

PERCEPTIONS OF SOUTHERN WOMANHOOD: THE LADY
AND THE MYTH IN THE WORKS OF ELLEN GLASGOW

by

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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

In Feminism and American Literary History: Essays,

Nina Baym expresses her concern for how and why women writers have been left out of the traditional canon of American Literature. Using historical research, Baym proposes that women have been writing successfully--both financially and artistically--since the beginning of America's settlement. Not only were women successful commercially, but they were also prominent, accountable for at least one-third of the market and possibly more. Baym proves her claims by stating that

Names and figures help make this dominance clear. In the years between 1774 and 1799 --from the calling of the First Continental Congress to the close of the eighteenth century --a total of thirty-eight original works of fiction were published in this country. Nine of these, appearing pseudonymously or anonymously, have not yet been attributed to any author. The remaining twenty-nine are the work of eighteen individuals, of whom four are women. One of these women, Susannah Rowson, wrote six of them, or more than a fifth of the total.... A novel by a second of the four women, Hannah Foster, was called The Coquette and had thirty editions by the mid-nineteenth century. Uncle Tom's Cabin, by a woman, is probably the all-time biggest seller in American history. A woman, Mrs. E.D.E.N. Southworth, was probably the most widely read novelist in the nineteenth century. (4)

Baym concludes this list with a question: "How is it possible for a critic or historian of American

literature to leave these books, and these authors, out of the picture?" (4). The rest of this introduction and the chapters that follow seek to answer this question. While Baym offers three explanations to explore the problem she posits--gender bias, a lack of prescribed artistic excellence, and the emphases of later critical literary theories--I am less concerned about the whys and hows that resulted in women being left out of the canon and more concerned with the effect that their absence has on historical, social, and literary studies and/or theories.

Although the works of many canonical authors do stand on their own--their literary and artistic merits readily and easily identified and appreciated--other authors need the backdrop of literary history for the extent and far-reaching consequences of what they attempted in literature to be revealed. This is true for canonical authors, too. For example, Nathaniel Hawthorne's remark about the mob of scribbling women and his lack of financial success as an author are not fully understood or appreciated when detached from the literary history of The Lamplighter, The Wide, Wide World, or The Hidden Hand. These three works by women were enormously popular, sold well, and were republished in numerable editions. Yet when compared to The Scarlet Letter, for example, none of these works exhibit the

critically accepted merits apparent in Hawthorne's novel. While many of Ellen Glasgow's novels, like Hawthorne's, can stand alone on their own merits, her work as a whole benefits from a comparison to the literary norms against which she rebelled. Without an understanding of what she fought against, her challenge to conventional Southern sentimentalism in literature does not seem like much of a rebellion. In his chapter on Glasgow from Pioneers and Caretakers: A Study of Nine American Women Novelists, Louis Auchincloss explains the necessity for reading and analyzing Glasgow in relation to her cultural and literary environments because

for all her faults...it is hard to get away from the fact that without Ellen Glasgow there would be a great gap in our fiction, particularly where it concerns the South.... When Ellen Glasgow began her career, there was almost no serious literature in the South. The pioneer element in her work today is obscured by the fact that the romantic school of southern fiction against which she reacted not only has disappeared but has hardly left a trace. Similarly, the modern school has gone so far beyond her in exploration of the freakish and the decadent that she seems as mild in comparison as Mary Johnson or Amelie Rives.... Yet she herself is the bridge, and the necessary bridge, between the world of Thomas Nelson Page and the world of William Faulkner, Katherine Anne Porter, Eudora Welty, and Tennessee Williams. (90-91)

Therefore, the consideration of women's fiction and its cultural and historical impact on society becomes a valuable tool in studying and analyzing literature by

both men and women, but especially women. In this dissertation, I compare Ellen Glasgow to Edith Wharton and Willa Cather, other major writers who also produced a considerable body of works. In addition, I find a pattern or trend occurring in women's fiction, and I believe that this trend, when analyzed, further reveals the historical and cultural effect of women's writing on society and patriarchal society's effect on women, perceptions of women, and expectations for women's roles.

Ellen Anderson Glasgow was born on April 22, 1873, in Richmond, Virginia, to Francis Thomas Glasgow and Anne Jane Gholson; out of ten children, Ellen was their eighth. At age seven, she wrote her first short story entitled "Only a Daisy," and by eighteen had completed a first manuscript, "Sharp Realities," which she burned after a trip to New York when the publisher she met with was more interested in the young author's personal attractions than in her work. From 1897 to 1943, Glasgow wrote and published nineteen novels, one book of poems, another book of short stories, and collected the prefaces to her novels into a third book of literary criticism. Two collections of her works were published first in an eight-volume set and later in a twelve-volume set. After her death in November of 1945, her autobiography (1954), her personal letters (1958), a

volume of her collected short stories (1963), and Beyond Defeat, the sequel to her Pulitzer Prize-winning novel, In This Our Life, (1966), were also published. In addition, Glasgow wrote thirteen other articles, reviews, and short stories, which have not been compiled or reissued in other editions. In total, her twenty novels gained varying degrees of commercial, popular, critical, and literary success. Although Glasgow's success--whether measured in sheer volume, financial gain, or critical praise and acceptance--was not consistent from novel to novel, over the course of her career she produced works that earned her both literary and critical acclaim.

Criticism of Glasgow's works began with her first novel in 1897 and has not ceased. While she is best understood and admired as the transitional or literary "bridge" which Auchincloss calls her, that is not the only way her work has been received or interpreted. Early in her career, Glasgow received critical acclaim for her determination to challenge contemporary depictions of the South. In A Certain Measure, Glasgow writes that

whether people liked what one wrote, or failed to like it, was no great matter. But that one should write the truth of life with a single mind and a single conscience, appeared to me,

at the moment, to matter profoundly. So I determined that I would write, not merely about Southern themes, but a well-rounded social record of Virginia from the decade before the Confederacy down to the period in which I was living, which happened to be the beginning of the twentieth century. My subject seemed to me to be fresh, and most certainly it remained untouched; for Southern novelists heretofore had been content to celebrate a dying culture. Yet the historic drama of a changing order and the struggle of an emerging middle class were set against the many personal dramas of individual frustration. The world was full of fermenting processes, of mutability and of development, of decay and of disintegration. (59-60)

Glasgow's subject, which did not include a celebration of dying culture, put her at the forefront of a movement which sought to counter the works of local colorists and sentimental acceptance of Southern nostalgia for an antebellum South. During much of her lifetime, the critical acclaim and penetrating reviews of her work have focused on Glasgow's ability to depict the South realistically and not sentimentally. Dorthea Lawrance Mann, James Branch Cabell, Joseph Collins, and Carl Van Vechten, all writing in the mid to late 1920s about Glasgow's works (chiefly about Barren Ground, but also Virginia and The Romantic Comedians), have kept this literary challenge as a backdrop against which her fiction is analyzed and interpreted.

But beginning in the 1950s, Glasgow's work began to be read in a somewhat different context. Except for Josephine Jessup's The Faith of Our Feminists: A Study

in the Novels of Edith Wharton, Ellen Glasgow, Willa Cather (1950) which takes a feminist approach, most critical analyses have relied heavily on Glasgow's self-proclaimed role as a social historian of the South, especially Virginia. Representative of this historical approach is Ellen Glasgow and the Ironic Art of Fiction by Frederick P.W. McDowell; he has claimed that

the critic of Miss Glasgow's work must consider her aim of presenting with fidelity and understanding a social history of Virginia from 1850 to 1939.... In any study of Ellen Glasgow's work, the social history of Virginia, as she assimilated it, becomes an inescapable consideration. The critic must be thoroughly aware of the tradition reflected in Miss Glasgow's novels and of her complex relation to it... (8)

While McDowell is certainly correct in his claim that knowledge about the South and its traditions is necessary for analyzing Glasgow's works (and he continues with the disclaimer that Glasgow's social history is successful as literature only when it results in "art"), he has moved away from considering Glasgow's achievements in comparison to the authors who had established the tenor of Southern literature prior to her career.

Throughout the 1960s, while Glasgow's work was still being published posthumously, literary critics who took Glasgow as their subject seemed to qualify their acceptance of her as a major novelist. They have been

careful to set the criteria--generally formalistic or new critical standards that privilege the idea of unity in the text--that determine literary merit, and then show how Glasgow both succeeds and fails in achieving literary greatness. Louis Rubin, Jr., Blair Rouse, Joan Foster Santas, C. Hugh Holman, and others have taken this approach almost as a safeguard against the charge that their subject, Glasgow, is not worthy of critical and literary study. Auchincloss has revealed the nature of this qualified relationship between the literary critic and the author-subject when he said: "The mystery of Ellen Glasgow is not so much how she could be so good a writer as how she could on occasion be so bad a one" (88).

In the fall of 1973, a centennial symposium was hastily prepared and held at Mary Baldwin College in Staunton, Virginia. With only two months to prepare, panelists and presenters from across the nation and even France attended the symposium. Some of the papers presented at that symposium, and at MLA of that same year, were collected and edited by Thomas Inge and published in Ellen Glasgow: Centennial Essays. Despite his introduction to the collection in which Inge remarks on Glasgow's role in the change which affected the nature of Southern literature, the essays focused on broad categories: The Woman, The Novels, and The Ideas.

While the symposium and the essays strive to acknowledge Glasgow's place in Southern literature, they have not necessarily explained her role in its change or development.

Prior to the symposium, Julius Rowan Raper had published his critical analysis of Glasgow, Without Shelter: The Early Career of Ellen Glasgow (1971), which gives serious consideration to the influence and use of Darwinism in Glasgow's early fiction, although a case could be made for its use in some of her later novels, too. Also published in 1971, Ellen Glasgow's Development as a Novelist, by Marion K. Richards, examined Glasgow's growth as an artist/novelist in terms of the style, structure, theme, and characters displayed in the novels, revealing the lingering impact of new criticism. However, Richards went on to interpret her findings or conclusions in light of biographical information as much as possible, combining aspects of new criticism with biography. Richards has argued that Glasgow developed her craft without help from mentors or peers because she was not well acquainted with or otherwise connected to other authors during her career. Once again, Glasgow has not been anchored to the literary environment in which she published.

Still partially, if not fully, cut off from the historical backdrop which highlights her fiction,

literary criticism of the 1980s began to make other connections or adopt different interpretive strategies. Julius Rowan Raper, From the Sunken Garden: The Fiction of Ellen Glasgow, 1916-1945, began to explore Glasgow's technique of using symbolic imagery, as she was a woman who was deeply interested in and well acquainted with psychoanalysis. Raper intended to show how Glasgow uses psychoanalysis to develop her material subtly. He has claimed that

I have sought to avoid the Scylla of biographical criticism and the Charybdis of impressionistic analysis, and yet I have left readers who do not fear those two bugaboos a place to stand if they choose to extrapolate. (xiii)

Linda Wagner, the author of Ellen Glasgow: Beyond Convention, has continued the trend to use biographical analysis of Glasgow to explore her novels, but has tempered the biographical interpretation with an examination of the social attitudes toward women established in the professions.

One possible explanation for the prominence of biographical analysis in the 1970s and 1980s may be attributed to the publication of Glasgow's biography by Stanly E. Godbold, Jr. Less than sympathetic at times, Godbold occasionally corrects Glasgow's autobiography, The Woman Within, with his own opinions. For example, in claiming that Ellen Glasgow takes creative liberties

with dates, Godbold explains that the publication of her first short story at age twenty-one disproves her claim that the short story was written at age fifteen. As a novelist, Glasgow revised her novels at least three times before publication, so another possibility is that Glasgow reworked an earlier draft or rewrote at age twenty-one a story she had created when only fifteen. Possible explanations such as these are ignored or glossed over in the biography. Godbold also has used Glasgow's novels to fill in the gaps left by the autobiography and her correspondence, creating another level of biographical criticism for Glasgow's fiction.

In the 1990s, Glasgow criticism moves beyond general assessment to work more closely with special topics or interests. In journals, such as the Mississippi Quarterly, entire issues are devoted to either special topics--women's history--or specific novels--The Sheltered Life. In addition, critics such as Pamela R. Matthews take a feminist and critical approach to Glasgow's work as a whole. In Ellen Glasgow and a Woman's Traditions, Matthews places Glasgow within women's history and examines the impact it has on Glasgow's novels. Matthews writes:

It might seem that Glasgow, armed with the inadequate legacy of restrictive attitudes toward Southern womanhood and sexuality and with an ambivalence about men, yet determined to succeed in a masculine literary world,

would have been doomed to lose the war [between the sexes]. But the critical battle is still one of control, and as feminist critics maintain, the balance of power can still be tilted in a new direction. The question Glasgow's life asks today is still, who is in control of a woman's life, a woman writer's place in a literary canon? (16)

Matthews explores Glasgow's attitude towards "women's culture" (ix), noting that Glasgow is criticized by others for being "too strong/weak, too public/private, too professional/personal, too Southern/not Southern enough, too masculine/feminine" (ix). Although she dismisses these criticisms as unfair and possibly irrelevant, these attitudes reveal the influence which patriarchal society can have on women. Only a woman could be criticized for being both too strong and too weak, because if she is too strong, she is not feminine, and if she is too weak, that proves women are not capable of engaging in masculine pursuits. The expectations of patriarchal society, especially in the South, give women little room in which to maneuver.

As patriarchal society has developed over the centuries, it has prescribed the roles for both genders and established the differing criteria by which men and women were judged to be successful. All societies train children and adolescents for specific roles and provide them with the standards by which they can determine how well they are progressing or maturing. In much of

women's writing, the roles prescribed for women and the criteria for success are analyzed both directly and indirectly. To study the effect that women's writing and this analysis of women's roles have, a taxonomy must be developed that can clearly classify women's roles, or perceptions of women, yet remain flexible enough to change as society does and as women's place in it also changes. Such a taxonomy promotes the classifying and analyzing of female characters as one way to examine the trends or changes in women's roles and social expectations for and about women.

Chapter II examines one of the best taxonomies currently available for literary analysis, that of David S. Reynolds in his Beneath the American Renaissance: The Subversive Imagination in the Age of Emerson and Melville. While Reynolds's taxonomy does classify female characters, it is limited to the mid nineteenth century, and one half of the taxonomy specifically targets reform literature and tracts in addition to literature. Without the flexibility to incorporate the changes in women's roles and in perceptions about women as they fulfill those roles, this taxonomy cannot track the changes in society caused by the women's movement, especially as those changes are reflected in women's writing. Reynolds develops his taxonomy in order "to recover the social and linguistic dimensions of

nineteenth century women's literature in the context of major and lesser authors of both sexes" (337). Although this taxonomy helps Reynolds fulfill his research agenda, I am looking at women's writing that spans the transition from the nineteenth century into the twentieth in order to analyze perceptions of women and women's roles, especially as these roles were in flux.

In developing a taxonomy that can keep pace with the social changes of the latter half of the nineteenth century and the first few decades of the twentieth, no single classification fits all geographic, economic, and social regions in America. To be as accurate as possible without spiraling out of control, it is necessary to distinguish between the areas of emphasis for study. This dissertation uses Ellen Glasgow as the touchstone for the creation of a taxonomy and with an analysis of patriarchal society, comparing the female characters of her novels to the female characters of both Edith Wharton and Willa Cather because they were contemporaries who responded to and lived under similar patriarchal influences.

In addition, these three writers, Glasgow, Wharton, and Cather, help set up another level of analysis--an examination of geographic, economic, and social regions. Throughout the dissertation references are made to Southern works and Northern works. These distinctions

are made to test the validity of the taxonomies offered for Southern and Northern female characters. This regional study is focused on the South and the other regional traditions that are brought into play function as part of the strategy for studying the Southern tradition as it manifests itself in Glasgow's work. The goal of the dissertation is not to make sweeping truth statements about Northern fiction because this area is complex and dynamic and cannot be distilled down into a set of easy categories. The regional distinctions as well as the works by Wharton and Cather are employed as strategic instruments that enable us to get a more accurate fix on the issues that characterize Glasgow's work.

In defining a Northern literature, I seek to emphasize differences in attitudes, biases, perceptions, and stereotypes associated with women as portrayed in fiction. Typically, Northern works reveal a preoccupation with the economic structure of society and the acquiring or inheriting of money. While the Puritan work ethic is strong in works by and about middle class female characters, it is less pronounced for the wealthy, upper class. Yet even upper class characters, whether they acknowledge it or not, rely on money and its economic power to achieve and/or maintain social status.

In contrast, Southern works produce female characters that do not contend directly with economics but do contend with standards of femininity that are distinctly related to issues of slavery. Matthews contends that "...both [marriage and slavery]...are products of a white male world that defines the acceptable limits of others' experience. Sexual oppression equals racial oppression" (82). Female characters in Southern works are defined by standards that reinforce their status as property--not quite belonging to themselves. Even when these female characters break with tradition and take an active role in defining themselves, the break is not complete and remains tied to patriarchal expectations for women and women's roles.

To serve as a check on the regional examinations of Southern and Northern depictions of women, Cather's novels provide female characters who do not belong to either the South or the North. The female characters depicted in Cather's works are capable, independent women who do not rely on others to set standards for them to live up to or goals for them to reach. They set both for themselves. This way Cather's characters are used to test the independence sought by Southern female characters who break with tradition. By comparing Southern characters to characters of other areas, it

becomes possible to evaluate the extent and/or success of the independence which some Southern female characters forge for themselves.

As the taxonomies for Northern and Southern fictional females are analyzed, trends in the portrayals of female characters emerge. These trends reflect not only the changes concerning how women are depicted in fiction, but also convey a sense of how the changes affected the lives of actual women. I have labeled these trends a negative hermeneutic, a positive hermeneutic, and a feminist pedagogy. In her chapter, "Reading Ourselves: Toward a Feminist Theory of Reading" from Contemporary Literary Criticism: Literary and Cultural Studies, Patrocinio Schweickart uses the terms negative hermeneutic and positive hermeneutic to refer to the art of interpretation. Specifically, she claims that the negative hermeneutic is a means to achieve an "ideological unmasking" of patriarchal society and that the positive hermeneutic results in "the recovery and cultivation of women's culture" (206). Despite the fact that I deal with each trend separately and in an imposed order, the three do not necessarily occur in this sequence nor do they occur separately from each other.

The negative hermeneutic offers an interpretative strategy for analyzing the ideological underpinnings of

patriarchal society. Writers who create female characters that conform to the expectations for women in patriarchal society provide the material which is best interpreted in light of the negative hermeneutic. In the course of the novel, these characters are usually destroyed by the very standards which defined them and their femininity. As the reader analyzes how the criteria for traditional womanhood and women's roles lead to failure, even death, the negative hermeneutic can be used to expose the socialization of women. The social forces which define, limit, and control women are based on a gender ideology rooted in patriarchal perceptions of women. When these forces are revealed as mechanisms created to sustain a particular social order, it becomes easier to challenge accepted standards of what is or is not feminine. Whether women provide the material on which fiction is based, or whether women read about fictional characters defying traditional expectations and then are spurred to action does not lessen the challenge to patriarchal society. Through the negative hermeneutic, gender ideology is revealed as a social construct rather than a natural division of sex roles.

The positive hermeneutic provides readers with a different interpretive strategy, one which explores what women might be like if they were not shaped or defined

by patriarchal expectations. Therefore, a positive hermeneutic provides new ways to envision women; they can be strong physically and mentally without losing their femininity. While the positive and new examples of strong, capable women are prominent in women's writing, these characters do not serve as role models for real women because they are not clearly defined. The positive hermeneutic does produce admirable feminine characters, but does not necessarily explicate how the new forces have shaped these characters. Although independence, ability, and strength are depicted in these female characters, how they learned to be independent, capable, or strong is not always made clear.

The third trend is the creation of a feminist pedagogy that outlines how girls can be brought up to be the kind of women idealized by the positive hermeneutic. Through the use of a feminist pedagogy, the lessons of independence, self-reliance, moral development, and self-control are revealed in realistic depictions of girls and young women. As the novel progresses, readers can observe how girls are trained to be women, and this enables them to evaluate the effectiveness of each new force which is used to define and critique what is feminine and yet strong.

Together these three trends reveal some of the changes in women's roles and women's lives. Although life does not necessarily imitate art nor art reflect life exactly, the two do inform each other. The taxonomy creates an order that allows for analysis and exploration, and the trends provide a means of interpreting the order imposed by the taxonomy. Finally, the regional emphasis again comes into play when the taxonomy reveals disparate categories, and the trends indicate that differences in social expectations result in differences in the use of the two hermeneutics and in the development of a feminist pedagogy.

CHAPTER II
PERCEPTIONS OF WOMEN'S ROLES AS PORTRAYED
IN FICTION

When a seminal work such as the Literary History of the United States (1974), edited by Robert Spiller et al., does not focus on the literary contributions of any woman author of the South other than a brief listing of two Southern women writers in one chapter, the reader can develop a false sense of women and their contributions, or lack thereof, to the development of American literature. For example, Emily Dickinson is the only woman author named in a chapter title, and she shares her chapter with Sidney Lanier. Nineteen other chapters focus on individual men's contributions to American letters, with one other chapter devoted to Longfellow, Holmes, and Lowell combined. Were there no women writing? Did no women write literature? Or were no women recognized for writing literature? Questions such as these have required scholars to reexamine the traditional cannon.

Examining more recent editions or sources does reveal the inclusion of more women in the discussion of American literature. The Columbia Literary History of the United States (1988), edited by Emory Elliott, does include more women authors, but not all women writers

undergo critical scrutiny alongside their male counterparts. Some women still receive special recognition in separate chapters written by women. A quick look at the works of Robert Bain and Joseph M. Flora reveals that women are heavily outnumbered. In Bain's and Flora's Fifty Southern Writers Before 1900: A Bio-Bibliographical Sourcebook (1987), only five of the fifty are women. In their Fifty Southern Writers After 1900, the number of women increases to sixteen. In addition, their two most recent works, Contemporary Fiction Writers of the South (1993) and Contemporary Poets, Dramatists, Essayists, and Novelists of the South (1994), still do not present a balanced number of each sex. The first has twenty-two women out of a total of forty-nine writers, and the second has fourteen out of fifty. The imbalance raises more questions about women and their contributions to literature. Were there simply no women writing? If they were writing, even if what they produced is not great literature, did they have an effect culturally or historically in this field? Has the number of women writing always been small, resulting in the fewer numbers of women listed in such works as Bain's and Flora's?

In her chapter "The Rise of the Woman Author" from the Columbia Literary History of the United States, Nina Baym claims that not only were women writing in large

numbers in the nineteenth-century, but they were also, in some cases, highly paid:

When the publisher Robert Bonner desired to ensure the success of his weekly fiction paper, the *New York Ledger*, he did so by engaging E.D.E.N. Southworth for exclusive serialization of her novels and the humorist Fanny Fern for weekly columns--and by publicizing the high fees he was paying these women. (292-3)

Baym's examination of the social and cultural milieu of this time reveals that women were encouraged as writers. The two groups with the most time for reading were women and youths, and Baym concludes that men were "scornful" of or "unsuited" to writing for either audience, so that editors like Robert Bonner were not uncommon in seeking women to write for their publications. Popular literature was so widespread that it was seen at the time to be a sign of a growing cultivation of morals, aesthetics, and artistic appreciation. Although Baym claims that many women writing at this time "held quite conventional views about women's place...and would have been shocked to think of themselves as unfeminine in any way" (290), I would argue that by becoming such a visible force in society, women began to change the roles available for their sex. Indeed, some women writers actually sought to change those roles directly through the medium of print, by writing about women's current situations, and by creating fictional female

characters that can provide women with sensible and attainable models of behavior.

In "Types of American Womanhood," from his work Beneath the American Renaissance: The Subversive Imagination in the Age of Emerson and Melville, David Reynolds analyzes women from nineteenth-century literature as fictional characters. Although Reynolds's examination of fictional women provides a means of classifying female character types, his taxonomy does not necessarily apply to all fictional constructs of women; Southern women especially do not fit neatly into any of his slots, and his taxonomy is limited to the mid nineteenth century. Reynolds organizes female character types into two main categories: (1) the female exemplar and (2) the female character of reform literature. The female exemplar has three distinct sub-categories: the angel who acts as a moral agent, the practical woman who serves as a positive role model, and the adventure feminist who assumes male roles. The characters of reform literature include the working woman, with both positive and negative examples, the woman as victim (usually a drunkard's wife, a slave woman, or a fallen woman), the feminist criminal, and the sensual woman. While all these categories do work in analyses of Northern and Western literature from the 1800s, they do not fit all examples from Northern and Western

literature and rarely fit Southern portrayals of women at all. In addition, Reynolds's taxonomy does not negotiate the turn of the century, when women's roles began to reflect changes in laws such as property rights or the right to vote. In Northern literature, Edith Wharton's career spans from the 1890s to the 1930s, and her female characters, such as Ellen Olenska, Lily Bart, or Undine Spragg, do not fit neatly into Reynolds's taxonomy. In Southern literature, Ellen Glasgow's career also begins in the 1890s and continues into the 1940s. Many of her characters are set in events and situations prior to the turn of the century, but like Wharton's characters, they do not fit Reynolds's scheme either. When female characters such as E.D.E.N. Southworth's Capitola Black (The Hidden Hand), Kate Chopin's Edna Pontellier (The Awakening), Wharton's Undine Spragg (Custom of the Country), or Glasgow's Virginia Pendleton (Virginia) cannot be classified as exemplars or reform literature characters, an alternative hermeneutic is needed. Granted, these female characters do fit Reynolds's taxonomy somewhat, but when special modifications or exceptions must be made for each character, a more inclusive means of cataloguing becomes necessary. For example, Glasgow's Virginia Pendleton may fit in Reynolds's scheme as "woman as victim" since Glasgow certainly portrays her

protagonist as a victim of society's dictates, class expectations, and Southern nostalgia for a lost past that never truly existed. However, Glasgow's novel cannot be classified as reform literature, and her main character, Virginia Pendleton, does not fit Reynolds's category as she is not the wife of a drunkard, a slave, or a fallen woman, which are Reynolds's classifications for the fictional characters of reform literature. At first glance, E.D.E.N. Southworth's intrepid female character Capitola Black could pass as an "adventure feminist" because she assumes male roles. But Reynolds's examples of this literary character are from what he terms "frontier literature"; except for Mabel Dunham from The Pathfinder, these women characters are depicted as pirates, bandits, and soldiers. None of these images of the frontier woman, from the pirate-bandit to the soldier-sailor, fits Capitola Black. Expanding the range of roles that female characters can play in literature requires an examination of the similarities and differences of both Southern and Northern types if we are to study as accurately as possible the perceptions of American womanhood prior to, during, and after the turn of the century. Using a taxonomy facilitates this examination.

To provide a focal point for comparing the female characters of Southern writers with their counterparts

in Northern fiction, I intend to center my study around Glasgow's career because, as an author, she lived, wrote, and published in the South at the turn of the century. Since Glasgow focused on society, its mores and its idiosyncrasies, her work depicts women's roles within the context of patriarchal society. When we compare the female characters of Southern writers with their counterparts in Northern fiction (just prior to, during, and after Ellen Glasgow's career), we see a striking difference arises in the number of categories. In Northern works, I can distinguish five (there may be more) distinct roles for women--the lady of good family, the Christian lady, the damsels in distress, the rebel, and the sensible woman; while in Southern writing, I see only two--the traditional lady and the strong woman. Granted, the category of the traditional lady has several subdivisions (invalids, flawed ladies, Southern belles, and Southern flappers), but without the standards or criteria of the traditional lady herself, the subcategories would not exist.

Southern and Northern women writers, both consciously and unconsciously, attempt to redefine in their own terms what it means to be female. Their fiction reflects women's need for "woman" to be defined not by men, but by women. But how can they speak out when the very act itself threatens to strip them of

their femininity? Anne Goodwyn Jones from Tomorrow Is Another Day notes that:

To have a voice is to have some control over one's environment. To have the vote, for example, is to have a voice in and therefore some power over the political world. But in another sense--a sense familiar to writers--to have a voice is to have a self. Learning to express the self in language is intimately related to learning to be. Thus voicelessness may imply selflessness both in the familiar and in the more sinister meaning. For southern women, particularly, the quality of voice reveals the condition of selfhood. (37)

As Jones suggests, issues of womanhood double as issues of selfhood; to name or define a thing is to have genuine power or control over it. Language is indeed a powerful tool, and this fact was an obvious one to anyone living in the ante-bellum South, where it was illegal to teach slaves to read or write.

To explore these issues of womanhood and selfhood, I want to examine the categories--two Southern and five Northern--and illustrate them within each region and then compare them between regions. This exploration should reveal the definitions of "woman" which writers brought to life in their female characters. As women writers create standards for femininity in their fiction and in their analysis of feminine behavior, they also begin to redefine womanhood and selfhood not only within literature but also within society.

