as to ensure their defeat in the battle of the sexes" (50). Schreiner and Charlotte Perkins Gilman faced this fear by creating worlds in which women could dominate without debilitating sex roles. Schreiner avoided the problems connected with sexuality by presenting a utopia in which woman could leave man until he learned to whisper not "Passion," but "Friendship." As later seen in Herland, Gilman addresses the issue similarly by making man a minority in a land of women who understood only friendship. In Vindication, Wollstonecraft had remarked that the shift from passion to friendship was possible only for those with "sufficient intellect" (152).

Ironically, in "Three Dreams" once woman puts man down, he will use his

wings to fly to the Land of Freedom before her while she wages the life-threatening river, never assured of any success. But what may seem a paradox to readers was a sacrifice that Schreiner accepted as a necessary part of change. While many Edwardian men of letters found the science of Darwin and Herbert Spencer "too mechanical" (Rose 91-2), Schreiner saw a Spencerian view of progress as a necessary part of any feminist utopia. As missionaries, Schreiner's parents made a meager family income, and they felt they could not extend money to the education of a daughter. Furthermore, her struggles to maintain relationships were always complicated by the "sex question." In so many ways, she felt confinement from her sex that allowed back and forward movements but little sense of real progress (First and Scott 90). Havelock Ellis complained that Spencer's science did not teach people how to live (Rose 91-2). However, despite Spencer's often dry language in which humans are studied as any other organism, Schreiner found in his ideas her own model for self-sacrifice. Through his mechanical theories of evolution, Spencer influenced Schreiner's work in a number of areas.

Herbert Spencer's The Principles of Sociology first appeared in installments to subscribers from 1874 to 1876; later it was compiled and had already gone through a third edition by 1886 (four years prior to the first publication of Schreiner's "Three Dreams"). The Principles has amazing breadth, touching on topics as diverse as the Super-organic evolution of ants and wasps (4-5), the evaluation of tribal intellect based upon the use of abstract

words (88), ancestor worship, animal worship, and numerous other indicators of social growth. It is easy to see why Havelock Ellis found the nature of Spencer's texts too mechanical to apply to human behavior. In one discussion of society's evolution, for example, Spencer writes, "Further, in the social organism as in the individual organism, differentiations cease only with that completion of the type which marks maturity and precedes decay" (438). Nor does the language become more humanized in later sections--people are consistently described as "organisms" and social entities. But it is also easy to see how Schreiner looked past this mechanical tone to find the keen observations about woman's current condition and how it must change. Spencer might well have been writing about woman's need to communicate with others of her sex when he observed,

> . . . though the members of a social organism, not forming a concrete whole, cannot maintain co-operation by means of physical influences directly propagate from part to part; yet they can and do maintain co-operation by another agency. Not in contact, they nevertheless affect one another through intervening spaces, both by emotional language and by the language, oral and written, of the intellect. (447-448)

Spencer also observes that, in more fully-evolved societies, the actions of each individual become more significant. Whereas, "in low aggregates, both individual and social, the actions of the parts are but little dependent on one another," in developed societies, "that combination of actions which constitutes

the life of the whole, makes possible the component actions which constitute the lives of the parts" (475). In other words, in a developed society all members are interdependent--the productivity of one person relies upon the productivity of another. Schreiner builds on Spencer's arguments to show that a society will necessarily suffer decline if its female members remain unproductive.

Schreiner's own views about social evolution particularly reflect Spencer's theories in her Woman and Labor, a work appearing in 1911 and quickly going through nine printings . Tracing the shift from a less agricultural society and a new emphasis on increased standards for education, Schreiner argues that women have been robbed of significant work. Women are no longer the primary food-gatherers, and women who insist upon being the sole educators of their children might do "irreparable injury on them" given the early specialized training that many occupations require (52). According to Schreiner, many women have become "sexual parasites" who define themselves not through function but through potential: "Under the mighty egis of the woman who bears and rears offspring and in other directions labors actively for her race, creeps in gradually and unnoticed the woman who does none of these things" (103). For the advancement of society, Schreiner argues, women must no longer defend themselves merely as mothers and potential mothers. They must be productive in other areas as well.

