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SITUATED UTOPIAS:
IMAGINING FAMILY AND COMMUNITY IN EARLY MODERN ENGLAND

by

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Situated Utopias: Imagining Family and Utopia in Early Modern England

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My dissertation examines the way in which families are imagined as situated utopias in early modern England. Unlike pre-modern dreams for imaginary paradises, early modern utopias aspire to construct an optimum society in this world by human agency and organization. The representative seventeenth-century utopian writings demonstrate this situating tendency, presenting practical political schemes to be implemented here and now. My dissertation shifts the focus to the literary works that are not usually classified under the rubric of utopia, and explores the ways in which the family emerges as the crucial sociocultural locus for utopia in early modern England.

Each chapter explores different aspects of the way utopia becomes situated in everyday life, and especially that of the family. The first chapter examines Andrew Marvell's situating revision of the country house poem in "Upon Appleton House." Impersonating the estate surveyor, the poet subjects the estate to an empirical and historical analysis. While idealizing the conjugal nuclear family of a Parliamentarian

general as a utopia, “Paradise’s only map,” the surveyor-poet also presents his own map in the form of this poem, evoking other socio-politically inflected utopias. Chapter Two studies the feminine imagination of the utopian family in Margaret Cavendish’s plays. Acutely aware of the disadvantages that women faced in the marriage market and marital life, Cavendish explores the secularized convent community of women as a potential alternative, but also appropriates the Lockean idea of an autonomous (male) subject for her heroines in her radical revision of the conjugal family from within. Chapter Three reorients the prevailing feminist readings of John Bunyan’s *The Pilgrim’s Progress* that tend to focus on female characters in the second part. I argue that the shift from pre-modern to modern sociability constitutes the literal-historical dimension of Christian’s pilgrimage and that the second part is mainly concerned with constructing a utopian communitarian family here and now by revising the residual model of family/community with the emerging principles of human collectivity.

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Introduction: Utopian Families and Emergent Sociability, 1640-1740

This is a study of the way in which families are imagined as situated utopias in early modern England, particularly in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. Reading Andrew Marvell's "Upon Appleton House" (written c. 1651), Margaret Cavendish's plays (1662, 1668), and John Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress* (1678, 1684), I intend to investigate how the family is figured as the crucial sociocultural locus in which different visions for England were imagined at this historical juncture. I use the term "situated" to characterize the particular kind of utopian imagination that we see in this period. The term is chosen over other related words like "secular," "reformist," "empiricist," or "worldly," all of which illustrate associated trends but tend to have a more strictly defined reference. Though the term "situated utopia" is an oxymoron, I think, the intense tension generated between these two oppositional tendencies reflects the unique energy of seventeenth-century sociopolitical experimentation. This spirit is well captured in John Milton's famous description of the task of Christian warrior in this world.

I cannot praise a fugitive and cloister'd virtue, unexercis'd & unbreath'd, that never sallies out and sees her adversary, but slinks out of the race, where that immortall garland is to be run for, not without dust and heat.¹

The effort to situate utopia here and now, namely, the attitude to analyze it empirically, test the possibility to implement it in this world and hence to reform the given reality, is the defining character of the utopias in my texts that distinguishes them

¹ John Milton, *Areopagitica* (1644), in Roy Flannagan, ed., *The Riverside Milton* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1998), 1006.

from earlier visions of a better world. Human aspiration for a life better than the given one had been expressed long before Thomas More wrote *Utopia* (1516) in the early sixteenth century. These expressions had taken shape as a fantasy “of a society wished for but not seen as an actual possibility,”² a dream of an imaginary reality completely separated from actual society. They were removed from reality temporally and spatially. In the Greek myth of the golden age, for example, the golden race “lived as if they were gods,” free from sorrow, hard work, pain, and the misery of old age, and the “fruitful grainland yielded its harvest to them of its own accord.”³ Similarly, in the medieval peasant fantasy of the Land of Cokaygne (“little cake”), an imaginary island of magical abundance that exists somewhere in the west of Spain, the rivers flow with milk and wine, and roast geese fly around, ready and asking to be served.⁴ In both cases, what is depicted is an imaginary land of plenty where a blissful life can be had without human effort and hard labor. The major fantasy lies in the natural fecundity of the land, giving out food of itself, freeing humans from the curse of unremitting toil. Other examples of primordial utopias, for example, Christian myths of the Garden of Eden, the lost origin of mankind, and the City of God, the telos of the Christian journey, also present imaginary lands completely separated from the fallen human world.

Working with Plato’s model of an ideal republic, Thomas More began the process of situation in his *Utopia* (1516), the first modern example of the genre. This ideal island

² A. L. Morton, *The English Utopia* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1952), 15.

³ Hesiod, *Works and Days*, in Richmond Lattimore, trans., *Hesiod* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1959), 39, cited in Frank E. Manuel and Fritzie P. Manuel, *Utopian Thought in the Western World* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 1979), 68. For ease of reading, I haven’t marked line breaks of the poem in this citation.

⁴ In many pre-modern utopias, these plebeian gustatory fantasies, often expressed in similar conceits, suggest some untracked oral transmission among the populace. Manuel notes, “Many of the same conceits, down to minute details, not only have been shared by Attic comedy, English mummers’ plays, and popular fables, but are repeated in Judaic and Christian descriptions of paradise, in legends of the Holy Grail, in the paintings of Breughel...” Manuel, *Utopian Thought*, 81.

state is not placed in an irrevocably lost antiquity but is presented as a contemporaneous society. The narrative makes considerable effort to present a plausible explanation of Raphael Hythloday's encounter with this ideal republic in the style of the early modern travel narrative. The map of the island is provided, and the narrator, Hythloday, is presented as a sailor who was a member of Amerigo Vespucci's expeditions to the new world, establishing the factuality of his encounter with this island nation.⁵

More's move to situate the utopia does not stop at presenting his narrative with markers of empirical evidence and claiming it to be true. Unlike earlier utopian dreams, this ideal state is primarily an outcome of human effort rather than of natural bounty. "And though their soil be not very fruitful, nor their air very wholesome, yet against the air they so defend them with temperate diet, and so order and husband their ground with diligent travail, that in no country is greater increase and plenty of corn and cattle, nor men's bodies of longer life and subject or apt to fewer diseases."⁶ Influenced by Plato's model as well as by Catholic monastic ideals, More's ideal state is grounded upon the tight organization of human labor and the control of human desire. Material abundance that is commonly shared by all is the outcome of manual labor that is required of all. All the aspects of this state, from the location and structure of the cities, to the organization of economic life and to the communal family life, are completely planned and organized.⁷

⁵ Susan Bruce, Introduction, *Three Modern Utopias*, ed. Susan Bruce (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), ix-x.

⁶ The translation from the Latin is Ralph Robinson's in his revised edition of 1556, which is used, with modernized spelling, as the text in Bruce, ed., *Three Early Modern Utopias*. The quote is from this edition, page 85. Hereafter references are to this edition with page numbers given parenthetically in the text.

⁷ J. C. Davis remarks, "The [modern] utopian's method is not to wish away the disharmony implicit within the collective problem, as the other ideal-society types do, but to organize society and its institutions in such a way as to contain the problem's effects. ... In utopia, it is neither man nor nature that is idealized but organization." *Utopia and the Ideal Society: a Study of English Utopian Writing, 1516-1700* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 37-8.

This vision of an optimum republic is a product of More's critical engagement with contemporary reality. The ideal republic is proposed as an alternative to the dire socio-economic reality of his own time that is vividly recorded in the first part of *Utopia*, namely, the ongoing agrarian transformation and the ensuing pauperization and vagrancy of the producer population. But More had his book of an ideal society published outside his homeland. He did not believe that his utopian ideas could be implemented in his lifetime. At the end of the book, he wishfully reflects; "so must I needs confess and grant that many things be in the Utopian weal-public which in our cities I may rather wish for than hope after" (123).

Not only does More's utopia remain a dream of "ou-topia," a fictional island republic far away from European society, it is also virtually without history. As A. L. Morton argues, in the world of *Utopia*, "the establishment of a model commonwealth could only be a kind of accident or miracle, the work of a prince, who is imagined as something apart from the class forces which normally dominate the state." Once conquered and constructed by King Utopus, utopia is completed and perfected, "allowing no place for growth and development."⁸ This is a system that does not allow change, partly because all the facets of life are regimented and controlled, fundamentally arresting human development. Personal lives are organized according to detailed rules, and everybody is placed under control all the time. In the communal dining hall, the elders sit with the young people to "keep the youngers from wanton licence of words and behaviour"(66). Adults don't have much freedom either.

Now you see how little liberty they have to loiter, how they can have no cloak or pretence to idleness. There be neither wine-taverns, nor ale-houses, nor stews,

⁸ Morton, *The English Utopia*, 52.

nor any occasion of vice or wickedness, no lurking corners, no places of wicked councils or unlawful assemblies. (68)

Like Plato's, More's utopia is fundamentally a perfected structure imposed from the top, and once constructed it does not allow change. In that sense, More's picture of an ideal republic, in spite of its democratic electoral system, is not immune from Lewis Mumford's critique of the fundamentally authoritarian nature of many utopias based on Greek tradition.⁹ Milton seems to have this aspect of utopia in mind when he rejects utopias and the control that they involve in his opposition to censorship by the Parliamentary government.

To sequester out of the world into *Atlantick* and *Eutopian* polities, which never can be drawn into use, will not mend our condition; but to ordain wisely as in this world of evill, in the midd'st whereof God hath plac't us unavoidably. Nor is it *Plato's* licencing of books will doe this....¹⁰

Between the time of More and Milton, a new conception of the principle of sociality seems to have been slowly emerging, one that would less involve the hierarchical system of control and rely more on the voluntary consent of autonomous individuals. To use Charles Taylor's framework, the pre-modern view saw society as one structured by the principle of "hierarchical complementarity," as exemplified in the relationship between, for instance, the feudal lord and the tenant. In this conception "people act within a framework that exists prior to and independent of their action." This pre-modern way to imagine social existence, or the "social imaginary" in Taylor's term, was slowly evolving into a diametrically opposite principle of sociality, that "starts with individuals and

⁹ Lewis Mumford, "Utopia, The City and The Machine," *Daedalus* (Spring, 1965): 271-92.

¹⁰ Milton, *Areopagitica*, 1010

conceives society as established for their sake,”¹¹ as exemplified in John Locke’s contractual political theory. I’ll talk more about this shift later on when discussing the evolution of the family, but I will note here that this is a centuries-long transition, a non-straightforward, inconsistent and uneven process, and that my texts are located in an earlier phase of this shift.

After More it is a century before the idea of utopia occupies a more central place in English society and culture. In the seventeenth century, increasing confidence that ever-growing human knowledge could improve the human condition in this world converged with the resurgence of Christian millenarianism, creating a generally shared sense that the time had come for drastic social change. Growing socio-political instability, culminating in the upheaval of the mid-seventeenth century and the ensuing breakdown of the apparatus of social controls, including censorship, all provided fertile soil for utopian ideas and practices to take root in.

This was also a century when “the word “utopia” came more and more to connote visions of an ideal state of man in this world.”¹² Utopian proposals were made with the belief that they would be implemented in the foreseeable future, if not in the present time. “For a brief space Utopia ceased to be a fiction but was felt by thousands to be just round the corner.”¹³ People like Francis Bacon, John Amos Comenius and Samuel Hartlib envisioned building a Christian polity based on ever-expanding human knowledge. These “Pansophists” were full of practical projects that would improve the human lot and eventually lead to the reformation of society. In their writings, a grand vision of an ideal society existed in juxtaposition with a particularized effort to reform various aspects of

¹¹ Charles Taylor, *Modern Social Imaginaries* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004), 3-22, 83-99.

¹² Manuel, *Utopian Thought*, 209.

¹³ Morton, *The English Utopia*, 61.

everyday life. When Comenius, for instance, advocated the reformation of schools in thorough detail, he saw it as part of a grand vision of the construction of a utopian society. Hartlib and his circle's vision of a "universal reformation" expressed itself in its attention to practical matters such as the productive use of land and agricultural innovation. Even resurgent millenarianism took a secular and materialist tone in its emphasis on human efforts. Rather than simply waiting for the Second Coming, a cataclysmic event, Fifth Monarchists tried to prepare the way for Christ's reign by reforming the present polity. "Thus the Fifth Monarchy man Thomas Venner was at pains to explain that what he meant by the imminent kingdom of Christ was not 'some strange thing' but distributive justice, full employment, the protection of native trades and manufactures; 'and whatsoever can be named of a common or publick good, we mean by the Kingdome of Christ.'"¹⁴

In representative utopias of the mid-seventeenth century like Hartlib's *Macaria* (1641) and James Harrington's *Oceana* (1656) this spirit of situatedness may have gone too far. Taking note of "a close relationship between the Utopian writings and the active framing of constitutions" in the middle of the century, Morton thinks, "*Macaria* and *Oceana* belong, as it were, half-way between *Utopia* and such essays in constitution-making as *The Agreement of the People*, and like *The Agreement*, were seriously advanced by their authors as practical schemes which could profitably and immediately be put into operation in England."¹⁵ These, "the most realistic of the humanist utopias"

¹⁴ Michael McKeon, "Politics of Discourses and the Rise of the Aesthetic in Seventeenth-Century England," in Kevin Sharpe and Steven N. Zwicker, eds., *Politics of Discourse: The Literature and History of Seventeenth-Century England* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1987), 43. Thomas Venner, *A Door of Hope: or, A Call and Declaration for the gathering together of the first ripe Fruits unto the Standard of our Lord, King Jesus* (1661), 4-5.

¹⁵ Morton, *The English Utopia*, 61, 71.

¹⁶ feel more like a political theory thinly disguised as a fiction. Indeed their overly-close proximity to the given reality might have posed a limit to their utopian imagination and worked as mental restrictions. These utopias are not the ones that I inquire into in this project. Rather I look at the texts that are not normally classified under the rubric of utopia and investigate the way in which families are imagined as utopias and emergent utopian sociability gets captured in familial relations. In early modern England, the family, I believe, was the most effective locus where competing sociopolitical formulations countered each other and the emergent idea of human sociability began to find expression.

The family as the site of fundamental human bonds is a readily-available trope for the imagination of utopian sociability. While pointing out that “the reification of the human being in the economy as the mere function of an economic variable is, of course, also continued in the family,” Max Horkheimer also acknowledges that a genuine desire for “the development and happiness of the other” can be found in sexual and familial relations, “a premonition of a better human condition.”¹⁷ Moreover, in early modern England, the family took on special importance, obtaining a critical sociocultural significance and functioning as a site in which a historical struggle between residual and emergent sociocultural formulations was fought.

The family had been taking on a spiritual role as well as functioning as a crucial unit of the nation state since the sixteenth century. The family “was assuming an

¹⁶ Karl Mannheim, “Utopia,” in E.R.A. Seligman and A. Johnson, eds., *Encyclopaedia of Social Sciences* (London, 1935), 201, cited in Davis “Utopia and History,” *Historical Studies* 13:50 (1968): 168, note 18.