Although the female characters found in Northern fiction seem to display greater variety, the Southern woman comes in only two categories: the lady and the strong woman. It is rare to find a depiction of the Southern lady that is neither sentimental nor mocking. From Virginia Pendleton to Rosa Coldfield, traditional Southern ladies are consistently disparaged by their authors. In Absalom, Absalom!, Mr. Compson tells Quentin that "years ago we in the South made our women into ladies. Then the War came and made the ladies into ghosts. So what else can we do, being gentlemen, but listen to them being ghosts?" (7). Through the defeat of the South and the destruction of its way of life, the pedestal on which the lady stood is crushed, and her very image evaporates into mist; men, however, can still be gentlemen. Although strong, ante-bellum ladies exist in women's fiction, they are eccentric, old, or too much of a lady to impose on anyone. In Delta Wedding, Eudora Welty's Fairchild women descend from a long line of strong women:

It was notoriously the women of the Fairchilds who since the Civil War, or--who knew?--since the Indian times, ran the household and had everything at their fingertips--not the men. The women it was who inherited the place--or their brother, guiltily, handed it over. (144-5)

However, Ellen Fairchild does not control her own sexuality. When she tells her two oldest daughters

about sex and reproduction, they become outraged with their father because Ellen is currently pregnant with a ninth child. Yet another Southern lady, Ellen Glasgow's Cora Archbald from The Sheltered Life is a no-nonsense woman who is both kind and practical. Yet she manages to raise a monster, her daughter Jenny Blair, and prevents her father-in-law from remarrying a middle-aged widow and finding some measure of happiness late in his life. The category of the Southern lady is an ambivalent one--too impractical to emulate and too limited to be fully human. On the one hand Southern women are taught to be ladies--there is no higher distinction--yet on the other hand, "ladies" do not exhibit the best feminine qualities. This becomes clearer when the category of the lady is examined more closely along with its sub-divisions.

Although most of Glasgow's "ladies" were born after the Civil War, they are shaped by its influence. From the diaries of actual Southern women to fictional characters, accounts are found of Southern ladies who lived through the hardships and terrors of war and were strong women. In fiction especially, these remnants of another era are respected for their endurance, fortitude, and dedication. However, like Grandmother Fincastle from Vein of Iron, they are not comfortable characters to live with. The celebrated Southern

beauties of Glasgow's novels are the belles of the 1880s and 1890s such as Eva Birdsong and Amanda Lightfoot and not the women of the war era. In terms of moral fiber or strength of character, the generations after the war cannot compete, however much they continue to embody the qualities of the Southern lady.

As a whole the category of the Southern lady is a mixed bag of good and bad which contains such traditional roles as wife, mother, and widow. There are dutiful wives such as Charlotte Fitzroy or Cordelia Honeywell, and loving mothers like Mrs. Pendleton and Mrs. Upchurch. However, Charlotte plays an insignificant role in In This Our Life, and Cordelia is dead before The Romantic Comedians ever begins. Mrs. Pendleton does love and care for her daughter Virginia; that is never in doubt. What is questioned is the appropriateness of the form that her love and care for her daughter take:

It seemed to her as wholesome to feed her daughter's growing fancy on an imaginary line of pious heroes, as it appeared to her moral to screen her from all suspicion of the existence of immorality. She did not honestly believe that any living man resembled the Heir of Redclyffe, any more than she believed that the path of self-sacrifice leads inevitably to happiness; but there was no doubt in her mind that she advanced the cause of righteousness when she taught these sanctified fallacies to Virginia. (40-1)

The tragedy of Virginia is that she does believe "that the path of self-sacrifice leads inevitably to happiness." When she has given everything and received almost nothing in return, Virginia still clings to the "sanctified fallacies" of her youth. She is not a younger or newer and improved copy of her mother. Indeed, Mrs. Pendleton knows things Virginia does not; she has learned, for all her rose-colored view of life, more than Virginia ever could. Instead of passing on this knowledge of life as it is, her daughter is sacrificed on the altar of matrimony and the pedestal of the lady. In addition, Mrs. Upchurch actively encourages her young, spoiled daughter Annabel to marry Judge Honeywell, a man three times her age. Mrs. Upchurch knows from the start that the marriage will not last, but does nothing to stop it from taking place; in fact, she actively encourages both Annabel and Judge Honeywell. Although Southern ladies love their children, they can become so involved with propriety or even social consequence that they somehow do more harm than good.

Besides wives and mothers, widows abound in Glasgow's fiction. Mrs. Carr, Gabriella's mother, is completely helpless after the death of her husband. Refusing to be responsible for herself, she relies on male relatives to face reality for her:

...for the first few years of her bereavement she had simply sat in her widow's weeds, with her rent paid by Cousin Jimmy Wren and her market bills settled monthly by Uncle Beverly Blair, and waited patiently for some man to come and support her. When no man came, and Uncle Beverly died of a stroke of apoplexy with his will unsigned, she had turned, with the wasted energy of the unfit and the incompetent, to solve the inexplicable problem of indigent ladyhood. (8-9)

Other widows like Mrs. Upchurch, Mrs. Archbald, or Mrs. Clay do not remarry, but instead choose to keep house for another family member. Only Gabriella ever remarries. These women have paid the price, become respectable, married women, and no longer need a husband. A brother or a father-in-law is much less demanding. While the Southern lady has a pure heart and acts from pure motives, the results of her advice, labor, or love are not equally pure and do not necessarily benefit those on whom they are bestowed.

Because Reynolds's categories are limited to the mid-1800s, his taxonomy does not incorporate women's fiction after the Civil War and through the turn of the century when changes in women's situations were occurring rapidly. Since his schema does not accommodate female characters in Southern fiction, there exists a need for a new taxonomy. In this Southern taxonomy, the first major category of Southern womanhood, the lady, entails several subcategories: (1)

invalids, (2) flawed ladies, (3) Southern belles, and (4) Southern flappers, the 1920's equivalent of the belle.

The first subcategory of the Southern lady is the invalid, and she possesses few if any positive qualities. Women like Gabriella's sister, Jane Gracey, and Lavinia Fitzroy Timberlake of In This Our Life use their physical weakness or chronic illness to demand attention and manipulate those around them. Etta Archbald, the only spinster, uses her weak constitution and delicate nerves to gain sympathy and attention from her family. Despite all the church work she has been doing lately, Etta learns that the rector intends to marry someone else. In an attempt to wring sympathy from her sister-in-law, Etta claims to have had a nightmare which has left her with an unidentified feeling of fear that comes from being unmarried; Etta exclaims hysterically that love is all she wants--"'It is the only thing in the world I want... I want love. I don't want any other interest. I want love'" (63-64). However, Mary Evelyn Fincastle suffers delicately as only a genuinely aristocratic lady can. Her family members cosset her because she makes no outright demands. Fragile and easily tired or overexcited, Mary Evelyn apologizes for being such a burden to those around her, eliciting reassurances that she is loved and

not a burden. Despite her beauty, lineage, and refined manners, Mary Evelyn does not model behavior which her daughter, Ada, wishes to emulate.

A second subcategory of the Southern lady is the flawed lady. Something that stems from their childhood or upbringing has gone awry with these women, causing them to cultivate an exaggerated and unhealthy feminine dependence on masculine admiration. Virginia Pendleton Treadwell is molded entirely by external forces such as her parents, her teachers, and her society. They all uphold a standard of behavior which no living woman could ever exemplify. Unfortunately for Virginia, she spends her whole life trying, yet through her devotion to her role, she loses the masculine admiration she was brought up to inspire. The Builders's Angelica (Anna Jeanette) Blackburn had a white nurse and not a black mammy as a child; this situation reflects how her upbringing was not the same as everyone else's. Somehow important knowledge about being a Southern lady was not imparted to Angelica because she has never learned to be gracious to others unless it benefits her directly. And while Angelica seeks approbation, she does not care if it comes from her husband--anyone, male or female, who will sympathize with her current circumstance, can meet her need for approval. Despite her angelic beauty, she is manipulative, self-centered, and deceitful. Jenny

Blair Archbald models herself after Eva Birdsong, refusing to take responsibility for her actions and seeking only to please herself. In love with Eva's husband, Jenny Blair reassures herself that "'when you can't help a thing [being in love], nobody can blame you'" (206). With Eva Birdsong as her model, Jenny Blair learns how to abdicate responsibility for herself and for her life. Eva, too, has sacrificed everything for love; she tells the young Jenny Blair "'when two people really love each other, they ought to be sufficient to themselves. Nothing else ought to come between them, nothing else ought to matter'" (55). What she has given up for love is a career in music, financial independence and possibly an opportunity for self-definition, to become a romantic figure. Married to a philanderer, Eva plays the tragic role of the beautiful, betrayed wife whose demands for perfection in love drive her husband to seek less complicated relationships. Her love keeps him unfaithful. Unfortunately, Jenny Blair believes Eva and not her mother who counters the belief that romantic love is everything to a woman with "'yes, I've had love, but it isn't everything'" (63). The wildly unbalanced view of love and the sexes to which Eva and Jenny Blair adhere creates the flaw in these women.

Southern belles such as Janet Rowen (Vein of Iron), Isabella Archbald (The Sheltered Life), and Dabney Fairchild (Delta Wedding) all grow up, but only Isabella becomes a Southern lady; the other two, along with Virginia's daughter Lucy, are examples of arrested feminine development. All of these belles are spoiled and petted by their families because of their beauty. They are headstrong, determined, and even careless of the conventions or propriety. Although they all eventually marry, only Isabella has children and a happy marriage. But she has made a misalliance according to her society's standards. During her engagement, Dabney determines that "you never had to grow up if you were spoiled enough" (185). So despite her marriage, Dabney will continue to be the pampered child she has always been. Virginia's oldest daughter Lucy is another Southern belle. She marries an older widower who already has children and a fortune. The reader gathers the impression that Lucy will be another pampered child-bride, especially one not expected to produce children. Only Janet Rowen acts the villainess, stealing Ada's lover and trapping him into marriage. Her marriage to Ralph McBride is unhappy and eventually leads to divorce. Even though they grow up and marry, Southern belles do not necessarily reach maturity.

A more modern branch of the Southern belle is the Southern flapper such as Stanley Timberlake (In This Our Life), Annabel Upchurch (The Romantic Comedians), and Minna Bergen (Vein of Iron). These modern girls share attributes with both the Southern belle of the last century and the daring flappers of other states, especially the North. It is this very combination that makes them unique; they have the power of a strong woman, but the destructive force of a flawed lady. Mrs. Upchurch notes some of the differences by comparing the behavior of what she considers to be flappers to that of her daughter: "...there was nothing of the flapper in Annabel. She did not drink or smoke; and she had never ...indulged in wild escapades" (136). F. Scott Fitzgerald also records the differences between Southern and Northern young women as the difference between belles and what he terms the "Popular Daughter" or the "P. D." In This Side of Paradise Fitzgerald writes, "The 'belle' was surrounded by a dozen men in the intermissions between dances. Try and find the P. D. between dances, just try to find her" (61). Yet in his short stories such as "The Ice Palace," "'The Sensible Thing,'" or "The Last of the Belles," the modern Southern flapper both attracts a devoted following of eligible suitors and yet still cannot be found between dances. The common thread with all the modern female

characters, especially in Glasgow's work, is their self-centered views and their physical beauty. While Stanley and Annabel both marry, all three young women (Stanley, Annabel, and Minna) fail to take marriage or its vows seriously. Annabel runs off with a young man closer to her age because she can no longer tolerate marriage to an old man. Both Stanley and Minna play fast and loose with another woman's husband; Stanley, like Janet Rowen, steals another woman's man, her sister's husband, and like a flawed lady, she destroys him. In addition to being a contributing factor in Peter's suicide, Stanley, driving wildly around town, hits a small girl crossing the street and kills her. She then blames the hired Negro who services her car. The selfishness of such characters makes it hard to sympathize with their respective situations. They are blind to the suffering of others; only their own pain or problems ever matter.

With the sub-divisions of invalids, flawed ladies, belles and flappers, the category of the Southern lady does not offer positive role models. What good might be attributed to them is effectively undone by their other actions. It is the second major category, the strong and/or sensible woman, which serves as a more positive model. The difficulty with this portrayal comes from the attempt to build characters who are strong, intelligent, sensible, and practical yet still feminine.

Combining these elements with traditional femininity is neither easy nor smooth and sometimes produces noticeable gaps. But these women are the heroines of Glasgow's novels.

When Glasgow portrays female characters that are strong and sensible, she chooses to use women who are independent. Therefore the strong and sensible woman occasionally needs a career. Gabriella Carr (Life and Gabriella) rises from hat decorator to proprietress of a dress shop; Caroline Meade (The Builders) is a children's nurse; and Dorinda Oakley (Barren Ground) begins as a shop-girl, becomes a doctor's receptionist, and finally carves out her niche as an independent and successful dairy farmer. Before her marriage, Gabriella, tired of indigent ladyhood, gets a job in a department store decorating hats. Later in life, after her husband leaves her for another woman, Gabriella gets a divorce and a job at Madam Dinard's again working with hats. Slowly, she makes herself indispensable and then takes over when Madam Dinard retires. She has spent most of her adult life being responsible for herself, her two children, and a seamstress cum nurse. She has worked, earned the money, paid the bills, and maintained her looks and consequently her femininity. That she remarries cannot undo or discredit all her past efforts. In fact, if she just became another dried-up matron worn

down by hard work, her triumph as a working woman would be transformed into defeat. Instead, Gabriella has a very physical and sexual reaction to Ben O'Hara, even though she is the mother of grown children. The second marriage is hasty, and the happy ending makes moot any speculation about more children for her in this union. Gabriella could be a woman of the 1980s or 1990s, combining a career with family and marriage. In addition, Caroline Meade has made a career for herself as a nurse specializing in work with sick children. She is dependable, competent, and dedicated to her career and her patients. Although she is impressionable, she slowly gathers the facts and learns to make her own decisions. The deceitful trickery of Angelica Blackburn may drive her from her current post, but it does not end her career. Even Dorinda, who originally planned to marry Jason Greylock and never work again, ends up in New York working for a doctor and studying agriculture. Eventually, she returns home, takes over the family farm, and turns it into a successful dairy. Dorinda's satisfaction comes from dealing in sound business practices, hard work, and even revenge against Jason. Dorinda is stripped of all feminine sensibilities, yet still marries. Though her marriage is in name only, as she does not allow her husband to sleep with her or control her dairy business, it provides Dorinda with an

heir. She has the benefits of marriage such as companionship and children, without being encumbered by a demanding husband or multiple pregnancies. Each of these women is the main character in her story. As the reader sees the world from their perspectives, another view of what it means to be feminine, independent, and successful emerges that is vastly different from the traditional views of patriarchal society.

However, being strong and/or sensible does not prevent a woman from marrying for love, as financial independence is only one kind of independence available to women. Ada Fincastle (Vein of Iron), Roy Timberlake (In This Our Life), and Sally Mickleborough (The Romance of a Plain Man) all marry. Their marriages are not necessarily good ones or not good all the time. Ada finally marries her lover after Janet Rowen sets him free, but he is not the man he once was. Ralph McBride, who once had dreams of studying law, ends up selling cars to support Janet instead. Since selling cars is all he knows, he continues rather than try to resurrect his dreams. Because Ralph's self-esteem is low, his marriage to Ada is rocky. He has been flirting with Minna Bergen next door, and the two of them are involved in a car wreck in which Minna gets a scar on her lip and Ralph is seriously injured. Through Ada's Trojan efforts, Ralph recovers and so does the marriage. Ben

Starr judges his career successful when he wins and marries Sally Mickleborough. He keeps her dependent on him and his money, treating her like a pampered pet or prized possession. For her part, Sally is not satisfied with this arrangement. She would prefer to have Ben as a husband and companion and not just a provider. In the end, Ben, given the choice between being the president of the railroad or Sally's husband, passes up his career opportunity to care for his wife whose health has failed, yet whose strength of character has finally brought him to his senses--the strong woman is not necessarily physically strong. The same goes for Roy Timberlake, married to Peter Kingsmill. When her husband and younger sister, Stanley, run off together, Roy decides she can live without the emotional fuss and nonsense people make about love and passion. Although her attempts at stoicism border at times on the pathetic, her efforts to rely solely on herself are unique. She has a career and her own self, and if this is not enough, she is willing merely to endure. She has grit if nothing else. Although strength for these women may or may not refer to their physical abilities, it is always manifest in strength of character.

Another version of the sensible woman, Capitola Black, the mad-cap heroine of Southworth's The Hidden Hand, is never taught how to be a strong or sensible

woman. Fortunately, she is both by nature. "Sensible" fits Cap as a better label than "rebel" as she repeatedly demonstrates a practicality that few men can match. She is certainly much too sensible to be dictated to by illogical, irascible men and their laws. She is strong enough to defy them when necessary, and her disobedience somehow appears more logical than her obedience ever could. Capitola may defy masculine dictates, but she does not indulge in reckless rebellion. Instead, she masters herself, her environment, and consequently those in her sphere. In rescuing Traverse Rocke's love, Clara Day, from her uncle, Capitola shows she is self-possessed and quick-witted. Through intrigue, disguise, wit, and intelligence, Cap saves Clara, unmasks the villain, and sets in motion events which lead to the release of her mother. She never lashes out in reaction to events, and when her daring-do gets her into trouble, her streetwise experience and self-control give her an edge over her opponents. Although Capitola does not have financial independence, she possesses the strength of mind and purpose to act independently of male authority.

A more modern example than Cap of the strong or sensible woman can be found in Katherine Anne Porter's *Miranda* from Pale Horse, Pale Rider. Miranda not only has independence through a career in journalism, but has

also cultivated a stoicism that is more successful than Roy Timberlake's attitude. Adam Barclay asks her, "'Weren't you ever--happy?'" referring to her ever having been in love, and Miranda replies, "'I don't know.... I just lived and never thought about it. I remember things I liked, though, and things I hoped for'" (237-8). Without apology or self-pity, Miranda describes her childhood in the same breath as her love-life. For throughout her childhood, she has sought a way to remember the past and thereby find her place in her family, as independent women are not without family ties or social responsibilities.

Even though many strong female characters are not perfect, they more closely resemble actual human women than the Southern lady. Sally may lose her health, Dorinda her compassion, Caroline her job, or Roy her husband, but they are still successful. They have the ability to make plans and achieve goals. If they are the victims of others, then they refuse to remain defeated. These women attempt to redefine femininity to include success (usually financial success), a career, strength of mind and/or will if not always a physical strength, and self-determination.

In contrast to the Southern Lady, the Northern categories--(1) the lady of good family, (2) the Christian lady, (3) the damsel in distress, (4) the

rebel, and (5) the sensible woman--all share the traits of the Victorian lady, whether British or American. It is taken for granted that such a personage is virtuous (chaste before marriage and faithful afterwards), kind, gentle, compassionate, considerate of others, gracious--indeed, all the female characters have at least traces of these elements in their make-up. The contrast between the Victorian Northern lady and the Southern lady is that self-control may or may not be a factor in the depiction of a Southern lady, but is necessary for the Northern lady. Patriarchal attitudes toward women are reflected in the Victorian lady who suffers in silence, puts others first, even denies self, and never loses her temper. Self-control and self-effacement are her watch words, even to her own detriment. Nathaniel Hawthorne, in short stories such as "The Birthmark" and "Rappaccini's Daughter," explores either intentionally or inadvertently the destruction of women by husbands and fathers in search of perfection. In "The Birthmark," the husband seeks to remove the one and only flaw from his wife, a red birthmark on her cheek. She, of course, never complains or questions the wisdom of his wishes, but submits to his designs, wanting only to please him and be worthy of his love. In the end, the husband-as-physician succeeds in removing the mark, but kills his wife. She is now perfect but dead.

"Rappaccini's Daughter" tells the story of a father, another doctor, in search of power; he intends to breed a superior race. Between the efforts of her father and her lover, Beatrice, too, dies in an attempt to please others. In writing stories about men who seek to create or redefine femininity in ways pleasing to men or advantageous to them, Hawthorne reveals the destructiveness of criteria established for women by patriarchal society.

Other male writers have also reacted to this patriarchal standard of feminine behavior. Herman Melville, in "The Paradise of Bachelors and the Tartarus of Maids," depicts the economic hazards of being female; this work comes closer to Reynolds's "reform literature" than does anything written by Glasgow, or Wharton; of course, Melville writes in the 1850s and Glasgow and Wharton write mostly after 1900. Like Melville, Wharton creates a character who must function as a working-girl under less than desirable conditions; but whereas Melville's short story critiques business/industry and society, Wharton's novel critiques only society. Writers such as Henry James (Daisy Miller), Stephen Crane (Maggie, A Girl of the Streets), and Hawthorne (The Scarlet Letter) all explore questions of feminine virtue or chastity in women, and in doing so portray female characters at odds with patriarchal society and

the traditional mores regarding proper, feminine behavior. Thus, although the female character types cited by Reynolds are not limited to women writers, they are limited to the 1800s.

Whether they write before or after 1900, women writers strive to redefine issues of womanhood, to define femininity, set its standards, and even judge it. In "A New England Nun," Mary Wilkins Freeman creates a character who is happy in the feminine environment she has made for herself, an environment in which her long-lost lover, Joe Dagget, is now out of place, even unwelcome. At first Louisa Ellis's betrothal to Dagget serves as a shield protecting her from other proposals of marriage. Her devotion to her promise is lauded and over the years has formed a safe haven for her feminine independence. Yet Louisa's feminine existence is threatened by Dagget's return. He is big and clumsy in her house, rearranging items at will, disturbing her order, and disregarding her preferences. Her survival derives from this totally feminine environment, which drives him out. When he finds a younger woman, Lily Dyer, who will adapt her femininity to his needs, requirements, and desires, Louisa is released from her promise to wed and allowed to retain her independence. In Susan Glaspell's "A Jury of Her Peers," two women, Mrs. Hale and Mrs. Peters, unravel a mystery which the

male characters in the story cannot. It is not that the men--the sheriff, the county attorney, and the doctor--do not arrive at a solution; they do, but the narrator makes it clear that their masculine thinking prevents them from finding Minnie Wright's motive for killing her husband. Piecing together facts like squares for a quilt, the two women solve the murder, judge the murdereress, and pass sentence, all unknown to the men in the story. Mrs. Hale and Mrs. Peters keep silent because in their eyes justice has been served. Any masculine pontificating at this point is irrelevant and superfluous.

Although all five of my categories for Northern female characters come from women writers such as Edith Wharton, Maria Susanna Cummins, Louisa May Alcott, and Charlotte Perkins Gilman, I have tested my schema against other authors' depictions of female characters and have found that regardless of the author's sex, most female characters fit my patterns. Looking at canonical writers one can find, for example, that Hawthorne's Hepzibah Pynchon is a lady of good family, while Phoebe Pynchon, along with James Fenimore Cooper's Alice Munro, is a damsel in distress. Henry James's Daisy Miller and Hawthorne's Hester Prynne are rebels, while Henry Adams in Democracy portrays an intelligent woman in Madeline Lightfoot Lee. These similarities in the writers'

depictions of female characters, regardless of the author's gender, require a classification system that can be applied to a wide range of female characters and not those limited to the mid-1800s. Reynolds's schema remains static, because it is geared only to the middle of the nineteenth century. As Elizabeth Ammons notes in her preface to Conflicting Stories: American Women Writers at the Turn into the Twentieth Century, that as the women's movement flourished so too did women's careers, especially in professional writing:

It is no accident...that the second great wave of the women's movement in the United States and the second great burgeoning of women writers as a group occurred at the same time. Just as the large group of very popular women writers that prospered during the mid nineteenth century were energized, whether they knew it or not, by the first widespread popular growth in the women's movement in America,...so women writers at the beginning of the twentieth century flourished in large part...because of an intensified and pervasive feminist political climate. Whether consciously acknowledged or not, this political climate has the effect of empowering women, including writers, and of transforming cultural expectations about how many women could be publishing writers, how many of them could be "great," and what they could write about. (vii)

Since Reynolds's classification of fictional females is confined to the mid-1800s, his taxonomy does not parallel the women's movement at a time that changes were occurring. However, these changes, which become more obvious in the 1900s, have their roots in the previous century. For example, in Reynolds's taxonomy

Kate Chopin's Edna Pontellier could be classified as either a fallen woman or a sensual woman, but such a classification would not do justice to either Chopin's novel or the issues of selfhood and femininity that Chopin deals with in The Awakening. Therefore, a scheme which can bridge the two centuries would be of use.

Beginning with the first category, the lady of good family, I find that Edith Wharton's works supply the best examples. Women like May Welland grow up in society, learn all its rules and forms, and can make the system work for them. Some are arbiters of tradition like old Mrs. Mingott or Mrs. Peniston, while others are the epitome of elegance of manner and social distinction like Clare Van Degen. What separates these women from others is their air of breeding. A privileged background, though not necessarily a wealthy one, promotes class standards and continues traditions, mores, and social customs that separate a woman of the upper class from those not of her class or not of her gender. Just as Lawrence Selden from The House of Mirth cannot imagine Lily Bart living as his cousin Gertrude Farrish does, neither can she skirt her class's dictates about fashion as he does. Lily explains to Selden how it is for women of her class:

Your coat's a little shabby--but who cares?
It doesn't keep people from asking you to dine.
If I were shabby, no one would have me: a woman

is asked out as much for her clothes as for herself. The clothes are the background, the frame, if you like: they don't make success, but they are a part of it. (12)

This class grooms a lady of good family for her place in society from the cradle, and marriage is the indication that she has been successful in living up to her society's expectations. Although Lily may crave an independence such as Gertrude's, she cannot have it and maintain her place in society.

Like the lady of good family, the Christian lady may or not be wealthy. Religious mores, traditions, and values serve as markers to evaluate her femininity. Christianity is what makes a lady of her. Maria Susanna Cummins delineates the superiority of poverty combined with virtue when the narrator from The Lamplighter makes this statement:

And so it is, that those born in honor, wealth and luxury, seldom achieve greatness. They were not born for labor; and, without labor, nothing that is worth having can be won. (39)

To illustrate the power of this combination, Marmee March, the mother of the March girls in Little Women, has married beneath herself socially; her husband is a poor minister. Such an alliance means that the March family lives in genteel poverty, providing Mrs. March with the opportunity to teach her daughters thrifty house-keeping and Christian charity. While Mrs. March's youngest daughter, Amy, eventually marries money, she

does so for love. Emily Graham, the blind and patient mentor for Gerty Flint in The Lamplighter, comes from a well-to-do family and has all the advantages of money. Yet Cummins makes it clear that Christian virtues and not her privileged background are what makes Emily so admirable. Of course, her infirmity is debilitating in terms of physical well-being but not in terms of moral rectitude. Emily's physical poverty or blindness when combined with her Christian virtue gives her insight into the human heart; it is not money alone that makes her rich, but her patience, gentleness, and understanding--virtues which Emily has developed because of her blindness and which help her "to see." Whatever their circumstance or birth, such women embody Christian values. They are patient and long-suffering, but not as mere feminine forms. Their role model is Jesus Christ, and their teachings of humility, forbearance, forgiveness, and charity are applied to the youths both of both sexes in their charge. The Christian lady counsels and even rebukes men as Emily counsels her step-brother and lover, and Marmee rebukes the schoolmaster who physically chastises Amy. In turn, Amy grows up to value goodness, industry, and honesty, which motivates Laurie to reform himself and win her hand. Northern sons such as Willie Sullivan prosper under the care of their Christian mothers, and in Little Men

Alcott makes it clear that Christian values need to be taught to boys as well as to girls.

Another category, the damsel in distress, is in many ways more of a plot device than an actual depiction of female behavior, although she can be a lady of good family and/or a Christian lady too. However, the latter two designations do not explain her role or function in the novel. In addition the damsel may be as helpless as Alice Munro or as capable as Phoebe Pynchon, but both need rescuing--Alice from Indians and Phoebe from a curse. Other women like Lucy Grey, Gerty Flint's mother, die in poverty and despair. Such a death obscures the heroine's legitimacy and family line, moves the plot forward, creates a mystery to be solved, which when resolved, contributes to the happy ending. The purpose of a damsel in distress is to provide an opportunity for the hero to reveal his manly appeal in strength, wit, or superior intelligence. Alice is the perfect foil for Major Heyward just as Phoebe's sunshine lightens Holgrave's gloom.