In a later section of The Principles of Sociology, "The Status of Women," Herbert Spencer notes through his tribal studies that "women are better treated

where circumstances lead to likeness of occupations between the sexes" (720). Furthermore, "in the exceptional simple societies which are peaceful and industrial, there is an exceptional elevation of women" (731). Through both of these observations, Spencer lends credence to utopian views illustrated by Scott, Lane, Jones and Merchant, Schreiner, and Gilman. To the extent that communities have elevated women to an equal position with men, and given them opportunities for significant work, these communities have created more peaceful worlds. To this general view, Schreiner adds her own belief that women must sacrifice their roles as mothers to gain this equal footing.

Schreiner compensated for the frustrations that she had experienced as a woman by placing her belief in the inevitability of progress. In "Three Dreams," for example, the locusts do build a bridge even though some of them die and are forgotten. The locusts, with their tracks to the water's edge, show the strong influence Spencer had on Schreiner's philosophy. The value of individual life is diminished in the wake of sweeping changes for women. The locusts need not even help build the bridge across the water as long as their tracks can still be seen; this is what the woman must resign herself to. The "dark flowing river" again suggests the blood of casualties, but for a New Woman standing at the banks, the Edwardian Age, with its many scientific developments, was ripe with the possibility of further progress. Thus the woman is prepared for the journey.

Taken all together, the relationships between Schreiner's personal life and the ideals reflected in "Three Dreams" show the many complexities the New

Woman must face in this journey to the Promised Land. She must disconnect herself from the traditional symbols of motherhood and fertility and find a way to be productive in the world. She must set aside sexual relations and force man to regard her in a new light. And she must be prepared to die for the vaguest hope of change, of progress. For Schreiner this progress justifies, even suggests success through, any sacrifices necessary to effect it.

Gilbert and Gubar note Schreiner's difficulty in creating a female freedom in The Story of an African Farm (52), and with such formidable obstacles, any heroine would be daunted. The two young girls of Story, Lyndall and Em, are initially refused an education because their guardian Tant Sannie does not want to spend the money on them. When Lyndall is later allowed to go to "finishing school," she laments that a woman's education only adds to her sense of confinement. Woman, she continues, is taught to shrink her soul, to cultivate weakness and imbecility. While the world tells men such as Waldo to work, it tells women to "seem" (174). And clearly voicing Schreiner's sentiments in Woman and Labor, Lyndall adds that women are ill-prepared for mothering, which influences the education of the whole world. Lyndall represents all of Schreiner's frustrations and almost none of the freedom she longed for. Through "Three Dreams," however, Schreiner creates an allegorical distancing that allows her to examine the possibilities and the consequences of such freedom. Her allegory identifies the self-sacrificial nature that women must adopt if change is to occur even though Schreiner can not depict in realistic

fiction the exact path to the Land of Freedom. In this regard, "Three Dreams" embodies not only the ideals that helped shape The Story of an African Farm, and build Schreiner's reputation as a feminist writer, but also the hopes for progress that her novel could not adequately address.

It is true that Schreiner fails to describe what shape the utopia will take once woman gets there, and with this absence, she faces the same problem that she mentions in her acknowledgment for The Story of an African Farm, the necessity of working with available materials, with possibilities:

> Those brilliant phases and shapes which the imagination sees in far-off lands are not for him [a certain type of artist] to portray. Sadly he must squeeze the color from his brush, and dip it into the grey pigments around him. He must paint what lies before him. (ii)

Perhaps Schreiner considered it an indulgence to describe a utopia for women when nothing around her suggested its connection to reality. But the prospect of such change was too enticing for her to leave entirely alone.