¹⁷ Max Horkheimer, *Autorität und Familie*, 64. Cited in Jürgen Habermas, *Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1991), 260-61 footnote 48.

importance it had not had in feudal, monastic or courtly society.”¹⁸ “The reformation, by reducing the authority of the priest in society, simultaneously elevated the authority of lay heads of households, as intermediaries between the central government and their own servants and dependents, no less than between the latter and God.”¹⁹ The family began to replace the parish as the basic unit of religious practice and to function as the crucial site of social discipline. William Perkins, the famous Puritan minister, calls the family “the foundation and seminary of all other sorts and kinds of life in the Commonwealth and the Church.” The Reformation, through the dissolution of monasteries and through the teachings of Protestant reformers, situated religious practices in the realm of everyday family life. Protestant divines repeatedly emphasized the family as the primary unit of worship and prayer, a place where religious reform could start, idealizing the family and effectively affirming everyday ordinary life.

A corollary of the Protestant emphasis on the family is a growing concern with the marital relationship. Reformation theology replaced the medieval Catholic ideal of celibate chastity with the ideal of conjugal affection, sanctifying the marital union of man and woman as holy matrimony. Early modern Protestant sermons constantly described marriage as “a state in itself far more excellent than the condition of a single life.”²⁰ For Protestant reformers, marriage was no longer just for procreation but also for mutual support, comfort and intimate society. Indeed, spousal love and companionship were increasingly seen as the primary purpose of marriage. As the Hallers put it, “from

¹⁸ William and Malleville Haller, “The Puritan Art of Love,” *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 5:2 (1942): 247.

¹⁹ Christopher Hill, *Society and Puritanism in Pre-Revolutionary England* (New York: Schocken Books, 1964), 445.

²⁰ William Perkins, “Of Christiane Oeconomie or Household Government,” in *Works*, (London, 1626), III, 689, Cited in Lawrence Stone, *The Family, Sex and Marriage in England 1500-1800* (New York: Harper & Row, 1977), 135.

magnifying the religious significance of marriage, Puritan thought easily proceeded to magnify the emotional, romantic, and idealistic aspects of the marriage relation.”²¹

Individual affection was becoming an important factor in choosing partners, even among the landed elite. The intimate bond between the married couple was beginning to acquire more weight than genealogical concerns.

This growing idealization of the family and the marital union happened in conjunction with the long-term transformation of the family itself. Despite long-standing debates about the nature of this shift, most family historians seem to agree on a fundamental change in the family that accompanied the socio-economic transformation from the feudal to the capitalist market economy.²² This was a slow, inconsistent, and complex process that looks linear only in hindsight. Lawrence Stone thinks there was a fundamental change in the family forms and familial affection that occurred in conjunction with the gradual decline of kinship networks and clientage and with the ascendancy of the centralized state. According to him, the nuclear conjugal family was rising as a pairing institution of the modern state when influences of other traditional human bonds like kinship, clientage, and village community were slowly eroding in the early modern period.²³ In her discussion of the transition that she locates in the eighteenth century, Ruth Perry focuses less on the change of the dominant familial form than on the sociocultural shift in primary familial allegiance. According to her, early modern England saw “a change in the definition of what constituted the primary kin

²¹ Haller, “The Puritan Art of Love,” 265.

²² The Cambridge demographic group’s claim that English families were essentially nuclear since medieval times seems to have been questioned for its failure to make a distinction between family and residential unit. See Ruth Perry, *Novel Relations: The Transformation of Kinship in English Literature and Culture, 1748-1818* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 15-18, 22. Stone locates the shift to “closed domesticated nuclear family” in the late seventeenth century, while Perry thinks the crucial inflection point occurred in the eighteenth century.

²³ Stone, *The Family, Sex and Marriage*, 123-404.

group. It involved a movement from an axis of kinship based on consanguineal ties or blood lineage to an axis based on conjugal and affinal ties of the married couple. That is, the biologically-given family into which one was born was gradually becoming secondary to the chosen family constructed by marriage.”²⁴

In this emerging dispensation, the conjugal bond between the married couple was becoming more important than the paternal-filial bond. The voluntary union formed by mutual consent was gradually overriding the individual’s traditional loyalty to blood family, effectively resulting in a reinforced focus on the nuclear core. The gradual decrease of political importance of kinship and clientage, combined with a Protestant emphasis on family and marriage, changed the outlook among the elite members of society, making them focus more on the nuclear unit of the family. This development occurred in tandem with other emerging principles of sociability, for instance, the growing emphasis on voluntariness and mutual consent as the foundation of sociopolitical association.

The laboring population experienced a similar process of detachment from the face-to-face, compulsory and exclusive sociability of traditional communities like the neighborhood, village, and parish. Ongoing agrarian modernization resulted in the gradual disintegration of close-knit traditional village communities. For the producer class, neighbors had more influence than kinsmen in the pre-modern social organization.²⁵ The open-field system of seigniorial agriculture was predicated upon a close cooperation and coordination among neighbors and the manor house. Agrarian revolution and its accompanying socioeconomic changes eroded the very foundation of

²⁴ Perry, *Novel Relations*, 2.

²⁵ Stone, *The Family, Sex and Marriage*, 92-3.

village communities. The expropriation of peasants from the land, however, also freed them from traditional constraints, producing a body of “masterless” men. This experience of uprooting loosened ties to the native land and natal family, decreasing the sense of loyalty to village communities and bonds of mutual obligation to kinsmen. Taking root in this historical juncture, radical sectarians and their rejection of the parish epitomize the new organizing principle of human sociability. In Christopher Hill’s analysis,

The transition from parish to sect is from a geographical unit which brings the members of a community together for cultural, social and ceremonial purposes, to a voluntary unit to which men belong in order to hear the preacher of their choice....The essential basis of the sect is a voluntary contract between its members.²⁶

Rejecting the parish, which was compulsory and based on geographical proximity, radical Puritans chose to belong to congregations that were based on voluntary participation. This is a “shift from a local community to a voluntary organization,” an association organized in the same fashion as the trading corporations in its voluntary, contractual agreement for mutual benefit.²⁷ The emergence of voluntariness and consent as the organizing principles of human groups was not limited to familial bonds and religious organizations but extended to the polity. The crux of anti-monarchal and Parliamentary political theory lies in its emphasis on mutual consent between voluntary individuals as the basis of state authority. As John Locke theorizes, “Voluntary Agreement gives...Political Power to Governours for the Benefit of their Subjects.”²⁸

²⁶ Hill, *Society and Puritanism*, 492-5.

²⁷ Hill, *Society and Puritanism*, 492-3.

²⁸ John Locke, *Two Treatises of Government*, ed. Peter Laslett (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 346.

Considering that the familial change occurred as part of a larger tectonic shift in the ways in which people imagined their social relationships in all areas of human associations, it will be helpful to introduce Charles Taylor's theorization of this shift. According to Taylor, a new principle of sociability emerged in the early modern period, which conceives of human association in a fashion diametrically opposed to the pre-modern conception. This new principle of sociability, the assumption that the community is built on voluntary consent by fundamentally equal individuals for their mutual benefits, is a critical constituent of what Taylor calls the modern social imaginary. For Taylor, the public sphere of modern civil society, as conceptualized by Jürgen Habermas, is the prime embodiment of this new principle of sociability. According to Habermas,

The bourgeois public sphere may be conceived above all as the sphere of private people come together as a public; they soon claimed the public sphere regulated from above against the public authorities themselves, to engage them in a debate over the general rules governing relations in the basically privatized but publicly relevant sphere of commodity exchange and social labor.²⁹

What is novel about this conception of human association is not just its bottom-up model that “starts with individuals and conceives society as established for their sake,” the same principle as the one John Locke conceives in the polity. According to Taylor, the public sphere is radically “secular” in that it “is an association that is constituted by nothing outside of the common action we carry out in it: coming to a common mind, where possible, through the exchange of ideas,” unlike in pre-modern notion of order where “[p]eople act within a framework that exists prior to and independent of their action,”

²⁹ Habermas, *Structural Transformation*, 27.

whether it is the Chain of Being, some other metaphysical reality, or a Platonic model of utopian organization.³⁰

This new kind of human association was partly enabled by the emergence of print culture and the accompanying capacity to imagine a virtual yet actual community. The idea of the public sphere comes into being only when “people who never meet [could] understand themselves to be engaged in discussion and capable of reaching a common mind.”³¹ The period I am mainly concerned with predates a fuller blossoming of these ideas.³² But some of the texts I study already exhibit early imaginings of this kind of virtual community and self-consciously accommodate it by innovative literary forms. Print culture and the emergence of a new logic of sociality engender a condition in which utopia becomes capable of a more-or-less contemporary situation as an imagined and yet tangible community.

This fundamental sociocultural shift that changed human sociability in a profound way, however, is clear only in hindsight. The trajectory of the shift is uneven and inconsistent across different sections of society. The literary texts that I am going to focus on come from the earlier phase of the transition, when new material conditions and new sociocultural ideas were still forming. To borrow from Raymond Williams the terms I have already used, the historically residual, the dominant, and the emergent coexisted

³⁰ Taylor, *Modern Social Imaginaries*, 93-4.

³¹ Taylor, *Modern Social Imaginaries*, 85. For a discussion of the way in which print culture profoundly changed the way that people relate to others, see Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (1983, London: Verso, 1991), 9-36.

³² Habermas and Taylor associate the emergence of the public sphere with the eighteenth century, but acknowledge that England saw it develop a bit earlier. Some historians argue the public sphere began to emerge in the mid-seventeenth century in England that witnessed the collapse of censorship and an explosive outburst of news books and pamphlets. See, for example, Joad Raymond, “The Newspaper, Public Opinion, and the Public Sphere,” in *News, Newspapers, and Society in Early Modern Britain*, ed. Joad Raymond (London: Frank Cass, 1999), 109-40.

and commingled in this period and the lines between them were fluid and often difficult to locate.³³

This inconsistency shows most glaringly in the coexistence of the republican ideas of contractual theory with the patriarchal relationship in the family. The contradictions show more clearly because the seventeenth-century struggle over the polity was couched in familial terms. Patriarchalism justified subjection to the king based on the analogy between the state and family: as it is natural that family members obey the male head of the household, so subjects should be subordinated to the magistrate. Locke's attack of patriarchal theory relies on separating out the family from the state and demonstrating that they operate on different principles. He applies the new logic of sociability only to the polity. Mary Astell's criticism of Locke's contract theory focuses on this inconsistency: "If all Men are born free, how is it that all Women are born Slaves?"³⁴ Michael McKeon has shown that "the family crisis of the seventeenth-century English state increasingly evoked reflections on the state of the English family itself." One outcome of the seventeenth-century political crisis, together with the transformation of the family itself, was the subjection of the private family to the same degree of self-conscious attention as the public state.

[T]here may be some basis for seeing the period between the Restoration of the house of the Stuarts and its replacement by a new family lineage in 1714 as crucial in the history of the patriarchalist analogy... If we conceive the analogy as an exercise in interpretive signification, the realm of the family had tended until this historical moment to be placed in the position of the "signifier" and thereby to be used experimentally to interpret or construe the nature of the state. Henceforth this relationship is rebalanced in the opposite direction: the family assumes the place of the "signified," and the state becomes one important means for signifying

³³ For the concepts of the residual, the dominant, and the emergent, see Raymond Williams, *Marxism and Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), 121-27.

³⁴ Mary Astell, *Some Reflections Upon Marriage*, 3rd ed. (London, 1706), preface, 11.

it, for making sense of the nature of the family. We can see evidence of this rebalancing in a range of public-sphere discourse – poems, plays, essays, conduct books, letters – in which the private family is of central interest and the public state is brought to bear on its understanding.³⁵

The conflict between the traditional and the emergent logic of sociability gets replayed in the family as a conflict between arranged marriage and marriage for love and it becomes a central theme in eighteenth century novels and in culture at large. Its full development postdates the period under study. But some of the texts that I wish to use exhibit precocious examples that formulate their questioning of the patriarchal conjugal family and women's position in it in such terms. Above all, partly due to the crises of the polity, and partly due to its own transformation, the family emerges as a highly charged locus to investigate questions of human sociability and to articulate the emergent logic of sociability.

Each of the following chapters explores different aspects of the way utopia becomes situated in everyday life, and especially that of the family. Andrew Marvell's "Upon Appleton House" exhibits the spirit of situation in a subtly self-conscious manner in his revision of the tradition of the country house poem. In the most famous example of that tradition, "To Penshurst," Ben Jonson idealizes the country house as an epitome of the old social order, what Taylor calls the principle of "hierarchical complementarity." Jonson focuses on the Lord's household as the apex of this hierarchical order because it exists on an ontologically higher plane and it is believed to represent all the lower forms of life in this estate, whether animal or human. Marvell takes a different approach,

³⁵ Michael McKeon, *The Secret History of Domesticity: Public, Private and the Division of Knowledge* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005), 127.

strongly redolent of Locke's empiricist approach several decades later, when he separates the family from the polity, showing that the analogy between the two does not stand. Assuming the role of estate surveyor, a modern profession, Marvell subjects the Appleton House to an analysis and finds that it is made of distinct parts--the house, the garden, the agricultural field and its members, the forest and its natural world--each with its own voice and vision. He surveys the estate not just synchronically but also diachronically. He divides it to examine the past, the present, and the future of the house: the Catholic past of this house as a nunnery and a female community; the Protestant present as the country seat of a retired Parliamentarian General and his conjugal nuclear family; and the open future represented by the impending marriage of Mary Fairfax and the uncertain succession of the Fairfax line. While idealizing this Protestant family as a utopia, "Paradise's only map,"³⁶ the surveyor-poet also presents his own map in the shape of this poem. Marvell evokes other, socio-politically inflected, imaginings of utopia: the female community of the nunnery and the communitarian dream of the estate's agrarian laborers. Challenges to this utopian family, however, do not exist only as external threats. Marvell reveals a crack in the family itself, a failure to write its own narrative of patrilineage and hence a crisis of succession. In the face of their "destiny," namely, their lack of male heir, the conjugal couple revises the idiom of dynastic succession to accommodate their plan to convey the estate to their only daughter, making "their destiny their choice."(744)

Appleton House is, of course, a microcosm of a divided England, "that dear and happy isle."(321) Out of Marvell's mapping of competing visions for England at this critical juncture, Margaret Cavendish picks up one of the threads and John Bunyan

³⁶ "Upon Appleton House, To My Lord Fairfax," line 768. Nigel Smith, ed. *The Poems of Andrew Marvell* (London: Pearson, 2003). This edition is parenthetically cited henceforth in the text by line number.

another. Margaret Cavendish, Duchess of Newcastle, challenges and reconceives the ideal of the patriarchal conjugal family, the one idealized by Protestant preachers.

Working with the model of the Catholic convent, her plays revise it into various kinds of secularized yet utopian spaces for her heroines. While Cavendish's exploration of a female separatist community reflects contemporary concerns for an alternative to marriage for women, it is her idealization of conjugal marriage and the spousal bond that truly demonstrates her vision of the new emergent sociability. Her plays also anticipate the central theme of the next generation by dramatizing the inconsistent coexistence of traditional sociocultural formulations with the emerging notion of individual autonomy. Cavendish's plays are often structured by the conflict between marriage for love and marriage for alliance.