The fourth category, rebels, reveals an ambivalence on the part of the character and even the author. Women like Madam Olenska or Hester Prynne manage to show their full strength of character by the end of the novel. Others like Lily Bart strive against society and its dictates to their own destruction. Also, while Undine

Spragg never understands the society against which she rebels, she still fights to have her own way. The ambivalence comes from the uncertainty of whether or not to applaud the heroine. Undine Spragg is remarkable for achieving her ends, but her selfishness and self-centered attitude alienate her from the sympathy of the other characters in the novel and eventually from the reader's sympathy too. Neither men nor women writers sanction reckless behavior in their characters--from Lily Bart to Daisy Miller they die tragically of an accidental overdose or an illness. Even though Daisy Miller is exonerated of any impropriety for repeatedly placing herself in compromising situations, the author resolves feminine recklessness by having the rebellious, female character die. At best disobedience is punished with an incurable fever. Although a rebel like Daisy Miller may find her reputation in tatters, her death becomes a tragedy when others learn that she is still unsullied. Miss Lily Bart, who is as familiar with the ways of society as May Welland, sabotages her own chances to make the spectacular society marriage which she claims she wants. After engaging the attentions of the wealthy Percy Gryce, her thoughts make it hard to believe she actually wants to marry:

--but she could not ignore him on the morrow,
she must follow up her success, must submit to
more boredom, must be ready with fresh com-

pliances and adaptabilities, and all on the bare chance that he might ultimately decide to do the honour of boring her for life. (The House of Mirth, 25)

Again ambivalent reactions surface because it is difficult to determine if Lily does not know her own mind, is fighting the dictates of patriarchal society, or is destroying herself. It becomes impossible for the characters in the novel to advise or encourage Lily, and the reader can only watch as everything unravels around her. While a character like Madam Olenska grows in determination, fortitude, and conviction, Lily Bart wanes to such an extent that the reader has to question if she ever had such qualities to begin with.

Finally, the fifth category, the sensible woman, depicts some of the best of feminine behavior, at least in the eyes of the women authors who write such works. For example, The Lamplighter's heroine Gerty Flint is very carefully molded for the reader. Emily Graham gains custody of the wild, willful child, and turns her into an independent woman of gracious character. The Victorian attitude of self-control strongly influences the character's development, but this is only to her advantage. Once mature, Gertrude Flint is a woman who controls her emotions. She is not the typical female giving way to emotion by weeping at every difficulty or becoming paralyzed with fear. Instead, she is able to

keep her head and even save others when a fire erupts on board ship. Feminine stereotypes such as being illogical, overemotional, or weak are given short shrift. Other women who have not been reared like Gerty may act so, but not she.

Little Women continues this theme. It is interesting that the title is not "Little Ladies" or "Young Girls." Although the girls are brought up with Christian values and taught charity, patience, gentleness, kindness, etc., they are also taught to develop their characters and talents. Meg grows up to be the perfect wife and mother, choosing a man of moral integrity rather than using her beauty to make a wealthy match and provide money for her family. Jo develops as an author and learns the excitement of earning money for writing popular stories and then experiences the satisfaction of writing more meaningful material. Amy studies art abroad. And even Beth has great musical ability. Despite their femininity, as women they exhibit individual personalities, and Alcott does not try to force all of her characters into the same mold.

Throughout the different types of women, there runs a thread of the Victorian lady who is gracious, controlled, and pure. Jo and Amy March are taught to control their anger just like Gerty Flint. Once these

women learn to master their emotions, they learn to handle others as well. This Victorian lady is more than the "angel in the house." She has the Victorian attributes of self-control, self-reliance, and reason or logic, which were usually denied to women because femininity is traditionally perceived as somehow inexplicable, illogical, and unstable. Women writers portray female characters who do control themselves or who at least can learn to do so. That Lily Bart and Undine Spragg fail in this respect only serves to highlight their need for such control and self-discipline.

Although there are ways that North and South are similar in their depictions of types of women characters, they are more different than alike. Both North and South have a category for sensible women who are independent-minded. However, the North's version of the sensible woman is more conventionally feminine, and the South's more radical. Even Southworth's Capitola beats the March girls hands-down for spunk and daring. While rebels do more as characters to highlight the unjust expectations for women in patriarchal society, and damsels in distress function as plot devices, most Northern categories are positive models, especially the Christian lady and the sensible woman. But even the lady of good family or the rebel can become a positive

force in a given novel. In the South, most female characters cannot serve as a positive role model. The Southern lady offers a mixed-bag of attributes: the invalid has few admirable qualities, the flawed lady is self-absorbed and destructive, the belle rarely attains maturity, and the Southern flapper can be as destructive as a flawed lady and as immature as a belle. Even the strong and sensible woman is not always an appropriate model for feminine behavior. Dorinda has ruthlessly stripped herself of any compassion, Sally has lost her health, and Capitola could never be replicated.

While women were writing about women and for women, women's issues, their needs, abilities, and attitudes were slowly evolving before the public eye. Whether they sought such change consciously or not, women's writing affected society and its views about women. There were many ways in which the attitudes concerning proper, feminine behavior were noted in the best-selling novels and fiction of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Some writers analyzed society and traditional femininity, and by using a negative hermeneutic, a reader can expose the patriarchal gender ideology which shapes women and possibly even warps them, making them dangerously unfit for life. Others attempted to create a positive model of femininity, and by using a positive hermeneutic, a reader can examine

alternative standards by which he/she can study feminine behavior. And between these two poles a third approach established a feminist pedagogy to teach others how to rear a generation of girls to be strong women and not fragile ladies.

CHAPTER III
THE NEGATIVE HERMENEUTIC AND TRADITIONAL
FEMININITY: NORTHERN AND SOUTHERN EXAMPLES

The three trends from women's writing (the negative hermeneutic, the positive hermeneutic, and feminist pedagogy) are not chronological trends. Evidence of all three can be found in work written around the same time, and each trend informs and is informed by the other two. When women began to write for public audiences, they slowly added dimensions, facets, and new possibilities to women's roles as noted earlier by Nina Baym. So the fact that women have been left out of literary history may have more to do with the fact that women wrote for contemporary audiences made up of women and youths than with any deliberate and overt attempt to bar them from the hallowed ground of "literature." Obviously some women, such as Emily Dickinson or Emily Bronte, did participate in this arena. In the article entitled "Feminist Criticism in the Wilderness" (from Contemporary Literary Criticism: Literary and Cultural Studies), Elaine Showalter quotes Gerda Lerner saying:

"Women have been left out of history not because of evil conspiracies of men in general or male historians in particular, but because we have considered history only in male-centered

terms. We have missed women and their activities, because we have asked questions of history which are inappropriate to women." (64)

To counter the effect of asking questions inappropriate to women's literary endeavors, women authors deserve critics who will consider perspectives more in line with feminine and feminist standards, concerns, and interests. Showalter explicates two possible ways to examine literature and even culture. She calls the first approach "feminist reading" or "feminist critique" and defines this as an

...invigorating encounter with literature [which]...is concerned with the feminist as reader, and...offers feminist readings of texts which consider the images and stereotypes of women in literature, the omissions and misconceptions about women in criticism, and woman-as-sign in semiotic systems. (53)

Such a reading or critique occurs when women analyze literary works about women in terms of patriarchal stereotypes and/or criteria. However, this method of analysis is less than precise, as Showalter claims, and she offers a second way to approach literary criticism in a method she terms "gynocritics":

The second mode of feminist criticism engendered by this process [of defining the feminine] is the study of woman as writer, and its subjects are the history, styles, themes, genres, and structures of writing by women; the psychodynamics of female creativity; the trajectory of the individual or collective female career; and the evolution and laws of a female literary tradition. (55)

While the first mode lacks theoretical precision and uniformity due to its "eclectic and wide-ranging" nature, gynocritics allows the critic to redefine the perspective from which the critique takes place, perspectives that allow us to ask questions of literature and culture that are appropriate to women. Showalter claims that the advantages of gynocritics far outweigh those of feminist critique because it shifts the focus of literary analysis. She writes:

Unlike the feminist critique, gynocritics offers many theoretical opportunities. To see women's writing as our primary subject forces us to make the leap to a new conceptual vantage point and to redefine the nature of the theoretical problem before us. It is no longer the ideological dilemma of reconciling revisionary pluralisms but the essential question of difference. How can we constitute women as a distinct literary group? What is *the difference* of women's writing. (55)

To depart somewhat from Showalter's guidance, I would argue that the difference in women's writing is their own "conceptual vantage point" of themselves, other women, and the society that shapes them. These perspectives are recorded in the fiction, poetry, stories, and novels written by women, and an analysis of women's writings reveals how women view the feminine and the cultural forces that set the standards for the feminine ideal. Women writers depict female characters in different ways. Some create female characters who fit traditional roles, yet the character's attempt to fit the

mold reveals more about what is wrong with society than what is wrong with that fictional character in particular or with women in general. Their critique of a fictional character generates a negative femininity, which when read through a negative hermeneutic promotes an evaluation of society and not of feminine behavior. Others strive to depict female characters who have somehow escaped being indoctrinated by traditional strictures governing proper feminine behavior. Their characters represent an ideal, what women might be like if society were different. Such characters, when analyzed by a positive hermeneutic, provide examples of positive, rational, and exemplary behavior not as right or wrong, and not as male or female, but as human--a category that integrates the best of both genders to achieve an admirable human race. In examining what is good and bad about being feminine, still others seek to uncover methods to promote the former and discourage the latter by establishing a pedagogy by which girls are brought up to be women. These three trends explain what is different about women's writing. Women writers' perspectives about being women and their evaluation and critique of the cultural forces society uses to define and limit women reveal what is unique and different about women's writing.

To begin an exploration of what women writers have to say about the conditions and situations of being female, I begin with the negative and destructive aspects of traditional femininity. Both Northern and Southern women depict a traditional femininity, so to compare regional differences and similarities, this chapter focuses on Edith Wharton and Ellen Glasgow as representatives of their social, cultural, and geographical milieus.

The Negative Hermeneutic and the Northern Perspective of Edith Wharton

In her novels, Edith Wharton repeatedly creates female characters expressly made to be measured against society's standards for proper feminine behavior. These standards are set and promoted by a society that seeks to foster, support, and shape the traditional or "womanly" woman. And the comparison of the female characters who live as traditional women to the cultural criteria that define them may be read through a negative hermeneutic that forces the often submerged gender ideology of their society to the surface. Specifically, to explore the Northern hermeneutic, I focus on Lily Bart from The House of Mirth and Undine Spragg from The Custom of the County as examples of this negative femininity--female

characters shaped by social forces who fail as models of traditional or proper feminine behavior or who self-destruct. Lily and Undine offer such striking examples precisely because they are perceived as rebels by the social class to which they strive to belong. As rebels Lily and Undine take opposite courses of action and in doing so make a striking contrast. Lily rebels because she cannot bring herself to marry. It is not that she cannot bring the prospective suitor to "the sticking point" and actually get him to propose, but that she herself repeatedly allows the opportunity to snare a husband to slip through her fingers. Undine is a rebel because she takes society literally; she marries and remarries until she gets it right. Paradoxically, she flies in the face of social convention in order to do exactly what society requires of a woman who desires to have social prominence or influence. Their rebellion makes Lily and Undine unique and different. Thus, their behavior focuses attention not so much on the women themselves but on the limiting social norms that have made these characters "flawed" and "defective" women.

In her book Edith Wharton's Argument with America (see specifically the chapter "The New Woman"), Elizabeth Ammons claims that despite Lily's outward and seeming compliance to society's dictates governing proper feminine behavior, she willfully and knowingly defies

society. For example, Lily knows that she should not visit Lawrence Selden's apartments unchaperoned. Yet when she is caught in this social faux pas by Rosedale, Lily lies about it. In the hansom cab on the way to the station, Lily berates herself not for behaving with any impropriety but for not handling Rosedale adroitly.

In the hansom she leaned back with a sigh.... She had yielded to a passing impulse in going to Lawrence Selden's rooms.... She was vexed to see that, in spite of so many years of vigilance, she had blundered twice within five minutes. That stupid story about her dress-maker was bad enough--it would have been so simple to tell Rosedale that she had been taking tea with Selden! The mere statement of the fact would have rendered it innocuous. But, after having let herself be surprised in a falsehood, it was doubly stupid to snub the witness of her discomfiture. If she had had the presence of mind to let Rosedale drive her to the station, the concession might have purchased his silence. (The House of Mirth 15)

Not only does Lily subvert propriety, but she also subverts her ability to recover from social disaster. Although this episode does little harm to Lily's reputation, later in the novel the reader becomes aware of Lily's continual mismanagement of the proprieties. In a conversation with Selden, Lily remarks, "'the truth about any girl is that once she's been talked about she's done for; and the more she explains her case the worse it looks'" (226). Ammons argues that the reason Lily repeatedly makes such blunders is that she does not

actually wish to marry, but instead would prefer to be in charge of her own life:

On the surface she [Lily] perfectly embodies society's ideal of the female as decorative, subservient, dependent, and submissive; the upper-class norm of the lady as a nonassertive, docile member of society. But only on the surface. In fact Lily has merely learned to suppress and camouflage her own impulses and ambitions. . . . The seal on her stationary, with its flying ship and the motto "*Beyond!*," images her true aspiration: she wants to escape--she wants to govern her own course in life. (32)

Society, however, has no intention of allowing a female member to take such a maverick approach when she ought to be fulfilling her prescribed role. By demanding that Lily conform to society's role for women as wives, Wharton shows not only the limitations of such roles, but also the oppressive nature of Lily's social class. Although Ammons says that Lily "has utility only so long as she remains in good standing with the class that produced her" (33), I would go even farther and state that she only has value so long as she maintains that "good standing" by performing the role assigned to her by society. Lily may want to set her own course or be her own woman, but that is not permitted her. When she gives up the fight and is willing to marry, even marry Rosedale, it is too late. She has lost her value as a desirable mate and society wife.

The impetus for marriage at all is economic. Lily is an expensive creature, as evening gowns and stakes for

bridge hands do not come cheaply. In the opening pages of the novel, this image of Lily as expensive is reinforced when Selden compares her to the "sallow-faced girls" and "flat-chested women" milling about in Grand Central Station. Lily leaves him with a different perspective altogether. "He had the confused sense that she must have cost a great deal to make, that a great many dull and ugly people must, in some mysterious way, have been sacrificed to produce her" (7). Later in his rooms over tea, Lily tells Selden that society expects more from women than men. It is the women who must be attractive and well-groomed. She says, "'We are expected to be pretty and well-dressed till we drop--and if we can't keep it up alone, we have to go into partnership'" (12). Lily's economic troubles stem from the fact that she "can't keep it up alone." Despite making herself available to her hostesses by acting as an unpaid secretary and being an exemplary house-guest who helps entertain and amuse fellow guests, even distract the hostess's husband from his wife's flirting, Lily is unable to keep her place in society. Also, Lily is not an heiress and therefore lacks the financial means to survive independently. So one social disaster after another combined with Lily's dwindling desire to perform her social role and her consequent inability to maintain her "good standing" destroy her social clout and her

social acceptability as a niece, as a welcome house-guest and acquaintance, as a social secretary, and finally as a wife. Lily has been trained to make a place for herself in society, but "her skills," as Ammons calls them, "are not transferable ... if she does not choose to use them as some rich man's wife" (32), so Lily must conform and marry or find herself slowly losing value as a member of her class.

It is her value as a mate and a member of this class that keeps Lily afloat for over eleven years. At twenty-nine, time is beginning to take a toll on her beauty, desirability, and worth. Emily Putnam in The Lady: Studies of Certain Significant Phases of Her History would concur with Ammons about Lily's "skills" when she says that

apart from the crude economic question, the things that most women mean when they speak of "happiness," that is, love and children and the little republic of the home, depend upon the favour of men, and the qualities that win this favour are not in general those that are most useful for other purposes. (70)

Lily does, of course, try to use her skills to obtain marriage. She knows and understands the economic realities of life in her society when she plans to entice Percy Gryce into marriage:

Her vulgar cares were at an end...she determined to be to him...the one possession in which he took sufficient pride to spend money on it. She knew that this generosity to self is one of the forms of meanness, and she

resolved so to identify herself with her husband's vanity that to gratify her wishes would be to him the most exquisite form of self-indulgence. (49)

But this resolution is exactly what Lily fears most: becoming lost within her husband's identity, needs, and desires and having no control over herself. Naturally, she cannot follow through and sabotages her own efforts to marry Gryce. Rosedale, too, has learned enough about money and the upper class to put his proposal succinctly though crudely to Lily: "'I know there's one thing vulgar about money, and that's the thinking about it; and my wife would never have to demean herself in that way'" (176). From his position as an outsider, Rosedale has been observant enough to make the critical connection between class/status and the economics of a society marriage.

In The Theory of the Leisure Class, Thorstein Veblen notes that women with impeccable antecedents (by which he means direct association with "accumulated wealth or unbroken prerogative") are preferred in marriage. It is this association with wealth and prerogative that give her value as a mate. But despite this association with material goods and social/political power, "she will still be her husband's chattel, as she was her father's chattel before her purchase" (55). He continues with the observation that "...there is a moral incongruity in her

occupying herself with the debasing employments of her fellow-servants" (55) precisely because she has been the expensive and valuable chattel of her previous owner, her father. While this explains the psychology of indigent ladyhood and the refusal to work in order to preserve one's superior value, it is not an option available to Lily when she is totally cut off from family and friends. So Lily tries to work first as a private secretary to Mrs. Hatch and even as a milliner's model. Putnam offers an explanation about the lady's difficulty in providing for herself financially:

The economic paradox that confronts women in general is especially uncompromising for the lady. In defiance of the axiom that he who works, eats, the lady who works has less to eat than the lady who does not. There is no profession open to her that is nearly as lucrative as marriage, and the more lucrative the marriage the less work it involves. (69)

Putnam neatly sums up Lily's dilemma. As long as she keeps her place in society, she does not work in the sense of manual or sweated labor and has enough to supply her physical needs. When she must work either as a model displaying hats or as a milliner making hats, Lily's ability to meet even her most basic needs rapidly diminishes.

Nowhere is Lily's depreciation in value as a member of her class more prominent than in her interview with Rosedale, when she confesses that she is now willing to

marry him. Contrasted with Rosedale's blunt commercialism--he has sought a society wife from the beginning--Lily's dignity and graciousness appear more intense and highlight the manners, abilities, and social graces that she has developed. The narrator of this passage notes that "she spoke with the noble directness which she could command on such occasions..." (198), and when rebuffed by Rosedale, she controls her anger and again speaks "in a tone of gentle dignity" (198). In her parting speech, which she delivers "with the faintest inflection of sadness" (199), Lily says, "'Before we bid each other goodbye, I want at least to thank you for having once thought of me as you did'" (199). The power of Lily's social training again impresses not only the reader, but also Rosedale:

The touch of her hand, the moving softness of her look, thrilled a vulnerable fibre in Rosedale. It was her exquisite inaccessibility, the sense of distance she could convey without a hint of disdain, that made it most difficult for him to give her up. (199)

But give her up he must because Lily refuses his offer for something less than marriage, and he cannot afford to "queer himself with the right people" now that Lily is disgraced. Rosedale does not hide the fact that he wants acceptance in the highest social circles. Despite the fact that he is in love with her, Lily's expulsion from those circles precludes her from being the wife Rosedale

seeks. Lily quickly grasps Rosedale's requirements in a wife and her failure to meet them when she confronts him with "'you mean to say that I'm not as desirable a match as you thought me?'" (199) and later comments, "'I understand you. A year ago I should have been of use to you, and now I should be an encumbrance'" (200).

Strangely enough Rosedale's directness and inability to dissemble appeal to Lily when he explains his reasons for not marrying her now that her social circumstances are greatly reduced: "She received this with a look from which all tinge of resentment had faded. After the tissue of social falsehoods in which she had so long moved it was refreshing to step into the open daylight of an avowed expediency" (200). Rosedale is doing what every other man of her social class does when he seeks a wife; only Rosedale is up front about the economic nature of marriage and what he expects from the wife he would purchase.

A second element of Lily's social and economic dilemma arises from her single state. Obviously, her lack of marriage marks her as either a rebel or a misfit; she has either refused too many suitors or has never attracted even one. Of course, with her beauty and personal charm no one actually believes that Lily is without suitable offers; therefore, she must be a rebel. But Lily's single state also stems from her lack of

family. As Veblen noted, women are exchanged between men, between fathers and husbands. Lily, living with her aunt Mrs. Peniston, has no father or mother to take an interest in her affairs or see to it that she takes her place in society as the wife of a rich man. Lily allows herself a moment of self-pity when she hears that Percy Gryce, whom earlier she had sought as a husband, is now engaged to another young woman:

Ah, lucky girls who grow up in the shelter of a mother's love--a mother who knows how to contrive opportunities without conceding favours, how to take advantage of propinquity without allowing appetite to be dulled by habit! The cleverest girl may miscalculate where her own interests are concerned, may yield too much at one moment and withdraw too far at the next: it takes a mother's unerring vigilance and foresight to land her daughter safely in the arms of wealth and suitability. (91)

Clearly, Lily is one of these clever girls who "miscalculate." And while Lily's fond remembrance of a mother's love clashes with other memories that the reader is shown of Lily's past and her mother's selfishness, her need for a social guide is undeniable. Mothers usually serve in this capacity and represent the daughter's connection to "accumulated wealth and unbroken prerogative." Granted, Lily is not totally alone; she has her aunt, Mrs. Peniston, but Lily obviously has not benefited from her aunt's influence or social guidance: Sometimes she thought it [the lack of success in marrying] was because Mrs. Peniston had

been too passive, and again she feared it was because she herself had not been passive enough. Had she shown an undue eagerness for victory? Had she lacked patience, pliancy and dissimulation? Whether she charged herself with these faults or absolved herself from them, made no difference in the sum-total of her failure. Younger and plainer girls had been married off by dozens, and she was nine-and-twenty, and still Miss Bart. (38)

However, on closer inspection the reader realizes that Lily has not married because Lily has not followed through. She can and does play the game correctly up to a point; then she stops. Lily does not want success. At least, she does not want the "success" available to her within the parameters set by society. Rather than making a successful, society marriage, Lily wants something different. Looking back specifically to her first attempt with Percy Gryce, the reader can analyze where and how Lily fails. She does not follow through, allows herself to be distracted, and makes enemies who destroy what progress she has made with Gryce. Instead of going to church as she had originally planned--"she had an idea that the sight of her in a grey gown of devotional cut, with her famous lashes drooped above a prayer-book, would put the finishing touch to Mr. Gryce's subjugation..." (43-4)--she goes off for the morning with Selden, who arrived unexpectedly the evening before. Her time and attention to Selden provokes Bertha Dorset, who designs on having an affair with him. She in turn tells the

straight-laced Gryce that Lily gambles regularly at bridge and spoils Lily's chance of getting an offer of marriage from him. If Lily "yields too much," it is to her own interests and independence, and in her repugnance for marriage she always "withdraws too far." The lack of balance during courtship, her ambivalence about marriage, and failure to persevere in keeping a suitor's attention prevent Lily from marrying. And Lily is off-balance precisely because she does not want marriage. Instead, she would rather have an independent self; unfortunately, the patriarchal ideology of Lily's society prevents her not only from realizing what that self might be, but also from seeing how it might be achieved.

In contrast to Lily, Undine Spragg has the determination and perseverance required to marry and marry well. In her chapter "The Business of Marriage," Ammons focuses attention on Undine's success as opposed to Lily's failure. She credits Undine's success to her lack of romantic expectations and clear sense of business. Undine knows what her beauty is worth in terms of marriage and economics. Ammons claims that Undine has no illusions about the marriage union as a bond of love which will perfect her personal happiness or complete her personality... Instead ...Undine approaches marriage as a simple economic contract in which both parties have well-defined, mutually aggrandizing, agreed-upon roles; and because she accepts the commercial nature of matrimony and is willing to negotiate herself on

the marriage market (which she manages to do not just once, but four times), Undine is unique among Wharton's early heroines. She controls her own life. (98)

But we should note that Undine does not understand economics in any venue other than marriage. Because Mr. Spragg does not share his interests or dealings in the stock market with his wife and daughter, they ignore this aspect of the finances upon which they rely for all they have; it is a man's role to provide for his female dependents:

...and they continued the bridal preparations, secure in their invariable experience that, once 'father' had been convinced of the impossibility of evading their demands, he might be trusted to satisfy them by means with which his womenkind need not concern themselves. (75)

Undine understands only an index of economics as it relates to marriage: conspicuous consumption. Veblen claims that conspicuous consumption is one aspect of class, rank, power, and superiority. Gentlemen of distinction or "gentle blood" consume the best of food, drink, fashion, and recreation (73). In addition they show their accumulated wealth by buying the time and energy of many servants either as paid domestics or chattel/slaves. The livery of a servant pays tribute to the wealth and standing of the master who clothes him. The same can be said of the wife. Veblen notes that even "...where there is assuredly no conscious attempt at ostensible leisure, decency still requires the wife to

consume some goods conspicuously for the reputability of the household and its head" (83). This is the role that Undine seeks: "to consume conspicuously for the reputability of the household and its head." The problem with Undine's marriage to Ralph Marvell is that she has confused conspicuous consumption with conspicuous leisure. Man's role in marriage is to provide (produce if he must), and woman's role is to consume: "She still thought Ralph 'sweet' when she was not bored by his good advice or exasperated by his inability to pay her bills" (130). Undine sees Ralph as a failure because he cannot get her everything she wants and will not strive to produce enough for her to consume lavishly: "...he would not achieve the quick rise to affluence which was man's natural tribute to woman's merits" (131). Ralph does not fulfill his side of the economic contract to which Undine believed she had agreed when she married him.

Undine's economic astuteness deserts her when she fails to reconcile the differences between leisure and wealth. Veblen defines conspicuous leisure as "...non-productive consumption of time. Time is consumed non-productively (1) from a sense of the unworthiness of productive work, and (2) as an evidence of pecuniary ability to afford a life of idleness" (43). Yet the leisure of the Marvels and the Dagonets demands a highly specialized knowledge of what to consume and how to

consume it rather than the indiscriminate consumption of vast quantities. Because Ralph does not work for his living, dabbles in esoteric learning and poetry, and comes from a prominent upper class family, Undine assumes that he has access to the "pecuniary ability to afford a life of idleness." Unfortunately, the Dagonet fortune can no longer support its heirs in both leisure and conspicuous consumption. By combining moderation with snobbery (the exclusion of those outside their social rank), the Marvells can maintain their leisure and foster the assumption in others, such as Undine, that they have the accumulated wealth to support their lifestyle and still refrain from productive labor. Not until after her marriage does Undine realize her mistake:

She had found out that she had given herself to the exclusive and the dowdy when the future belonged to the showy and the promiscuous.... Apex ideals had been based on the myth of 'old families' ruling New York...with the new millionaires paying them feudal allegiance. But experience had long since proved the delusiveness of the simile. Mrs. Marvell's classification of the world into the visited and the unvisited was as obsolete as a medieval cosmogony. Some of those whom Washington Square left unvisited were the centre of social systems far outside its ken, and as indifferent to its opinions as the constellations to the reckonings of the astronomers; and all these systems joyously revolved about their central sun of gold. (111)

Undine comes to the conclusion that she has married into the wrong social orbit. She has the best, a place in New

York aristocracy, only to discover that she would have been better served by the nouveau riche.

In a conversation between Charles Bowen and Laura Fairford the problems with economics and marriage are laid explicitly at the feet of men and implicitly at the feet of patriarchal society. Wharton puts these accusations in the mouth of a male character so that they are taken seriously and are not dismissed as the ravings of a woman. Ammons claims that Undine is not the object which Wharton seeks to attack with her satire; instead Wharton goes after "the institution of marriage in the leisure class" (102). Laura Fairford is Undine's critic when she claims that Undine has no interest in Ralph's affairs, while Bowen dispassionately dissects the nature of society and the social relations maintained between the sexes as played out in Undine's and Ralph's marriage. He notes that men have always "slaved" for women and that Ralph is no different in this respect. And Undine's economic expectations are the expectations of her culture. Bowen continues, "in this country the passion for making money has preceded the knowing how to spend it, and the American man lavishes his fortune on his wife because he doesn't know what else to do with it" (119). He understands what women are taught to expect from marriage and spells it out in a way that society would find distasteful to acknowledge overtly. In his eyes

Undine does not fall short of womanly behavior; instead "she's a monstrously perfect result of the system: the completest proof of its triumph" (120). And she is so "monstrously perfect" that she uses the institution of marriage repeatedly to get what she wants.

When her marriage to Ralph fails to provide her with the display, luxuries, and social consequence for which she contracted, Undine has no compunction in ending the marriage. She is ready to cut her losses and move on to a bigger and better marriage. Although she miscalculates Peter Van Degen's willingness to leave his wife or her own ability to hold him, Undine makes no mistake in attempting to snare a banker's son. Motivated by economics, she makes a bid for the kind of marriage she wants and believes she deserves. Her failure, however, leaves her in a condition similar to Lily Bart's in that her difficulty in marrying well can be attributed to her lack of family connections. Mrs. Spragg has no knowledge of social customs and cannot help her daughter navigate uncharted waters. Mr. Spragg is not a social asset to Undine either. He makes more money than Ralph because he does not have to fight Ralph's inherited inertia--the psychodynamics of leisure and social position (247). However, Mr. Spragg cannot open the doors to social acceptance that Undine craves. In Europe after the divorce and before Ralph's suicide, Undine strives to

regain "the precise value she had lost in ceasing to be Ralph Marvell's wife. Her new visiting-card, bearing her Christian name in place of her husband's, was like the coin of debased currency testifying to her diminished trading capacity" (205). Here the economics of marriage are clearly outlined, and Undine's divorced state implies that she is trading in "debased currency." Although the popular cliché claims that one must have money to get money, it is also true that one must have social connections to make social connections.