Frances Barkowski, writing in Feminist Utopia (1989), argues that, along with Gilman's Herland, Schreiner's allegories were among the first descriptions of utopia that posited women as the subject, not one of the objects, in a utopian land (24). In other words, women do not merely inhabit the new land; they help create it. The examples by Cavendish, Astell, Scott, and others contradict this argument, but Schreiner's works are more direct in their revisions of woman. Although she was not able to describe the end that the new woman would find,

she does point the way to change. In The Story of an African Farm, the stranger who observes Waldo's carving interprets it as man's struggle for a truth that he never actually sees, but the man takes comfort in the steps he's chipped into the mountain leading to truth: "But they will mount, and on my work; they will climb, and by my stair!" (150). In "Three Dreams," Schreiner also chips away at a mountain. She provides footing on which later female novelists may stand as they look over the mountain to see possibilities of a female utopia.

Waldo's stranger tells the boy that through his carving a story is suggested, and "the attribute of all true art, the highest and the lowest, is this--that it says more than it says, and takes you away from itself. It is a little door that opens into an infinite hall where you may find what you please" (151). Through her allegory, Schreiner opens a door for women as well. In these ways, she holds true to her belief that in her allegories she could condense and condense her writing, and never sense a loss (First and Scott 192).

The descriptions of Schreiner and the other early women utopists are meant not to devalue the contributions of Charlotte Perkins Gilman's Herland, but to acknowledge its precedents and parallels. Like the works by Cavendish, Astell, and Scott, Herland suggests revisions for women's education. This education must prepare women not to be ornaments for society, but rational beings who can create a more peaceful and productive world. Like the utopias by Jones and Merchant, and Lane, Herland posits women in leadership roles with full opportunities for work. Women become the scientists, the teachers, the

government workers, employing in each role the communal concern for others that so often characterizes women's utopias. And like Schreiner's "Three Dreams," Herland calls for specific changes in the role of mother and nurturer. Women do not become mothers because that is all that they can do; they are allowed to be mothers only when they have qualified themselves to be so through an individual nurturing of their own talents. It is no wonder, then, that Herland serves as an excellent example of a fully-functioning female society.

In Herland, a male narrator, Vandyck Jennings, and his two male companions, Terry Nicholson and Jeff Margrave, encounter an all-female world during a scientific expedition. Through this initial plot element alone, Gilman plays off of a conventional male-female relationship with the male on a quest and the female in a domestic setting. However, Herland does not represent conventional female stasis. Following a pattern that Pfaelzer identifies in nineteenth-century feminist utopias, a position of power is created for the women as "the self evolves through relationships rather than quests, in which the society recognizes that integrity and individuality stimulate community; dependence rather than autonomy nurtures personal integrity" ("Subjectivity as Feminist Utopia" 98). In other words, the community remains in process as the residents explore new means of educating their young and combining their resources to operate more effectively. It is this same self-questioning that marks the joint decisions of women's utopias extending back to Cavendish's seventeenth-century work "A Blazing New World."

Just as the Empress and Duchess in Cavendish's work revise the rules for religion as they learn the effects of their actions, Herlanders appreciate the constant process of reevaluation and change. Although they have a long history, they have no laws over a hundred years old and few over twenty years old. Herlanders are also highly educated, and because they nurture each individual's special interests and talents, they value what each new generation may add to their knowledge. When the narrator, Van, questions his female companion, Ellador, about the little respect they show for the past, Ellador responds, "Why should we? They are all gone. They knew less than we do. If we are not beyond them, we are unworthy of them--and unworthy of the children who must go beyond us" (111). Van sincerely attempts to learn from the women, yet he, like the other men, is constantly surprised by what he sees and hears.

The male narrators represent a range of views toward women from the chauvinistic and domineering Terry to the more reasonable and open-minded Van to the worshipful attitude of Jeff. However, none of the men readily accept that women could be responsible for what they see, from the high cultivation of the entire forest and the perfectly-engineered roads to the swift motorized cars. In almost every regard, they are unprepared to respond to this new breed of woman, just as the narrator is astonished by the pastoral beauty the women have achieved in Sarah Scott's Millenium Hall (1762).