If Marvell's poem captures an agrarian community that was becoming fragmented into different parts, John Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress* shows a new way to conceive a community. Christiana's family's new sociability of mobility is coterminous with the dissolution of the exclusivistic bond of kinship and status in the native village community and its associated seigniorial and parochial obligations. The traditional sociability of face-to-face relations evolves into a new one, dependent on the experience of uprooting and mobility. What emerges as a result is a new sort of sociability, a new sort of family based not on literal filiation but affective affiliation. But this is just one side of this utopian family. It also reworks and integrates the positive elements of traditional community. This family is organized in a manner different not only from the exclusive and compulsory sociability of traditional communities but also from the privatized and enclosed character of the nuclear domestic family. While building itself as an association

of equal individuals, Christiana's family also widely shares material resources, welcoming the poor, the old and the weak, those who were increasingly marginalized in this historical reorganization of English society.

Written at a critical juncture of English history that offers both challenge and promise, these familial utopias explore possibilities of situating utopias onto the plane of the world of ordinary daily life, seeking to reconcile their ideals with its material imperatives. Negotiating between the old sociocultural formulations and newly emerging ideas of human associations, these works offer a diverse yet complementary range of visions for human collectivity. Though written at the dawn of modernity, their visions still remain suggestive and resonant in our own time.

1. Surveying “Paradise’s only map”: Situated Utopia(s) in “Upon Appleton House”

In her introductory endnote to the poem, Elizabeth Story Donno states: “*Upon Appleton House* ... falls within the category of the ‘country house poem’ designed to describe and praise a house, a family and a way of life.”³⁷ Indeed, “Upon Appleton House, To My Lord Fairfax” claims to share the same intention as its classic precedent in the genre, “To Penshurst,” which represents a monolithic vision of utopia, an official version of the utopian manorial household and community centered around it, promoted by the king and the landed aristocracy of the early seventeenth century. Like its precedent, “Upon Appleton House” apologizes for the lord of the house, Sir Thomas Fairfax, ex-general of the New Model army, or at least that seems to be the intention.

Having said that, however, one immediately sees critical differences between the two poems, especially in the context of the historical sea change of forty or so turbulent years that lie between them. In this chapter, I would like to examine the ways in which “Upon Appleton House” historicizes and empiricizes the tradition. I hope to make a case that such poetic innovations enable Marvell to revise and question the monolithic vision of utopian community of “To Penshurst” in a polyphonic dialogue of multiple utopian visions. In the process, Marvell not only captures the radical moment of progressive ideology as embodied by Sir Thomas’ nuclear family, but also gives voice to other contemporary views of the family and of social relations that envision different futures for the emerging modern English society.

³⁷ Elizabeth Story Donno, ed., *Andrew Marvell: The Complete Poems* (London: Penguin, 1972), 248.

I. Opening Up the Building: A Multiperspectival View of the Estate

In the context of the country house poem tradition, the beginning of Marvell's poem sounds familiar. The first few lines are strongly reminiscent of those of "To Penshurst" that criticize the contemporary appetite for ostentatious mansions and praise the modesty of the Penshurst household that differentiates it from such an upstart fashion. The languages and the images of its generic precedents strongly resonate in this poem. However, they often have a subtly parodic force, reminding readers of the traditional values of the country house that this house does not share. For instance, the opening lines of the poem, which invite the reader to the "within" of this building, separate it from the ways of the outside world and privilege it as a meritorious space, echo the language of the early lines of Thomas Carew's "To Saxham" that emphasize the self-sufficient utopian quality found within the gate of Saxham house.

Though frost, and snow, lockt from mine eyes
 That beautie which without dore lyes;
 Thy gardens, orchards, walkes, that so
 I might not all thy pleasures know;
 Yet (Saxham) thou within thy gate,
 Art of thy selfe so delicate;
 So full of native sweets, that blesse
 Thy roofe with inward happinesse;
 As neither from, nor to thy store
 Winter takes ought, or Spring addes more. ("To Saxham" 1-10)³⁸

Excusing himself from venturing out into the inconvenient wintry weather, the poet focuses on the perpetual "inward happinesse" of this household whose self-sufficiency also makes it free from the temporal vicissitudes of the outside world: "As neither from,

³⁸ All quotations from Carew's poetry are from *The Poems of Thomas Carew*, ed. Rhodes Dunlap (1949; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1957).

nor to thy store/ Winter takes ought, or Spring addes more.” The implicit assumption behind such a decision is shared by Ben Jonson in “To Penshurst”: they can focus on the moment of festivity within the house without danger of missing out on anything crucial outside because the house functions as an axis of the centripetal order of the estate and the surrounding community. In other words, the division of an essential “within” and peripheral “without” is established with clear value associations in these poems, and this clear demarcation functions as a way to construct the “within” as a utopian space distanced from the banal and material struggles of the outside world. Within the wall and the gate lies the essence of the timeless order of the moral economy, while the human and non-human members of the “without” exist only to serve this jewel of the traditional order: the country house. It is no wonder that the fish desire to be served at its table rather than remain alive in the marginal outside world: this is the “Ark” (“To Saxham” line 22) of the community toward which all the animal and human members look and move.³⁹

In its invitation to readers to the “within” of this modest house, “Upon Appleton House” certainly seems to depend on the same juxtaposition of “within” versus “without.” In fact, there are many instances in “Upon Appleton House” that evoke the lines of “To Saxham” and of “To Penshurst”: we see the image of flooding and Noah’s ark, and we also hear about non-human members of this estate. Marvell freely acknowledges and refers to the poetic tradition that he is working with. These evocative images and language, however, since they are used in different ways and contexts, only work to highlight the critical distance between Marvell’s poem and its precedents, as well as the

³⁹ In this utopian image of the natural world offering food of itself without hard labor, Jonson evokes the myths of the Golden Age and, to a lesser extent, of the Land of Cockayne. But Jonson refigures the myth so that now all the natural offerings are directed to the manor house, the center of the idealized order.

diverging characteristics of the households that they portray.⁴⁰ The contrast is clear from the early lines of “Upon Appleton House.” This house represents values widely different from those found in Saxham and Penshurst. The communal feast with bountiful food that occupies the central place in “To Saxham” as well as in “To Penshurst” does not seem to have a place “within” the “sober frame” of Appleton. The “[W]ork of . . . foreign architect”⁴¹ is not the only thing that the poem tells visitors not to expect “within this sober frame”(1): “native sweets” that “bless [Saxham’s] roof with inward happiness” are also something that visitors to Appleton House would fail to find.⁴² Instead, this is a house that embodies Protestant asceticism by requesting its residents to “stoop/To enter at a narrow loop;/As practicing, in doors so strait,/To strain themselves through heaven’s gate”(29-32). While this passage alludes to the passage in Matthew that dictates the Christian way of life (“Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.”),⁴³ it also responds to the lines on the “wide open” gates to the houses in Carew’s and Jonson’s poems and calls attention to this house’s distance from the world of Penshurst and Saxham.

⁴⁰ One such example is the image of flooding and of ark: while in “To Saxham” the house is compared to the ark working as a shelter in the middle of flooded world, in “Upon Appleton House,” the poet finds a shelter/ark from the flooded field in the private space in the forest. James Turner has pointed out the ways in which Marvell uses similar languages in different poems, arguing that it is often the case with Marvell that “verbal similarity only increases our sense of actual difference.” See James Turner, “Marvell’s Warlike Studies,” *Essays in Criticism* 28, no.4 (1978): 290.

⁴¹ “Upon Appleton House, To My Lord Fairfax,” line 2. Nigel Smith, ed., *The Poems of Andrew Marvell* (London: Pearson, 2003). This edition is parenthetically cited henceforth in the text by line number.

⁴² Anne Cotterill, “Marvell’s Watery Maze: Digression and Discovery at Nun Appleton,” *ELH* 69, no.1 (2002): 103-4.

⁴³ Matthew 7:13-14 (King James Version). This biblical allusion is picked up again later when describing this house’s future owner, Mary Fairfax, and her immunity from worldly and carnal temptations: “But knowing where this ambush lay, / She ’scaped the safe, but roughest way.” (719-20).

Thou hast no porter at thy door
 T' examine, or keep back the poore;
 Nor locks, nor bolts: thy gates have bin
 Made onely to let strangers in;
 Untaught to shut, they doe not feare
 To stand wide open all the yeare; ("To Saxham" 49- 55)

By the sleight-of-hand juxtaposition of Christian injunction and feudal hospitality, Marvell effectively alludes to the vaguely non-Christian and worldly nature of the cornucopian hospitality of the moral economy, and effectively promotes Protestant asceticism as the true Christian way of life. Therefore, it is no wonder that a "frontispiece" of the poor "[a]dorns *without* the open door" (65 italics mine) in Appleton House. Its bare interior makes guests themselves function as "furniture" rather than providing them the comfort of furniture ("Nor less the rooms within commends / Daily new furniture of friends." 67-68). In fact, those "pleasures" that Carew found at Saxham are the very things that Appleton not only lacks but also opposes: they are the antithesis of what the Fairfax household represents. In this poem earthly pleasures like "native sweets" and "dainties" ("To Saxham" 17) are associated with the "past" of this building that the Fairfax household has defeated and replaced: namely, the Cistercian Priory. As evidenced in the abbess' speech to entice Thwaites, it is in this corrupted past of the building where sweets and "pastes"(181) overflow, and "pleasure" coexists with "piety."

'Nor is our order yet so nice,
 Delight to banish as a vice.
 Here pleasure piety doth meet;
 One perfecting the other sweet.
 So through the mortal fruit we boil
 The sugar's uncorrupting oil:
 And that which perished while we pull,

Is thus preserved clear and full.’ (169- 76)⁴⁴

The values of this Puritan house are demarcated not only against the new money’s upstart taste, as in the earlier country house poems, but more importantly against the traditional culture of festive hospitality associated with royalist-Catholic England.⁴⁵ Indeed this works well in portraying the household of the former Lord General of the Parliamentary Army, who defeated the royalist cause and whose martial prowess helped to open up a new chapter in English history.⁴⁶ Marvell constructs an image of the household whose master subscribes to the new values of the ruling elite that came to replace the traditional values that were idealized in the genre of the country house poems. This poses a challenge to the poet who would eulogize his patron and the family estate in the tradition of the country house poem, where the focus of the eulogy is usually on communal consumption around the cornucopian table.⁴⁷ The way Marvell chooses to extend the genre seems to fit the character of the estate and its landlord adequately: rather than lingering on the bare and almost claustrophobic inside of this Puritan house that doesn’t offer utopian bounty, he moves out of the confinement of the house both to the history

⁴⁴ Presenting these lines as an example, Bradbrook and Thomas have noted the “sensuous exuberance” found in the abbess’ speeches: “the sense of rounded fruits and heavy syrup is as rich as that of *St Agnes’ Eve* (it is largely a matter of alternating *o*’s and *u*’s, explosive *p*’s and *b*’s and smooth sibilants).” M. C. Bradbrook and M.G. Lloyd Thomas, *Andrew Marvell* (1940; Cambridge: University Press, 1961), 34.

⁴⁵ Barbara K. Lewalski writes that in the 1630s, as part of his efforts to reinforce the court’s cultural influence, Charles “reissued Jacobean proclamations commanding the gentry and nobility back to their country estates to keep hospitality in the traditional fashion, especially at the Christmas and Easter seasons.” See “Milton’s *Comus* and the politics of masquing,” in *The Politics of Stuart Court Masque*, ed. David Bevington and Peter Holbrook (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 296. For a discussion of the general decline in hospitality and Protestantism’s role in this shift, see Felicity Heal, *Hospitality in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), 91-140.

⁴⁶ “Not only is ‘Upon Appleton House’ the first non-Cavalier/royalist country-house poem, but the patron to whom it is addressed is none other than the lord general who had recently led the New Model Army to victory over the armies of the king...” Brian Patton, “Preserving Property: History, Genealogy, and Inheritance in ‘Upon Appleton House,’” *Renaissance Quarterly* 49.4 (1996): 837.

⁴⁷ I need to acknowledge this may seem a simplistic characterization of the country house poem given Alastair Fowler’s of the form. But Marvell seems to have the poems of hospitality in mind when he is refitting the genre for his purpose. See Alastair Fowler, ed., *The Country House Poem: A Cabinet of Seventeenth-Century Estate Poems and Related Items* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1994).

and to the open space of the estate. While Carew's poem contents itself with the discussion of the "within" of the house and its timeless order of self-sufficiency, in Marvell's case the initial dichotomy of the "within" and "without" is set up only to open up the poem both temporally and spatially.

In his analysis of "To Penshurst" Raymond Williams has demonstrated the ways in which Jonson's poetic mastery manages to idealize the family's estate as a timeless natural order by mystifying the process of production on the estate and by erasing its recent origin as this particular family's property.⁴⁸ Marvell's poem seems to operate on a different principle. While maintaining his intention to present Sir Thomas's as a utopian household, Marvell brings in both historical perspective and analytical techniques and applies them to the poetic tradition that he is working with. By moving out of the house both physically and figuratively, he intends not only to historicize, but also to "survey" (81) the estate, paying attention to its individual divisions and subdivisions. The poet chooses to ambulate around "fragrant gardens, shady woods,/ Deep meadows, and transparent floods" (79-80) to observe and contemplate in each its own separate world and residents, its own songs and voices, its own ideas and ways of living.

Considering that surveyors were often at the center of early modern agricultural controversies, Marvell's decision to impersonate the estate surveyor in the poem demands our attention. According to Andrew McRae, while the word "surveyor" was already used in the Middle Ages to refer to government officials, only in the sixteenth century did the land surveyor begin to be seen "as an independent specialist, who brought to an estate a newly legalistic appreciation of tenurial relations and newly rationalistic standards of

⁴⁸ Raymond Williams, *The Country and the City* (1973; London: Paladin, 1975), 38-47, 54-55. Though an old manor house, Sidney family received it from Edward VI only in 1552. For a history of the ownership of Penshurst Place, see Fowler, *The Country House Poem*, 57-58.

land measurement and estate planning.”⁴⁹ As McRae informs us, however, the birth of land surveyors as a professional class in early modern England was met by traditionalist pamphleteers’ attacks on them. They were often targeted by proponents of the moral economy as “agent[s] of those people whose covetousness threatens the existing order; most particularly, of landlords enclosing common lands and causing the depopulation of rural villages.”⁵⁰ One early seventeenth-century writer compares the surveyor to “a Beare with a Chaine at his side.”⁵¹ Faced with such negative public perceptions, members of this newly emerging professional class published surveying manuals like John Norden’s *The Surveiors Dialogue* (1607) to reshape their public image as well as to educate their own members in this new trade. Norden’s book, for example, dramatizes a surveyor’s successful attempt to convert an initially hostile tenant farmer into an ally as well as assistant to his survey. The surveyors also actively promoted themselves by advertising bills “fixed upon posts in the streets” of London.⁵² These manuals and street advertisements promoted “the improvers’ ideals of order and reason.” They recommended that landowners gain “perfect knowledge” of their land, now perceived as their exclusive private property, and endorsed a rational and legalistic estate management.⁵³ Radulph Agas’ attempt at self-promotion summarizes their surveying ideals succinctly.

⁴⁹ Andrew McRae, *God speed the plough: The Representation of Agrarian England, 1500-1660* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 170.

⁵⁰ McRae, *God speed the plough*, 169-70.

⁵¹ Donald Lupton, *London and the Countrey Carbonadoed* (1632) 106. Cited in McRae, *God speed the plough*, 170.