After Ralph's suicide, Undine's currency rebounds in value, as a widow is vastly more respectable than a divorcee. With the rise in her stock in the marriage market, Undine can contract another social marriage, trading New York aristocracy for genuine French aristocracy and a title in marriage to Raymond de Chelles. Once again, Undine has made the same mistake in thinking that conspicuous leisure and conspicuous consumption can be interchanged. Ammons notes that

in her marriage to Ralph, and in this one to Raymond, Undine entered the relationship expecting to be placed on triumphant public display--modeling fabulous gowns, being seen dining leisurely at the finest restaurants, shuttling back and forth across the Atlantic, sporting jewels that would be written up on society pages from New York to Apex--only to find that her third husband, like her second... abhors publicity: he belongs to a very special subclass that prides itself on its invisibility. (117)

Most of the de Chelles family fortune is spent maintaining a costly chateau and not maintaining Undine in the style to which she aspires.

Again Undine must end what is to her an unprofitable marriage. Since Elmer Moffatt has no Roman Catholic sensibilities to be offended by divorce, and since he was her first husband, he does not hesitate to remarry her after she leaves de Chelles. Finally, Undine has what she has always wanted--unlimited funds to spend and display publicly. Moffatt is just one such man that Bowen earlier accused of lacking imagination and therefore reliant on a wife to spend the wealth he accumulates. If no one sees how much money he has, then there is little glory in the Wall Street conquests he makes. However, the life as a member of the nouveau riche is not all Undine had thought it would be either. Her contact with the upper class, whether in America or France, has refined her taste, but not her appetite:

Even now, however, she was not always happy. She had everything she wanted, but she still felt, at times, that there were other things she might want if she knew about them...At first she had been dazzled by his success and subdued by his authority. He had given her all she had ever wished for, and more than she had ever dreamed of having...and there were hours when she still felt his dominion and exulted in it. But there were others when she saw his defects and was irritated by them...Now and then she caught herself thinking that his two predecessors...would have said this or that differently, behaved otherwise in such and

such a case. And the comparison was almost always to Moffatt's disadvantage. (333)

Her restless ambition is never satisfied, and the novel ends with Undine learning that she can never be an ambassador's wife and convincing herself "that it was the one part she was really made for" (335). Undine's grasp once again exceeds the reach of the man to whom she is married, but this time she cannot blame her husband. Even though she tells Moffatt that he could be an ambassador if he had any ambition, Moffatt quickly lets her know that the greatest barrier to a life in politics is her divorced state and not any deficiency perceived or actual on his part.

By ending the novel here, Wharton asks that the reader wearily accept the fact that Undine will not change and has not learned anything redeeming from her self-serving use of marriage. But if Undine is a "monstrously perfect result," then a pecuniary patriarchal ideology is the monstrosity which has created her. The blame or the credit cannot lie with Undine but with the expectations, dictates, and social forces which shape her and which she strives to fulfill. Ammons succinctly describes the flaws in the social institution:

Undine is not an admirable character because, within marriage as it is defined in this novel, there is for women no admirable way to accept or escape the collected state. To submit to it is to become a masochistic, self-effaced Clare Van Degen. To escape it one must

apparently be a callous, profiteering Undine Spragg Moffatt Marvell de Chelles Moffatt--a woman as ruthless and exploitive as the culture she mirrors. (123)

Just like Lily Bart, Undine recognizes that her society requires women to submit to "the collected state." Both Lily and Undine escape, but each must forfeit some vital part of herself: Lily her life, and Undine her soul.

Just as Lily may never have owned her own life, Undine may not have possessed a soul, but the loss to each woman reflects the emptiness and self-serving institutions which uphold patriarchal society at the expense of women fictional or real. Applying a negative hermeneutic is specifically Northern in that it dissects the American leisure class represented by New York's Fifth Avenue. Yet it also applies to the basic economic principles that women as chattel face in patriarchal society. The negative hermeneutic provides a forum for an author like Wharton to play out in fiction the destructive roles society bestows on women and therefore highlight the flaws in patriarchal culture that produce flawed women.

The Negative Hermeneutic and the Southern Perspective of Ellen Glasgow

Like Wharton, Ellen Glasgow also creates female characters whose behavior reflects the mores, standards, and customs of their society. When this behavior is

played out in the novel before an audience, the reader judges society as much if not more than he/she judges the character. Yet unlike Wharton, Glasgow's negative femininity is obviously Southern. Although economic principles impact Southern women, their society places them in double jeopardy: not only must they limit themselves to being wives and mothers, but they must also never forget that they are ladies. What makes the role of lady especially taxing for Southern women is twofold: first, the role of the lady after the Civil War is bound up in nostalgia for a perceived past that never existed in actuality, and second, the role is capricious--the skills a Southern woman develops as a belle do not logically fit her for the role of Southern matron. In Tomorrow Is Another Day, Anne Goodwyn Jones quotes George Fitzhugh who defines the role of woman for his day in 1854:

"Let [woman] exhibit strength and hardihood, and man, her master, will make her a beast of burden. So long as she is nervous, fickle, capricious, delicate, and dependent, man will worship and adore her. Her weakness is her strength, and her true art is to cultivate and improve that weakness.... In truth, woman, like children, has but one right and that is the right to protection." (8)

The woman of Fitzhugh's rhetoric is a self-destructing time-bomb which offers neither the woman herself nor those who live with her any stability.

In The Builders Glasgow portrays a sensible young woman as the protagonist, Caroline Meade. Yet in contrast to Caroline, Glasgow displays society's dysfunctional ideal, the lady, in Angelica (Anna Jeanette) Blackburn. The contrast between the two characters only serves to emphasize how Angelica's behavior appears correct on the surface, but is destructive and manipulative in reality. Angelica is not her real name, but a surface reflection of her feminine beauty. And she pointedly corrects her brother, Roane, who calls her Anna Jeanette: "'And for heaven's sake, stop calling me by that name!'" But despite Roane's clever quip that Anna Jeanette is her name, Angelica insists: "'It is not the one I'm known by'" (137). Appearances are everything to her, and she strives to put herself always in the best possible light even if it means dimming or extinguishing the light on someone else such as her husband or a potential rival. As a director managing a scene or one of the tableaux that she loves so much, Angelica maintains her appearance and deftly focuses her adoring audience on what she wishes them to see.

For Angelica her appearance is her greatest asset, one which she displays masterfully. From the first both the reader and Caroline see Angelica Blackburn from the

perspective of an outsider. And that first glimpse is impressive: "It was the rare quality of Mrs. Blackburn's beauty that in looking at her one thought first of her spirit--of the sweetness and goodness which informed and animated her features" (47). The close proximity of living with Angelica soon causes the scales to fall from Caroline's eyes. Inconsistencies jar the presentation of the image that Angelica projects, and the differences between the image and the real Angelica/Anna Jeanette surface immediately. At the same dinner party where Caroline first admires Angelica, she also witnesses Angelica's attempts to belittle her husband by pointing out his flaws. Oddly, this behavior centers the admiration of Angelica's dinner guests on herself, the poor dear who must endure such an uncouth husband. After Angelica directs a particularly rude and inept remark to her husband, Caroline must make excuses for Angelica in order to preserve the beautiful and spiritual image she sees. "A woman who looked like that couldn't be lacking in social instinct. It must have been a casual slip, nothing more. She was probably tired..." (50). Slowly Caroline's admiration for Angelica dwindles as Angelica's words and actions fail to match the image of spiritual beauty. Soon her tone of voice fails to match the sweetness of her words. Later, Angelica is stingy with a poverty-stricken seamstress who asks for a small increase

in her wages because the cost of materials has risen. And finally Caroline must conclude that Angelica is not the admirable beauty she first thought when Angelica refuses to accept any responsibility or inconvenience when her small daughter contracts pneumonia: "In one vivid instant ... [Caroline]... seemed to look straight through that soft feminine body to Mrs. Blackburn's thin and colourless soul" (150). The reader and Caroline have now joined a small and exclusive group of the housekeeper, black nurse, and husband, who all know what Angelica is truly like. The beauty is only an image, an appearance, for which Angelica sacrifices everything to maintain.

As the director of all of her own scenes, Angelica presents the image she wants her audience to see. At first these scenes inspire pity and admiration for the beauty who suffers so delicately under the dictatorship of a harsh husband. Her ability to extract every last ounce of emotion from even the smallest audience adds credibility to her claims that she is scorned and abused by the selfish and callous David Blackburn. As Angelica's best performance is staged before Caroline, the black nurse Mammy Riah, David, and the young doctor attending her sick child, only Doctor Boland can be the true audience for whom Angelica plays the distraught mother. He does not know that Angelica's behavior is a

performance. Informed that her daughter is dangerously ill, Angelica goes to the tableaux anyway. She has a major role as "Peace" and refuses to let anything keep her from being seen, admired, and even photographed for several magazines. Although Glasgow does not incorporate the actual tableau vivant as a scene in the novel, as Wharton does in The House of Mirth, another tableau is provided for the reader. Coming straight from her last performance still dressed "in her white robes, with the wreath of leaves on her hair, [Angelica] paused on the threshold [of the nursery] like some Luca della Robbia angel" (173). After this dramatic entrance, Angelica drops to her knees beside the child's bed and demands to know why no one told her how serious the illness was. The doctor responds to both her dramatic appeal for attention and her implications that David is a cruel, uncaring husband. The rumor quickly spread about town claims that David was so anxious for his wife to be admired (and himself envied) that he made her go to the tableaux when she would have preferred to stay with her sick daughter. Of course the strain of this horrific mistreatment forces the delicate Angelica to her bed away from the sickroom.

If audience members such as the doctor or dinner guests fail to recognize a performance, her husband has learned over the years to be more discerning. Although

Angelica may not deserve his chivalry, David refuses either to defend himself or to reveal her true motives to others. Another contrast, this time with the gentlemanly behavior of her husband, displays the warped standards that Angelica emulates in acting the lady. In the middle of one of Angelica's scenes, David stops to reflect on her motives:

As her voice rose in its piercing sweetness, it occurred to him for the first time that she might wish to be overheard, that she might be making this scene less for his personal benefit than for its effect upon an invisible audience. It was the only time he had ever known her to sacrifice her inherent fastidiousness, and descend to vulgar methods.... (265-6)

Indeed, Angelica has an "invisible audience" in the next room--Alan Wythe, her sister-in-law's fiancee, who is now a rich man. Angelica wants him, and she intends for Alan to save her from marriage to David. Having snared a well-to-do husband in David Blackburn, Angelica is prepared to trade him in for a wealthy one. This behavior, while totally inappropriate and inconsistent with the role of the lady that Angelica seeks to emulate, is successful. Very few people ever see past the image. When Caroline first resolves the conflict between the image of Angelica and the real Anna Jeanette, she attributes Angelica's behavior to unfair expectations and familial training:

After all, Angelica couldn't help being herself. After all, she wasn't responsible for

her limited intelligence and her coldness of nature! Perhaps she felt more in her heart than she was able to express, in spite of her perfect profile and her wonderful eyes. "Even her selfishness may be due to her bringing up, and the way everyone has always spoiled her." (153)

But by being relieved of any responsibility for her actions, Angelica can remain both immature and dependent. And Angelica's image does depend on the good opinion of others. As she strives to play the role of the lady who suffers without complaining, the mother who wants only to nurture her sick child, the wife who sacrifices her health and stamina for her husband's sake, and the humanitarian who aids the poor and sick, Angelica fails to actually live the part. The failure implies that the role is merely a social performance, and those who attempt to exist within its boundaries are warped and twisted by the effort. That Anna Jeanette has been twisted into an "Angelica" who is anything but angelic testifies to the destructive cultural forces used to shape women into ladies.

In contrast to Angelica's concentration on image, Amanda Lightfoot from The Romantic Comedians has spent her adult life striving to be an ideal. Judge Honeywell, reflecting on Amanda's presence at his side during a party, notes that

From Amanda herself, grave, stately, self-preserved, confirmed in queenliness, wrapped in her Victorian reserve as in a veil of

mystery, he knew that he should have nothing to fear. The women of her generation had known how to suffer in silence. What an inestimable blessing was this knowledge, especially when it had passed into tradition! What suavity, what harmony, it interfused into human relations! What protection, what safety, it afforded the chivalrous impulses. (55)

To embody this ideal she has sacrificed everything, believing that society would reward her for her diligence, or at least Gamaliel Honeywell would reward her with marriage.

In their youth these two were engaged, but a lover's spat sent Amanda dashing off to Europe. However, instead of following Amanda to Europe as was expected of him, Judge Honeywell married another woman. Despite the fact that Amanda returns to Queenborough and finds her place usurped by another, she waits for him. Dedicated not just to an ideal but also to being an ideal, Amanda remains faithful for thirty-six years. And although she never admits it to anyone else, possibly not even to herself, now that Honeywell's wife is dead, Amanda and the rest of Queenborough expect him to marry her. At a party that Amanda hosts for her young cousin, Annabel Upchurch, Judge Honeywell unwittingly raises Amanda's expectations by repeating a comment made by his twin sister. "'There isn't one among them [young girls]...who could hold a candle to what you were like at that age. There were queens in those days...'"(58). To this sally,

Amanda responds "in the musical tone of her girlhood: 'I am so glad you remember me like that,'" and the narrator remarks,

It was the nearest that she could come to losing her self-possession after the stern discipline which she had endured in the last thirty-six years. For ideals are difficult models to imitate, particularly when they are ideals of and for the opposite sex. (58)

An ideal does not serve Amanda any better than an image does Angelica.

That this ideal serves as a poor model is reflected in the next generation's unwillingness to continue where their mothers and aunts have left off. Young Annabel Upchurch has impulsively declared that she will never love again now that her heart has been broken. Yet her egoism still demands center stage--if not as a romantic figure, then she will settle for the role of a tragic heroine. Discussing love and life with her cousin, Amanda Lightfoot, Annabel is unimpressed with the Victorian ideal. Although Amanda claims that "God doesn't let you be unhappy while you are doing His will," Annabel remains skeptical:

Didn't He? Well, what was His will, and how did you know it? demanded Annabel, who was sure that she shouldn't have been made happy by the will she had seen manifested to her mother and Cousin Amanda. Nor did Cousin Amanda appear to be as happy as she said that she was--not when you were close enough to see the circles under her eyes. She looked quiet, but she looked also, in some inexplicable way, hurt, as if God's will with her had been firm

rather than gentle, and had given her a moment, at least, of unpleasant surprise. (146)

Annabel, too, has been hurt by her previous suitor and has resolved never to love again. And this makes her mildly receptive to the Judge's offer of comfort, security, and luxury for herself and her mother.

As required of women of their social class, Annabel and her mother, Mrs. Upchurch, have been living in genteel poverty dependent upon support from family members. Annabel is tired of poverty, cheap dresses, and charity. And since she will never love again, marrying the Judge seems to provide a solution to many of her problems. However, like the rest of Queenborough, Annabel expects Judge Honeywell to marry her cousin Amanda. In a conversation with her mother, Annabel is reassured that the Judge would not marry Amanda Lightfoot if given another chance:

"Men aren't like that, and they have their own peculiar ideas of romance--even the elderly ones. If you refuse him he won't turn back to Amanda, but toward one of the buds of next season. Of course, it is disgusting, but, after all, that's the way they're made, and when an elderly man has once got the maggot of youth in his head, it takes him a long time to get over it. If he had never thought of you, or any other young girl in that way, he might have married Amanda, but you never can tell. You must remember," she concluded, with a refrain which was less irrelevant than it sounded, "that he has a great deal of money. Some young girl will always be ready to marry him." (134-5)

Like their Northern counterparts, Southern women in social classes of distinction must be prepared to barter themselves in exchange for a living as a wife. In Women and Economics: A Study of the Economic Relation Between Men and Women as a Factor in Social Evolution, Charlotte Perkins Gilman remarks on the economic realities of young women marrying older men. She claims that these women are only doing what their society dictates women do to ensure their survival. In order to gain the greatest economic rewards or opportunities available to women, they must marry the man with the most money, prestige, or both. Gilman makes it clear that this May-December union is one promoted by the economic realities of patriarchal culture:

The girl who marries the rich old man or the titled profligate is condemned by popular voice.
... Since marriage is her only way to get money, why should she not try to get money in that way?
... The mercenary marriage is a perfectly natural consequence of the economic dependence of women.

(93)

By labeling the marriage which is popularly condemned as "mercenary" a "natural consequence," Gilman makes clear that the demands of patriarchy are responsible for what society considers a misalliance. If society truly abhors such a marriage, then it ought to provide women with other economic opportunities.

Both Amanda and Annabel feel incomplete as women, and both desire love and marriage. Amanda has remained

faithful to an ideal that has proved unable to meet her needs, and her own spinsterhood represents a wasted life. Even after thirty-six years of waiting for him, she would still prefer marriage to Gamaliel Honeywell to remaining single. As Annabel noticed, she does not appear to be happy in her role of spinster caring for nieces and nephews, and while she may still be admired by the community of Queenborough, she is also pitied. Annabel, too, wants love and marriage despite what she claims. When a younger man comes along, Annabel does not hesitate to put her desires before marriage, duty, or her husband's prior claim. Whether a woman lives up to the ideal of being a lady, or whether she refuses to live up to any ideals at all, the social forces are present directing women to take specific courses and lead their lives in particular ways.

With They Stooped to Folly, Glasgow explores three generations of women who have had a lover outside marriage. Agatha Littlepage stooped to folly in the 1870s, Amy Dalrymple in the 1890s, and Milly Burden in the 1920s. Since the storyline is set in the 1920s after the war in Europe, Agatha's fall and even Amy Dalrymple's can only be viewed in retrospect, but even so the twenty years' difference alters the two women's situation. If Angelica aspired to an image and Amanda to an ideal,

these three women are just as limited by a society which compels them to take on the role of the fallen woman.

First, Agatha Littlepage has become a ruin and an object of pity; even her own family now calls her "poor Aunt Agatha." Her eldest nephew Marmaduke Littlepage describes her condition well: "'But she [Aunt Agatha] was a perfect lady, though fallen; and perfect ladies do not exist any longer except as perpetual ruins or specimens of primitive art'" (122). Time and again the burden of being a lady, fallen or otherwise, mocks both the characters and even the society of Queenborough. How can a woman be a contradiction in terms, a "perfect lady, though fallen"? A perfect lady would not have fallen, or more correctly no lady would have been some gentleman's prey if the human woman were as cherished as the image or the ideal. Virginius Littlepage, the central perspective for two-thirds of the novel, reflects on women's condition in society and comes to the conclusion that "even the Southern gentleman . . . was beginning to suspect that the ruined woman is an invention of man" (20). The novel hints that more than being an invention, the fallen woman may actually be man's creation, both individually in the person of her seducer and socially in her patriarchal community. The profligate who seduced Agatha Littlepage was already married, and therefore could not

redeem her from her fallen state. As an unmarried woman no longer a virgin, Agatha must remain a spinster.

The second woman who stoops to folly is Amy Dalrymple. Unfortunately, Amy is too beautiful for men to resist, and despite her married state, men sought her favors. Caught in the act by her husband, Amy is abandoned by her lover, who quickly marries a more virtuous woman. Divorced, she has lost her respectability and social acceptance within her community. The narrator provides a measure of insight into Amy's situation:

Endowed with much energy and little temperament, she [Amy] might have remained as virtuous as Louisa had her figure been less pronounced or the field of woman's activities more varied. But in the late 'nineties, when she had flourished and fallen, an immense feminine vitality was confined with the narrow range of a wasp-waist and the exacting ritual of being a lady. (99)

Years later, reflecting back on that infamous night which scandalized the town of Queenborough and brought about her social and public disgrace, Amy notes that she never wanted a sexual display of masculine admiration, but was too tender hearted to deny those men what they sought. As the lady is supposed to be gracious, welcoming, and unselfish, Amy follows the forms and does not think about herself in the face of masculine needs. This perverse yet oddly accurate rendition of the ideal emphasizes the perversion inherent within the ideal itself.

The only female character to escape social dictates, Milly Burden, does not care what her society thinks about her folly; her lack of concern for living up to an ideal allows her to walk away from societal expectations. Having recklessly loved a young man, Milly bears his child out of wedlock and refuses to tell Martin Welding about what has happened. In contrast to Agatha's and Amy's lovers, Milly's lover could marry her and end the scandal. Though she loves him and claims that she will never love another, she will not force him to make "an honest woman of her." She would accept marriage to Martin only if he loves her; Milly would never marry just to please patriarchal society. Despite the fact that her employer, Virginius Littlepage, feels paternal about her, Milly has no compunction about leaving Queenborough and starting her life over somewhere else. Her avowals of unending misery sound immature and insincere at first, but slowly the story unfolds a strength of character and resolve that would not give in to society's judgment of proper feminine behavior. Virginius Littlepage thinks to himself "...that there was a vein of iron beneath her bloom" (115), and before the novel ends Milly has learned to mine this vein and become one of Glasgow's more believable and realistic stoics.

If Agatha, Amy, and Milly are fallen women, then Victoria Littlepage portrays the standard which they all

fail to meet. Victoria's best friend, Louisa Goddard, sums it up best when she declares that Victoria "never considers herself." No one seems surprised that Victoria works hard to make her husband and three grown children happy. Because such exertion is taxing, Victoria is able to hide her illness from her family and friends. When Victoria is exhausted, they simply think that she has been doing too much again, unaware that she is suffering from a terminal condition. Ironically, Victoria's heart condition is hereditary; her own mother suffered for over a year, just as Victoria is now doing. However, more than a physical illness, Victoria is also suffering and dying from a social illness: "the exacting ritual of being a lady":

For an instant, her knees trembled, and she was thankful for the frail support of a Heppelwhite chair. Without a prop, either moral or physical, it seemed to her that she must give way beneath this endless burden of sparing people, of persuading them to do right, of being an inspiration for good. (195-6)

Later in the novel Victoria tells herself, "'I am not real. I am hollow within... None of them has ever suspected it, but I am as hollow as a drum beneath the mask I wear'" (260). Victoria's thoughts reveal disturbing images of duplicity and self-effacement. The fact that she wears a mask and that no one has ever suspected hints that ladies have something to hide, cannot or dare not reveal who and what they are. After

Victoria's death, Virginius, her husband, realizes that "within the four walls, bound together by the indissoluble bonds of affection, interest, and habit, he had never known, never even seen the real Victoria" (318). In addition to the need for duplicity, the lady must be self-effacing. Victoria has followed this principle until she is hollow, even empty of personal desires, needs, or dreams. And like the drum to which she compares herself, Victoria has been her society's instrument. She has not beaten out her own rhythms, but has marched under the direction of patriarchal society.

Whether Southern women try to be ladies or not, that is the criterion against which they are measured. Even those who are successful and adhere to all the rules like Victoria or Amanda receive only paltry rewards of admiration and respect and not the rewards they thought they would get: fulfillment or marriage respectively.

While Angelica lives for the rewards of admiration and respect, her appeal as a model or representative of her gender rapidly diminishes throughout the course of the novel. Although Annabel and Milly may refuse to submit to society's restrictions about love, sex, and marriage, other women such as Agatha are crushed by them. In order to highlight the ideology behind the self-effacing and even destructive behavior women are encouraged to adopt, writers like Wharton and Glasgow depict a negative

femininity--one which conforms to society's dictates yet is rejected by the reader.

Like Wharton, Glasgow uses a negative hermeneutic by which society and not just women can be evaluated. Yet Glasgow herself is as caught up in the demands of her age as the characters she writes about. Oddly enough, Glasgow can create a fictional character such as Angelica, but not another who could supplant or stop her. Angelica's husband contributes to his wife's image as a lady when he refuses to expose her lies and selfishness. Although this behavior may appear gentlemanly, by the end of the novel David has allowed Angelica to ruin Caroline's career, end his sister's engagement to the man she loves, and destroy Alan Wythe. The negative femininity exhibited by Glasgow's women may also reveal implicitly how the South propagates the image or ideal of the lady through patriarchal customs like chivalry. To some extent Wharton would agree because she has characters like Ralph Marvell, who seek to shape women as Pygmalion did Galatea, acting as a representative of patriarchal society. One impact of using a negative hermeneutic to reveal the patriarchal perception of women is that it makes society take credit for what it has wrought in women, in the men who marry them, and the gender ideology that either admires them or crushes them.

CHAPTER IV
THE POSITIVE HERMENEUTIC AND THE STRONG WOMAN

Just as female characters can be created to exemplify the negative aspects of society, throwing into relief the social dictates that limit or undermine women, so too can female characters be used to turn readers' attention to matters beyond gender, such as success, determination, and strength of character. Analyzing women's writing that focuses on more positive or traditionally masculine traits and attributes them to female characters provides examples of a positive femininity. Both Willa Cather and Ellen Glasgow have created female protagonists that are not limited by social dictates for and about "proper" feminine behavior because these characters either refuse to accept such limitations or do not acknowledge that any limitations can be based solely on gender.

The literary canon provides a number of female protagonists who exhibit a positive femininity--one which is still successful and feminine but not restricted by traditional roles for women. Jane Austen, for example, creates one of the best examples of a positive femininity in Elinor Dashwood from Sense and Sensibility. Although Elinor is a character from a British novel and not an

American one, Austen's Miss Dashwood displays admirable qualities such as fortitude or discretion. Without directly confronting society's strictures governing female behavior, Austen shows that women do not necessarily crumble under adversity or break a confidence. That the practical, sensible, and reserved Elinor is one to admire cannot be missed as even Marianne admits that she should have been more like Elinor and should not have exposed herself to humiliation or heartbreak. Because Elinor arrives on the scene developed and mature, the reader does not know how her character was formed, and this lack makes a positive femininity such as hers unobtainable for the ordinary, female reader.

Cather and Glasgow also create women whose behavior, while displaying the positive traits traditionally reserved for men, cannot be replicated by just anyone. However much the reader may want to know how or why one female character can rise above adversity and another cannot, works which intend to provide an alternative to traditional female characters fulfill another purpose: to depict women of strength as possible. In O Pioneers! and The Song of the Lark, Cather has two female leads, Alexandra and Thea, who are strong, determined, capable, and successful. Glasgow does the same in Barren Ground, and Life and Gabriella with Dorinda and Gabriella.

Whether they strive to conquer the land or to make a career for themselves, these female characters triumph over obstacles despite a patriarchal society which limits women.

The Positive Hermeneutic and
Willa Cather's Strong Woman

In examining strong women characters who come from unlikely settings, gynocritics can find in Alexandra Bergson from O Pioneers! and in Thea Kronborg from The Song of the Lark a blending of traditional masculine and feminine attributes. While the use of a negative hermeneutic in analyzing such characters as Lily Bart or Amanda Lightfoot focuses critical attention on patriarchal society and its role for women, the positive hermeneutic cannot be used to analyze society or women in general. Instead, this hermeneutic can only be applied to specific individual, female characters who do not accept traditional limitations for women. Whether they inherit land or seek a career, these women find the power, strength, and determination to forge their own destiny.

In O Pioneers! Alexandra is the quintessential strong woman. Yet this strength is not portrayed as masculine or feminine; it is uniquely both. When Alexandra is first introduced, we see her through Emil's

eyes as "a tall, strong girl" who "walked rapidly and resolutely, as if she knew exactly where she was going and what she was going to do next" (5). Words like "tall" and "strong" are not typically associated with women or the description of feminine, physical attributes, nor does "rapidly and resolutely" describe typical feminine behavior. Whether male or female, many people wish that they knew exactly where they were going and what they were going to do next. That Alexandra appears so confident and self-possessed assures the reader that her gender is not the determining factor for her behavior or demeanor. In addition, Alexandra's dress is not specifically limited to one gender either: "She wore a man's long ulster (not as if it were an affliction, but as if it were very comfortable and belonged to her; carried it like a young soldier)..." (5). If the reader is in any way reminded of Cather's youthful preference for masculine dress, he or she seems to be steered away from making any such comparison here. This man's coat is only "comfortable," and when teamed with "a round plush cap, tied down with a thick veil," the effect is neither exclusively masculine nor feminine. And the wearing of the coat is not an "affliction"--in other words practicality, not poverty, is the likely motivation for choosing the garment.