Terry resorts to tactics he has used on Earth, trying first to charm the

women he sees, then to bribe them with jewels, and finally to use physical force to capture them (15-17). But as with Scott's characters in Millenium Hall and Mary Bradley Lane's characters in Mizora, the women have created a non-violent atmosphere. Gilman's characters are so physically fit that they are not threatened in the least by the male intruder. The women dart away quickly, yet playfully, illustrating Terry's impotence in the new land. Soon, all the women of the land have the visitors surrounded, emphasizing the power of community the women have developed. Despite the men's attempts to stay in the open, they must paradoxically await the women's movement to escape their static position. As Laura Donaldson comments, this reversal with women as movers/seekers and men as static beings also parallels a later reversal when women are seen as collectively searching for truth while men rely upon emotionally-based bias, or static opinions of what women should be (374).

While Van remains the most reasonable of the three, he also must reconstruct preconceptions. According to Barkowski, Van is intended as an object of humor and humiliation in the story (28). Alternatively, though, we might see Van as Gilman's ideal man in the story as she shows him on the second morning awakening as a "child" in a sleep so deep that it as though he has had a "return to consciousness after concussion of the brain" (24). Although Van must continue to make adjustments, he remains open-minded to the new consciousness that will be required for the revision of woman he has encountered. Similar to Schreiner's depiction of the man-child, he is also less

threatening because he does not exercise his physical strength.

As the men attempt to learn the language of Herland, they expose the stereotypical associations in their own language. Because they have not been fawned over, Jeff complains that it is as though the women did not recognize they were men. And Terry eagerly awaits the chance to see "where the real women are--the mothers, and the girls" (30-31). Thus they both define woman by what relationship she should have with others, whether its focus be catering to man's desires or reproducing. What they must finally realize, although Terry never learns the lesson well, is that Herlanders are complete, self-sufficient individuals, who regard the general good of the community above any other tie.

Throughout their stay, the visitors witness how Herlanders build physical health through exercise and diet, and mental health through detailed attention to the educational needs of their children. The women ennoble motherhood, achieved through parthenogenesis (virgin births following an intense longing for a child), but their children become the community's responsibility so that those who are most qualified in each field can instruct the young girls. Although Pfaelzer asserts that Gilman creates a "paradoxical model" in that her "asexual utopia" is based on the "distinguishing biological feature of women" ("A State of Her Own" 152), Gilman makes mothering the responsibility of all citizens, regardless of their biological connection with the children. Therefore, Gilman successfully escapes some of the restrictions in intellectual activity that Victorian mothers, including Gilman herself, suffered from. And while Carol Pearson

would group Herland with other turn-of-the-century utopias that "sentimentalize motherhood," it is significant that none of Gilman's mothers are traditional (66). With the entire community involved in raising the children, no mother is forced to neglect her own education or work. In Herland, motherhood is so revered that it is considered their religion, but because of historical changes, motherhood has become less a biological construct than a social construct.

By studying their history, Van learns that men had died out in Herland after a period of wars and volcanic outbursts. The male slaves who lived through these tragedies attempted to take over the land by killing their masters, the older women, and all mothers. But the young women killed their conquerors so that they would no longer have to submit. Gilman's description parallels a number of earlier utopias such as Lane's Mizora in the use of violence as a means of shifting the power source; however, a touch of self-deprecating humor--Van's comment that it "sounds like Titus Andronicus" (55)--makes the description more palatable.

When the surviving young girls realized that they could reproduce by willing their bodies to become pregnant, their community quickly repopulated. The Herlanders valued the children as their future, but they also recognized that their small world could provide well only for a limited number of people. Therefore, a period of "negative eugenics" followed. Many women were forced to sacrifice motherhood, "the hardest thing for them to do" (69). Herland, at the stage that the male visitors are introduced, maintains a steady population of

about three million by allowing most of its women to bear just one child. Only those highly honored are allowed to bear more.