⁵² Apparently, such advertising practices by surveyors were quite common. See John Norden, *The Surveiors Dialogue* (London, 1607), 14. According to McRae, Radulph Agas’ bill is the only survivor of such documents. McRae, *God speed the plough*, 177.

⁵³ McRae, *God speed the plough*, 172-79.

No man may arrogate himself the name and title of a perfect and absolute Surveior . . . unless he be able in true forme, measure, quantitie, and proportion, to plat the same in their particulars, ad infinitum, and thereupon to retriue, and beat out all decaied, concealed, and hidden parcels thereof.⁵⁴

According to the OED, to “plat” means “to make a plan or map of” and “to divide up or determine the boundaries of” an area of land. Agas, a surveyor who claims to have had over forty years’ practice, separates his practice of surveying from accepted custom and tradition, and promotes the application of new scientific techniques in “knowing” the estate objectively and discovering those resources of the estate that were not recognized by the customary approach. In other words, he proposes to achieve accurate knowledge of the estate using quantitative measure and analytic skills rather than passing on already-known tradition. I would like to argue that this self-representation of surveying practice is strikingly analogous to what Marvell accomplishes in this poem. Marvell elects to look at this estate and its master’s family in a way dramatically different from that of the senior practitioners of the genre, by venturing out of the enclosed space of the house, by analyzing the estate “in true forme, measure, quantitie, and proportion,” by “[plating] the same in their particulars,” and hence by recovering its “hidden parcels” that used to be systematically excluded in the earlier poetic representation of the country estates. Like Norden’s surveyor, who is not satisfied with the clerical examination of the deeds of the estate but emphasizes the empirical examination of the entire manor by actual perambulation,⁵⁵ Marvell’s poetic surveyor neither stays inside the house, nor stops at tracing the historical origin of the house, but walks through each and every section of the

⁵⁴Radulph Agas, *To all persons whom these presents may concerne, of what estate and degree soever* (c. 1596).

⁵⁵Norden, *The Surveiors Dialogue*, 116.

estate and interacts with its various members. While retaining the generic conventions of the country house poem, the poet retools them into a new frame of perception, a modern survey of an estate. In that sense, I would argue that the whole poem is presented as the sort of estate map that surveyors produced based on the result of their survey. According to McRae, mapping is the estate surveyor's radical new strategy for the representation of the land, and it symbolizes a new individualist attitude towards land ownership. With sub-sections devoted to each division and subdivision of the estate, Marvell's poem does look like an estate surveyor's map even on the surface, whose analytic perception of the estate was often expressed by marking the divisions of the estate with different colors.⁵⁶

In fact, it is Marvell himself who provides the grounds upon which to read the poem in this fashion: using this representative term of the modern profession of the survey, Marvell calls Appleton House "paradise's only map" (768). Paradoxically, he associates the outcome of modern empirical technology with paradise – something that is supposed to exist beyond the realm of empirical perception. This intriguing combination of utopia (no-where), the unrepresentable, with an emblem of scientific empiricism illuminates Marvell's self-imposed task in this poem: he is trying to survey this only map of paradise – or to put it differently, to examine the paradise in earthly terms using the empirical/analytical technique of surveying. Of course, the famous prototype of the utopian genre in England, Thomas More's *Utopia* (1516), has the front page of a map of Utopia. So, the idea itself could have come from there. Furthermore the inherent urge for the reformation of this empirical world of ours already exists in More's *Utopia*. As Paul Turner puts it, "*Utopia* revolutionized Plato's classical blueprint of the perfect

⁵⁶ McRae, *God speed the plough*, 189-92; Examining a 1596 map of the estate, Timothy Raylor argues for "the topographical accuracy" of Marvell's poem. Timothy Raylor, "'Paradise's Only Map': A Plan of Nun Appleton," *Notes and Queries* 44, no. 2 (1997): 186. The same map is reprinted in Smith, ed., *Poems*, 236.

republic, mainly by its realism. Locating his island in the (then) New World, More endowed it with a language and poetry, and detailed the length of the working day and even the divorce laws.”⁵⁷ I would argue, however, that Marvell extends such “realism” further, by bringing ‘paradise’ into his native England, and applying the analytic techniques of the newly emerging science of surveying to its poetic representation. The same is true of his revision of the country house poem. Raymond Williams has argued that the genre of the country house poem is itself an innovation over the tradition of the pastoral in the sense that it is about a specific physical place rather than a vague idealization.⁵⁸ Utilizing much more fully the possibilities of the poetic traditions that he is working with, Marvell is taking a major step towards situating utopias here and now.

Before moving on to a detailed reading of the poem, a few points need to be emphasized regarding Marvell’s version of the country house poem. I will argue that Marvell’s poetic innovations enabled him to register the agricultural innovations of this estate and the actual moment of labor of the common people. This does not mean, however, that in encompassing multiple voices and in paying attention to empirical details, Marvell intends to attempt a wholly new genre that would sever his poem completely from the tradition of the country house poem. His intention is much more modest, as is suggested by his remark on the building, which may also be read as a remark on his own poem:

Humility alone designs
Those short but admirable lines,
By which, ungiirt and unconstrained,
Things greater are in less contained. (41- 44)

⁵⁷ Paul Turner, back cover, in Thomas More, *Utopia*, trans. Paul Turner (London: Penguin, 1965)

⁵⁸ Williams, *The Country and the City*, 38-39.

Throughout the process of the analytical study of divisions and subdivisions which covers the multiple dimensions and details of this household, this poem wonderfully maintains its rigorous and yet gracefully compact lines tetrameters while managing to “contain” “things greater” “ungirt and unconstrained.” Marvell intends to “contain” the empirical and prosaic details of the estate in the compact language of poetry. His innovations subject the genre of the country house poem to the newly found methods of perception in order to improve, rather than replace, the tradition.

We can better appreciate Marvell’s unique positioning of himself in relation to poetic traditions when we compare “Upon Appleton House” with so-called prospect poems or topographical poems. This is a genre that is emerging in this period and, as John William Foster has argued, is quite directly coterminous with the rapid advance of the science of land surveying and topography.⁵⁹ In fact Marvell is not the first to utilize the language of the estate survey in poetry. About a decade earlier, John Denham compared his poetic practice to land surveying in his famous “Coopers Hill”(1642)⁶⁰ which set a seminal example for the genre of prospect poems: “My eye descending from the Hill survaies / Where Thames amongst the wanton valleys straves;” (185-186). I agree with Foster that the emerging science of land surveying provides a critical context for Denham’s poem, especially considering Denham’s later career as Surveyor of the Works under Charles II.

⁵⁹ John Wilson Foster, “The Measure of Paradise: Topography in Eighteenth-Century Poetry,” *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 9, no. 2 (1975): 232-56.

⁶⁰ Denham revised the poem several times after its original composition of 1641 or so, in response to the changing political landscape. The above quotation is from the published text of 1642, which is significantly different from the better known version of the poem, the text of 1655-68. The 1642 text or one of its variants is the one that Marvell would have known when he was writing “Upon Appleton House.” For the various texts of the poem and the history of the revision, see Brendan O Hehir, *Expans’d Hieroglyphicks: a Critical Edition of Sir John Denham’s Coopers Hill* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969).

Marvell's poem has quite a few images that are reminiscent of Denham's poem, for instance, the image of flooded meadows, suggesting Marvell's familiarity with the poem. Compared to prospect poems and the active adoption of the scientific perspective that they exhibit, however, Marvell's poem is much more grounded in the earlier poetic tradition. For example, Dunham's poetic perspective, which he terms "my eye," is, as Foster points out, curiously instrumental and resonant of the detached and objective stance of scientific practice,⁶¹ while Marvell's surveyor is much more personally and emotionally involved with the members of the estate, the *object* of his poetic survey, even when he is using the cutting-edge technology of contemporary science, the telescope/microscope.⁶² The poet does not stay in the elevated poetic vantage point of the "prospect" but actually goes down to the meadow and then to the forest, interacting with their respective denizens.

In fact, Marvell's poetic innovations do not stop at the introduction of analytical methods of land surveying to his poetic practice. Rather, I would argue, he also reshapes the rational-empirical methods themselves by separating them from their conventional ideological associations. As mentioned earlier, surveyors' rational-empirical-legalistic analysis of the estate and their ambition to provide a 'perfect' knowledge of the land benefited major landowners at the expense of the landless. As the young tenant farmer in Norden's book complains, the surveying profession was unpopular among the rural poor

⁶¹ Commenting that readers do not get an impression "of a real man actually standing on the hill at the mercy of the elements" but rather "a generalized prospect," Foster argues that such an effect was "reinforced by the fact that the subject and observer of the scene is not "I" or even "we" but the "eye," almost always used in the impersonal singular." Foster, "The Measure of Paradise," 235.

⁶² See pages 55-57 of this chapter for the discussion of Marvell's poetic use of scientific instruments.

because its practitioners usually sided with the interests of improving landlords.⁶³ I will examine the ways in which Marvell utilizes the potential of the surveying language and technique to produce a map that is entirely his own, a map that goes so far as to challenge this estate's status as the *only* official map of paradise. Not only does he disengage the genre of the country house poem from the ideals of a traditionalist moral economy, he also separates the innovative techniques of poetic 'surveyorship' from their ideological implications. In the following pages I will trace Marvell's division of the Nun Appleton estate, examining the ways in which he revises both the poetic tradition and the emergent language of land surveying, and I will discuss the poetic outcome of such innovations.

II. The Field/The Open Landscape: New Economics and New Voices

Appleton House's distance from manor houses like Penshurst and Saxham does not result only from the absence of old values that Jonson and Carew eulogize in their poems. Rather, Marvell's innovations on the tradition show even more clearly in the ways in which he registers the positive new values of this household. In this section I will examine the details of the agricultural practices that Marvell chooses to survey and that testify to the innovative characteristics of this estate and of its landlord.

Stepping outside the house, the poet first surveys the rather recent historical origin of Appleton House as the property of this particular household. Marvell opens up the poem historically, which is not seen in the earlier examples of the genre. Country house poems normally emphasize the lineal perpetuity of the ancient household. I'll discuss Marvell's handling of this estate's history further in the later section of this chapter.

⁶³ Norden, *The Surveyors Dialogue*, 1-5. The unpopularity of the profession among the poor was partly due to their notorious hostility to cottagers. Christopher Hill, *The World Turned Upside Down: Radical Ideas During the English Revolution* (London: Penguin, 1972), 52.

Moving away from the past history of the house and starting his survey of the present estate, Marvell pauses at Sir Thomas' garden right outside the house and establishes his patron as an innovator. Marvell's lines (281-88) leave it ambiguous whether he refers to the Lord General or to his great-grand father Sir Thomas Fairfax, son of William Fairfax and Isabel Thwaites, although some critics think the Lord General's great-grand father is the only referee here.⁶⁴ Whichever the case, one could argue that Marvell chooses to emphasize the high discipline of this well-organized 'military' garden in reference to the current lord's fame as a great military leader and an innovator of the New Model Army. Sir Thomas' ability to keep his garden "fresh . . . and flourishing" (348) parallels his efficacy as a military general who was credited with the organization and training of the parliamentary army. With its principle of meritocracy and regular pay (though in reality the pay was often in arrears) and with its higher standard of discipline, the New Model Army represented a radically new approach to building up the national military force, and it directly accounted for the defeat of the royalist army in the Civil War. As Richard Elton's dedication of his military manual to the Lord General demonstrates, contemporaries identified the innovative novelty of the New Modern Army with Sir Thomas Fairfax.⁶⁵

The prevalence of military language in the garden sequence, however, also distinguishes Marvell's treatment of the garden from its representations in emblematic and literary traditions. Marvell, shifting away from the tradition of the garden as the

⁶⁴ While editors of earlier editions lean toward a reading that allows such ambiguity, Nigel Smith seems to share Duncan-Jones' reading that Marvell is referring only to the Lord General's great grand father. See E. Duncan-Jones, "Two Notes on Marvell," *The Review of English Studies*, n.s. 52, no. 206 (2001): 192-93; Smith, ed., *Poems*, 223, footnote to line 281.

⁶⁵ Just a year earlier in 1650, Richard Elton chose to dedicate his *Compleat Body of the Art Military* to Sir Thomas Fairfax, Lord General.

locus of amorous, extramarital “courtly love” currently associated with the aristocratic culture of the Caroline court, instead associates it with the virtuous married love of Sir Thomas and his nuclear family. This is not the amorous garden of Cavalier poets: this garden and its flowers do not embody the sexualized female body, the object of male desire as in the following lines from Thomas Carew’s “A Rapture”(1640).

Then, as the empty Bee, that lately bore,
 Into the common treasure, all her store,
 Flyes ‘bout the painted field with nimble wing,
 Deflowring the fresh virgins of the Spring;
 So will I rifle all the sweets, that dwell
 In my delicious Paradise, and swell
 My bagge with honey, drawne forth by the power
 Of fervent kisses, from each spicie flower.
 I’le seize the Rose-buds in their perfum’d bed,
 The Violet knots, like curious Mazes spread
 O’re all the Garden, taste the ripned Cherry,
 The warme, firme Apple, tipt with corall berry:
 Then will I visit, with a wandring kisse,
 The vale of Lillies, and the Bower of blisses:
 (Thomas Carew, “A Rapture” 55-68)

It is true that the military trope had already been used in Carew’s poem to underscore the intensity of the male persona’s amorous desire, and that Marvell’s language is surprisingly reminiscent of Carew’s, testifying to his early association with Cavalier poets. But the military garden of Sir Thomas’ Puritan family lies traverse to the licentious love rhapsodized in Carew’s poem. Sir Thomas’ is not an amorous garden of love but a garden that pays homage to the values of the nuclear family (stanza 38), and is militantly against the sexual promiscuity encouraged in Carew’s poem. The words that are resonant of Carew’s poem are used in a way that highlights the different values that Marvell praises. For example, while the words “the Switzers of our guard” (“Upon

Appleton House” 336) recall “[The] grim Swisse”(“A Rapture” 10) that guards the garden and keeps lovers outside in Carew’s poem, in Marvell’s poem they refer to the flowers *in* the garden that have internalized the discipline of militant Puritanism. The amorous bee that, in Carew’s poem, would “rifle” the flowers with “fervent kisses” and deflower them is now replaced by the belligerent she-bee that guards the flowers as “sentinel” and is ready to “[run] you through” (318-20).

What most sets Marvell’s garden apart from others, however, is that this garden is not presented as an enclosed space, a self-sufficient paradise shutting out the outside world and looking inwards. Indeed Marvell himself touches on the traditional image of the enclosed garden as a paradise: picking up the popular image of England as an Edenic garden, Marvell mourns the replacement of such a paradise by the wasted world of the Civil War.