As the scene unfolds, it reveals Alexandra's sense of responsibility and her physical feminine attributes. Emil's kitten has been chased up a pole, and he turns to his sister for comfort and aid. Although she chastises Emil for bringing the kitten to town, she also assumes part of the responsibility: "'Oh, Emil! Didn't I tell you she'd get us into trouble of some kind, if you brought her? ... But there, I ought to have known better myself'" (6). In Willa Cather's Imagination, David Stouck claims that

It is to Alexandra that everyone else turns with his or her troubles.... Alexandra wears a man's coat, but ultimately it is the maternal protection of a strong woman that she offers to those around her; and it is this quality--that of a larger-than-life mother figure--that is at the heart of the imaginative conception of her character. (27)

Alexandra immediately takes charge of the situation. When she cannot get the cat down herself, she comforts Emil, wraps him up in her own veil, and finds Carl Linstrum to climb the pole and rescue the kitten. Yet this act of "maternal protection" reveals another blended image of Alexandra's strength and feminine vulnerability. In taking off her veil, Alexandra exposes her head to the cold and to masculine impudence. A traveling salesman sees her "shining mass of hair" and reacts without thinking: "'My God, girl, what a head of hair!' he exclaimed, quite innocently and foolishly" (6). Yet

despite her vulnerable condition, bare-headed and transformed into an object, a single body part, Alexandra is still strong enough to take command of the situation and put the impudent fellow in his place: "She stabbed him with a glance of Amazonian fierceness..." (6), and Cather spends the rest of the paragraph describing the man's reaction to this stare:

It gave the little clothing drummer such a start that he actually let his cigar fall to the sidewalk and went off weakly in the teeth of the wind to the saloon. His hand was still unsteady when he took his glass from the bartender. His feeble flirtatious instincts had been crushed before, but never so mercilessly. He felt cheap and ill-used, as if some one had taken advantage of him. When a drummer had been knocking about in little drab towns and crawling across the wintry country in dirty smoking-cars, was he to be blamed if, when he chanced upon a fine human creature, he suddenly wished himself more of a man? (6-7)

In an effective display of strength, Alexandra routs the stranger's "feeble flirtatious instincts"; he is the one left feeling "cheap and ill-used" rather than the woman-object. The sexuality or femininity of her hair may receive a very masculine response, but Alexandra controls both herself and the situation.

As the novel progresses, the reader learns that in addition to her ability to command herself and others practicality runs deep in Alexandra's nature. The same practicality that motivates her to wear a man's coat for comfort over fashion contributes to her father's decision

to leave the land to her and not her two brothers. Even her willingness to learn from other people's mistakes reveals her practical outlook on farming and makes her the best choice as Bergson's heir:

In his daughter, John Bergson recognized the strength of will, and the simple direct way of thinking things out that had characterized his father in his better days. He would much rather, of course, have seen this likeness in one of his sons, but it was not a question of choice. As he lay there day after day he had to accept the situation as it was, and to be thankful that there was one among his children to whom he could entrust the future of his family and the possibilities of his hard-won land. (19)

Bergson's decision to leave "his hard-won land" to Alexandra is motivated by this same practicality. But if women are typically portrayed as emotional rather than rational, whimsical rather than logical, then the inclusion of practicality in Alexandra's nature points the reader toward a positive hermeneutic that can explicate the possibilities of a feminine behavior that extend beyond a few traditional or expected roles. Father and daughter share a human and not a strictly masculine trait.

A second image of Alexandra as a strong woman comes sixteen years after her father's death. The Divide is thriving and prosperous, and so is Alexandra. Again the reader sees Alexandra through Emil's eyes, this time as he sits down to dinner at her table:

Alexandra herself has changed very little. Her figure is fuller, and she has more color. She seems sunnier and more vigorous than she did as a young girl. But she still has the same calmness and deliberation of manner, the same clear eyes, and she still wears her hair in two braids wound round her head. (66)

This image and the passage from which it comes provide both expected parallels and odd contrasts. For example, the passage goes on to present the image of Alexandra as sunflower, another tall and strong product of the Divide. To see Alexandra as a living, growing thing produced by the soil requires no great stretch of the imagination, yet for all her color ("her face was always tanned in summer"), her skin is still "of such smoothness and whiteness as none but Swedish women ever posseses; skin with the freshness of the snow itself" (66). This combination of vitality and growth with purity and freshness gives Alexandra both vigor and femininity, another image of blended traits.

Although Alexandra has changed, the narrative voice takes care in preserving the girl introduced in Part I. The older Alexandra may have a fuller figure, but she has the same eyes and manner. Susie Thomas, in Willa Cather from the Women Writers series, claims that the differences in Alexandra, while subtle, are quite telling:

Alexandra becomes a corn goddess, statuesque and radiant. As she strides through the fields, showers her gleaming white body, and presides

over her household of farm hands and Swedish maids, she is an impressive combination of matriarch and myth. (66)

Although Alexandra is called "Amazonian" at one point, it is difficult to label her matriarchal aspect as a viable political or social alternative to the patriarchal society of the Divide. Her father did not choose Alexandra to be his heir because she was female, but because she was the logical choice; his reasons are practical. If her brothers fail to follow her example or listen to her advice now that they have their own land, that is not how it was when they all worked their father's land together. However, once they divided the land, it becomes clear, clear to everyone but Lou and Oscar, that Alexandra's contribution, ideas about agriculture, is worth much more than her brothers' contribution, manual labor. Unfortunately for them, Lou and Oscar simply do not possess their sister's affinity for the land or for farming; they do not see, for example, the value of a silo. Although Alexandra claims that "Lou can learn by my mistakes and I can learn by his" (67), a more accurate statement would be that she can learn by his mistakes, and he can learn by her successes. However she comes by it, Alexandra's abilities as a farmer are another blended trait. She has the power and authority of a farming landowner, and a

respected place, both within her own household and within the society of the Divide, as a matriarch.

If Alexandra seems mythical in stature, it derives not from her gender, but from her willingness to learn from the past and to look to the future. What her father recognized in her was a willingness to learn: "It was Alexandra who read the papers and followed the markets, and who learned from the mistakes of their neighbors" (18). She also learns from the past when she seeks out Ivar's advice about livestock and crops. But Alexandra does not stop there. She also has listened to Emil's "university ideas" and has put up the first silo on the Divide. Once again, Alexandra's character blends what could be opposites--Old World and New World in this instance--into savvy and prosperous farming techniques.

In The Song of the Lark, Thea Kronborg is another blend of Old World and New, of masculine strength and feminine beauty. Her music teacher, Wunsch, first combines these images about Thea:

Yes, she was like a flower full of sun, but not the soft German flowers of his childhood.... She was like the yellow prickly-pear blossoms that open there in the desert; thornier and sturdier than the maiden flowers he remembered; not so sweet, but wonderful. (122)

The people of Moonstone wise enough to recognize her musical ability all seem in awe of her ambition and determination: Dr. Archie, Wunsch, and Mrs. Kronborg.

Others, such as Ray Kennedy or Spanish Johnny, may not consciously recognize her ability, but they are sensitive enough to be aware of its presence and/or depth. Despite being a minority in Moonstone, these characters know Thea and her determination to succeed: "She had the power to make a great effort, to lift a weight heavier than herself" (122). During her struggles to study music and develop her voice in Chicago, Thea learns as much about herself as she does about music and her talents. What makes Thea such a strong female character lies in her depiction by Cather. According to Thomas, Cather was drawn to Wagner's operas in part because of the strong female roles: "To Cather, one of Wagner's greatest innovations had been making his women active, animating forces in drama. This clearly engaged her sympathy and provided a stimulus to the creation of Thea's character" (34). Yet it is in the final chapters in the novel that the images of strength and womanliness come together.

Although images of Thea as impatient with anything less than perfection are present throughout the novel, her determination to succeed with her music dominates the episodes in Moonstone and Chicago. In contrast, Thea's physical self dominates the images after Chicago to the end of the novel. During the episode in Panther Canyon, Thea's physical self begins to emerge. And when Dr.

Archie comes to New York to give Thea money to study in Germany, he becomes aware of her physical presence:

Even Doctor Archie felt, each time he looked at her, a fresh consciousness. He recognized the fine texture of her mother's skin, with the difference that, when she reached across the table to get him a bunch of grapes, her arm was not only white, but a little dazzling. She seemed to him taller, and freer in all her movements. She had now a way of taking a deep breath when she was interested, that made her seem very strong, somehow, and brought her at one quite overpoweringly. (457)

Thea's talent and physical presence begin to mirror each other. Her "way of taking a deep breath" gives the impression that she is about to sing and not just listen. If merely breathing makes Thea appear strong, even overpowering, her physical presence and her music ought to be equally pronounced when she comes fully into her talent.

Indeed, Cather orchestrates this blend of musical talent and physical self in Thea's bath:

She slid into the tub with anticipation and splashed and tumbled about a good deal. Whatever else she hurried, she never hurried her bath. She used her brushes and sponges and soap like toys, fairly playing in the water. Her own body was always a cheering sight to her. When she was careworn, when her mind felt old and tired, the freshness of her physical self, her long, firm lines, the smoothness of her skin, reassured her.... While she was in the tub she began to whistle softly the tenor aria, '*Ah! Fuyez, douce image,*' somehow appropriate to the bath. After a noisy moment under the cold shower, she stepped out upon the rug flushed and glowing, threw her arms above her head, and rose on her toes, keeping the elevation as

long as she could. When she dropped back on her heels and began to rub herself with the towels, she took up the aria again....(515-6)

Finally the two are blended into one image: the woman as artist and the artist in a woman's body. Thea's voice and body are her own; a unique image of feminine self-possession in a patriarchal society where women have been chattel and their talents fostered and developed only by men. Determination, ambition, and talent have merged to form a character who is both feminine and strong.

Thea's determination to succeed on her own terms should inspire admiration. When she refuses to take money from Fred Ottenburg, claiming that to do so would make her a kept woman, Thea sounds both melodramatic and prudish. Yet her attempt to achieve independence, even repay Dr. Archie, is not typical of the time or readily associated with women. In carving out a successful career, Thea does not conform to typical conventions.

Thomas claims that

It is a convention in literature...for an actress or singer to rise to fame, not just on the merit of her talent but through charm, good looks and, invariably, male patronage. Thea, however, fights for her own way with inflexible determination and male critics in particular have found this unprepossessing. The terms in which [John H.] Randall, for example, discusses her character betray a masculine bias against the assertive and successful woman: she is 'a rough and aggressive woman' with 'despicable qualities'; so 'irritatingly aggressive' and 'unattractive', indeed, she seems to offer a personal insult to his ideas of femininity. (36)

Thea's rise to fame is due in part to her talent and good looks, but the rest of these conventions quickly fall apart. Due to her lack of humor, specifically her inability to laugh at herself or her Moonstone background, Thea does not use "charm" as leverage to succeed in her chosen field. Thea does accept male patronage, however, first from Ray Kennedy and later from Dr. Archie. As patrons both men offer a "safe" or a nonsexual support of her art. Kennedy is dead when Thea profits from his financial support by leaving Moonstone to study in Chicago, and Dr. Archie serves as a quasi-father figure. Although Dr. Archie may be very aware of Thea physically, no indication is given that Thea ever recognizes it or responds to it. For example,

The tea-table and the little room in which it stood seemed to be out of scale with her long step, her long reach, and the energy of her movements. Doctor Archie, standing near her, was pleasantly aware of the animation of her figure. Under the clinging velvet, her body seemed independent and unsubdued. (521)

Once again a blended image portrays the female lead in terms of masculine traits such as "independent and unsubdued," yet in a feminine manner with "under clinging velvet." Given the historically restrictive nature of feminine dress, corsets, petticoats, bustles, etc., it would appear that the velvet comes into direct contact with a feminine body that is not hampered or controlled

by anything beyond the will or determination of Thea herself.

Despite Randall's assessment of Thea as aggressive, rough, and irritating, she succeeds on her own terms. Whether her motives in refusing money from Ottenburg are prudish or not, she chooses her patrons; they do not choose her. Such independence would be labeled as aggressive by anyone applying traditional feminine standards to a character like Thea. She matures to the point that she begins to make decisions for herself independent of men (father, lover), asks for and receives financial support for her study abroad, and possesses a sense of self or self-ownership, all of which are at odds with patriarchy. Dr. Archie's and Ottenburg's awareness of Thea's physical presence maintains her femininity before the reader. Yet they would not, or are not allowed to, impinge on the feminine image they so admire. Like her own body, Thea's success is also hers; others may help her, but she ultimately receives the credit for both her talent and her determination.

Both Alexandra and Thea succeed on their own terms. They may seek advice and help from men, but they make their own decisions, set their own courses. Alexandra, like Thea, is strong, determined to prevail over all obstacles, and eventually becomes prosperous and successful. Many critics dismiss characters like

Alexandra and Thea as iconic, even mythic, as if they were disembodied images or spirits. When Cather has gone to great lengths to establish for her characters a physical presence in obviously feminine bodies, such a dismissal seems hasty.

The Positive Hermeneutic and
Ellen Glasgow's Strong Woman

Glasgow's Dorinda Oakley and Gabriella Carr offer strong parallels to Cather's Alexandra Bergson and Thea Kronborg. Dorinda inherits the farm from her father because her brother, Rufus, is too weak and too lazy to reclaim the land. The broomsage has seeped into his soul in a way Dorinda does not allow. Gabriella succeeds in making a career for herself despite her role models of indigent ladyhood. While Gabriella's talents may be with fashion and not music, she still manages to market her skills and not herself. Her career is successful in that she can support herself, her two children and one servant, and maintain an independence not reliant upon men or male patronage.

In Life and Gabriella: The Story of a Woman's Courage, Glasgow attempts to portray a woman who defies traditional stereotypes of femininity. Gabriella rebels against Southern strictures governing the behavior of

ladies. On the front piece by C. Allan Gilbert to the 1916 edition of the novel, Gabriella sits dressed all in white, sewing before the window. Although the portrait displays a dreamy expression on Gabriella's young face, the caption, a quote from the novel, rings with emotional maturity: "'I want to be happy, but it depends on myself.'" Just as she refuses to remain dependent on the charity of her relatives when she is young and strong enough to work, Gabriella strives to achieve independence emotionally as well as financially. Although her family and society are scandalized at first with her job in a department store decorating hats, they all eventually realize that Gabriella is both capable and yet elegant. Glasgow concisely blends ability and fortitude with an eye for style and fashion.

This combination keeps Gabriella from sinking into poverty and indigent ladyhood on a second occasion when her husband, George Fowler, leaves her for another woman. Abandoned in New York in her mother-in-law's house, where George and Gabriella have spent most of their married life, Gabriella once again finds employment in women's fashions, decorating hats. However, Gabriella is not satisfied to remain only a saleswoman, but strives to become Madame Dinard's successor. Such a step moves her from a working woman to a successful businesswoman.

In Reynolds's chapter, "Types of American Womanhood," the historical conditions of women in the fashion industry are revealed as so harsh that women earned "bare subsistence" wages. In the literature of women's wrongs, Reynolds finds two major types of female characters, one of which is "the working woman, usually the starving seamstress." Reynolds writes:

...the working woman was a rich symbol of both the degradation and the stoical strength of American women in a time of great economic instability.... Particularly wretched were seamstresses, who in the two decades after the Panic of 1837 often lived in squalid, crowded tenements and worked long hours for bare subsistence pay. During the 1830s and 1840s, the highest rate paid for a shirt was about fourteen cents, and few women could make more than ten shirts a week toiling twelve to fifteen hours a day. (352)

Granted, Gabriella is working in women's fashion, as opposed to men's, and is at least two generations removed from the women sewing in the 1840s, but her success in rising from shop girl to businesswoman is still remarkable.

In addition, Gabriella must achieve this financial success without any male patronage. Having received promises of help from Judge Crowborough for years, Gabriella finally gives in and asks the judge for a loan. Madame Dinard wants to retire and is willing to sell a controlling interest to Gabriella. Believing that she can convince Crowborough that the dress shop is a

worthwhile investment, she tells herself that "'It's a simple business proposition--a promising investment'" and determines to "...ask him to get the money ...at a fair interest..." (352). After going to his office and telling him about the business investment that she wants to make, the judge reassures her that he is willing to help her, but she quickly becomes aware of the sexual undertones of his offer:

His manner was still casual and business-like, and it did not change by so much as a shade when he moved a step nearer and put his arm about her waist...and she realized, in the very instant of her amazement, that his manner was merely an authoritative expression of his power.... She was not frightened, she was not even disturbed, she was merely disgusted.... Now, with her worldly wisdom and her bitter knowledge of love, she found herself regarding the situation with sardonic humour. (363)

Calmly, Gabriella explains that he has ruined their business association with his sexually possessive manner. Crowborough tries to reassure her that he did not intend to imply that any indebtedness be repaid in sexual favors; his act was one of "habit"--what men do when they provide financially for a woman. Nonetheless, Gabriella decides to find another way to gain a controlling share in the dress shop on her own, keeping her independence.

Eventually, Gabriella is successful. After her visit with the judge, she decides that she will just have to find the means to solve her own dilemma and gain the

controlling share of Madame Dinard's dress shop without help. Gabriella tells herself:

"It's a pity the judge can't help me, but it wouldn't do. I'd never forget what happened to-day, and you can never tell when trouble like that is coming. I'll either make Madame give me half the profits for managing the business or I'll go to Blakely & Grymn at a salary of ten thousand a year. She won't let me go, of course, because she knows I'd take two thirds of her customers with me. Then I'll invest all I can save in the business until finally I am able to buy it entirely--." (380)

No mention of this business arrangement is ever made in the novel again. The reader must suppose that the offer was accepted, that Gabriella was correct in estimating her worth to Madam Dinard, because later in the novel Gabriella introduces herself as Madame Dinard. One morning she enters the shop to find a woman--in fact, the very woman for whom Gabriella's husband had left her-- looking at hats. When Florrie ask Gabriella if she is also shopping for hats, Gabriella replies "'No, I belong here. I am Madame Dinard'" (493). Glasgow's omission of Gabriella's interview with Madame Dinard and their business transaction concerning ownership of the shop is easily understood in light of Louis Auchincloss's comment from Pioneers and Caretakers: Nine American Women Novelists that "...Gabriella is the Virginia woman triumphant over all obstacles. The obstacles, indeed, bend like rushes before the storm of her resolution"

(72). With fortitude and determination such as hers, no one can be truly surprised by Gabriella's new role as proprietress. Indeed, it evolves almost naturally out of her character and sense of self.

As another character who evolves, though not quite as naturally, Dorinda Oakley begins as a naive shop girl, becomes a doctor's receptionist and a self-educated student of modern agriculture, and finally a prosperous dairy farmer and landowner. Dorinda does not evolve as naturally as Gabriella because Dorinda believes that her survival depends on the removal or modification of the feminine traits in her personality. In the final chapters of the novel, she refuses Bob Ellgood's proposal of marriage because, as she says, "'I've finished with all that'" (367). "All that" begins with Dorinda's youthful love for Jason Greylock, the doctor's son. Pregnant with Jason's child, Dorinda learns of his marriage to Geneva Ellgood just weeks before he was supposed to marry her. She then flees to New York seeking anonymity, not wanting the people of Pedlar's Mill to know about her condition. Wandering the streets of New York, Dorinda steps in front of a carriage, suffers a blow to the head, and miscarries the baby.

The significance of the miscarriage lies in its necessity as a symbolic detachment from patriarchal society. Glasgow's intention for this novel was that

"for once in Southern fiction the betrayed woman would become the victor instead of the victim" (jacket). Admittedly, the pregnancy and miscarriage are plot devices that first make Dorinda a "betrayed woman" and then set her free to become a "victor instead of a victim." Dorinda's first attempt to escape the poverty and dirt of her life is through the traditional method of marriage and the subsequent roles of wife and mother. When Jason fails her and she loses their baby, Dorinda can now try alternatives such as living without men and love, farming as a woman in a patriarchal society, and innovating in agricultural practices. Instead of strictly incorporating masculine traits into her feminine ones, Dorinda tries a different approach. Where patriarchy and its approved roles have failed her, she has turned to less traditional roles such as a working woman or an independent farmer. And where her femininity has disappointed her, left her pregnant and jilted, she has tried to adopt more masculine traits to balance the pain or the damage.

The strength of Dorinda's character shows in her willingness to attempt new farming methods at a time "when a corn-field at Pedlar's Mill was as permanent as a graveyard" (16). In contrast to her father, Joshua Oakley, Dorinda succeeds in reclaiming the land and prospering as a farmer. Joshua has a limited vision of

possibilities, and in response to his son's desire to move the tobacco beds, he replies, "'Well, they've always been thar, son'" (43). Instead of the traditional crops grown in traditional ways and in traditional places, Dorinda exchanges the patriarchal cash crop of tobacco for a dairy farm. As she utilizes the best of her feminine and masculine traits to reclaim the land from the overgrowth of broomsage and life-everlasting, success comes from the feminine chores of poultry raising, milking, separating, churning, and butter making in combination with the more masculine traits of hard work, agricultural study, and a sharp business acumen.

Although Dorinda parts with traditional, feminine roles, she cannot escape being a woman. However, when given the choice, she values her more masculine attributes over any feminine ones. When doing business Dorinda prefers to be thought of and respected as if she were a man. During a transaction with Ellgood over the sale of some cows, Dorinda speaks confidently of her ability to make Old Farm, the Oakley family property, a success. Her ability to discuss farming and its concerns knowingly with this prosperous neighboring farmer raises her in his estimation:

He was looking at her now with keen, impersonal admiration. Just as if she had been a man, she thought, with a glow of triumph. Though the sensation was without the excitement of sex vanity, she found that it was

quite as gratifying, and she suspected, more durable. (225)

Even the people closest to her such as Fluvana, the hired black woman who works with Dorinda in her dairy, know that Dorinda esteems hard work over just about everything else. Fluvana says, "'I ain' never seen no man work as hard as you do, Miss Dorinda'" (267). Even if the farm is a dairy, a femininizing of a traditionally masculine occupation, the hard work is that of a man, possibly even a superman.

The secret to Dorinda's success lies in her ability to channel her emotions into the land. Since women have typically been perceived as emotional rather than logical, Dorinda learns to control her emotions, especially those linked to feminine weakness. Emotion requires the expenditure of personal energy which could be put to use elsewhere rather than wasted in hating Jason: "...she had hated him for years, until she had discovered that hatred is energy wasted..." (374). As Frederick P. W. McDowell states in Ellen Glasgow and the Ironic Art of Fiction,

Only ascetics like Dorinda...who no longer dissipate their energies in gratifying the impulses of the flesh, can summon the force to bring the land to heel. Mastery of the impersonal powers of nature is assured only when mastery of the self is complete. (151)

Indeed, it is taking charge of her emotional energy and directing it toward Old Farm and later Five Oaks that

enables her to be a successful farmer and to reclaim the land from the broomsage and generations of overuse.

So Dorinda takes Old Matthew Fairlamb's advice--"Put yo' heart in the land. The land is the only thing that will stay by you" (256)--and devotes herself to the land. And the more she pours her emotional energy into her properties, the more successful she becomes. The process becomes cyclical; the harder she works, the less time she has to waste on emotional expenditures such as regret over Jason, and the fewer energies she wastes, the more work she manages to do. In fact, the land rewards her emotionally in ways people have not:

...she felt the quickening of that sympathy which was deeper than all the emotions of her heart, which love had overcome only for an hour and life had been powerless to conquer in the end,--the living communion with the earth under her feet. While the soul endured ...she knew that she could never despair of contentment. (408)

This investment of emotional energy in the land repays Dorinda both financially and emotionally. She becomes a successful farmer.

Although Dorinda's character does not achieve a balance in blending masculine and feminine traits, the combination of the two cannot be entirely discounted. She is still a woman doing a man's job in a man's world. Just like Thea Kronborg, Dorinda, too, has a need for

male patronage; and just like Gabriella Carr, she also has a distaste for accepting it:

The fact that she needed Nathan on the farm was driven home to her every day of her life. Without him, she would never become anything more than a farmer who was extraordinary chiefly in being a woman as well; and this provoking disadvantage was a continual annoyance. (289)

Because Nathan Pedlar also makes a study of more modern agricultural practices, he has become someone to whom Dorinda can turn for advice. She would prefer to rely solely on herself, but that is not always possible.

Like Alexandra and Thea, both Gabriella and Dorinda find ways to succeed sometimes without men, sometimes with them, and sometimes in spite of them. Although Alexandra does not have to leave the Divide to succeed and be accepted for what she does, Gabriella and Dorinda do not have that same luxury. Gabriella's success only comes in New York away from the Virginia society of her girlhood. Dorinda, too, cannot make the transition from the expected traditional roles of wife and mother to independent farmer without leaving Pedlar's Mill. And because she must return to Old Farm to reclaim the land from the broomsage and the life-everlasting, Dorinda's success is harder to achieve than Alexandra's, which could account in part for her bitterness even near the end of the novel--the greater limitations placed on Southern women, make divergence from accepted roles more

difficult than adherence to society's dictates. Southern women find that there is something inimical in Southern institutions to feminine success in business and industry which hampers an author's use of the positive hermeneutic. While Thea, too, must leave Moonstone and eventually Chicago to succeed, it is not the raw, untamed West that is inimical to her as a woman, but as an artist. The West simply does not have the resources or the traditions to train and encourage a musical talent.

Alexandra, Thea, and Gabriella may be more successful than Dorinda in integrating both masculine and feminine traits, but all these characters exhibit both. The emphasis lies not so much with the gender of these fictional females, but with their ability, determination, and fortitude. They are achievers and at times more forward thinking than the men around them, especially in business. However much they remain feminine or female as women working, dreaming, and succeeding in patriarchal society, they are capable of more than the stereotypes associated with their gender allow. Their determination to succeed, their ability to work hard, and their strength of character make these fictional women more than masculine or feminine; it makes them human--an alternative method of classifying people and the result of a positive hermeneutic.

The Strong Woman and Marriage in Both Cather's and Glasgow's Novels

Interestingly, all four of these female characters marry. Any gynocritic must wonder why, if these women are so strong and so capable, they ever feel the need for a man to take care of them, or if they need companionship, why they choose a man weaker than themselves as a partner. Most critics disparage the marriages that Cather and Glasgow arrange for their main characters. And I must agree that the men these characters marry are not necessarily equal to them. In Cather's two works the men are overshadowed and even overpowered by the women that they marry, while in Glasgow's works, the men available for love and marriage come in one extreme or the other--either overwhelming he-men or ninety-pound weaklings. I would argue that the positive hermeneutic, which brings the behavior of the strong woman to the reader's attention, requires complete female characters--ones that are both strong and independent while they are also womanly and desirable. Within the positive hermeneutic for women, being fully human implies that the character has integrated both masculine and feminine traits. If these fictional females do not exhibit both strength and femininity, then either they are not strong, or they are not feminine.

One problem with the marriages of Alexandra, Thea, Gabriella, and Dorinda stems from their authors' efforts to develop them as strong women. When the majority of the novel has concentrated on establishing them as capable, innovative, logical, and ambitious, then their marriages come as a surprise, unexpected and unneeded. Although Cather may occasionally remind the reader that Alexandra and Thea have firm, supple bodies in which they find a source of personal strength and reassurance, the images do not convey enough of a sense of womanliness or desirable femininity.

For example, Alexandra Bergson has been described by Thomas as a "corn goddess" and "an impressive combination of matriarch and myth." Like Lou and Oscar, the reader develops an immunity to Alexandra's womanliness and becomes convinced that Alexandra will never marry. When Carl Linstrum and Alexandra meet again and rediscover some long-lost fondness for each other, the emotion does not come naturally or obviously from the corn field, but from left field. This sudden and previously undeveloped attachment makes the relationship difficult to take seriously. Auchincloss finds the romance between Carl and Alexandra to be a "faint embarrassment" (100), and Thomas claims that the love affair is "ludicrous" (67).

However, if Alexandra's situation is analyzed, the reasons her family objects to her marriage are selfish,

shallow, and reflect an oddly placed age discrimination. Lou argues that Alexandra has always had her way and that they, he and Oscar, have always humored her; to their way of thinking, Alexandra's advice does not match their contribution of manual labor. Of course, this conversation creates dissonance for the reader who knows that Lou and Oscar are incorrect in their assessment of the origins of the Bergson family's success on the Divide. For some strange reason, they seem to believe that if Alexandra loses her land to some fortune hunter, they will suffer for it. Lou and Oscar ignore the fact that Alexandra's land belongs to her and not to them. One has to wonder if they were expecting the "old maid" to leave her land to one or more of their offspring. All of her brothers believe that forty is too old to marry. Oscar exclaims, "'Everybody knows he's nearly five years younger than you, and is after your money. Why, Alexandra, you are forty years old!'" (128). Few people today would be so amazed that a woman would marry for the first time in her forties. And Alexandra has never been portrayed as dried-up or unfeminine. Even Emil's attitude reveals the bias that love and passion are only possible for the young:

He was a little ashamed for his sister, though he had tried not to show it. He felt that there was something indecorous in her proposal, and she did seem to him somewhat ridiculous.

There was trouble enough in the world...without people who were forty years old imagining they wanted to get married. (133)

The limitations of Emil's views are more ridiculous than the desire of a forty-year-old woman to marry.