Women who have already had one child, or who are deemed less fit for motherhood, are encouraged to disregard the concentrated desire that can lead to pregnancy. They devote themselves to their work instead. But no mother sacrifices motherhood as Herlanders define it. For motherhood to them is not the one-on-one bond between a single parent and child; it is instead the concern each citizen feels for all of the children and for their world's future. As Van explains it, "To do the best work they had to specialize, of course; the children needed spinners and weavers, farmers and gardeners, carpenters and masons, as well as mothers" (68). Most Herlanders want the honor of bearing a child, but they readily give up that child to another's care to allow for the best education. Somel, Van's tutor, clarifies for him, with this explanation: "Education is our highest art, only allowed to our highest artists" (82). Somel argues, just as mothers in Van's world take their children to dentists, who specialize in the care of teeth, Herlanders divide much of the work in childrearing among those most qualified. In this regard, Gilman allows for a freedom that most earlier women utopists do not. Cavendish, Astell, Scott, and Gaskell focus on characters who have chosen lives separate from motherhood, while Mary Bradley Lane suggests that mothers have simply given up feelings of frustration in recognition of their noble calling. Jones and Merchant's nineteenth-century text Unveiling a Parallel (1893) offers one of the few precedents for a community in which citizens share

in the nurturing of children, although the parents (mother *and* father) remain primarily responsible.

Increasingly, in twentieth-century utopias, women writers have addressed their frustrations about motherhood by creating alternatives to the natural processes of delivering and nursing infants. Androgynous characters in Ursula LeGuin's Left Hand of Darkness (1969), for example, take on female characteristics only when they become pregnant. Both partners in a relationship are equally equipped to conceive during kemmering, a state that allows them to take on either feminine or masculine traits so that they can mate.[5] In Woman on the Edge of Time (1976), Marge Piercy eliminates most gender references, noting that a child's co-mothers may be male or female. No one in her fictional world Mattapoisett, however, must endure the discomfort of childbirth. Embryos are developed in tanks, for as one character, Luciente, explains, "As long as we were biologically enchained, we'd never be equal. And males never would be humanized to be loving and tender" (98).

These approaches, while intriguing, are found in societies with many flaws. Utopian elements such as healthful and plentiful food and a greater respect for both sexes and all occupations are combined with numerous dystopian elements, war threatening at the boundaries and citizens being called upon to serve their time as soldiers. Rarely are twentieth-century texts complete utopias, which leads to a more critical analysis of any changes presented. The alternatives to pregnancy and childrearing require this same critical view as they

call to mind as many problems as solutions.

Jewell Parker Rhodes argues that "androgyny as a possible utopian device aimed at exploding our culture's sexual restraints is a deception" because while "versions of the myth seem to negate male / female polarizations, they do so by seducing us to believe that a man alone, a woman alone, is imperfect" (109-111). While the narrator in LeGuin's Left Hand still describes the rulers as men, the fact that the citizens must take turns playing the female coincides with Rhode's description; woman as she is physiologically constructed cannot rule. Readers might also take lightly any discussion of how family structure may be revised when put in the same context as the fantastical alternatives to labor and delivery. Aside from the obvious problem in feasibility when creating alternatives to the natural biological processes, the utopian fiction that suggests such means of freeing woman from the confines of motherhood might also reenforce the opposition between contributions in the workforce and childrearing. Women may do one or the other, but never both at the same time.

As Ann Lane argues in her introduction to Herland, Gilman "transforms the private world of mother-child, isolated in the individual home, into a community of mothers and children in a socialized world. It is a world in which humane social values have been achieved by women in the interest of us all" (xxiii). In this sense, Gilman does not merely reinforce the private role of woman as nurturer; rather, she expands a female value to incorporate a civic role in which all residents must work for the health and well-being of others. The male

narrator summarizes their attitude well on this point: "You see, they were Mothers, not in our sense of helpless involuntary fecundity, forced to fill and overfill the land, every land, and then see their children suffer, sin, and die, fighting horribly with one another; but in the sense of Conscious Makers of People" (68). Through this description, Gilman emphasizes the ways in which women can actively control their own reproduction.