Oh thou, that dear and happy isle
 The garden of the world ere while,
 Thou Paradise of four seas,
 Which heaven planted us to please,
 But, to exclude the world, did guard
 With wat’ry if not flaming sword;
 What luckless apple did we taste,
 To make us mortal, and thee waste? (321-328)

However, he also acknowledges here that an enclosed paradise such as this one is the lost Eden, a thing of the past. This present garden of Sir Thomas is not a haven safe from the cruel reality of the Civil War. Neither is it a world of paradisiacal perfection, self-sufficient and self-referential. The imagery of the enclosed paradisiacal garden is evoked to emphasize this garden’s distance from such tradition, in the same way that in the beginning of the poem, the “within” of the house is juxtaposed with the “without” of the

house only to emphasize this house's and this poem's distance from the country house poem that is based on such division. Sir Thomas' is not an Edenic garden sealed from the vicissitudes of the world in the same way that his house does not provide the utopian self-sufficiency Carew found in Saxham. In this poem the enclosed world of the house or the garden does not have a claim to moral superiority over the outside world, nor can it boast the self-sufficiency of its utopian precedents. The structure of the poem challenges the very valuation of the enclosed center over the periphery that we have seen in Jonson's and Carew's poems. The house and garden are no longer the privileged center of the world, but just one of many parts of a world that has become fragmented.⁶⁶ While the center stage of "To Penshurst" and "To Saxham" was reserved for the inner space of the manor, the central weight has shifted in Marvell's poem to the field and to the forest. The once *peripheral* world of laboring population, the natural world and the tutor's private space now occupy the central lines of the poem.⁶⁷

⁶⁶ Some contemporaries associated the opening-up of the garden with republicanism, as demonstrated in Waller's poem published in 1656.

Lucretius with a Stork-like fate,
 Born and translated in a State,
 Comes to proclaim in English Verse
 No Monarch Rules the Universe;
 But chance and Atomes make this All
 In Order Democratical, (1-6)

By which they were before supposed
 By narrow wits to be inclos'd,
 'Till his free Muse threw down the Pale,
 And did at once dispart them all. (17-20)

Edmund Waller, "To His Worthy Friend Master Evelyn, Upon his Translation of Lucretius," in John Evelyn, *An Essay on the First Book of T. Lucretius Carus de Rerum Natura* (London, 1656), 3. For this reading of Waller's poem, see Douglas Chambers, "'Wild Pastorall Encounter': John Evelyn, John Beale and the Renegotiation of Pastoral in the Mid-Seventeenth Century," in *Culture and Cultivation in Early Modern England: Writing and the Land*, ed. Michael Leslie and Timothy Raylor (London: Leicester University Press, 1992), 174.

⁶⁷ This breaking-up of the garden boundary corresponds with the future course of English gardening, that is, the famous landscape gardening of eighteenth-century England. See Chambers, "Wild Pastorall Encounter,"

Therefore, the poet-surveyor does not choose to linger in the garden and utilize its metaphorical potential to the full. He does not let “the sweet fields...lie forgot”(“The Mower against Gardens” 32) but moves out to survey and record what is happening in “the sweet fields” and to listen to what the Mower and his likes have to say. Unlike Carew, who chooses to stay and look within the privileged enclosed space, Marvell, together with the flowers themselves, “gaze[s]/graze[s]”⁶⁸ outwards to the agricultural field of the estate (“But o’er the meads below [the sight] plays, /Or innocently seems to graze.” 367-68).

In direct contrast to the timeless world of Penshurst and Saxham, this field is a scene of action and of constant change, changing faster than Inigo Jones’ famous theatrical machinery (“No scene that turns with engines strange/ Does oft’ner than these meadows change.” 385-86). It is not only a locus of agricultural activity but also one of the military campaigns of the Civil War: the field of Appleton House is part of the very stage where quite recently major battles were fought in the early phase of the Civil War when Sir Thomas established his military career. Battles were fought in nearby Tadcaster, Selby, and Sherburn as well as in famous Marston Moor, which is less than ten miles away from Appleton House.⁶⁹ No wonder Marvell’s lines are filled with images of military campaigns and their deadly violence. Occupying the physical center of the poem

174. In spite of the similarity, however, Marvell’s opening up of the scope of the country house poem to the open field and to its human residents has crucial differences from the mainly esthetic nature of the landscape gardening movement.

⁶⁸ In *Miscellaneous Poems* (1681), the posthumous collection of Marvell’s poems, this reads as “gaze,” but it reads as “graze” in an annotated copy of *Miscellaneous Poems* in the Bodleian Library. Margoliouth and Legouis accept the reading of *Miscellaneous Poems* while Donno and Smith prefer the reading of the Bodleian Library copy.

⁶⁹ Clements R. Markham, *A Life of The Great Lord Fairfax* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1870), 56-187; Michael Wilding, *Dragons Teeth: Literature in the English Revolution* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), 162, n. 55. See also the map of “The War in Yorkshire, 1642-44” in M.A. Gibb, *The Lord General: A Life of Thomas Fairfax* (London: Lindsay Drummond, 1938), an insert between 296-97.

(stanza 47-60 of a ninety seven-stanza poem), the meadow is the locus of history, of the political and socioeconomic reality of mid-seventeenth-century England.

Now that the agricultural field, the former *periphery* of the traditional order, occupies the center stage in this poem and reclaims its importance as the locus of production, it demands the surveyor-poet's careful attention to itself. It is no surprise, therefore, that we encounter a detailed description, though in figurative language, of agricultural production in the meadow sequence, a description both of the agricultural practice and of its human agents. Critics have already noted the accuracy of this surveyor-poet's record. Derek Hirst and Steven Zwicker, for instance, have observed "[t]he precision with which Marvell takes us through the season's agricultural calendar in the Vale of York."⁷⁰ The husbandry technique that I'd like to bring our special attention to, however, is the artificial flood that Marvell records in the middle of the poem, which I believe provides a key to understanding the physical characteristics of this field and its lord.

Then, to conclude these pleasant acts,
Denton sets ope its cataracts;
And makes the meadow truly be
(What it but seemed before) a sea.
For, jealous of its Lord's long stay,
It tries t'invite him thus away,
The river in itself is drowned,
And isles th'astonished cattle round. (465-72)

Strangely, it is not easy to find a convincing answer to a naïve but naturally occurring question: what caused this artificial flooding? While much critical attention has been

⁷⁰ Derek Hirst and Steven Zwicker, "High Summer at Nun Appleton, 1651: Andrew Marvell and Lord Fairfax's Occasions," *The Historical Journal* 36, no. 2 (1993): 251.

paid to the metaphorical significance of this scene,⁷¹ not much effort has been made to explain the literal act which Marvell's lines refer to. Certainly the lines have biblical reference, strongly evoking the opening of heavenly flood gates ("cataracts") and the ensuing flooding of the world, as recorded in the Book of Genesis.⁷² But the lines also make it clear that this is an anthropogenic flooding. John Barnard has argued, based on a map of the Denton estate drawn by a surveyor in 1716, that "Marvell's image involves a playful aggrandisement" of the periodic cleaning of the 'Fish-Pond' in the Denton estate and that Marvell conflates this minor flooding with the annual spring-flooding of the Wharfe in this scene.⁷³ Barnard's explanation seems to have gained currency, considering that in his recent edition of Marvell's poems, Nigel Smith shares Barnard's position in his footnotes to the flooding scene. However, the opening of sluice gates to a mere fishpond wouldn't flood the whole meadow thirty miles down the river.

In explaining the cause of this flooding, an agricultural historian proves more helpful. According to Eric Kerridge, the floating/flooding⁷⁴ of the watermeadows is one of the crucial agricultural improvements of the early modern period.⁷⁵ "The floated

⁷¹ For example, Turner argues "Marvell makes the water represent the life he praises, a privileged and local innocence." James Turner, *The Politics of Landscape: Rural Scenery and Society in English Poetry 1630-1660* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1979), 68.

⁷² The OED offers many early modern examples of such biblical use of the word "cataracts." For example, "all the Cataracts/Of Heav'n set open on the Earth shall power/Rain day and night," John Milton, *Paradise Lost* (1674), 11: 824-26.

⁷³ John Barnard, "Marvell and Denton's 'Cataracts,'" *Review of English Studies*, n.s. 31.123 (1980): 310-15. Margoliouth and Legouis argue that Marvell refers to the practice of "warping" a tidal river, but the Appleton estate is located too far inland for this practice, whose main purpose is to reclaim the low-lying lands in coastal areas like Marvell's hometown Kingston-Upon-Hull. H. M. Margoliouth, ed., *The Poems and Letters of Andrew Marvell*, rev. ed., by Pierre Legouis with the collaboration of E.E. Duncan-Jones, vol. 1 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971), 287-8. In addition, the practice of warping was introduced to this region only in the eighteenth century. See R.E.P. Ernle, *English Farming Past and Present* (London: Longman, Green and Co., 1927), 114.

⁷⁴ The terms "floating" and "flooding" seem to have been used interchangeably. According to the OED, to flood also means "[t]o cover or fill with water; to irrigate (grass land)" and it cites Loudon's *Encyclopedia Agriculture* (1831): "Flooding and warping are modes of irrigation, the former for manuring grass lands."

⁷⁵ Only after drafting this section did I discover that Cristina Malcolmson had already pointed out that Marvell is referring to the new technology of floating, based also on Kerridge's essay, though she pursues a

meadow ended the critical shortage of feed in April by giving earlier grass and more hay.” The watermeadows were flooded and covered with water during the cold winter months for protection and early growth of hay, which would provide much-needed early feed for the live stock.⁷⁶ The monstrously tall grasses described in the beginning of the meadow scene (“And now to the abyss I pass/Of that unfathomable grass” 369-70) suggest that this was a flooded field: the hay crop from the floated meadow was usually “about four times as great as from an equal area of unfloated wet meadow.”⁷⁷ According to Kerridge, the water meadows were often flooded after the mowing in June or July for a second or third crop of hay,⁷⁸ and dairy cattle were put in the meadows in high summer and early autumn to eat off the meadows. This corresponds with the agricultural practice recorded in Marvell’s lines: “...to this naked equal flat,/...The villagers in common chase/Their cattle, which it closer rase” (449-52). The sequence of events in the meadow-flood scene testifies to Marvell’s accurate observation and knowledge of this advanced practice of husbandry. The flooding concludes the “pleasant acts” (465) of the mowers’ harvest of

different line of argument, claiming that it represents Sir Thomas’s “godly power” and “establishes Fairfax’s absolute jurisdiction over the meadow.” Cristina Malcolmson, “The Garden Enclosed/The Woman Enclosed: Marvell and the Cavalier Poets,” in *Enclosure Acts: Sexuality, Property, and Culture in Early Modern England*, ed. Richard Burt and John Michael Archer (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994), 265.

⁷⁶ Eric Kerridge, “The Sheepfold in Wiltshire and the Floating of the Watermeadows,” *The Economic History Review*, n.s. 6 (1954): 282-86. Joan Thirsk agrees with Kerridge on the crucial significance of this new technique in seventeenth-century agricultural development. Joan Thirsk, “Seventeenth-Century Agriculture and Social Change,” in *The Agricultural History Review* 18, supplement, *Land, Church, and People: Essays Presented to Professor H.P.R. Finberg* (1970). See also Joan Thirsk, ed., *The Agrarian History of England and Wales*, vol. 4, 1500-1640 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967), 180-82.

⁷⁷ Kerridge, “Floating of the Watermeadows,” 287.

⁷⁸ Several critics, including Raymond Williams and William Empson, assume that Marvell describes a later autumn/winter flooding, but Hirst and Zwicker’s view that the season of this poem is high summer seems to have been widely accepted. Williams 74; William Empson, “Natural Magic and Populism in Marvell’s Poetry,” *Andrew Marvell: Tercentenary Essays*, ed. R. L. Brett (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979), 46; Hirst and Zwicker, “High Summer at Nun Appleton,” 248-51. Such confusion might be partly due to the fact that floating was mostly performed in late autumn and winter to protect grass from the harsh winter weather, as I’ve already described. But the short duration of flooding described in this poem fits better the practice of summer floating.

the hay (385-432), its drying in stacks (433-40), and the cattle's grazing in the mowed meadow (441-64).

What does this new technique tell us about the nature of this estate and why does Marvell provide such details that hint at this new agrarian technology? Perhaps more importantly, what does that tell us about the nature of this poem? We do not know when the flooding of watermeadows was introduced in English agriculture. Kerridge argues that it seems to have "started in the early seventeenth century, spread widely in the second and third quarters of the century and had become standard practice by the early eighteenth." (289) In southern regions of England like Chalk country and Herefordshire, the floating was quite well established by 1632. Though located in England's northern region, the vale of York bore close resemblance to southern regions in farming practices, partly thanks to its close proximity to the major port of Hull, which provided easy access to international as well as domestic grain markets. At any rate, the presence of such new agricultural techniques, and of the large-scale irrigational improvements necessary for such a practice as early as 1651, suggests that Sir Thomas' is a very well-managed estate with cutting-edge innovations.⁷⁹

Indeed, Sir Thomas himself seems to belong to the growing group of gentry landowners who were paying unprecedented attention to the modern management of their estates. His management of the Isle of Man, the lordship of which was granted to him by

⁷⁹ Fairfax family members' military engagements in the Low Countries over several generations could have contributed to the advanced agricultural practice of their estates. The Lord General himself served under his future father-in-law, Sir Horace Vere, in the Low Countries during the Thirty Years War. According to G. E. Fussell, Flemish farming was the most advanced in Europe throughout the early modern period and its practice was passed on to England by immigrants from that region and by Englishmen who traveled to the Low Countries for trade or for war. G. E. Fussell, "Low Countries' Influence on English Farming," *English Historical Review* 74 (1959): 611-13. One such example is Sir Richard Weston whom Arthur Young regarded as "a greater benefactor than Newton," and whose *Discourse of Husbandry used in Brabant and Flanders* (1650) was edited and published by Samuel Hartlib with a new title of *Legacie* (1651) as part of his utopian project of "universal reformation."

Parliament on October 15, 1651 following the execution of the royalist James Stanley, seventh Earl of Derby, was so efficient that the Countess of Derby, to whom Sir Thomas generously allowed the rent to continue to be paid, later “confessed she had never received her rents with such regularity from her own agents.”⁸⁰ The recurrent use of agricultural terms and images in “Upon Appleton House, To My Lord Fairfax” testifies to the main addressee’s interest in contemporary agricultural innovations. Sir Thomas’s enthusiasm for gardening also suggests his familiarity with contemporary husbandry manuals and discussions of agricultural improvement, since, in this period, gardening encompassed much broader areas of husbandry than it does today. “In the seventeenth century the literature of horticultural improvement often merged into that of agricultural improvement. In the mind, as in practice, the boundaries between the kitchen garden, the orchard, and the fields beyond were difficult to maintain.”⁸¹ Improvement in arable farming was very often achieved by applying advanced horticultural techniques to it.⁸²

Perhaps it is not surprising that Marvell presents the estate of this former Lord General of the Parliamentary Army as one well-managed with advanced agricultural technologies like floating. The late 1640s and early 1650s witnessed an active promotion of the productive use of land by the people in the Hartlib circle with the support of the Parliamentary government. This was a group of people loosely connected around

⁸⁰ Markham, *Lord Fairfax*, 364-65. On Sir Thomas’ close, though absentee, engagement in the island’s business as Lord of Man, see Philip Major, “Thomas Fairfax, Lord of Man,” *Notes and Queries* 54, no. 1 (2007): 43-45. In the Isle of Man, land tenure was a volatile issue. Against James Stanley and his governors’ attempt to introduce the modern rent system and to limit tenants’ use rights, tenants claimed for their customary use rights of the land. Tenants’ discontent materialized as several revolts in the first half of the seventeenth century.