Even if Alexandra's desire to marry is not ridiculous, and a forty-year-old woman is not necessarily past her prime, the love affair remains unconvincing. In Willa Cather and the Art of Conflict: Re-Visioning Her Creative Imagination, Patrick Shaw notes that despite Alexandra's depiction as "graphically feminine, even overtly erotic" (33), Alexandra's and Carl's relationship is oddly sexless. Despite whatever problems Cather may or may not have in reconciling femininity with mainstream or accepted views of sexuality and the expectations of patriarchal society for women, to be successful as a woman the positive hermeneutic reveals the need for female characters to be fully human, strong yet still desirable. Whether the difficulty in accepting this love affair lies in the choice of her lover, the younger, ineffectual Carl Linstrum, or in their lackluster "fondness" for each other, this union remains problematic for the reader.

Nevertheless, Cather has managed to do something unique in marrying off Alexandra. In fiction, even romantic fiction, women over forty rarely marry, and more rarely still marry for the first time. With a depiction

of a strong woman who has maintained a viable femininity, the combination of success both in business and in love makes the victory complete. Having conquered the land and established herself as a farmer, and a prosperous one, Alexandra can now pursue a personal life in ways typical of prosperous men in any occupation. This combination of both masculine and feminine success, of a life's work and marriage, provides a balance. In this way the strong woman does not become "unsexed" by her achievement, nor is she expected to make excuses for her femininity.

Like Alexandra, Thea, too, chooses a man who is not her equal. With her personality and physical presence, Thea overshadows Fred Ottenburg. There is no question that Thea's career will come first in their marriage because it already has in their relationship as mentor and young artist, and as lovers. Just as it would be foolish at the height of her career to take a secondary role when she has the talent and ability to play the lead, so too is it foolish to marry. But again, the marriage makes Thea's success complete. With both a career and a marriage, Thea's achievement combines masculine and feminine success.

In contrast, Gabriella marries a man who can only overshadow her. Ben O'Hara is a rough Westerner and a self-made millionaire, and this combination works both

for and against Gabriella. It works for her in that O'Hara will not be interested in taking over Gabriella's dress shop or assuming control of her business interests; he has enough of his own. And it works against her in that the sheer force of his personality will dominate her as it does when Gabriella finds her former husband dying on her doorstep. Not only does O'Hara take charge of the sick room, but he also arranges all the funeral details when it becomes necessary. Gabriella submits to his more forceful personality. Considering all that she has achieved up until her second marriage, her regression into feminine dependence is not in keeping with the strength, ambition, and determination which she has exhibited previously.

However, while O'Hara appears overwhelming, Gabriella's previous love, Arthur Peyton, is decidedly underwhelming. He has remained in Virginia, caring for his widowed mother and has never married. At no time, even in his youthful courtship of Gabriella, has Arthur acted deliberately or decisively. Just as Alexandra's emotional attachment for Carl is reintroduced into the text when the reader has no idea that such an attachment ever existed, late in the novel Gabriella begins to reminisce about Arthur. When the reader compares Arthur to O'Hara, the obvious choice becomes O'Hara, but the marriage begins to resemble the best of two evils. Yet

once again, the marriage provides Gabriella with a measure of success that is a tribute to her womanliness or femininity and to her success as a businesswoman. Competing in the business world, making her own way, and providing for herself and her children has not cost her femininity or her desirability as a mate.

Dorinda, of course, differs from everyone. While the critics are more accepting of this marriage, it is still a qualified acceptance. Auchincloss, in comparing Dorinda Oakley and Alexandra Bergson, states:

When Ellen Glasgow... wrote Barren Ground, about another old maid who conquered the soil, she also gave her protagonist a husband in middle age, but she added the interesting and perhaps significant detail that the marriage was never consummated (100).

Dorinda, younger than Alexandra, marries for the first time in her mid thirties, yet Auchincloss still calls her "another old maid." Although she has worked hard, long hours to be successful with the dairy and then with the rest of the farm, this dedication has not made her undesirable. Nor have her attempts to remove or modify her feminine traits been entirely successful to prevent Nathan Pedlar from seeking marriage. Even after Nathan's death rescuing people from a train wreck, Dorinda still receives another proposal of marriage, this time from Bob Ellgood. Again, Glasgow combines the masculine success of a farmer with the feminine success of marriage.

Although the marriage is never consummated, Dorinda achieves companionship with Nathan and an heir in his youngest son, John Abner. She may not want a "normal" marriage, but Dorinda still achieves all the traditional trappings.

The need for blending masculine and feminine successes makes the marriages of these women inevitable. Whether these marriages are realistic or not does not lessen the necessity of having them take place. When women do not marry, they are given labels like spinster, old maid, crone, which signify their uselessness to patriarchal society. In having these lead characters marry, they can spurn such epithets and be successful both as men and as women.

Overall, the positive hermeneutic provides an arena in which readers can explore female characters outside the limitations of tradition and/or patriarchy. The creation of fictional women who possess such traits as strength, ambition, determination, ability, and more combines aspects of traditional masculinity within feminine characters. When both masculine and feminine traits are incorporated into one character, that person models a humanity that is more inclusive, or more complete, than the traditional stereotypes of patriarchy. However, even though the positive hermeneutic breaks new

ground and provides a forum for exploring female characters outside traditional roles, the lives of Alexandra, Thea, Gabriella, and Dorinda remain beyond the reach of ordinary women. A third measure is needed to make the positive hermeneutic a possibility for living women and not just fictional characters; a feminist pedagogy must analyze how girls are taught to be women and provide a method for training, fostering, and encouraging a positive femininity.

CHAPTER V

THE FEMINIST PEDAGOGY: A NORTHERN "HOW TO" VERSUS A SOUTHERN "HOW NOT TO" BRING UP GIRLS

When women writers employ a positive femininity to create female characters who are capable and decisive, the need for a feminist pedagogy clearly emerges. While the positive hermeneutic places its emphasis on a fully developed character whose behavior incorporates traditionally masculine traits with feminine ones, it becomes necessary to examine the cultural forces that could contribute to the creation of an admirable female character. Readers, especially female readers, are prompted to ask: "How does she do it?"--they want to know why or how such characters emerge as strong, independent, even different from other traditional female characters.

As women seek to portray a positive femininity, the Victorian idea of separate spheres, which Helene Cixous has labeled "patriarchal binary thought"--the pairing of opposite traits such as intellectual versus emotional, autonomous versus dependent, and masculine versus feminine, is reduced to a social convention. With the positive hermeneutic comes a positive femininity which creates female characters who have traditionally masculine traits. However, this new positive femininity

is limited because it cannot be reproduced, which in turn generates a need for a feminist pedagogy.

As women writers began producing stories about young women who possessed ambition, intelligence, courage, and independence (or the Victorian "self dependence"), their ideas and reflections about women challenge the idea that "patriarchal binary thought" is a genuine reflection of the natural order. Yet in order to bring up girls to resemble those fictional females, a guidebook or set of instructions is needed, and the first thing that these child-rearing manuals must teach is self-control because every other virtue is based on it. The Victorian respect for self-control is central to the belief that only a controlled person can lead or control others. This makes self-mastery a must for women and children because women must learn to control themselves before they can control the next generation, and children must learn to control themselves as they mature and become leaders in the marketplace or in the home.

The need for self-control is answered for both children and adults in Frances Hodgson Burnett's A Little Princess. Stripped of her wealth and luxuries, Sara Crewe becomes a half-starved drudge and child-tutor. Yet despite the reversal in her fortunes, Sara

still manages to dominate the people around her because she remains in control of herself:

When people are insulting you, there is nothing so good for them as not to say a word--just to look at them and *think*. Miss Minchin turns pale with rage when I do it, Miss Amelia looks frightened, and so do the girls. When you will not fly into a passion people know you are stronger than they are, because you are strong enough to hold your rage, and they are not, and they say stupid things they wish they had n't said afterward. There 's nothing so strong as rage, except what makes you hold it in--that 's stronger. (131-2)

What Nina Baym calls female Bildungsromans, I call a manual or instructional guide to bringing up girls as women. Regardless of the label applied to the genre, these stories focus on girls who are taught to master their rage as a sign of their maturity: Gerty Flint in The Lamplighter and Jo March in Little Women. In her introduction to The Lamplighter, Baym points out that while works such as this one may not be great literature they still do much to reveal not only the world that they portray, but also the world they help shape (x). Continuing Baym's discussion of the genre of the female Bildungsroman, she claims that

...these novels do not merely reflect a current ideology of womanhood; they participate vigorously in constructing and analyzing such an ideology. The woman's fiction attempts to show that women who cultivate dependency, passivity, or decorative uselessness--the very qualities extolled by the cult of true womanhood of the era--are dangerously unfit for real life. And in this respect these novels are anything

but the intellectually uncritical documents that they have been dismissed as being. (x-xi)

Therefore, an examination of such novels as The Lamplighter by Maria Susana Cummins or Little Women by Louisa May Alcott reveals how women writers can both depict their social and political environments while also adding to the discourse, debate even, surrounding the woman question. However, while Northern writers like Cummins and Alcott were able to critique patriarchal expectations for women and even show how those expectations could be adapted or modified in order to produce a stronger, more capable femininity, Southern writers never developed a feminist pedagogy meant to produce a nobler womanhood. At best Glasgow creates a negative feminist pedagogy in such works as Virginia and The Sheltered Life, which are more concerned with how girls do not grow up to be strong, capable, or independent women. Instead, they are somehow twisted or warped by the cultural forces of patriarchal society into useless creatures or destructive monsters. With less social mobility in the rural South women would have had fewer opportunities outside the home; consequently any changes in cultural expectations for women in roles, other than wife and mother, were not as forthcoming as they were in other regions.

How to Bring Up Girls to Be Women:
A Northern Manual

As noted in Baym's critique of the cult of true womanhood from her introduction to The Lamplighter, the qualities that were heralded as feminine accomplishments include "dependency, passivity, or decorative uselessness" (xi). Yet many women who wrote fiction for women, or even for girls, like Alcott, Cummins, Susan Warner, or E.D.E.N. Southworth do not give their heroines these traits. If Warner's Ellen Montgomery is passive, her passivity evolves out of a Christian humility and an acceptance of God's will. If Southworth's Capitola Black is dependent, it is because she is underage. If Cummins's Gertrude Flint is decorative, it comes from her gentle spirit and good manners, and not from furbelows, ribbons, or satins. In Alcott's fiction for children, girls like Fanny, Trix, or Belle who have or cultivate such characteristics are proved to be "dangerously unfit for real life" (xi) if they fail to learn compassion and find meaningful, life-enhancing work. In The Promise of Destiny: Children and Women in the Short Stories of Louisa May Alcott, Joy Marsella says that

although Alcott criticizes the social butterfly, she doesn't necessarily blame her, realizing that society expects women to fulfill that role.... In the case of the social butterfly, her work there [the

domestic sphere] is merely displaying wealth through elaborate and expensive dress and social rituals.... (110)

When young women stop participating in empty, social rituals and find something worthwhile to which they can commit their time and talents, they find personal satisfaction and fulfillment denied to social butterflies who do not find fulfillment in being patriarchal creations.

Instead of traits that leave women helpless, powerless, or dependent, women writers portray fictional characters who begin helpless and powerless yet learn to develop qualities that empower them to help themselves and others. Such qualities as self-control (especially the control of her temper, vanity, fear, or envy), independence through education and/or work, and charity for those in need replace the less desirable traits in fictional female characters. Through a feminist pedagogy, this transition is explicated for the reader through the trials and development of the main character(s).

Beginning with Cummins's The Lamplighter, the reader is introduced to the child Gerty Flint, who because of a lack of love, discipline, and education, is a willful, headstrong, and angry young person. She has no patience for or tolerance of injustice, and consequently hurls herself headlong into conflict with

authority. Once she is adopted by the old lamplighter, Trueman Flint, and loved by him and his neighbors, Mrs. Sullivan and her son Willie, the wild child is tamed through loving discipline and Christian education. However, genuine self-control still escapes Gerty because she has not yet gained control of her temper. When she does conquer her passionate self with meekness and forgiveness, Gerty begins to develop a virtuous and strong character.

The last scene in the book in which she contends with her remarkable temper occurs when, at age fourteen, she takes up residence with her benefactor, Emily Graham, after Flint's death. The Grahams's housekeeper, Mrs. Ellis, perceives Gerty as an upstart and an intruder into the household. As a result, the house-keeper taunts and snubs the girl, and finally in a fit of spring cleaning throws out several of Gerty's childhood possessions. When the girl realizes what has happened and who has "stolen" her treasured items, she first resolves to confront Mrs. Ellis, and then struggles with herself both physically and mentally to rein in her wayward emotions:

...with a loud sob, [she] fell upon her knees, and buried her face in her hands. Once or twice she lifted her head, and seemed on the point of rising and going to face her enemy. But each time something came across her mind and detained her. It was not fear;--O, no! Gertrude was not afraid of anybody. It must

have been some stronger motive than that. Whatever it might be, it was something that had, on the whole, a soothing influence; for, after every fresh struggle, she grew calmer, and presently, rising, seated herself in a chair by the window... (117)

Much like Sara Crewe on the subject of self-control, the narrator explains that the power of control is stronger than rage, passions, or fear.

With the slowly acquired self-mastery come other virtues or traits such as tranquillity, calmness, forbearance. Before this scene ends, the young Gertrude holds her tongue through tea with the housekeeper, making that lady "more uncomfortable and mortified than she would have been willing to show" (118), and the cook tells Emily about the injustice done to the girl. As Emily waits for Gerty to complain to her about the housekeeper, several days pass before she realizes that Gerty intends to bear the injustice with fortitude. The narrator concludes with:

This was the first instance of complete self-control in Gerty, and the last time we shall have occasion to dwell upon. From this time she continued to experience more and more the power of governing herself; and, with each new effort gaining new strength, became at last a wonder to those who knew the temperament she had had to contend with. (118)

Of course, Gertrude's trials are not at an end. Her temper, especially when Emily is slighted, is still present, but it no longer controls her; she controls it.

In addition to self-control, Gerty (or Gertrude as she is called once she becomes mature and able to govern her emotions) uses her education to support herself and defy a patriarchal authority that would use her for its own ends and needs. When Mrs. Sullivan's father falls ill, Gertrude goes to help her nurse him in return for all the good she received as a child from that lady. Emily understands and applauds Gertrude's devotion to Mrs. Sullivan, but Emily's father becomes angry and demands that she stay and care for the blind Emily. He argues that because the Graham establishment has raised Gertrude, provided for her, and educated her, she owes them her loyalty and servitude. Gertrude refuses to see the situation from his perspective, goes to help Mrs. Sullivan nurse her father, and then nurses Mrs. Sullivan after the old man's death. After Mrs. Sullivan dies, Gertrude secures employment as a teacher and supports herself modestly yet comfortably. Gertrude is finally independent in every sense of the word.

However, Cummins is not finished with Gertrude yet. Independence and self-control are remarkable traits for a woman (real or fictional) in nineteenth-century America, but Cummins makes her main character not just a heroine, but someone capable of the heroic. Slowly, Gertrude gives up her independence and almost her life to do what is right or good. When Emily needs her,

Gertrude leaves her teaching position at \$300 a year and returns to care for Emily and be a companion to her for only room and board. As the blind but humble Emily is slighted and abused by her new stepmother and that woman's niece, Isabel, Gertrude steps into the breach. She is the one to make up any deficiencies in Emily's care, even to the point of ironing Emily's dresses so that she does not know the neglect intended by her new relatives. Although Gertrude naturally feels anger over these injustices on Emily's behalf, she does not lose her temper and continues to return good for evil. Gertrude is not just in control of herself, but also has the power to control the situation because she does not participate in the petty jealousy and back-biting.

In addition, Gertrude's self-sacrificing gradually becomes more Christ-like, progressing from mere feminine subservience to heroic action--a willingness to risk her life for friend and enemy alike. Ever since Willie Sullivan left America to work for a shipping line as a clerk in India, he and Gertrude have exchanged letters, remained steadfast friends, and come to love each other. But when Willie returns to America, he is prevented from going directly to Gertrude, and she sees him first with Isabel. Later, as she and Emily board a steamboat, she overhears and misinterprets a conversation between Willie and Isabel; she believes that Isabel is now the

object of Willie's affections. During the journey, a fire breaks out on board the riverboat, and Gertrude arranges for Emily's rescue, aided by a stranger, Mr. Phillips. When the stranger returns to assist Gertrude from the fire by swimming with her to safety as he did with Emily, Gertrude substitutes a desperate and incapacitated Isabel. Gertrude, by means of a level head and self-control, takes control of the situation and resolves to save her rival:

And now a new and heroic resolution took possession of the mind of Gertrude. One of them could be saved; for Mr. Phillips was within a few rods of the wreck. It should be Isabel! She had called on her for protection, and it should not be denied her! (329)

Mr. Phillips swims to safety with the wrong woman, and Gertrude leaps from the flaming wreckage into the river just as the steamboat's paddle wheel comes loose and threatens to sweep her downriver with it.

Although she is rescued by others, Gertrude's act is in no way diminished. Baym in her introduction to this novel interprets the impact of Gertrude's action:

This deed of inspired heroism moves Gertrude far beyond the gendered goodness that she has exemplified in the novel to this point. Nothing in her behavior previously has challenged the idea that women were more physically timid, the weaker sex; she has been a paragon, but her heroism has been heroinism--the purely womanly activities of nursing, teaching, consoling. . . . Now, however, Gertrude does something that makes her a 'hero.' Emily's word for Gertrude, when she learn[s] of the deed, is noble and

that word has been carefully chosen for its masculine aura. Gertrude's best deed by far--in a novel devoted to expounding domestic ideology--shatters the constraints of domesticity. (xxvii)

Cummins has gradually honed Gertrude's character so that this physically heroic act is believable and consistent with the qualities she has developed within Gertrude, who literally and metaphorically leaps from feminine helplessness to masculine action.

From the reader's perspective, the trials and lessons Gertrude has endured to reach this point have been clearly laid out. To grow from a girl into a woman requires self-control, a good education, and the resolution to take action in the midst of danger. While Alcott's fiction, especially that written for children, does not always require such physical daring, greater emphasis is placed on self-control and overcoming vices such as envy, timidity, vanity, and temper.

In Little Women, Alcott provides examples of girls who are brought up to be women, and of the rewards for those who truly succeed in growing up to be women. While no one's daughter may be exactly like a particular March girl, with the four models there is much to pick and choose from, and Alcott does something unique in that the path each girl takes to achieve maturity is not an exact duplicate of any of her sisters' choices. Joy Marsella notes that for the March girls the

biggest challenge is to develop self-control
...to improve themselves and thereby create
opportunities. They are bold enough to dare
to accomplish the difficult, the unusual,
yet they maintain the traditional feminine
values. In doing so, they prepare for the
choices they assume they will have as adults.
(131)

In the learning of life's lessons, all Alcott's female
characters achieve maturity through self-control or
mastery of a personal flaw or vice.

Beginning with Meg from Little Women, the reader
watches her struggle with envy both as a young woman and
later as a young wife. Meg is young and pretty and
longs for pretty things, an easy life, and the money
needed to provide both. When invited for a two-week
stay with a well-to-do family, the Moffits, she
thoroughly enjoys the good life until she overhears
comments made about her dress and appearance. When the
Moffits host a party during her stay, Meg gives in to
the persuasion of her young hostess and wears borrowed
finery and cosmetics. Yet in spite of all the finery,
Meg does not enjoy herself. The long skirt gets in the
way while she is dancing; she must take care not to trip
over it in her high-heeled boots. The gown's tight
lacing makes her flushed and unable to get a deep
breath. And the décolletage embarrasses her. To cover
up her embarrassment, she flirts with the young men who
had previously ignored her when she was more modestly

attired and defiantly drinks champagne. However, her tactics backfire, and she has a headache before the night is over and is ill the next day.

Upon returning home, Meg confesses to Marmee with Jo present what she did and why she did it. Marmee responds by telling Meg what she hopes for her girls' future in terms that are at odds with the social expectations of families like the Moffits. Marmee tell her that

"I want my daughters to be beautiful, accomplished, and good; to be admired, loved, and respected; to have a happy youth, to be well and wisely married, and to lead useful, pleasant lives, with as little care and sorrow to try them as God sees fit to send....My dear girls, I *am* ambitious for you, but not to have you make a dash in the world,--marry rich men merely because they are rich, or have splendid houses, which are not homes because love is wanting. Money is a needful and precious thing, --and, when well used, a noble thing,--but I never want you to think it is the first or only prize to strive for. I'd rather see you poor men's wives, if you were happy, beloved, contented, than queens on thrones, without self-respect and peace." (118)

Meg is not quite convinced yet, and repeats the advice that she was given at the Moffits that if a poor girl wants to advance in society, be accepted, and possibly get a husband, she must be bold and not retiring. Jo is not impressed and says so to Meg, and Marmee agrees with her second daughter: "'Right, Jo; better be happy old maids than unhappy wives, or unmaidenly girls, running about to find husbands'" (118). Inspired by their

mother, Meg and Jo both resolve to make their parents proud of them. Meg begins to learn that while she cannot control others, what they think or say, she can control herself.

For Meg, though, the lesson of envy is not yet thoroughly mastered, and her envy gets her into trouble in her marriage later on. With Meg and John's marriage, Alcott does not stop with the traditional and-they-lived-happily-ever-after ending. Although Meg comments at one point after her marriage that she is now on a shelf out of life's action and turmoil, Alcott does not leave her out of the novel's action; her young marriage has plenty of turmoil of its own and supplies the novel with lively scenes. In this instance the lack of money for the nice things that others have goads Meg to spend too much, culminating in a shopping spree of fifty dollars for twenty-five yards of silk. Realizing that she has spent too much money, Meg confesses to John and defends her actions by saying:

"I know you are angry, John, but I can't help it. I don't mean to waste your money, and I didn't think those little things would count up so. I can't resist them when I see Sallie buying all she wants, and pitying me because I don't. I try to be contented, but it is hard, and I'm tired of being poor." (318)

Reproached by his wife for his poverty (a Victorian middle-class poverty and not doing without shelter, food, or clothing), John remains in control of his

temper, takes responsibility for his position as provider, and calmly says: "'I was afraid of this; I do my best, Meg.'" Alcott shows that John is the stronger character here: "if he had scolded her, or even shaken her, it would not have broken her heart like those few words" (318). If John comes out better than Meg in this exchange, it is because he has already learned greater self-control than his young wife has.

This is Meg's last encounter with envy. Realizing that her husband must now do without necessities like a coat to provide silk for her, Meg swallows her pride and asks Sallie Moffit to buy the silk yardage from her. Meg then uses the money to buy the overcoat her husband needs. Although the novel does not give a didactic moral lesson at this point like the one earlier from Marmee, the very absence of any further scenes about Meg and the trouble envy gets her into suggests that Meg no longer struggles with her vice. While it might not be accurate to claim self-control such as Gertrude masters, Meg does learn to control her envy.

Beth is the next March sister to learn to control her own personal vice, fear or cowardice. The young Beth has been timid, retiring, and fearful throughout the novel. Even her great passion, music, is not enough to bring her completely out of her shell. When allowed to use the grand piano in the Lawrence mansion, Beth

only goes when she is assured that no one will see her. Knowing that her fear robs her of any enjoyment, the elder Mr. Lawrence buys a parlor piano which Beth can use at home. Without the worry of disturbing others or of "being seen," Beth can delight herself with her music in safe and familiar surroundings. Although willing to play for visitors to the March home, Beth is unable to display her talent in any public manner. Yet in facing her illness and subsequent death, she shows remarkable courage.

In the two short chapters devoted to Beth's lingering illness and premature death, Alcott requires that the reader approach these scenes from a Christian perspective. By using such words as "faith," "piety," and "submission," Alcott is not merely requiring feminine submission to patriarchal authority, but a human submission to the will of a divine creator. What Beth masters all people must eventually face. While many critics claim that Beth belongs to that Victorian category of saintly children who die early because they are too good for this world, such an interpretation overlooks the struggle Beth has with relinquishing life and accepting death. In the chapter entitled "Beth's Secret," Jo takes Beth to the seaside for a rest; everyone hopes that this vacation and change of scene will help the tired Beth regain her health and spirits,

but instead Jo and the reader learn that Beth is dying and knows it. At first Jo is unable and unwilling to let Beth die without a fight, and the narrator takes pains to show the reader that Beth's example in facing death, while correct, is not easily achieved. The narrator explains "she could not say, 'I'm glad to go,' for life was very sweet to her; she could only sob out, 'I try to be willing,' while she held fast to Jo, as the first bitter wave of this great sorrow broke over them together" (412). Many of the word choices for this passage prevent Beth's quick and unexamined induction into a heaven for saintly children. Although she does manage at last to be courageous and accept death, the human side of this nineteen-year-old is still present. She worries that even in heaven she will be homesick, and she wants Jo to tell their parents the truth: she is not getting any better. In "The Valley of the Shadow," Beth stays serene for the most part, yet continues to struggle with weariness, trouble, and pain. Toward the end of the ordeal the narrator exclaims,

Ah me! such heavy days, such long, long nights, such aching hearts and imploring prayers, when those who loved her best were forced to see the thin hands stretched out to them beseechingly, to hear the bitter cry, "Help me, help me!" and to feel that there was no help. A sad eclipse of the serene soul, a sharp struggle of the young life with death;... (455-6)

Again, word choices such as "bitter cry," "sad eclipse," and "sharp struggle" prevent a stereotypical reading of Beth's death. That Beth is triumphant and finally faces death serenely, does not diminish the effort it takes to achieve such a feat. And the narrator further deflects any overt sentimentality with the comment that "Seldom, except in books, do the dying utter memorable words, see visions, or depart with beatified countenances..."

(459). Beth simply dies quietly in her sleep, exhausted by pain but without any fear of death.

Amy's success with self-control over her vanity is not as easily rendered from the text with overt moral lessons, but as she masters herself, she gains control over both her circumstances and her future husband, Laurie. From the beginning Amy complains about her lot in life. She wants what the other girls at school have, so she is envious, but not to the extent that Meg is. And she has a temper like Jo's, which she reveals when she burns her sister's manuscript in revenge. Yet vanity is uniquely her character flaw. As a child, Amy goes to bed at night with a clothes pin on her pug nose, hoping to straighten it out. And even though her vanity focuses on a desire for personal beauty, it also extends to her social status and her art. This vanity is the flaw which she must learn to control before she achieves maturity and can control those about her. Fortunately

for Amy, she masters her vanity and pride more quickly than her sisters overcome their own flaws.

The first situation that Amy's vanity gets her into results during the party that she wants to put on for several young society misses with whom she has made friends in drawing class. Marmee counsels Amy that to offer her friends simple foods and entertainments would be better than spending her savings on things that her wealthier friends take for granted. But Amy insists that the luncheon be "proper and elegant" with such delicacies as tongue, chicken, chocolate, and ice cream. With the meal prepared, the day begins expectantly, but a rainshower keeps any guests from coming. The next day only one guest out of the expected twelve or fourteen comes, and to save Amy embarrassment, the family quickly scales back luncheon. "'Run, Beth, and help Hannah clear half the things off the table; it will be too absurd to put a luncheon for twelve before a single girl,' cried Jo" (297). Yet in spite of the near fiasco, she takes her party's failure in stride and later even learns to laugh about it. Indeed, as the narrator makes clear, Amy stands to learn important lessons from the luncheon's failure:

"My lady," as her friends called her, sincerely desired to be a genuine lady, and was so at heart, but had yet to learn that money cannot buy refinement of nature, that rank does not

always confer nobility, and that true breeding makes itself felt in spite of external drawbacks. (290)

The next element that Amy overcomes is her pride in and vanity about her art. Amy is asked to participate in "Mrs. Chester's fair...so very elegant and select that it was considered a great honor by the young ladies of the neighborhood to be invited to take a table..."

(335). Amy is given a place of honor at the head table with Mrs. Chester's daughters, but as May Chester becomes increasingly jealous of Amy, she prompts her mother to ask Amy to take another table. Hurt and confused by her sudden demotion, Amy tries to be gracious, but when offered her art objects back to decorate her own table with, Amy reacts rashly, "'Oh, certainly, if they are in your way;' and sweeping her contributions into her apron, pell-mell, she walk[s] off..." (337). Amy has been reassigned to the flower table which in summer is not a popular table, and to add insult to injury, the flowers are wilting with the heat. Amy, however, does her best not to complain, and the next morning as the fair begins, she sees a reminder to "love thy neighbor as thyself." This prompts her to give May back the pen and ink drawings which she had earlier removed when she overhears May complain that there is no time to replace the loss of Amy's work from the art table; the art table suffers by their absence.