Dorothy Berkson traces this emphasis on the power of motherhood to transform a culture from Harriet Beecher Stowe to Charlotte Perkins Gilman to Marge Piercy, but she contends that the nineteenth century rhetoric about motherhood was "intended to placate women for their exclusion from the public sphere" (101). Although Berkson suggests that Gilman merely bought into the rhetoric of moral superiority, Gilman is more specific about the necessary changes that accompany the spirit of universal motherhood than nearly any other woman utopist.

Herland has eliminated violence by teaching a respect for others. Birds are safe from cats because the latter are not bred to kill (49), and man has not been a threat to the women since the war and volcanic outburst that destroyed much of their nation (54-55). The generation that followed learned from their predecessors and placed their faith in more peaceful, united action, rather than competition, so that a spirit of communal concern rose from all. The three male intruders offer little threat to the Herlanders because of their united efforts; the men are told that if they even accidentally hurt one of the young women, they

would have to face "a million mothers" (66). Furthermore, the traditional associations of women with fecundity and reproduction have been transferred to the land. Nature is kept fertile in Herland because they nurture themselves and their world, not just their families. They feed the soil from their bodies (treating everything from excess food to sewage to materials from their labors), and the land continues to reproduce for them (80).

Feminine values play such a large role in their successes that it is a wonder why the women are willing to reintegrate men into their society through the marriage of three of their residents with the male visitors, but their assumption is that Father-Love added to Mother-Love will double the progress they have made in education and community development. For Van this might be a possibility, but just as Jones and Merchant argue in Unveiling a Parallel that men and women must adopt the same values, Terry illustrates that a utopian society cannot be influenced by virtue if all vice is not dismissed. After marrying, Terry becomes extremely possessive of his wife and announces to the other men, "These women think of *nothing* but children, seems to me! We'll teach 'em!" (119) Unfortunately, all that Terry himself learns is that he cannot use physical force to overpower his strong wife; when he attempts to rape her, he is banished from Herland and leaves protesting that the women still don't know the first thing about men (132-34). With Terry as a prototype, the Utopian women may not care to know more.

The other men fare better: Jeff adopts Herlander values so readily that

he never leaves the land, and Van agrees to show his new wife Ellador his former world so that she can further advance her world through their combined knowledge. But Van's consciousness has grown enough that he realizes she will be disappointed in what she finds. He has learned to recognize the selfishness found in his male-dominated world and has come to appreciate the concern for others that they will be leaving behind.

By incorporating the emphasis on education around which seventeenth and eighteenth-century women's utopias centered, and by revising women's roles to allow her empowerment within the government and in other civic roles as did nineteenth-century women's utopias, Gilman builds on some of the strongest reforms suggested by earlier texts. In significant ways, though, her work represents a culminating point in feminist utopias for its assertion of the values necessary to structure a utopian society. Furthermore, while the all-female society implies that women are the possessors of these values of cooperation, concern for others, and a recognition of interconnectedness between individual and community progress, Herland further suggests that with a reasoned, open-minded approach, both sexes can appreciate and eventually incorporate these values.

Van, the most reasonable of the male visitors, finds it difficult to release past views about women and the male/female relationship. He fares better with Ellador than Terry does with his wife Alamis because Van and Ellador had developed a strong friendship before their marriage. But when Ellador wants a

"logical" reason to consummate their relationship other than for procreation, Van must reconstruct his views and recognize that what he has "supposed to be a physiological necessity was a psychological necessity" (128). Although greatly frustrated at first, Van grows to appreciate Ellador even more as they further develop their friendship by working side by side. Van fully illustrates a new consciousness in this contrast with Terry. While Terry cannot set aside passion for friendship, Van learns to with the help of Ellador's reasoned approach. He cannot disappoint her when she asks if he would want "mere submission" from her (129), and he is able to control his desires because of her "de-feminized" company (130). Ellador understood companionship well, but she had never been taught to be alluring as part of being woman. Van and Ellador are able to have a fulfilling relationship because, like Schreiner's allegorical woman, they recognize when they must set aside passion for friendship to develop.