⁸¹ Michael Leslie, “‘Bringing Ingenuity into Fashion’: The ‘Elysium Britannicum’ and the Reformation of Husbandry,” in *John Evelyn’s “Elysium Britannicum” and European Gardening*, ed. Therese O’Malley and Joachim Wolschke-Bulmahn (Washington D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 1998), 133.

⁸² Fussell, “Low Countries’ Influence,” 614.

Samuel Hartlib that functioned as a hub of intellectual communication and “medium of technology transfer, especially from the advanced civil societies of the continental corridor.”⁸³ Their ultimate goal was utopian, dreaming “universal reformation,” or “Panorthosia”⁸⁴ for the benefit of the public and mankind. But their utopian dream was grounded in practical efforts and they worked mainly to promote many utilitarian projects, one of which was the improvement of the land. For Hartlib and his associates, agricultural innovation constituted an integral part of their program of social progress, and their efforts in the 1640s and 50s directly contributed to the “agricultural revolution” of the late seventeenth century.⁸⁵ Floating was the foremost of important agricultural innovations recommended by these parliamentarian improvers. For instance, Walter Blith who was a captain of the Parliamentary Army and then turned a surveyor/sequestration agent, cites floating and watering of land as the first of the “six pieces of improvement” that he promotes in his highly influential *The English Improver or a New Survey of Husbandry* (1649).⁸⁶ Robert Child, in his “Large Letter” printed in Hartlib’s *Legacie* (1651), urges an active adoption of floating and recommends Blith’s book as a guide. In such a context, the poet’s adoption of the role of surveyor seems a perfect choice in eulogizing his patron as an improving landlord, considering that contemporaries associated the profession of surveyors with the imperative of land improvement.

⁸³ Mark Greengrass, Michael Leslie and Timothy Raylor, eds., *Samuel Hartlib and Universal Reformation: Studies in Intellectual Communication* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 22.

⁸⁴ The term is that of Jan Amos Comenius, a Moravian exile who was Hartlib’s close associate and mentor.

⁸⁵ Timothy Raylor, “Samuel Hartlib and the Commonwealth of Bees,” in *Culture and Cultivation in Early Modern England: Writing and the Land*, ed. Michael Leslie and Timothy Raylor (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1992), 91-92.

⁸⁶ For the historical and personal context of Blith’s book, see Joan Thirsk, “Plough and Pen: Agricultural Writers in the Seventeenth Century,” in T. H. Aston and et al. eds., *Social Relations and Ideas: Essays in Honour of R.H. Hilton* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 306-14.

If the surveyor's description of the advanced agricultural practice in Sir Thomas' field introduces the progressive logic of agrarian capitalism, his attention to the agricultural laborers brings in another utopian agenda voiced at this critical juncture in English history. This was a vision that challenged not only the Royalist ideology of Merry Old England portrayed in earlier country house poems, but also the capitalist improvement of land and its concomitant re-organization of village community and of traditional landlord-tenant farmer relations. One of Raymond Williams' major points of critique of the country house poem is that it idealized the community of consumption while successfully erasing the process of production and the laboring poor. By moving out of the manor house to the open agricultural landscape, Marvell's surveyor-poet instead makes a conscious choice to trace the agricultural reality of the field. His survey, however, doesn't stop at accurately registering agricultural practice. Marvell's survey of the estate also differs from earlier poems of the country house in the way he records agricultural laborers. As already discussed, in the centripetal world of the country house poems, villagers willingly identify themselves with the idealized community centered around the manor house, and the epitome of this "organic community" is portrayed in the central scene of the communal banquet. We have already discussed the absence of any instances of a charitable relationship to the surrounding community in Sir Thomas' house: Marvell describes no feast, no poor people from the village around the house participating in the communal feast. The poor exist in Appleton House only as decoration (lines 65-66), as a reminder of the old culture that has perished. Instead, the surveyor-poet locates the village people outside the house, in the field, engaged in their everyday life of hard labor. The laboring people in "Upon Appleton House" are largely

devoid of the idealizing trappings of earlier poems. We do not see those happy villagers of “To Penshurst” who freely visit the house and deferentially pay their tributes, as surrounding nature does to the household. In fact, the surveyor-poet records that the agricultural laborers have their own life and culture, no longer part of the “organic” unity of a collective *us*. Their festivity as an integral part of their hard labor and production, is now their own, separated from that of the manor house.

And now the careless victors play,
Dancing the triumphs of the hay;
Where every mower’s wholesome heat
Smells like an Alexander’s sweat.
Their females fragrant as the mead
Which they in fairy circles treat:
When at their dance’s end they kiss,
Their new-made hay not sweeter is. (425-32)⁸⁷

This separation of cultures is coterminous with the long-term transformation in the relationship of production, which was formally confirmed by the parliamentary abolition of feudal tenures in 1646. As Christopher Hill has pointed out, “the agricultural revolution of the later seventeenth century was made at the expense of tenants” whose customary rights were being eroded while the property rights of the landlords came to be legally protected.⁸⁸ Small tenants had been forcefully ‘freed’ from their land, and as a result, the employer-laborer relationship had been replacing the traditional landlord-tenant relationship. The idealized manor-village community of Penshurst was not a dominant reality even in Jonson’s own day, not to mention forty or so years later in the

⁸⁷ Based on these lines, Empson makes a case for Marvell’s populism: “I do not know that any other poet has praised the smell of a farm hand.” Empson, “Natural Magic,” 48-49. Wilding, however, argues that “The qualities of country labourers are not qualities presented for admiration.” Wilding, *Dragons Teeth*, 157. I think it is undeniable that there is a certain attraction (though not whole-hearted and with a critical distance) to the life and culture of rustic people in these lines and in the Mower poems.

⁸⁸ Christopher Hill, *A Tinker and a Poor Man: John Bunyan and His Church 1628-1688* (New York: Norton, 1988), 129.

mid-seventeenth century. Now villagers no longer identify with the world of the manor but have their own culture and their own vision. The laborers' attitude to the tutor-surveyor, whom they would associate with the landlord's household, is cool and distanced, to say the least. Demonstrating her thorough knowledge of the Bible, Thestylis' rhetoric separates her kind from the observing tutor: "*He called us Israelites*" (406 – italics mine).⁸⁹ Not only is the laboring population represented in its actual life in this poetic survey, unlike in "To Penshurst," this laborer talks back to the poet, refusing the subjected role of mere subject matter. Her active intervention evokes the unprecedented participation of women in the socio-political events in this era. The opened space of the Civil War provided an opportunity for women to voice their opinion and their beliefs.⁹⁰ Taking an active role and acquiring her own voice, Thestylis refuses to interpret the poet's biblical allusion figuratively, but insists on understanding it literally: she wants the blessings of heaven to materialize here and now as real, physical gains.

But bloody Thestylis, that waits
 To bring the mowing camp their cates,
 Greedy as kites, has trussed it up,
 And forthwith means on it to sup:
 When on another quick she lights,
 And cries, 'He called us Israelites;
 But now, to make his saying true,
 Rains rain for quails, for manna, dew.' (401-08)

When understood in a literal sense and applied to social reality, the Bible often had radical potential to challenge the established social order, as a popular catchphrase

⁸⁹ Annabel Patteron observes that "Thestylis becomes the voice of peasant realism mocking his metaphors." See Annabel Patteron, *Pastoral and Ideology: Virgil to Valéry* (Berkeley: University of California, 1987), 155; Cristina Malcolmson argues that Thestylis is "akin to the women of the religious sects during the Civil War period who outspokenly used their knowledge of the Bible to counter traditional models of the church." See "The Garden Enclosed/The Woman Enclosed," 262.

⁹⁰ See Keith Thomas, "Women and the Civil War Sects," *Past and Present* 13 (1958): 42-62.

demonstrates: “When Adam delved and Eve span, Who was then the gentleman?”⁹¹ In fact, Thestylis’ attitude is evocative of radical millenarian hopes, widespread in seventeenth-century England, especially among the common people: the English were often compared to the “Israelites” and many believed the Civil War years to be the Latter Days and the Second Coming to be not far off. Christ will come and build his kingdom here in England, land of His chosen people.⁹² The poor and the oppressed will be rewarded not in the afterlife but here and now -- a utopia situated. People like Thestylis reappropriated the shared master code of Christianity to give voice to their own vision for England.⁹³

This new kingdom, of course, would be a “leveled” society like Eden before the Fall, like the harvested meadow created by the mowers’ military labor: “The world when first created sure/Was such a table rase and pure” (445-46). As pointed out by many critics,⁹⁴ the images of the mown field in the meadow sequence refer to the Levellers’ claims for social reform which many members of the propertied class suspected challenged the right of private property⁹⁵--and, even more closely, to proto-communist experiments of the Diggers, who called themselves “True Levellers.”⁹⁶

⁹¹ This dates back to the Peasants’ Revolt of 1381 and is attributed to John Ball.

⁹² Hill, *The World Turned Upside Down*, 95-98.

⁹³ Fredric Jameson, *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1982), 84.

⁹⁴ For example, for a detailed discussion of the topical allusions to the Levellers and the Diggers in the meadow sequence, see Wilding, *Dragons Teeth*, 155-56.

⁹⁵ Patton, “Preserving Property,” 824-25.

⁹⁶ One of Gerrard Winstanley’s pamphlets is titled *The True Levellers Standard Advanced* (1649). Wilding thinks that “The ‘levellers’ Marvell refers to in Stanza lvii are most likely to be this group.” Wilding 153. Sir Thomas had personal contacts with Winstanley’s group: as the Commander-in-Chief of the Parliamentary Army, he met with Winstanley and Everard in April 1649, soon after Winstanley’s group started their communist experiment on St George’s Hill. He visited the Diggers’ colony in May and had “an amicable exchange with Winstanley.” Winstanley addressed at least three letters to the Lord General in 1649. For their meetings, see Christopher Hill, ed., *Law of Freedom and Other Writings* (1973; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 27-8. For the text of Winstanley’s letters to the Lord General, see

For to this naked equal flat,
 Which Levellers take pattern at,
 The villagers in common chase
 Their cattle, which it closer rase;
 And what below the scythe increased
 Is pinched yet nearer by the beast. (449-54)

Common people now have their own ideas and their own utopian social program, which would challenge the propertied elite, whether Royalist or Parliamentarian. The dominant military image in the meadow scene makes literal sense: this meadow was part of the very field where battles were fought, and these were the very people who fought in those battles.

The mower now commands the field;
 In whose new traverse seemeth wrought
 A camp of battle newly fought:
 Where, as the meads with hay, the plain
 Lies quilted o'er with bodies slain:
 The women that with forks it fling,
 Do represent the pillaging. (418-24)

The commoners became politicized to an unprecedented degree through religious-political pamphlets by Puritan preachers, through the New Model Army, which became “a hothouse of political ideas,”⁹⁷ and through the liberating experience of sectarian congregations. Rather than simply serving the will of the Royalist or the Parliamentarian side, they now started to voice their own ideas and claim their own culture, their own utopian plan for the commonwealth. Christopher Hill sees this third voice as a force that could have led to “another revolution.”

George H. Sabine, ed., *The Works of Gerrard Winstanley* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1941), 279-92, 340-49.

⁹⁷ Hill, *The World Turned Upside Down*, 58.

There were, we may oversimplify, two revolutions in mid-seventeenth-century England. The one which succeeded established the sacred rights of property (abolition of feudal tenures, no arbitrary taxation), gave political power to the propertied (sovereignty of Parliament and common law, abolition of prerogative courts), and removed all impediments to the triumph of the ideology of the men of property – the protestant ethic. There was, however, another revolution which never happened, though from time to time it threatened. This might have established communal property, a far wider democracy in political and legal institutions, might have disestablished the state church and rejected the protestant ethic.⁹⁸

In this poem, the meadow is the stage of contestation where the imperative of improvement encounters the alternative logic voiced by the laboring population. In the meadow-flood scene, the surveyor-poet not only registers the advanced farming practice of Sir Thomas' estate, but also gives space to the voice that demands a different kind of agrarian reform. Marvell's apparent reference to the True Levellers, together with Thestylis' millenarian voice, introduces such an alternative vision in this poem. Indeed, I believe that the meadow-flooding scene, together with the final lines of the poem, obliquely allude to the ongoing popular uprising that threatens the logic of agrarian capitalism: fen men riots in nearby Hatfield Chase and Isle of Axholme, a fenland near Hull (Kingston-Upon-Hull), Marvell's hometown, on the border of Yorkshire and Lincolnshire, about twenty miles away from Nun Appleton.⁹⁹

The area of Hatfield Chase and Isle of Axholme was among the first of the immense tracts of fen land along the east coast of England that were to be drained into

⁹⁸ Hill, *The World Turned Upside Down*, 15.

⁹⁹ Hirst and Zwicker cite the riots in Hatfield Chase as one of topical contexts of the poem. See Hirst and Zwicker, "High Summer," 253. Sir Thomas had some personal association with this fenland. Anti-undertakers allegedly rescued his father, Sir Ferdinand Fairfax, from royalists in the isle of Axholme during the first Civil War. Sir Thomas intervened in 1647 when a leader of Axholme anti-undertakers was arrested and helped to arrange his release. See Keith Lindley, *Fenland Riots and the English Revolution* (London: Heinemann, 1982), 95-96, 139-40, 145, 156; Anonymous, *The Anti-Projector, or, The History of the Fen Project* (1646?), 6.

arable land over the course of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The draining project, a major example of agrarian improvement, contributed to the much-needed increase of grain production. But it also destroyed the traditional livelihood of fen men, fishing and fowling,¹⁰⁰ and they were coerced to the project and inadequately compensated for the loss of their customary use rights of the commons. The draining of Hatfield Chase and Isle of Axholme was originally commissioned to a Flemish engineer Cornelius Vermuyden by King Charles in 1626, but wasn't completed due to the national political turmoil as well as local protests. Generally siding with the Parliamentary army,¹⁰¹ fen men took advantage of the time of the war to attack the drainage works throughout the 1640s. Against fen men's expectation, however, the parliamentary government picked up the draining project in 1649 in their zeal for agricultural improvement, causing violent protests from fen men.¹⁰² The area of Hatfield Chase and Isle of Axholme saw the most violent rioting among all the fen lands in this period. Serious unrest resumed in late 1650, reaching a peak in summer 1651. During the summer when Marvell was penning this poem, fen men were staging violent attacks on the drainage works and on the new settlements of projectors' tenants. Leveller leaders

¹⁰⁰ "The native peasantry had nothing to gain and much to lose by [the drainers'] designs, for in both forests and fens they were intended to turn pastoral economies into arable ones, and would inevitably have altered the structure of the local communities." Thirsk, "Seventeenth-Century Agriculture and Social Change," 169.

¹⁰¹ Fen lands were major recruiting grounds for the Parliamentary forces. The Isle of Axholme was also "a stronghold of nonconformity." "[O]n one occasion the King and his forces on a march from Beverley to Nottingham intended to go through the Isle but 'learning that the Isle were all in arms against them' they turned their course and skirted the Isle." See J. D. Hughes, "The Drainage Disputes in The Isle of Axholme and their connexion [sic] with the Leveller Movement: A Re-examination," *The Lincolnshire Historian* 2, no.1 (1954): 23. Oliver Cromwell himself gained his national fame as the spokesman for the commoners in 1638, earning the title of "Lord of the Fens." He was not, however, "opposed to drainage as such for after the Civil Wars, true to family tradition, he actively encouraged fenland drainage." Lindley emphasizes the complexity of fen men's political alliance during the Civil War. See Lindley, *Fenland Riots*, 95-96, 139, 195-96.