May accepts, but what reply she makes is drowned out by another who claims spitefully that of course it is nice of Amy to return those drawings, "'...for she knew she wouldn't sell them at her own table'" (339). Again, Amy's vanity or pride in her work is prodded, and she is tempted to respond to this sally. Instead, she holds her tongue. In the end Amy triumphs for two reasons: first, her family with the help of Laurie and his college friends make Amy's table a success at the fair, and second, because Amy has held her tongue and not reacted spitefully, she becomes more gracious, more like the Christian lady that her mother is. Later Amy explains herself to her family:

"You laugh at me when I say I want to be a lady, but I mean a true gentlewoman in mind and manners, and I try to do it as far as I know how. I can't explain it exactly, but I want to be above the little meannesses and follies and faults that spoil so many women. I'm far from it now, but I do my best, and hope in time to be what mother is." (343)

Amy's trials are not necessarily easier to bear than any that her sisters face as each girl struggles with areas that are particularly hard for her. But Amy does seem to learn more quickly.

Finally, the last of Amy's vanity is removed by her trip to Rome. Before she goes, she tells her family that this trip abroad with her aunts will decide her future. "'It isn't a mere pleasure trip to me, girls,'

she said impressively, as she scraped her best palette. 'It will decide my career; for if I have any genius, I shall find it out in Rome, and will do something to prove it'" (345). Later when she and Laurie meet abroad, he asks her when she will begin her great work in art. "'Never," she answer[s] with a despondent but decided air. 'Rome took all the vanity out of me; for after seeing all the wonders there, I felt too insignificant to live, and gave up all my foolish hopes in despair'" (445). Since she does not intend to be a second-rate artist, Amy decides that "talent isn't genius" and claims that since she cannot be great, she will be nothing. Her reckless air wins Laurie's approval, but she has a different agenda. Tired of his laziness and self-pity over the loss of Jo, she disapproves of Laurie who has been wasting his time, talents, and energy.

Since Amy has mastered her besetting sin, vanity, she can lecture Laurie about his, sloth. She gives him a good "stirring up" with his permission, but he only laughs at her. Amy chides him: "'You men tell us [women] we are angels, and say that we can make you what we will; but the instant we honestly try to do you good, you laugh at us, and won't listen, which proves how much your flattery is worth'" (448). Eventually, Amy's self-control prompts Laurie to develop some discipline of his

own, for her appraisal of his present character is more accurate than he would like to admit.

Jo is the last March sister to learn to control herself, especially her temper. Alcott's portrayal of Jo does not depend on sentimental views of childhood or femininity as necessarily pure or innocent. Charles Strickland in Victorian Domesticity: Families in the Life and Art of Louisa May Alcott claims that Alcott believes "children are as capable as adults of anger, jealousy, and pride. They must be brought, by 'gentle measures' to be sure, to the place where they can conquer their little sins through the strength of will" (125). As seen in Gertrude Flint, anger is not easily mastered, and as Jo has the least teachable spirit of her sisters, learning to control her temper takes her longer. Time and again, giving way to her anger and quick tongue causes Jo much pain and later remorse, and even hurts others as well.

The first time we see Jo vent her anger in the novel it almost leads to Amy's death. Jo and Amy have a history of teasing and provoking each other, and the narrator comments that "although the oldest, Jo had the least self-control" (93). The conflict begins when Meg and Jo are invited by Laurie to go to the theater. Amy, who has been sick, wants to go and has the money to pay her own way, but as Meg is not quick enough to arrange

Amy's inclusion for the outing, and Jo is especially adamant that she not tag along, Amy gets left behind. On the way out the door, Jo hears Amy threaten, "'You'll be sorry for this, Jo March; see if you ain't'" (93). So when Jo discovers the next day that Amy has burned her only copy of the manuscript she was working on, Jo reacts with violent anger, shaking Amy and boxing her ears. Although Amy is persuaded to ask for forgiveness, Jo does not give it. As Amy puts on self-righteous airs, Jo further hardens her heart to the point that when Amy follows Jo and Laurie skating, Jo refuses to warn her little sister about the thinning ice at the center of the river. Consequently, Amy falls through it in her attempt to catch up with Jo and Laurie. Even though the rescue is successful, Jo realizes not only that Amy could have drowned, but also that she could still become very ill by catching a cold or worse. Jo confesses to her mother, "'It's my dreadful temper! I try to cure it; I think I have, and then it breaks out worse than ever. O mother, what shall I do? what shall I do?'" (98). Her mother responds with a long lecture about patience, prayer, and self-control through an extended example of her own struggle to master angry words. Although Jo agrees with what her mother tells her, it takes the rest of this novel and most of the sequel for her to master her temper.

The second time Jo loses her temper is much less dramatic, and the only one hurt by it is Jo herself. While making social calls with Amy, something Jo hates to do, she makes several casual and brusque remarks in her aunts' presence that she "hates to be patronized" and says outright, "'I don't like favors; they oppress and make me feel like a slave. I'd rather do everything for myself, and be perfectly independent'" (333). Later when Marmee tells Jo that Amy and not she is to accompany the aunts abroad, Jo complains that it is not fair because she is older than Amy and ought to go first. However, as soon as Jo is reminded of her earlier words before her aunts, she laments, "'Oh, my tongue, my abominable tongue! why can't I learn to keep it quiet?'" (344). But Jo learns to hold her tongue for Amy's sake and not mar Amy's excitement with her own disappointment in being passed over for this trip to Europe. Although the angry words do not get her into trouble, they do deprive her of a long desired treat. When she realizes her fault, she does take responsibility for it even though she cannot yet control it.

Finally, Jo achieves self-control, but this attribute comes only after much suffering, self-sacrificing, and even loneliness. Although such words as "self-control" do not appear in relation to Jo in the

novel, she becomes subdued, thinks of others before herself, and has learned to be a cheerful giver. The combination of these attributes not only reveals how hard the knocks were that she took while learning self-control, but also how much she has achieved. Throughout the novel, Jo has been at odds with society, people, and even friends and family. Stubborn, willful, proud, and quick to explode, Jo only makes things more difficult for herself. In learning to control her temper, she learns to control her words, which in turn makes her appear less proud and stubborn to others. As her example to lay down her own will and accept God's will is found in Beth and not just Marmee, the self-sacrificing attitude Jo cultivates is the result of a Christian perspective and not a patriarchal one; Jo does not cultivate passivity to achieve feminine acceptance in patriarchal society, but instead cultivates patience, a Christian virtue. When all of her new traits are compiled, Jo's self-control is assured. Although in another novel, Little Men, a matronly Jo says she needs to learn patience, such a claim is not entirely true; what is needed is not patience, which she already has, but patience in even greater measure.

As the March sisters learn to master their personal flaws, they replace vices with virtues, becoming better,

stronger women who can manage a home, face death, reform a man, or open a school with success and courage. When they know that they are right, these women do not back down, mince their words, or lose heart. The examples provided by their fictional lives spell out the means that one can use to shape girls differently from the traditional or "proper" social expectations. According to Charles Strickland, Alcott creates this unique view of women best in her children's literature:

As a writer, Alcott was a consummate professional. She kept firmly in mind the character of her audience as she wrote, and each type of literature--literary, juvenile, and sensational--reflected...a different image of young womanhood. Surprisingly, it was not her juvenile fiction that proved to be the most conventional.... For the children she created an entirely new image of woman, neither sentimental nor sensational... (58)

Each girl earns money through her own talents and abilities, and their parents encourage them in these efforts. Marmee has other objectives than simply marriage for her daughters. And most of all, the four young women come to grips with their character flaws through self-control. Once they learn to control themselves, they are equipped to control others.

How Not to Bring Up Girls to Be Women:
A Southern Critique

Contrary to Alcott and Cummins, Glasgow depicts a negative female pedagogy in Virginia and The Sheltered Life. Just like Gerty and the March girls, Virginia Pendleton and Jenny Blair Archbald are supposed to fulfill specific roles. The difference lies in their being brought up to be ladies rather than adult women. While social institutions such as the family provide Northern mothers with a forum in which they can shape and mold future women to be strong and capable, the same institution in the South limits Southern mothers to perpetuating replicas of the Southern lady. Accordingly, the theme of self-control takes a different path in the South. Northern women may be taught to control themselves, especially their emotions, but Southern women are not given such autonomy; they are controlled by external forces such as education, social institutions (especially marriage), and familial expectations. A perfect Southern lady such as Virginia internalizes these external forces so thoroughly that she seems to be self-controlled, but as the epitome of a flawed lady, Jenny Blair throws off all control whatsoever, either external or internal.

As mentioned in Chapter II, the Southern lady is a mixture of good and bad--the two cannot be separated,

but always go together. The broad category of the Southern lady in society and fiction is comprised of wives, mothers, widows, and even spinsters who seek to uphold and perpetuate the social institutions of the South. When things go wrong or are left incomplete in the training of the Southern lady, then variations such as the invalid, flawed lady, Southern belle, or Southern flapper arise. So when Jenny Blair follows the example of Eva Birdsong and not her mother, she grows up not just as a Southern lady, which would be bad enough, but more specifically she grows up to be a flawed lady who destroys those about her, especially those she claims to love. Virginia, on the other hand, is the epitome of the Southern lady, and reveals how ladies are "dangerously unfit for real life" even when their education is all that it should be and they themselves achieve the perfection expected by their society, family, and mate.

Through her education, Virginia is instructed how to uphold the myth of the Southern lady, and the result is that she is "made for love." Both the social institutions of her time and the example of her mother keep Virginia firmly in her prescribed role, and no rebellion is strong enough to overcome years of indoctrination. The external controls which have taught Virginia her place and have kept her there for over

thirty years cannot be broken, because to go against all that she has been taught will negate her existence as a Southern lady.

Virginia's formal education takes place under the supervision of Miss Priscilla Batte, who is "capable of dying for an idea but not of conceiving one" (10), at the Academy for Young Ladies in Dinwiddie, Virginia. This training is not desired so much for its intellectual rigor as for its cultivation of an exacting moral deportment:

...it was earnestly believed that no girl, after leaving ... with a diploma for good conduct, could possibly go wrong or become eccentric in her later years. To be sure, she might remain a trifle weak in her spelling (Miss Priscilla having, as she confessed a poor head for that branch of study), but, after all, as the rector had once remarked, good spelling was by no means a necessary accomplishment for a lady; and, for the rest, it was certain that the moral education of a pupil of the Academy would be firmly rooted in such fundamental verities as the superiority of man and the aristocratic supremacy of the Episcopal Church. (9)

Later, when Virginia firmly states an opinion in support of her young lover, Oliver Treadwell, her resolution surprises her former teacher, Miss Batte, who after a brief lecture to Virginia worries that the girl might be "getting to know things" (17). However, the formal training that Virginia has received at the hands of Miss Batte herself, reassures the reader that no such thing would or could happen:

The chief object of her upbringing, which differed in no essential particular from that of every other well-bred Southern woman of her day, was to paralyze her reasoning faculties so completely that all danger of mental "unsettling" or even movement was eliminated from her future. To solidify the forces of mind into the inherited mould of fixed beliefs was, in the opinion of the age, to achieve the definite end of all education. (17)

Virginia never for an instant breaks completely free from this educational foundation, and when she does exhibit moments of insight it is only through her emotions and instincts and not her intelligence or mental abilities. The training which has paralyzed her intellect controls how she perceives herself and her role in the world around her.

In addition to being perfectly educated, Virginia is fitted for her one true role in life, to be loved. The Southern lady belongs on a pedestal to be worshipped and adored by the patriarchal society that put her there. Virginia is more than just a Southern beauty--she has become the living breathing ideal which she was modeled after:

...it was easy to discern that she embodied the feminine ideal of the ages. To look at her was to think inevitably of love. For that end, obedient to the powers of Life, the centuries had formed and coloured her, as they had formed and coloured the wild rose with its whorl of delicate petals. The air of spoiled beauty which rested not ungracefully upon her was sweetened by her expression of natural simplicity and goodness. (4-5)

For as long as Virginia is beautiful and embodies this feminine ideal, Oliver loves her. Only when her beauty begins to fade, does he lose interest in her. Oliver wants a pretty wife to love and serve him directly as this feeds his ego and selfishness. What he has in Virginia is a woman who is tired and worn out because she serves him indirectly through being the mother of his children.

Virginia's problem lies in the inherent contradictions of being both wife and mother as social expectations and the example of her own mother lock her into one possible mode of existence--the self-sacrificing mother. The contradiction lies in the role conflict inherent in being both a wife and a mother simultaneously. Indeed, these two roles have pluralistic dimensions often overlooked. For example, a wife is also friend, lover, companion, hostess, housekeeper, social secretary and more. In addition, a mother is a nurse, teacher, counselor, friend, mentor, role model, etc. As Elizabeth Janeway in Man's World, Woman's Place: A Study in Social Mythology notes, "sometimes different roles demand different responses at the same moment" (86). Yet Virginia is not taught this.

Instead, Virginia grows up with a mother who sacrifices herself for her husband and daughter. Lucy Pendleton does not allow her husband Gabriel to help her

with the dishes. In fact, she rises before dawn to do the housework, believing that if no one actually sees her do the work, she can remain a lady in everyone's eyes despite their poverty. Through her example, Mrs. Pendleton teaches her daughter how to live the life of a self-sacrificing wife and mother--a lesson which Virginia takes to heart and repeats with unerring exactness. "She let her mother slave over her because she had been born into a world where the slaving of mothers was a part of the natural order..." (41). In turn, Virginia grows up to slave for her own children, and just like Virginia, they take their mother for granted as well.

The need for different responses at the same time finally renders Virginia powerless; her conflicting roles of wife and mother continue to paralyze her even more effectively than her earlier training does. Unfortunately, both Virginia and Oliver have different expectations for their marriage, and they continually frustrate each other. According to Louis Auchincloss in Pioneers and Caretakers, Virginia was "brought up to be the model wife that every Southern gentleman was supposed to desire, and may have desired--twenty years before her birth" (70). Auchincloss claims that

from the very beginning...Virginia's parents and teachers are perfectly united in their unconscious aim of turning her into a creature bound to be blighted by the world in which she must live. Her only hope would have been to find a husband (and there were such) who had been in his turn educated to appreciate her type. (71)

Her great misfortune and the ultimate failure of her marriage is that Oliver has not been "educated to appreciate her type." He has not grown up in the South, nor has he had the customs and traditions ingrained in him as the typical Southern gentleman would have; despite being of Southern stock, Oliver is not a true Southerner.

Having arrived in Dinwiddie, Virginia from Australia at the age of twenty-two, Oliver has missed the acculturation that men like John Henry or Gabriel Pendleton have had. Reverend Pendleton has the grace not to notice his wife's loss of beauty because she has lost it in serving him: caring for his needs, keeping his house, bearing his children, and rearing his one surviving daughter. After thirty years of marriage, he still sees his wife as she appeared the day they first met:

It is doubtful if he had seen any change in her since he had first looked upon her face, and thought it almost unearthly in its angelic fairness.... he saw her always as she had appeared to him on that first morning, as if the pool of sunlight in which she had stood had never darkened around her. (112)

Unfortunately for Virginia, Oliver is not as forgiving; he notices the loss of beauty, and even ungallantly remarks on it. He does not like it that Virginia has spoiled her looks with hard work to care for him and the children. He asks, "'What have you done to your hands? They used to be so pretty?'" (229). Virginia replies meekly that it is hard to keep her hands white and soft while she mentally flashes through an inventory of housework, child rearing, and laundry that has roughened and reddened her hands. Although she cannot say it aloud, "her heart cried, 'What do my hands matter when it is for your sake that I have spoiled them?'" (230). Oliver wants a wife--someone who is exclusively devoted to him and who keeps herself pretty to attract him.

However, Virginia cannot serve Oliver first because she is being controlled by the social institutions of the South. The blindness that Gabriel Pendleton exhibits in refusing to see the aging and physical deterioration of his wife comes from the paternalistic ideals underlying the role of the lady. Supporters of this feminine ideal must have realized that if women are expected to slave for others, then the women who conform must be praised and admired. What woman would sacrifice her youth and beauty in the service of a man if she could be discarded when those attributes were gone? Mrs. Pendleton works unceasingly for over thirty years

secure in the knowledge that her husband would never leave her except in death. Virginia, too, adheres to the belief of "till death us do part"--but Oliver, who did not grow up in the South, does not.

Virginia's dilemma with Abby Goode and the fox hunt reveals an excellent example of the role conflict. First of all, as a wife and lover Virginia is expected to be jealous and strive to win back Oliver's regard and admiration. Not only must she keep her reputation spotless, but she must also ensure that her husband does not stray. Additionally, as a mother of three small children, Virginia should refrain from activities, however much she might enjoy them, that could cause an injury, making her unable to care for her children and home. Although it looks as if Virginia might escape the narrow confines of Southern marriage and learn to please her husband and take better care of herself, the fox hunt only serves to draw the noose tighter about Virginia; social expectations serve to hold her more firmly to her prescribed role of motherhood. While her passions are aroused and her natural color is high, she rides to the finish and even receives the fox's tail in tribute to her daring. Oliver is impressed and pleads with her to spend more time as his companion; in the thrill of the moment, she gives in and agrees. But the next chapter completely undermines all advances in this

area. When her young son complains that he does not feel well, she stays with her children and does not go to Atlantic City, disappointing Oliver. Later that weekend, Harry becomes desperately ill, and Virginia knows that her place must be with her children and not her husband.

While the role conflict may not seem like much, when Virginia's situation is compared to that of Meg's from Little Women, the advice each woman gets from her mother makes the distinction very clear. Mrs. Pendleton carries gossip to her daughter, confronting her with what the neighbors are saying about Oliver riding out daily with Abby Goode. Her mother expects Virginia to put a stop to the gossip by preventing Oliver from riding anymore with an unmarried woman. Virginia cannot deprive Oliver and knows that if the outings were to stop suddenly, it would prove everyone's speculations were correct. Instead, Virginia's solution is to join them and therefore lend her countenance to the activity. Immediately, Mrs. Pendleton exclaims in horror, "'But the children, dear--and then, oh, Jinny, you might get hurt'" (236). Her mother makes the conflict clear and forces Virginia to choose between her husband and her babies.

In Little Women, Marmee is more helpful than Mrs. Pendleton. Meg needs help with the babies; they are

wearing her out. John needs to feel wanted and appreciated to keep him at home. As it is, the young mother is tired and cranky when John arrives home, so he has taken to visiting a friend and enjoying companionship and conversation at another hearth. Meg, expecting that Marmee will tell her that she is doing all she can and that John is in the wrong, gets a lecture from her mother instead. Marmee explains that it is the wife's job to keep her husband happy; she should meet him at the door and be a charming companion so that he does not go looking elsewhere for fun or friendship; most of all she is to educate herself so that she can talk to her husband and exchange ideas with him. By doing so the wife ensures that the children's father is home where he belongs, takes an active role in raising his children, and finds a companion in his wife. In effect Marmee's advice encourages Meg to continue to attract her husband, be a companion, and be a friend.

Yet Virginia is not counseled to serve her husband directly as a wife, but indirectly as the mother of his children. Due to the paternalism of Southern institutions and the ideal of the lady, Virginia is taught to focus on her role as mother. Despite the fact that she must become a wife first, being a mother is the crowning virtue or ultimate goal of every woman. Mother is the nobler role over that of the wife/lover. In

Ellen Glasgow and the Ironic Art of Fiction, Frederick McDowell comments that

the conflict between the sexual drive and the maternal...reveals how they are to some degree mutually exclusive. According to the Victorian standards observed in Virginia during the 1880s and 1890s, the responsibilities of motherhood precluded any further need for a woman to seek self-realization, even in sex itself. (112)

Virginia has been taught to believe that in serving her children, she serves their father. Therefore, her duty must be to her children first and her husband second, or in Oliver's case, fourth because she has three children. Since Oliver does not share this uniquely Southern perspective about the role of wife and mother, he tries to persuade Virginia to accompany him on weekend trips and rides in fox hunts. He would prefer Virginia to serve him directly. While Marmee cautions Meg to do a bit of both by including her husband in the nursery and making sure she spends time with him, Virginia is immobilized because she cannot resolve the conflict and must choose between her roles. When she chooses motherhood, she ultimately sacrifices her marriage.

In the end, Virginia, still wearing the hairstyle of her youth, is left by both her children and her husband. Her eldest daughter Lucy, named for Virginia's mother, has just married to an older man, a wealthy widower. Jenny, her youngest daughter, is a coldly

modern and independent young woman who does her duty by her mother but fails to sympathize with her. And Oliver, still fit and vigorous, wants a divorce and leaves Virginia for a woman who interests him. Only her son Harry does not fail Virginia. Although the announcement of Harry's return to his mother's side may be sentimental, it stems from Harry's nature as a Southern gentleman.

Again, Southern institutions are at work keeping Virginia in her prescribed role. Harry does not fail Virginia because he grew up in the South and learned the traditions of his society, traditions which Oliver misses when he grows up in Australia instead of Virginia. So the telegram announcing his return home is the honorable and chivalrous act of a true Southern gentleman coming to the rescue of the most innocent and helpless of creatures, his mother. While Glasgow's irony may be softening to sympathy--she too was a Southern woman held in check by Southern institutions--the force which compels Virginia to be only a mother is still at work.

Being brought up to be a lady, being taught the traditions, standards, and ideals of a myth, and accepting, even conforming to, the traditional role of a Southern lady, Virginia is socially scripted by the

gender ideology of the South. Pamela Matthews in Ellen Glasgow and a Woman's Traditions notes that

originally intending to damn a woman's tradition that relegated Virginia to self-less inaction and to denounce the women who freely accepted this role, Glasgow, in creating her character, came to see the practical impossibility of Virginia's ever being otherwise than she had been defined by the patriarchal world, here that of the Reconstruction-era South. ...Virginia's participation in her own loss of self results from the subtle but strong internalizing of social standards. (74)

The socially scripted role assigned to Virginia is ultimately motherhood. Once directed toward marriage and motherhood, she receives no training in anything else, nor is she ever encouraged to look beyond the limitations of those roles. If a woman must sacrifice her role as a wife to be a mother, then she cannot expect to fall back on that role after her children leave home. Motherhood may be the most sanctified role a woman could fulfill, but after her children grow up, she has nothing left to do. In effect, she becomes useless.

The opposite of Virginia is Jenny Blair Archbald of The Sheltered Life. Jenny Blair, with her sheltered upbringing, neither accepts any outward control nor develops any inner self-control of her emotions or sensual self. She lives only for sensation. From the opening pages where she is skipping and singing "'I'm

alive, alive, alive, and I'm Jenny Blair Archbald'" because nothing else has "ever given her such a pure ecstasy" (4) to the final moments when she enjoys tormenting herself with her infatuation for George Birdsong, Jenny Blair wants to feel and experience emotions. Strangely enough, the nine year old Jenny Blair has been coaxed into reading Little Women for a penny a page, but she is not impressed. She murmurs, "'Well, even if Mamma did form her character on Meg and Jo, I think they're just poky old things.... Mamma may call the Marches lots of fun, but I'm different. I'm different'" (3). Jenny Blair is correct in her assessment; she is different in that she not only lacks self-control, but also refuses to accept any outside control such as propriety, dignity, or sympathy to check or guide her behavior. The young girl has been too carefully sheltered and has preferred to develop emotional responses and sensations over discipline or character.

Very early in life, Jenny Blair decides to forgo character in favor of excitement. According to Pamela Matthews, "the opening chapter of The Sheltered Life... emphasizes the separations between generations represented by Jenny Blair Archbald and her mother" (180). She does not care for Meg and Jo March precisely because her mother, Cora Archbald, is trying to "form

her character" by bribing her to read the book. Jenny Blair prefers drama, melodrama, or excitement and has no patience with character. While reading Little Women, she becomes bored when the scene between Jo and Amy does not end with Amy's death in the icy river; without the catastrophe to enliven the story, the characters remain just "poky old things." Jenny Blair is likely to skip boring sections in the books she reads--anything that has to do with character bores her: "...but Jenny Blair was not interested in character, and was inclined to skip it whenever she saw it approaching, especially in books, where, she had learned from tedious experience, it was apt to interfere with the love story" (53). Although this is only Jenny Blair's response to fiction, others see the lack of character in her. Her Grandfather, General Archbald, takes stock of the maturing Jenny Blair and notes a wildness about her as though a winged thing is trapped inside her. "Wildness there had been always, and would be always, he supposed, only the vague wildness of Jenny Blair lacked, he felt, both dignity and direction" (129). Her mother also notices a lack of development in the girl, and it worries her, but only vaguely. She tells her daughter, "'Yes, run away. I suppose, after all, it is only your youth that makes me think you lack something. In a few years, after your character is formed, I may feel safer

about you'" (265). The irony is that Jenny Blair is seventeen almost eighteen, but because she is not officially "out," she can still be dismissed as a child. So while Jenny Blair has not cultivated any self-control for herself, neither have her elders done much to control her or teach her self-control.

Instead of control, Jenny Blair craves excitement, and in the opening of the novel, the Archbalds are currently living with a great deal of excitement. Her youngest aunt, Isabella, has broken her engagement. Under a cloud of suspicion with both her family and her society for possibly flouting propriety, Isabella storms through the house and plays passionate outbursts on the piano. Her sister-in-law may chide her for such behavior, but she has her niece's admiration. From Jenny Blair's perspective the reader learns that

In her beauty and anger she [Isabella] was magnificent. Nothing, not even the royal air with which Mrs. Birdsong swept up the aisle in church and sank rustling on her knees, had ever made such delicious thrills flicker up and down Jenny Blair's spine. It might not be conduct, she told herself, but it was splendid. With her genuine gift for imitation, she decided that she would try her best to have a broken engagement, when she grew up, and to be passionate and defiant while she struck false notes on the piano. (11)

Jenny Blair enjoys the sensation of "delicious thrills" and really is not much concerned with Isabella's emotional state unless it provides excitement for her.

Her first adventure also provides both excitement and a secret. Skating on Canal Street where her mother expressly forbade her to go, Jenny Blair trips on the uneven sidewalk and hits her head. After being tended by Memoria, a mulatto laundress and George Birdsong's mistress, George walks the nine-year-old Jenny Blair home. Realizing that the child might innocently tell others, especially his wife Eva, where they met, George makes a deal with Jenny Blair; they need a special secret of their own. She agrees not to tell anyone about skating on Canal Street (which she should not have been doing in the first place) and meeting George at Memoria's house. As a reward, George Birdsong praises the girl in a "caressing tone" and this produces quite a thrill in her:

Intoxicated by his praise, she blushed over her thin little face and turned her eyes again to the sunset. Instead of moving on, as she had expected him to do, he sank back, still holding her hand, on the edge of the plank. Was it possible...to feel happier than she felt sitting there on the pile of lumber, with Mr. Birdsong beside her? When her blushes had ceased tingling, her eyes wavered back to his face....(47)

Jenny Blair learns very early to appreciate masculine admiration, especially from George Birdsong. Julius Rowan Raper in From the Sunken Garden: The Fiction of Ellen Glasgow, 1916-1945, claims that George Birdsong is partly responsible for the young woman Jenny Blair

becomes because "he molds the need of the not very pretty little girl for a father into the need for a lover" (141). This childhood crush is nothing to worry about when she is only nine, but at eighteen, Jenny Blair's overdeveloped fancy becomes very dangerous in a young woman.

In addition to craving excitement, Jenny Blair is also young for her age because she has been so sheltered. Many of her elders notice Jenny Blair's immaturity, but no one does anything about it. Her mother remarks, "'The trouble with you, Jenny Blair, is that you do not know the first thing about life. It is only by knowing how little life has in store for us that we are able to look on the bright side and avoid disappointment'" (240). Yet her mother is one of the people who have worked so hard to keep Jenny Blair innocent. The only way she can learn things is to eavesdrop on the adult conversations around her, and while Cora Archbald cautions others to be careful about what they say--"'Don't speak too plainly, or Jenny Blair might catch on'" (12)--Jenny Blair learns more than she is supposed to. Unfortunately, no one helps her interpret what she hears, and without restraint, she makes her own decisions, such as giving in to the desire "to live [her] own life untrammeled by consideration for others" (131). Instead of replacing vices or personal

flaws with self-control like Meg and Jo, Jenny Blair begins to cultivate selfishness.

As a result, her sheltered life produces a self-absorption. Just as she did as a child, the teen-aged Jenny Blair remains fixated on her own emotional responses and sensations. The most obvious consequence of Jenny Blair's self-absorption is her inability to feel sympathy for anyone. Despite having just had a conversation with her Aunt Etta, Jenny Blair can forget everyone except herself in the time it takes her to cross the hall to her own room:

...her own inner self absorbed her attention. Obeying a confirmed habit, of which she was entirely unaware, she walked straight to the mirror and gazed at herself with admiration and a kind of unfailing surprise. There was a little smile tucked in at the corners of her mouth, and she tried to keep it there as long as she could, for it seemed to her very attractive, as if it were saying to men, "Come and catch me! Come and catch me!" (229)

Yet it is as a child that Jenny Blair makes the decision not to be sympathetic. Overhearing a conversation between her mother and her Aunt Etta, Jenny Blair learns of Etta's despair and pain over being a spinster, and in her bed she prays, "'Please, God, don't let me feel sorry any oftener than you are obliged to'" (63). If Jenny Blair does feel any sympathy, it is for Eva Birdsong. When Cora Archbald tells her father-in-law about Jenny Blair's wish to give her new blue and purple

kimono to Mrs. Birdsong, home recovering from an operation, the General remarks, "'I'm glad of that. I was beginning to think she was less sympathetic than I liked her to be'" (171). Even though Jenny Blair's self-absorption may be noticed, it is still unchecked.