It is perhaps Gilman's specific assertion of utopian values that have led critics to link Herland with later twentieth-century works rather than viewing the text as part of a tradition dating back to the earlier, conservative visions of the seventeenth century. Yet Gilman's views may be seen in the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries as women writers contradict the stereotypical expectations of their times for woman, wife, and mother.

In the seventeenth century, Margaret Cavendish and Mary Astell contribute utopias in which women are allowed the same education that men are offered and, furthermore, opportunities to serve society with their reason.

Women serve as rational and moral models for each other, countering negative stereotypes of communities of women dating back to Greek mythology. Their characters define themselves not through silence and passivity, but through the degree to which they effect reform in the world.

The eighteenth-century utopia created by Sarah Scott adds to these contributions the model of a peaceful society, in which women nurture the land and reduce violence. Millenium Hall women, like the women in later utopias, do not use physical power to control man nor beast, but instead rely upon the good will created by equal opportunities and a land fully developed so that it provides for all of its people. Nor are Millenium Hall women forced to live one life common to all. They may choose marriage or service within the community, with love and not necessity dictating their choice.

Nineteenth-century works by Elizabeth Gaskell, Mary Bradley Lane, Alice Ilgenfritz Jones and Ella Merchant, and Olive Schreiner build even stronger parallels. With alternatives to marriage and motherhood, and a growing appreciation for nurturing as a human value, not just a female value, these writers speak to each other across time and region. With Charlotte Perkins Gilman's publication of Herland, we see not the beginning of a tradition of female utopias, but a work building on a tradition over two hundred years old. Throughout the history of women's utopias, women writers have reflected the struggle for a voice, education, and work. They have repeatedly argued that silence must be replaced with a sense of community in which women share their

experiences, their solutions, and their dreams. They have fought to ensure that women have the opportunity to contribute outside of the domestic sphere so that they can use their intellectual capabilities and so that they can develop those capabilities to become better wives, better mothers, but also better individuals. They have also shown the benefits of societies replacing oppression and violence with communal decision-making aimed at promoting the common good. Given this tradition, Herland is not alone the "mother-text" of twentieth-century feminist utopias; it is instead the mother and the daughter, embodying the struggles of early women utopists who first envisioned new opportunities for education and work, and later women utopists who began to realize those dreams.

Notes

[1] Another interesting commentary on the witch and the mother appears in David Holbrook's discussion of the mystique that maternal images invoke. He argues that while the mother may be viewed as a positive creating force, she is also like a witch in her control over life and death (7-8). This discussion, rather than separating woman's power into the sexual and supernatural, seems to combine them as both disturbing implications of sexual power.

[2] In Herland, Charlotte Perkins Gilman seems to show a similar faith in endless progress in describing how the ill-natured woman and the criminal were slowly weeded out as the citizens realized the hazards.

[3] Thurer notes Dickens as one perpetrator of this stereotype in works such as Bleak House. In characterizations of women such as Mrs. Jellyby, Thurer argues, Dickens was "merciless to mothers who failed to give up their lives to the family's domestic happiness" (205).

[4] In Marge Piercy's utopia Woman on the Edge of Time, for instance, Connie leaves her real-world concerns for her child, whom she had physically abused during a nervous breakdown and enters the world of Mattapoisett where she herself is nurtured by characters such as Luciente.

[5] Some critics, such as Rosinsky, suggest that LeGuin undermines the feminist perspective by polarizing the sexes more through the description of kemmering and through the pronoun "he" meant to describe characters who may

take on female or male traits (32). Libby Falk Jones points out that this polarity in characterization, the insistence upon male and female traits, is necessary as "Characters in an apologue function not as individuals but as representatives or positions. They must be recognizably human, and their actions must be minimally motivated; extensive psychological realism, however, not only is not necessary but in fact interferes with their proper functioning" (117).

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