¹⁰² It is telling that Walter Blith, an agricultural writer who associated in the Hartlib circle, shows a dramatic shift of view from 1649 to 1652 regarding the draining of the fens. He became a warm supporter of the project in his revised book, published as *The English Improver Improved* in 1652. See Thirsk, "Plough and Pen," 309-10.

John Lilburne and John Wildman were getting involved with the issue, visiting the area to advise these men.¹⁰³ Interestingly, one of fen men's main tactics of protest was to open the sluice-gates to induce flooding to the drained ground and "[level] the enclosures."

In the neighbourhood of Hatfield Chase, near the Isle of Axholme, every day for seven weeks, gangs of commoners, armed with muskets, drew up the flood-gates so as to let in the flowing tide, and at every ebb shut the sluices, threatening that they "would stay till the whole level was well drowned, and the inhabitants forced to swim away like ducks."¹⁰⁴

Contemporary doggerel by fen men identifies them with the creatures of the water, asking help from "antient water Nurses" and "good old Captain Floud."

Wherefore let us intreat our antient water Nurses
To shew their power so great as t'help to drain their purses;
And send us good old Captain Floud to lead us out to Battel,
Then two-peny Jack, with skakes on's back will drive out all the Cattle.¹⁰⁵

The allusion of Marvell's lines to the ongoing unrest in the nearby fen land is certainly very subtle and hard to pin down. It is possible, however, to argue that the harvested meadow "Which Levellers take pattern at"(450) triggers the association with the ongoing riots in the fen land, not just because of Lilburne's involvement with the fen men, but

¹⁰³ Lindley, *Fenland Riots*, 188-222; Hughes, "The Drainage Disputes," 13-45.

¹⁰⁴ Rowland E. Prothero, Baron Ernle, *English Farming Past and Present* (London: Longmans, Green and Co, 1912), 119. Apparently such intentional flooding and drowning of the recently drained ground were perpetuated throughout the 1640s, taking advantage of the time of the Civil War. "At the very start of the [Civil War], two sluices, one on Bycker's Dyke and the other on Snow Sewer, were pulled up to flood a great part of the Isle of Axholme." See also Lindley, *Fenland Riots*, 146-48. Hirst and Zwicker note "It may be merely coincidence that the rioters were attacking drainage works, but it is suggestive that Marvell chose to vent the *canard* about the leveling aims of the Levellers in one of the very contexts in which Levellers actually were leveling." Hirst and Zwicker, "High Summer," 253, n. 26.

¹⁰⁵ "Powtes Complaint," Cited in William Dugdale, *The History of Imbanking and Drayning of Divers Fenns and Marshes, Both in Forein Parts and in This Kingdom, and of the Improvements Thereby* (London, 1662), 391-92.

also because of the word “Level,” the word used to refer to the drained land.¹⁰⁶ The ensuing flooding of the meadow and its topsy-turvy, world-turned-upside-down image seems to allude to the threat that these violent riots and their direct challenge of ‘property’ must have posed.¹⁰⁷

How boats can over bridges sail;
And fishes do the stables scale,
How salmons trespassing are found;
And pikes are taken in the pound. (477-80)

Indeed we have another threatening, ominous image at the very end of the poem: the “moist” salmon fishers, “rational amphibii” coming out of this flooding river.

But now the salmon-fishers moist
Their leathern boats begin to hoist;
And, like Antipodes in shoes,
Have shod their heads in their canoes.
How tortoise-like, but not so slow,
These rational amphibii go! (769-774)

Largely dependent on the water, fishing and fowling,¹⁰⁸ fen men were characterized by contemporaries as living half on land and half in water. Samuel Pepys left a record of his impression of the fen land and its people in his diary entry of September 17th and September 18th, 1663. He passed “along dikes, where sometimes we were ready to have our horses sink to the belly,” and “over most sad Fenns, all the way observing the sad life which the people of the place (which if they be born there, they do call the Breedlings of

¹⁰⁶ Certainly the association was not lost to one contemporary who claimed that “the undertakers were the true Levellers, for they invented the equivocal word Level.” *The Anti-Projector*, 6.

¹⁰⁷ “...the fendland disturbances that accompanied the descent into civil war turned the spectre of anarchy into a chilling reality for the political elite in counties like Lincolnshire.” Lindley, *Fenland Riots*, 139.

¹⁰⁸ “...another detractor maintained that ‘the generality of the fen people were very poor, lazy, given much to fishing and idleness...’” Lindley, *Fenland Riots*, 2. It is intriguing that this characterization shares a lot with Marvell’s playful self-description as an angler in ll. 641-50.

the place) do live, sometimes rowing from one spot to another, and then wading.”¹⁰⁹

Partly based on Pepys’ diary, Thomas Macaulay, 200 years later, described the life of fen men at the end of seventeenth century as an “amphibious” one.¹¹⁰ Can we say Marvell is referring to the ongoing popular unrest in nearby areas in these final lines? Right after idealizing Mary Fairfax as the future owner of the estate and successor of Sir Thomas’s virtue, it seems Marvell subtly reminds us of another vision that threatens the order represented by her, thereby fulfilling his role as a poetic surveyor who would have ‘perfect knowledge’ of the manor.¹¹¹

Noting the “reductive, negative, mean” images of the villagers in the meadow scene (ll. 449-64), Michael Wilding has argued that Marvell expresses “the propertied classes’ view of those radicals they called Levellers.”¹¹² I do not intend to disagree with Wilding’s reading entirely, but it is questionable whether the very images that he bases his argument on are really as negative as he claims. Rather, I believe that they exemplify the way in which Marvell brings multiple perspectives into his poem. Wilding, for example, argues “there is a pejorative note” in that “the villagers [are]...compared to fleas or to spots on faces.”¹¹³ But is it really the case? Let’s look at Marvell’s lines:

Such fleas, ere they approach the eye,
In multiplying glasses lie,

¹⁰⁹ Samuel Pepys, *The Diary of Samuel Pepys*, Vol. 3, ed. R.C. Latham and William Matthews (New York: AMS Press, 1968), 281-82. The quotation can be found in H. C. Darby, *The Draining of the Fens*, 90-91.

¹¹⁰ “In that dreary region, covered by vast flights of wild fowl, a half savage population, known by the name of the Breedlings, then led an amphibious life, sometimes wading, and sometimes rowing, from one islet of firm ground to another. The roads were among the worst in the island.” Thomas Macaulay, *History of England from the Accession of James the Second*, ed. Charles Harding Firth (London: Macmillan and Co., 1914), vol. III, 1349. The quotation can be found in J. M. Heathcote, *Reminiscences of Fen and Mere* (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1876), 12.

¹¹¹ See pages 27- 30 of this chapter for my discussion of early modern surveyors’ emphasis on “perfect knowledge” of the estate.

¹¹² Wilding, *Dragons Teeth*, 155.

¹¹³ Wilding, *Dragons Teeth*, 158.

They feed so wide, so slowly move,
As constellations do above. (461-44)

At first glance, Marvell's lines indeed seem to resonate with the mainstream sentiment against the rural poor, particularly that of the proponents of agricultural improvement. The author of a 1653 pamphlet claims "The poor increases like fleas and lice, and these vermin will eat us up unless we enclose."¹¹⁴ But a close reading of the poem makes any simple interpretation impossible. In Marvell's lines, it is villagers' cattle rather than villagers that are compared to "fleas." Marvell seems to play a tongue-in-cheek trick while picking up a popular negative metaphor used for the poor. Furthermore, he also compares villagers' cattle to "constellations" three lines down. Fleas and constellations are the representative objects of the recently invented optical instruments, respectively, the microscope and the telescope. Many contemporaries expressed their wonder at the brave new world opened up for human perception by the microscope in their records of how big "fleas" looked in the microscope. They marveled at "a multiplying-glass...which can make a flea look like a cow."¹¹⁵ In fact, the simple hand-held microscope was called a "flea-glass"¹¹⁶ and apparently people often carried a flea enclosed in its tube for observation.¹¹⁷ In the above lines, playing with recent inventions

¹¹⁴ Pseudomismus, *Considerations concerning Common Fields and Enclosure* (1665), cited in Hill, *The World Turned Upside Down*, 52.

¹¹⁵ James Howell, *Epistolae Ho-Eliaanae* (1650), letter dated 15 August 1646, cited in H. M. Margoliouth 287; In February 1650, Johann Wiesel, famous optician from Augsburg told Johann Morian, a member of the Hartlib circle, that his new microscope "makes a flea as great as a turtle." Cited in Inge Keil, "Technology transfer and scientific specialization: Johann Wiesel, optician of Augsburg, and the Hartlib circle," in Mark Greengrass, Michael Leslie and Timothy Raylor, eds., 275.

¹¹⁶ For a picture of a bone flea-glass telescope which is both a telescope and simple microscope, the same kind as the one used by Robert Hooke, see the website of the National Maritime Museum, UK. <http://www.nmm.ac.uk/server/show/conWebDoc.4137> (last accessed on Feb. 26, 2011). It is suggestive that the telescope was combined with a simple microscope, to enable the observer to play with the multiple perspectives generated by these optical instruments, as Marvell seems to do in the lines quoted above.

¹¹⁷ Edith W. and Norriss S. Hetherington, "Andrew Marvell's 'Upon Appleton House' and Fleas in Multiplying Glasses," *English Language Notes* 13 (1975): 123-24.

of scientific inquiry and the new modes of perceptions made possible by them, the surveyor-poet, instead of choosing to criticize or endorse them, seems to illustrate that the Levellers' and the True Levellers' utopian claims that he associates with the villagers could be perceived in widely different ways, depending on where you stand.

This multi-perspectivism is something that I have already pointed out earlier in this chapter: rather than accepting the monolithic vision of the country house as seen in Carew and Jonson's poems, Marvell surveys and finds the existence of various views in the estate, extending the scope and the object of his poem both physically and methodologically. I have argued that his strategy works to separate the genre of the country house poem from the values of the moral economy and to refashion it so as to promote the Puritan values of Appleton house. In the lines above, however, the surveyor-poet seems to explore the radical possibility of multi-perspectivism even further. He seems to question the conventional way of seeing the working poor as on *the periphery* of the social order, and to acknowledge the existence of an entirely different perspective on them and their labor, like the one expounded by Gerrard Winstanley and more or less shared by radical sectarians. As a matter of fact, such a perspective is given a direct voice in "Upon Appleton House." In lines 406-408, Marvell chooses not to contain Thestylis's voice by the male persona but lets it be heard directly. Thestylis' threatening millenarian demand rudely breaks through the surface of the poem.¹¹⁸ Placed together with Marvell's apparent reference to the True Levellers, this detail testifies to the way he pursues the radical implications of his poetic methodology. Rather than focusing only

¹¹⁸ Cf. For a different reading of Thestylis episode, see Stephen Guy-Bray, "Virgil at Appleton House," *English Language Notes* 42, no. 1 (2004): 26-39. Discussing the "metapoetic function" of Thestylis as a character in Virgil's second eclogue, Guy-Bray argues that Thestylis "does not burst out of the framework of art at all, but rather demonstrates the existence of an artistic framework within the one we have been reading." (29)

on the landed elite's perception of the country estate, Marvell recognizes different perceptions, parts and members of it. His main concern, certainly, is to separate the genre from traditional values and to adapt it to the values of the new breed of landed elite like Sir Thomas. But the surveyor-poet doesn't just stop there; he pursues the possibility of his new methodology even further to capture multiple voices and perspectives that challenge the very value system that this eulogy officially endorses.

III. Historicizing the Family: The Ascendancy of the Nuclear Family and its Challenges

We have seen the ways in which Marvell subjects his patron's country estate to empirical analysis of surveying and finds different parts with separate visions rather than a unified whole in it. The estate is depicted as a locus where the emergent values of the landed elite, that is, the reformist vision of improving landlords that gradually replaced the moral economy, is being challenged by another, more communitarian, vision for the future of agrarian England. In the meadow scene, the surveyor-poet maps the discursive field of contestation, so to speak, between these two value systems, each with its own blueprint for the future of English society, its own utopian agenda.

The surveyor-poet's analytic exercise also shows as a powerful impulse toward an empirical grounding, that is, a situation, of these utopias. The poet's surveying practice reconceives the utopian manorial household as traditionally depicted in country house poems, in general terms of the Golden Age, and situates it as a historical presence, with specific concerns and values, all grounded in the socioeconomic and political contexts of England in the summer of 1651. This process of situation is also seen in Marvell's

portrayal of the communitarian vision of the laboring population. In her call that “Rails rain for quails, for manna, dew”(408), a call that wishes for the blessings of heaven to materialize here and now as physical gains, Thestylis evokes a fascinating, if grotesque, mixture of millenarianism and the medieval dream of the Land of Cokaygne. But that dream is carefully situated in the specific historical contexts of True Levellers’s agrarian experiments and even more specifically, in the ongoing struggle of the fen men in nearby Hatfield Chase.

Together with the land, the family was another crucial locus of contestation between these value systems, between different utopias at this juncture of English history when a fundamental transition from the pre-modern form of the family to the modern nuclear family occurred. The family has long been a popular and readily available vehicle for imagining an ideal community. We don’t need to look very far back: in the relatively brief tradition of the country house poem, the household is often portrayed as a paradisiacal space that embodies the values that the poets emphasize, as in Jonson’s and Carew’s poems. Marvell largely follows the tradition, commenting on the largess and hospitality of Nun Appleton. But again, the poet differentiates himself from earlier practitioners of the genre by his move to situate this utopia in specific historical contexts, that is, a move of sociocultural grounding that specifies this household as embodying the emergent familial values. We see this especially in the latter part of the poem where he devotes many lines to discuss the issue of familial succession, a controversial topic for Fairfax family at the time. I would like to argue that in presenting the values of the ascendant nuclear conjugal family that were replacing the communal values idealized in earlier country house poems, Marvell again reconstructs the contemporary discursive

field where multiple imaginations of the family interacted and competed, placing one idealized form of the family, embodied by his patron's household, alongside other contemporary family ideals.

The way that Marvell portrays the topical issue of Fairfax's decision to pass the Appleton estate to Mary clearly demonstrates the value represented by this nuclear family in this poem. Sir Thomas did not have a son, but only a daughter, Mary, and all the patrimonial landed estates were originally going to pass to the heir male of the family, Sir Thomas' cousin, who would succeed as the fourth Lord Fairfax. Less than a year before this poem was written,¹¹⁹ however, Sir Thomas took a crucial step in passing substantial pieces of the family estates including Nun Appleton to his daughter Mary, in spite of vigorous protests from members of his extended family. Many critics have observed the centrality of the issue in this poem and cited it as an instance of Sir Thomas' dynastic ambition, the current patriarch of an old, but originally regional family that had been accumulating landed properties and influence since the sixteenth century.¹²⁰ I believe, however, the image of grafting used to describe Mary's future wedding questions such a reading and alludes to a different concern that motivated Sir Thomas' decision.

Hence she with graces more divine
 Supplies beyond her sex the line;
 And, like a sprig of mistletoe,
 On the Fairfacian oak does grow;
 Whence, for some universal good,
 The priest shall cut the sacred bud; (737-42)

¹¹⁹ Hirst and Zwicker have persuasively argued that the poem was written in the summer of 1651, between late June and the end of the third week of August. See "High Summer," 248-51.