If Jenny Blair is shallow and focused exclusively on her own feeling, she is only mimicking her mentor, Eva Birdsong. Mrs. Birdsong teaches Jenny Blair to love George, stimulates the girl's wildest fancies, and provides Jenny Blair with a model of how to enjoy suffering for something out of reach. As a key figure around which most of the action happens, Eva Birdsong is beautiful, much admired and oddly unreal. While watching old Jacob working in Mrs. Birdsong's garden before she returns from the hospital, Jenny Blair reflects on just what Eva means to her: "'How she would hate all that untidiness.' What Mrs. Birdsong meant to her, she felt vaguely, was order, beauty, perfection, and an unattainable ideal of living" (266). Yet the garden is in chaos because Eva Birdsong has not been there to keep things in order. Still a lovely woman, she is no longer the beauty she was at eighteen, and the operation has not only taken a toll on her beauty, but her perfection also. Lastly, if the ideal Eva has sought to live up to all her life is "unattainable," then success always eludes her. One piece at a time,

the reader learns how unstable the pedestal is on which the Southern lady rests; it is not strong enough to support a flesh and blood woman, but only a fantasy.

As the town of Queenborough's reigning beauty, an ultimate fantasy creation, Eva is qualified to teach Jenny Blair how to create fantasies and get others to live them (or at least act them out) with her. Jenny Blair witnesses a deftly managed and tragically enacted scene from the nursery. Eva has learned that George has slipped away from the party with a debutante, and so she falls ill--technically, she has a "spell." Jenny Blair is sent to find George out in the garden and tell him that Eva is ill. He immediately forgets Miss Delia Barron and hurries to his wife's side. Eva has suffered from a sudden faintness, and the hostess, Mrs. Peyton, exclaims that "'I am always uneasy about her heart when she has these attacks'" (90). Solicitous now that he knows she needs him, George prepares to take Eva home, but neither he nor Mrs. Peyton seem to notice Eva's face the way Jenny Blair does: she has "a tragic yet triumphant look in her face" (89-90). And when Eva consents to go home, her success is complete, and she exits as the victor:

"Yes, take me home," she said. "Take me home." That was all, but the words were ringed round with a flame, with the burning sweetness, the pure radiance, which flickered for a heartbeat, and then shone steadily in

her eyes, in her smile, in her flushed and transfigured face. (91)

Although Jenny Blair may not yet understand the scene enacted before her, she does recognize the power Eva Birdsong can wield and has seen Eva's face "transfigured" by emotion too.

Earlier, Jenny Blair had helped Eva select a gown to wear to the Peyton's ball. While reminiscing over her girlhood, Eva pumps Jenny Blair for gossip and learns that people think Eva gave up too much when she married George. Eva defends herself to the nine-year-old girl, claiming "'...that you can never give up too much for happiness'" (57). And when George joins them in Eva's room, Eva's passionate response to her husband provides Jenny Blair with a role model suited to the child's developing disposition. As George embraces his wife, she "...lifted her eyes to his [and] there was a luminous vibration in her look. Even the child noticed the change and wondered curiously what could have made her so happy" (60). The transformation comes from loving George, so when Jenny Blair wants to experience the tremulous emotions she imitates Eva and loves George.

However, when Eva tries to warn Jenny Blair not to give in completely to love, happiness, marriage, or even a man, it is too late; her disciple has bought the

fantasy completely and has already begun to enact it. Eva counsels, "'Whatever you do, Jenny Blair, never risk all your happiness on a single chance. Always keep something back, if it is only a crumb'" (271). Too many people for too long have contributed to Eva's fantasy; it takes a dedicated community to uphold a lady on her pedestal.

As the Archbald family watches Eva walking down their street from their drawing room window, the three women, Cora, Etta, and Isabella discuss Eva's marriage and her good looks. Cora Archbald wonders if Eva actually knows about her husband's infidelity, to which Etta queries, "'Who could have told her? Who would be so heartless?'" (19), and Isabella responds, "'I can't believe that she could look so happy if she suspected'" (19). But Eva does know because she is able to put on timely and masterful scenes of sudden faintness. As long as no one tells Eva, as long as George does not confess, Eva can safely ignore her husband's philandering; no one can or will reproach her for being less than completely feminine--unable to satisfy her husband. Eva Birdsong manages to fulfill her role because she conforms to her society's ideal of womanhood, and since she has accepted the role and has worked so hard to make it a reality, that society in turn strives to support or undergird the role as well.

Like Virginia Pendleton, Eva is controlled by outside forces such as gossip, propriety, and social status. She upholds her social consequence by developing dignity, grace, and charm to distract people from the holes or flaws in the ideal which she embodies. While most of her community is willing to aid Eva in portraying the Southern lady, her young relative John is not so complacent, and frequently states his mind. He believes that the pretense of being an ideal for more than twenty years is more likely to kill her than the operation. He says, "'Think what it must have cost her to keep up being an ideal for more than twenty years! You may talk about keeping up socially, but it doesn't touch the effort of keeping up emotionally'" (199). Eva has kept up emotionally because she has accepted the controlling forces her society puts on beautiful women; she may resent her role upon occasion, but she is unable to walk away from it because she wants the praise and admiration that go with being a lady.

Only Jenny Blair, who has not accepted any outside controlling force and who has not developed any self-control, can effectively absolve herself of both any wrong doing or personal responsibility; she is free from any restraint to act as she will. Even though she is eighteen, Jenny Blair still craves excitement and sensation. Lately, she has learned how to enjoy

suffering from an unrequited love, just as her mentor, Eva Birdsong has done majestically for twenty years. Unfortunately, what Eva does so well only makes Jenny Blair look petulant and ridiculous:

"Why is it," she asked herself, with tragic intensity, "that only young people are ever really unhappy?" . . . Why did she have to suffer such anguish when she expected nothing? Nothing but that glow, that flame, that ecstasy, which beat over her in waves whenever she looked into his eyes, whenever she heard his voice, whenever she stole into the cupboard and buried her flushed face in the brown wool. "It isn't my fault," she thought resentfully. "Nobody could wish to suffer like this. I didn't want to fall in love with him. I didn't want him to kiss me." (237)

Jenny Blair may be capable of deceiving herself, but no one else is fooled, certainly not the people who are on to her. George Birdsong, an inveterate womanizer, recognizes what she is up to, but like a hound on the trail of a fox, he cannot forgo the chase. Although he calls her a flirt, and even claims that she is dangerous because "' . . . innocence when it lives to be eighteen is wicked'" (262), he cannot refrain from kissing Jenny Blair on the three occasions when she tempts him. Jenny Blair tempts George the first time to test her power, but she continues her "innocent" quest for affection from George Birdsong because of the thrills and the tragedy.

Just like that winged thing which her grandfather believes is trapped inside Jenny Blair, she longs to be

free of restraint. Unfortunately, her actions are not without consequences, so she is not as "free" as she thinks. The second time she lures George into kissing her she looks "...at him with her wide, shallow, devouring gaze. ...her small, vivid mouth, which was round and open and insatiable, was as innocent of meaning as if the hole had been drawn with two hasty strokes of red chalk" (245). Like a newly hatched baby bird, Jenny Blair demands sustenance; not food for survival, but food to nourish her growing fancy. Animal imagery is used to describe Jenny Blair's mental state as she contemplates just what she wants from George Birdsong. Because she seeks nothing more than sensation, she does not know what she wants, and her thoughts are described as a squirrel running frantically around in a cage. Finally, after the last kiss when Eva sees George holding Jenny Blair in his arms, she gets that scene of which she was deprived while reading Little Women. As a child, Jenny Blair is disappointed when "...Jo and Amy very nearly, but not quite, make a scene" (9), and one is left wondering what it would take to satisfy her; the answer is death. When Jenny Blair sees the death and havoc she has caused in the Birdsong household, she gets her wish. Gazing over the dead ducks which George has shot, Jenny Blair sees the flecks of blood on their beaks and the wounds on their chests.

Just like the ducks, George, too, has flecks of blood on his lips--Eva, now lifeless as if she were made of wax, has shot him. Her reaction to this scene reinforces her association with small, mindless animals: "Dropping into a chair, she threw back her head and began to scream with the thin, sharp cry of an animal caught in a trap" (291). And her last desperate cries as she faints in her grandfather's arms echo Jenny Blair's self-absorption and freedom from responsibility: "'Oh, Grandfather, I didn't mean anything,' she cried, as she sank down into blackness. 'I didn't mean anything in the world!'" (292).

Although the novel ends with Jenny Blair's dramatics, the sheltered life she has lived still thrives in her community as does the belief that nice girls cannot do any harm. Jenny Blair's failure to conform to any form of control, whether internal or external, contributes to the instability of the Southern lady's pedestal. Eva is not the perfect Southern lady; she has manipulated her husband for more than twenty years, enacted the tragic role of the noble and long-suffering wife (just as she portrayed another tragic and romantic figure, Juliet, in a tableaux at the height of her beauty), and trained a promising, young debutante to continue the tradition. Although Eva has had to operate under certain limitations, Jenny Blair has learned how

to circumvent most social restrictions. Those who know her well may detect the lack of control, character, or dignity, but given time, Jenny Blair has the potential to manipulate many others and feed her need for sensation and drama while remaining, even in her own eyes, innocent and free from responsibility.

All three examples of Southern girls who become Southern ladies reveal the stagnation caused by outside control and/or the lack of inner or self-control. Virginia accepts her society's demands and never questions the authority or legitimacy of the tradition superimposed on her. In fact, she is fundamentally unable to challenge the forces, ideas, and lifestyle that mold and shape her to fit patriarchal requirements. As several characters remark, Eva wants "too much"-- tries to use her beauty and status as a Southern lady to achieve what it cannot and was never meant to do. Although beautiful, Eva's beauty eventually fades. In addition, she lacks the strength to "keep up emotionally" the ideal image of a woman passionately in love with her husband. The effect wears her down, and she changes from a figure of romance to one of tragedy. According to Raper,

Eva Birdsong's effort to evade reality is the most poignant agon in the novel because it is a desperate struggle, against the combined pressure of society and biology, to preserve her sanity. It was Queenborough

society that elevated her at eighteen to the role of its reigning beauty for the first five years of the 1890s, and it is biology... that brings her down from that high position. (142-3)

She may still enthrall her community; they may still admire her dignity and grace, but time and the restrictions of being a lady ultimately defeat her. Lastly, Jenny Blair ignores the traditional requirements of being a lady, such as generosity, sympathy, graciousness, consideration for others, and self-sacrifice. She lives to serve her own needs, and as she does so without any check or control from within or without, Jenny Blair becomes so self-absorbed that she remains as amoral as an infant. She is innocent in that sense, but as George Birdsong says, such innocence is wicked. Virginia Pendleton is stifled by her adherence to role of the Southern lady. Eva Birdsong, for all her manipulation or use of this role, fails to move beyond its limits and is trapped by her heart's desires. And Jenny Blair is stifled by her fixation on her fantasies and emotional experiences.

Finally, while Northern girls are brought up to be women--capable, strong, and self-controlled, Southern girls are taught how to be ladies--a myth or ideal that no human woman can fulfill. Southern female characters reveal the patriarchal controls which are applied externally to shape or structure this feminine ideal.

In order to live up to this ideal, it becomes necessary for the lady-in-training to adopt the external criteria and apply them to herself. This in turn becomes a self-regulated control, but one that keeps the woman within bounds that do not impinge upon men or challenge patriarchal institutions.

In contrast to Southern ladies, Northern girls are brought up to be women. While they may not have the ability to change others or to control their circumstances, they are at least granted the dignity or the ability to control themselves. Biblically, the one who controls the tongue is stronger than one who conquers a city. As Northern women writers endow their female characters with traditionally masculine traits, they begin to depict a new woman--one who can think logically, act in the face of danger, and control her emotions. Slowly, such fictional women find ways to control more than their emotions, tempers, or hasty tongues; they learn to control their education, rights, and future by setting and achieving goals. Just because the first goals are small ones, as women writers attempt to work within the social structures and institutions, does not imply that these writers are less concerned with women's issues; they have only taken a different route.

Although Nina Baym in her chapter "The Rise of the Woman Author" explains that many women writers "...held quite conventional views about women's place and sexual difference and would have been shocked to think of themselves as unfeminine in any way" (290), as their characters overcome hardships or obstacles without fairy godmothers or other forms of deus ex machina, female readers discover alternatives or options. Also, women writers not only generate new or different perspectives, but reflect the changes already taking place in society, too. The two dimensions of new female characters who persevere and the reflection of how women live and act in everyday situations feed off each other. The change becomes deliberate with the advent of a feminist pedagogy that seeks to provide models and reveal how these models are realized in the lives of girls and young women. That Northern women writers could produce a feminist pedagogy can be attributed to changes in a rapidly evolving industrial society, and when Southern women writers fail to produce a positive pedagogy, the lack emphasizes the static and hierarchical nature of the rural South. The North could produce a feminist pedagogy and contribute to the change in women's roles because that change became inevitable, even unavoidable. Yet the South, which did not change as quickly, could immobilize women through, as Glasgow puts it, "the

exacting ritual of being a lady" as long as the pedestal
on which she rested could be supported.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

A classification schema for women's writing is nothing new. However, after examining the implications highlighted by interpretive strategies, such as the negative or positive hermeneutic outlined in the previous chapters, an analysis of women's writing requires a taxonomy that encompasses the changes in women's roles as they are reflected in society and in fiction. So while Reynolds's taxonomy is accurate and appropriate for types of female characters found in fiction in the mid 1800s, it does not allow for change in or development of women's roles as they occur in both fiction and society. Such changes for women did not come easily or quickly, and perceptions of women and women's roles are cyclical and interdependent between fiction and reality. Both fiction and society can play off of one another; the first can either reflect reality or suggest an alternative existence, and the latter can suggest new material for fiction or be a testing ground for conceivable alternatives--neither life nor art occur in a vacuum. This interdependence makes it necessary for a classification system that allows for development and change as it is portrayed in fiction.

Part of the change in women's roles is reflected in women's writing, especially in the critique of patriarchal society and its accepted criteria for proper, feminine behavior. This critique can take many forms, but utilizing either the negative or the positive hermeneutic can reveal the social ideology that shapes women. Socialization is a natural process as all societies require certain behaviors from their members and discourage others. As an interpretive strategy for women's writing, these two hermeneutics help the reader peel back the layers of social construction and uncover underlying assumptions.

Once the underlying assumptions or ideologies have been revealed, they can be subjected to analysis, evaluation, and even reconsideration. Much of women's writing from the mid nineteenth century and into the twentieth calls attention to patriarchal ideology and its impact, either good or ill, on women. Although this analysis does not have to be a conscious or deliberate endeavor on the part of the writer in a specific work, most women writers of this period offer a social critique. Examining the critiques or suggestions found in fiction provides insight into the lives of women, women's roles, and patriarchal perceptions of and expectations for women.

By developing a negative hermeneutic and applying it to patriarchal society, readers can explore the demands and forces that shaped femininity and created the traditional woman. For writers, portraying a negative femininity provides the means for examining predominant standards of feminine behavior by creating female characters who are perfect according to the society that creates them. Nonetheless, such characters are ill-equipped to survive without masculine provision. Through the depiction of a negative femininity, women writers can present a clear picture of what society demands from women, what it rewards, and what it punishes. Wharton's characters, Lily Bart and Undine Spragg, are both failures and successes. To the extent that they meet the demands of their society, they are successful, yet in conforming to social expectations, they are also failures--no reader would wish to be either Lily or Undine. In this way, the flaws inherent in the ideology of patriarchal society are critiqued through the development of character and plot. Glasgow, too, creates characters, such as Angelica Blackburn or Amanda Lightfoot, who conform to their society's demands for perfection and become twisted parodies of "proper" females.

Yet however much a critic may learn from a negative hermeneutic, eventually a positive hermeneutic is needed

to explore what women would be like if liberated from forces that warp the traditional female and make her unfit, irresponsible, and dependent. Therefore, a positive hermeneutic calls for a new vision of womanhood with strong and capable attributes that do not detract from femininity and a positive model displaying this vision as it might work in society. Cather creates such a vision of womanhood with Alexandra Bergson and Thea Kronborg--women who are not only strong and capable, but who are also feminine and desirable as wives/mates. Glasgow's characters, Dorinda Oakley and Gabriella Carr, are similar in that they also display a strength and capability not typically associated with women, and they, too, are desirable and sought repeatedly for marriage. Unfortunately, the reader is unable either to determine what makes these women so strong and capable or to recreate the circumstances that make them so. It becomes impossible for this positive model to directly affect women's lives without some mediation or explication.

In order to achieve the new vision or positive model of womanhood, a step-by-step procedure or feminist pedagogy needs to be developed; new forces must be called upon to shape women in new ways. Characters such as Gertrude Flint and Meg, Jo, Beth, and Amy March develop slowly, and the novel gives examples of how they

mature through the counsel, discipline, and training that they receive from those responsible for their intellectual and moral growth. Emily Graham teaches Gerty to control her temper, endure injustice, and triumph by means of a level head and well considered actions and words. Marmee March instructs her daughters to overcome their vices through self-mastery, patience, and Christian virtues. Because these girls grow into young women before the audience, a reader can see the new forces at work creating and shaping a strong yet compassionate womanhood.

Despite the existence of these three trends (the negative hermeneutic, the positive hermeneutic, and the feminist pedagogy), regional differences in the literature of the North and South occur due to cultural differences. As different cultural and social expectations define these two regions, such forces affect the articulation of femininity.

While the literature of both the North and the South offer examples which can be read through the negative hermeneutic, the areas of emphasis are quite distinct. Wharton's critique of patriarchal society is linked to the upper class or leisure class of New York. In the fiction of the North, especially short stories of writers like Sarah Orne Jewett, Mary Wilkins Freeman, Susan Glaspell, or Charlotte Perkins Gilman, middle

class women are portrayed as more sensible and resourceful while they confront patriarchal expectations for women. Even Louisa May Alcott, Maria Susanna Cummins, or Susan Warner use middle-class or upper middle-class girls for their protagonists. If these Northern heroines have rivals, they are from the upper class or well-to-do families. In Alcott's An Old-Fashioned Girl, Polly Milton, the heroine, comes from a middle-class family and outshines her rich, spoiled friend, Fanny Shaw. In Northern works, the negative hermeneutic is especially useful for exposing social demands that emphasize a woman's decorative uselessness or feminine dependence on men.

In contrast to the Northern emphasis on class and economics (as upper class implies a certain economic level), Southern works focus on class and social status. In her novels, Glasgow makes the distinction between coming from a "good family" or coming from "good people." The first has more to do with breeding, elegance, social status, and family lineage, while the second connotes independence, middle-class values, and hard-working dependability. Yet the women of either class are expected to be ladies in so far as virtues such as graciousness, hospitality, gentleness, and deference to masculine superiority do not rely on wealth or property. Elegance or refinement are not as

important for middle-class women such as Dorinda Oakley, but most of Glasgow's characters, male or female, must account for their family origins. As Grandmama Fairfax-Bland in The Romance of a Plain Man comments on Ben Starr's suit for her granddaughter, Sally, "'what good is six feet, two inches without a grandfather?'" (138). The negative hermeneutic allows the reader to examine the socially scripted roles for men and women or even gentlemen and ladies. Either way, feminine roles are more limited, calling for self-effacement and fostering a dependence on and service to masculine roles.

Using the positive hermeneutic reveals the depiction of the strong/sensible woman in both Northern and Southern literature. However, these characters in Northern works are rather conservative while in Southern works, they are more radical. To determine just how radical the Southern portrayal of the strong woman is, it becomes necessary to compare the Southern portrayal to depictions of the strong woman in settings that are neither Northern or Southern. Two examples of Cather's strong woman help with this analysis as Alexandra is from the Nebraska and Thea from Colorado. Female characters similar to these two have to be strong and independent in order to survive on the farms and ranches of the settlers on the frontier. So while works from other regions portray women as capable, strong,

independent, and hardworking, Southern works fail to produce a counterpart equal to Cather's depiction. When Kate Chopin via Edna Pontellier begins a social critique through the means of a positive hermeneutic, Chopin finds her character at odds with patriarchal institutions, especially marriage, and resolves this conflict by having Edna choose death rather than submission or self-denial. This positive femininity drowns along with her. Glasgow does manage to explore fully society's cultural influence on women, but she must remove her characters geographically from the South if she wants them to exceed society's expectations.

Gabriella Carr becomes a successful businesswoman in New York. Although she visits the South, she remains in the North for all of her adult life. Dorinda Oakley also runs away to New York to escape patriarchal roles for women; she is pregnant and not married. The symbolic miscarriage frees Dorinda from motherhood, and she uses her time in New York to work as a receptionist and study agriculture. Later, she returns to the South and implements what she has learned. The changes in Dorinda, and subsequently her family farm, occur due to sources and resources outside the South. The Southern use of a positive femininity is confined or constricted in ways that other regions do not experience.

The third trend the feminist pedagogy delineates a sharp split between the South and the North. The North could produce a feminist pedagogy in the works of Alcott, Cummins, Warner, and others. Other regions also offer a feminist pedagogy in works like the Laura Ingalls Wilder series. All of these works present female characters who grow to maturity before the reader, and in doing so, display how new forces and environments shape women in new ways. The South, however, never develops a positive feminist pedagogy. At best, Glasgow produces a negative pedagogy which takes an ironic look at how training girls to be ladies instead of women creates helpless, inadequate, shallow, or destructive females.

Consequently, the absence of any feminist pedagogy in Southern works can be attributed to Southern institutions, especially slavery. According to Eugene Genovese author of Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made, paternalism supported slavery; "paternalism defined the involuntary labor of the slaves as a legitimate return to their master for protection and direction" (5). As justification for slavery rested in part on paternalism, slave owners began to create a social and moral hierarchy with the slave-holding planters reserving the highest echelons for themselves and relegating their slaves to the lowest. Such a

hierarchy inevitably came to include gender with class and race. In Tomorrow Is Another Day, Anne Goodwyn Jones states that the South's image of women is intimately tied to the planter class established in the seventeenth century:

Roughly interchangeable with the image of the southern lady or (for the young unmarried) that of the southern belle, southern womanhood was born in the imagination of white slaveholding men. Thus Southern womanhood was linked directly to fundamental Southern questions of race, class, and sex, and, as Sara Evans¹ has said, "revealed more about the needs of white planters than about the actual lives of women".... (8)

In her article, "Placing Women's History in History," Elizabeth Fox-Genovese places images of women within the context of their societies. So when images of Southern womanhood are attributed to the paternalistic planter society which was ultimately responsible for their creation, there is no question that "the domination of women by men figures at the core of the domination of specific classes, races, ethnic groups and peoples" (14). With paternalism the image of the father was reinforced in the South--more so in the South than anywhere else in the nation. As paternalism makes the owner a "father" to his slaves and in turn makes the slaves his "children," then it becomes possible for a

¹Evans, Sara. Personal Politics: The Roots of Women's Liberation in the Civil Rights Movement and the New Left. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1979. p. 1353.

man to be the "owner" of his wife and children. To ensure stability, Southern institutions must keep people in their assigned and appropriate places or the South could fly apart. In her work The Southern Lady: From Pedestal to Politics 1830-1930, Anne Firor Scott notes that

women, along with children and slaves, were expected to recognize their proper and subordinate place and to be obedient to the head of the family. Any tendency on the part of any of the members of the system to assert themselves against the master threatened the whole, and therefore slavery itself. (17)

The social hierarchy maintained by Southern institutions rests on two codes both modeled on late eighteenth and early nineteenth-century perceptions of medieval honor and chivalry. As Bertram Wyatt-Brown notes, "honor resides in the individual as his understanding of who he is and where he belongs in the ordered ranks of society" (14). When a rebel like Edna Pontellier challenges patriarchal society and its institutions, an unresolvable dynamic results; only one (either the individual or society) can win. Similarly, other determined women such as Gabriella Carr or Dorinda Oakley must also go outside their Southern communities to find the space or resources to circumvent or modify cultural and social roles.

While the South had forces like slavery shaping even controlling femininity and women's place in

society, the North had the Industrial Revolution. With the Industrial Revolution came factories and other economic opportunities for women outside marriage. Granted, such opportunities were not ideal; depictions like Melville's in "The Paradise of Bachelors and the Tartarus of Maids" refutes any notion of labor as a feminine oasis in the midst of patriarchal culture. But the option of a career did exist, making independence a practical reality. That some women chose work over marriage or remarriage cannot be discounted in women's struggle for the vote or equal rights. Elizabeth Janeway in her introduction to Cather's O Pioneers! claims that careers for women provided more options:

...the choice lay between independent work or conventional marriage.... Some continued to value marriage highly, and felt merely that its demands, while justified, were more than they could fulfill. If we consider that the question "marriage or career" was replacing the older one of "marriage or marginality at best and tragic doom at worst," we can understand better, perhaps, the attraction of freedom and independence. (xx)

In the South women had fewer alternatives to marriage, and consequently, married more often and sooner than did women in the North. Anne Firor Scott also notes that

in middle Georgia, an area inhabited by solid up-country planters, girls began very early to accumulate a hope chest. Marriages at fourteen or fifteen were common. The girl who had many beaux was envied, and families with a "houseful of old maids" pitied. (25-26)

Gilman's criticism of marriage in Women and Economics parallels the conditions of the South extremely accurately when she claims that traditional, nineteenth century marriage works because women are forced to it by their need for food and shelter, and men are forced to it by their need for socially sanctioned domestic services. She writes, "we are absurdly afraid that, if men or women can meet the needs of life by other means, they will cheerfully renounce the marriage relation" (300). Marriage on these terms becomes a contradiction as women seek a livelihood as unpaid domestic servants. Although Southern institutions and the need for social stability limited alternatives for Southern women, the Industrial Revolution provided women with other economic opportunities, at least allowing women to marry latter and earn some money of their own. Most Northern women, like the March sisters, could and did earn money, and the knowledge of that earning potential provides them with more economic clout than Southern women.

Only as social conditions in the South changed after the Civil War did Southern women begin to experience the economic opportunities available elsewhere in the country. Scott explains that

it is possible to argue that when the factories needed cheap labor, it became acceptable for women to work in mills; when businesses needed secretaries, when children needed teachers,

when ever and wherever economic imperatives existed, mores and social barriers gave way. (129)

While Scott makes it clear that not all women wanted careers and that some "would happily have returned to dependency had any opportunity appeared" (129), she also cites several examples of women who were thwarted in their desire for a career before the war, and were glad to work after the war when the shortage of men opened many fields and careers for women. Some women even went so far as to rebuff offers of "dependency" from family members preferring to support themselves. Yet these economic changes were slow to impact attitudes concerning feminine behavior--girls were still brought up to be ladies.

A feminist pedagogy that promotes change would have upset and possibly overturned the principles of paternalism and patriarchal institutions. Although Glasgow can develop and use a negative femininity and a limited or qualified positive femininity, she can only produce a negative female pedagogy in Virginia with Virginia Pendleton or in The Sheltered Life with Jenny Blair Archbald. Without diverse means of economic independence available, economic dependence remains the primary option for women. And women writers make it clear that economic dependence promotes other forms of dependence as others, usually men, make intellectual and

moral decisions for women. Chopin in "The Story of an Hour" defines what freedom means to a woman; the implications are that "there would be no powerful will bending hers..." (229). While the reality of Southern institutions crumbled long ago, the nostalgia for a past which did not exist exactly as it is remembered serves to keep Southern society reliant upon patriarchy and its social hierarchy. Of course, those at the top of this hierarchy would be loathe to part with their prescribed and ordained places of superiority and would continue to promote social thinking which supported their views. As a result, for as long as Southern institutions and society rely on patriarchy and its hierarchy to defend social rank and appropriate gender-related behavior, then a fully Southern and fully developed positive hermeneutic is only a vivid dream and a feminist pedagogy an impossibility.

The gynocritic is at a loss when confronted by a feminine tradition that actually is silent. In some sinister aspects, the Southern lady is voiceless because she is selfless or self-sacrificing. While the muted aspects of selfhood for Southern women may be difficult to discover and interpret, gynocritics must read between the lines of women's writing in fiction or diaries and letters. As long as Southern womanhood is contingent upon a silent state, dependence on men, and being

defined by patriarchal images and requirements. changes in or revisions of perceptions about women and the roles they fulfill are not possible.

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