¹²⁰ See, for example, Lee Erickson, "Marvell's *Upon Appleton House* and the Fairfax Family," *English Literary Renaissance* 9 (1979): 158-68; Patton, "Preserving Property."

Folk belief in the sacredness of mistletoes was recorded as early as Pliny the elder's *Natural History*. Mistletoe, especially the rare variety growing on the oak tree was believed by the Druids to be so holy that cutting it itself was a ritual with specific rules to follow. "The Druids... esteeme nothing more sacred in the world than Mistelto, and the tree whereupon it breeds, so it be on Oke."¹²¹ According to James Frazer, the mistletoe, especially the ones growing on the oak tree, was traditionally believed to be the soul, "the seat of life" of the oak.¹²² Therefore, the image adds weight to Marvell's claim that Mary "with graces more divine/Supplies beyond her sex the line" by inheriting her father's virtue. At the same time, by comparing her to a parasitic plant of mistletoe rather than a branch of the oak tree,¹²³ he also subtly observes the reality that "the line" that Mary "supplies" will not be the Fairfacian line, but the line of her husband's family. Let me explain. This poem doesn't seem to be the only contemporary instance where the image of grafting was used to refer to the marrying off of a daughter. At least one other seventeenth-century writer used the image in that fashion.¹²⁴ George Savile uses the language of grafting and transplantation when he advises his daughter to internalize the values of her future husband's family:

The family into which you are grafted will generally be apt to expect, that like a stranger in a foreign country, you should conform to their methods... Endeavour

¹²¹ For a detailed description of the ceremony, see *The Historie of the World : Commonly called, the Naturall Historie of C. Plinius Secundus. Translated into English by Philemon Holland Doctor in Physicke.* (London, 1601) 497. For other European myths surrounding the mistletoe, see also James George Frazer, *The Golden Bough*, abridged edition, ed. Theodor Gaster (New York: Mentor Books, 1964), 672-79.

¹²² Frazer, *The Golden Bough*, 672-79.

¹²³ "She is not, after all, a branch on the great "Fairfacian oak," but a sprig of mistletoe with only a tenuous connection to the genealogical tree." Patton, "Preserving Property," 836.

¹²⁴ About a century later, Clarissa uses the same image to describe the practice of marriage: "Marriage is a very solemn engagement... To be given up to a strange man; to be engrafted into a strange family; to give up her very name, as a mark of her becoming his absolute and dependent property." Samuel Richardson, *Clarissa, or the History of a Young Lady* (1747-8), ed. Angus Ross (London: Penguin, 1985), 148.

to forget the indulgence you have found at home... The tenderness we have had for you, my dear, is ... differing from that which you will meet first in any family into which you shall be transplanted.”¹²⁵

This use of the language of grafting, however, is somewhat misleading as a metaphor. In the practice of grafting, the new growth of the united plant normally expresses the genus of the scion (the grafted bud). But that’s not the case with a woman “grafted” onto her husband’s family tree in the patriarchal-patrilineal order. “[T]he role of women in a patrilineal order is to serve as the medium through which that order replicates itself; it is the father’s essence, not the mother’s that is passed on from one generation to the next.”¹²⁶ Marvell’s use of grafting image reflects his sense of this reality. Mary’s mistletoe, grafted onto the family tree of her future husband, will produce new shoots not of the Fairfacian oak, but of the new family tree Mary marries into. If Fairfax’ main concern had been the patrilineal succession in a conventional sense, his arrangement for Mary wouldn’t have constituted a solution for it. In fact, the members of the extended Fairfax family didn’t see his action as one motivated by patrilineal concern. For them, Sir Thomas’ decision was a threat to patrilineage and jeopardized the dynastic future of this ambitious family, which though an old and prominent family in Yorkshire, only recently had acquired the most privileged status of the peerage. It was the general’s grandfather who had purchased the baronial title at £1,500 in the heyday of title sales by the Crown, becoming the first baron of Cameron in 1627.¹²⁷ In the context of the

¹²⁵ Marquis of Halifax, George Savile, “The Lady’s New-Year’s-Gift: or, Advice to a Daughter,” *Miscellanies* (London, 1700) 31-34.

¹²⁶ Patton 834.

¹²⁷ George W. Johnson, ed., *The Fairfax Correspondence: Memoirs in the Reign of Charles the First*, vol. 1 (London: Richard Bentley, 1848), 11-19. See also Lawrence Stone, *The Crisis of the Aristocracy 1558-1641* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1965), 61. For this family’s extraordinary interest in family record and genealogy, and the competitive race between different branches of the family to gain the title of the peerage,

contemporary development of real estate law and laws of conveyance, Marvell's concern in making this apology for Lord Fairfax points in a very different direction from that of conventional dynastic succession. I would argue that Marvell's poetic representation of Sir Thomas' action draws a picture of an emergent attitude and progressive values that would challenge the norms of patrilineal succession. Even though using the traditional language of genealogical succession in treating this topical issue of his patron's family, Marvell revises the language in such a way as to accommodate the emerging attitude on family and kinship.

Conflicting views on Sir Thomas' decision on the matter of estate conveyance demand a detailed examination of his action in its historical context. Less than a year before this poem was written, Sir Thomas took the crucial step of annulling the entail to the marriage settlement drafted on his own marriage and hence paved the way to settling substantial part of the estate on his only daughter Mary and on her future husband at the expense of the male heir to the title, his cousin, the fourth Lord Fairfax. Sir Thomas' course of action is recorded in detail by Clements Markham, his biographer.¹²⁸

By the settlement, dated May 13, 1637, on the marriage of the great general and Anne Vere, all landed property whatever, including Nunappleton, was settled on the heirs male of the marriage; but if there were none, then on the heirs male of the first lord, a provision of £5,000 being made for daughters of the general. But

see Anne Cotterill, "Marvell's Watery Maze: Digression and Discovery at Nun Appleton," *ELH* 69, no. 1 (2002): 114.

¹²⁸ This author, a nineteenth-century explorer and president of the Royal Society of Geology, had a personal relationship with Nun Appleton. His mother's ancestor, William Milner of Leeds, bought the estate from the creditors of the Duke of Buckingham at bargain price in 1710, and it has been with the Milner family till this author's time. Markham's detailed knowledge in the issue of the Fairfax settlement is perhaps not surprising, considering that William Milner made the purchase at the advice of his future son-in-law, a lawyer named Robert Witton who possessed in-depth knowledge of the intricacies of the settlement, because his father, the General's "man of business... drew up the settlement of 1666." See Markham, *Lord Fairfax*, 406-7; see also Albert H. Markham, *The Life of Sir Clements R. Markham, K.C.B., F.R.S.* (London: John Murray, 1917).

on November 2, 1650, the third Lord levied a fine on all land comprised in the settlement to his use; and this fine barred the entail, and vested an estate in fee on the third lord. He then, by a deed of settlement dated April 23, 1666, gave Nunappleton, Bolton Percy, and Bishop Hill to the Duke and Duchess and their issue, and, failing issue, to the fourth lord and his heirs male; and Denton, Askwith, Rigton, and Bilbrough to the fourth Lord and his heirs.¹²⁹

The legal technique that Sir Thomas used in his action is the one widely adopted by the heads of the family who would annul the entail in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century England. According to Lawrence Stone, while during the middle ages, the head of the family had little freedom to dispose of the family estates at his pleasure, “in the late fifteenth century, the lawyers found a way to break entails without too much difficulty, and some confusing legislation of the 1530s had the result of still further widening the breach. This greatly strengthened the ability of the current head of the family to dispose of the property as he chose...”¹³⁰

Sir Thomas’ decision made Mary Fairfax an attractive match in the marriage market at a time when the average size of dowry was increasing. It also ensured that Mary would have enough jointure in case she survived her husband. This must have been an especially compelling concern for parents in seventeenth-century England that witnessed a rapid decrease of the ratio of jointure to dowry, which fell from one to six in 1600 to one to ten in 1700.¹³¹ Well-endowed, Mary would also have a better chance to be on a more equal footing with her future husband, as was the case with her parents. Lady Vere, a “Vere of the fighting Veres,” was herself a co-heiress to her father who didn’t

¹²⁹ Markham, *Lord Fairfax*, 403-04. For further details of the two settlements, see the copy of contemporary lawyer’s opinion on the settlements in Robert Bell, ed., *Memorials of the Civil War: comprising the Correspondence of the Fairfax Family with the Most Distinguished Personages Engaged in that Memorable Contest*, vol. 2 (London: Richard Bentley, 1849), 254-55

¹³⁰ Stone, *The Family, Sex and Marriage*, 156.

¹³¹ H. J. Habakkuk, “Marriage Settlements in the Eighteenth Century,” *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 32 (1950): 21-24.

have a son. She was noted for her strong character, as publicly displayed during the trial of Charles I.¹³² Quite a few contemporaries, including his own grandfather, commented that Sir Thomas was unduly influenced by his strong-willed wife,¹³³ and it was widely assumed that the general's protest at the impending preemptive invasion of Scotland and his following resignation was a result of his Presbyterian wife's influence.¹³⁴ Indeed, the poem repeatedly emphasizes the companionate relationship of this couple, the kind of spousal relationship that became more common only in the eighteenth-century. "As the poem carefully observes from its fifth stanza, Vere and Fairfax, Fairfax and Vere, are named always together, grown to the muffled darkness of wood," Cotterill has noted.¹³⁵ It is suggestive that critics have commented on the weakness of Sir Thomas as a patriarch.¹³⁶ Can we see it as an expression of an emerging familial value that this couple embodies than as his failure as a traditional patriarch?

The case of Sir Thomas' estate decision is an instance of the confrontation between this new outlook on family and the more traditional one that emphasizes kinship networks and the patriarchal estate. Sir Thomas' arrangement of the family estate caused significant grumbling from members of the Fairfax clan. Sir Thomas' uncle Charles Fairfax left a record that he had confronted in person and made a petition to Sir Thomas concerning this issue, resorting to the authority of the late Sir Thomas Fairfax, the general's grandfather.¹³⁷ Long after Sir Thomas' death, his cousin Brian Fairfax advised the fifth Lord Fairfax not to cooperate with Mary in her desperate attempt to sell the Nun

¹³² Markham, *Lord Fairfax*, 349-50.

¹³³ For the first Lord Fairfax' remarks, see Johnson, *Fairfax Correspondence*, 1:cviii.

¹³⁴ Markham, *Lord Fairfax*, 360, n. 1.

¹³⁵ Cotterill, "Watery Maze," 121.

¹³⁶ See for example, Cotterill, "Watery Maze," 120-24.

¹³⁷ Johnson, *Fairfax Correspondence*, 1:cvii-cviii, 314-16. According to Sir Charles, the general's grandfather requested Sir Charles to make known his foreboding, if the appropriate occasion arose, that "such is Tom's pride, led by his wife, that he, not contented to live in our rank, will *destroy his house*."

Appleton estate to pay the creditors of her late husband, the Duke of Buckingham, arguing that the earlier settlements demonstrate “how desirous [his] old lord grandfather was to keep the estate in the heirs male.”¹³⁸ Sir Brian’s long letters of detailed advice that urge his nephew to take swift action to foil the intended sale and to secure the estate to the family reveal the deep-seated vexation of the extended members of the family at her father’s decision.¹³⁹

Sir Thomas’ “individualist” decision was probably frowned upon by many members of the landed class. As a matter of fact, important developments in English property law in the seventeenth century seem to have been made to block individualist actions like Sir Thomas’ which jeopardized the interests of the extended family as a whole and which went against the general trend of strengthening primogeniture. According to Lloyd Bonfield, the critical device that enabled the “strict settlement” was developed precisely to “prevent the life tenant from unilaterally destroying the contingent entail by levying a fine or suffering a recovery.”¹⁴⁰ The first of these two legal techniques (that is, levying a fine) was the very one that Sir Thomas used in 1650, as specified in the passage from Markham quoted earlier: “on November 2, 1650, the third Lord levied a fine on all land comprised in the settlement to his use; and this fine barred the entail, and vested an estate in fee on the third lord.”

¹³⁸ Bell, *Memorials of the Civil War*, 2: 259.

¹³⁹ For Mary Buckingham’s letters to her cousin, the fifth Lord Fairfax and Brian Fairfax’s letters of advice to the same, see Bell, *Memorials of the Civil War*, 2: 256-67. Brian Fairfax’s effort to foil Mary’s intended sale reveals the importance placed on the estate by the extended family, considering that he served as a personal secretary for Mary’s husband, Duke of Buckingham, at Sir Thomas’ recommendation and later wrote a memoir of the Duke. See Brian’s letter to his son in Clements R. Markham, *Life of Robert Fairfax of Steeton, Vice-Admiral, Alderman, and Member for York* (London: Macmillan, 1885), 142-47.

¹⁴⁰ Lloyd Bonfield, *Marriage Settlements, 1601-1740: the Adoption of the Strict Settlement* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 55-7.

Making the case that “the crisis of the aristocracy” was one of the contributing causes of the Civil War, Stone has argued that the mid-seventeenth century saw a watershed of opinion among large landowners. At the cost of giving up the freedom to alienate patrimony, and in order to protect the long-term fortunes of the family and the common interests of their group, members of the ruling elite seemed to have reached a consensus to block the individual decisions of the current head of the family in matters of family real estate, whether such decisions were made for personal consumption, or for providing for younger sons and daughters. Such a shift in opinion pushed the lawyers to come up with a legal solution that would restrict the current head’s ability to alienate the family estate, resulting in the emergence of the strict settlement.¹⁴¹ Eileen Spring has also made a strong case for the repressiveness of the strict settlement, arguing that the development of the real property law in early modern England mainly aimed to prevent heiresses from getting family estates. She claims that “limiting in advance the claims of the heiress-at-law and sending the estate as little reduced as possible to the collateral male is what the strict settlement is primarily about.”¹⁴² The unique egalitarianism of Sir Thomas’ decision to convey large chunk of land holdings of the family to a daughter becomes clear in the light of later developments in English history of estate conveyance: the ascendancy of the culture of primogeniture and of the “disinheritance of daughters.”¹⁴³ Leaving property to male heirs had become such an established norm by

¹⁴¹ For an outline of shifting attitudes among large land owners on the settlement of family estates from the sixteenth to the seventeenth century, see Stone, *The Crisis of the Aristocracy*, 175 – 83.

¹⁴² Eileen Spring, “The Heiress-at-Law: English Real Property Law from a New Point of View,” *Law and Historical Review* 8, no. 2 (1990): 273-96. Amy Louise Erickson has argued that the ascendancy of common law over other bodies of law, equity, manorial law and ecclesiastical law played a role in the long-term deterioration of women’s economic position. See *Women and Property in Early Modern England* (London: Routledge, 1993), 5-6, 21-31.

¹⁴³ The devastating effect of the strict settlement and primogeniture on daughters’ fortunes in the following century, see Ruth Perry’s “The Great Disinheritance,” a chapter of her book, *Novel Relations: The*

late 18th century that it became an issue even when the estate stayed in the family name, as Perry points out. Criticizing a friend who arranged to leave his property to his sisters rather than to a remote male heir, Samuel Johnson, in 1773, declares “An ancient estate should always go to males...It is mighty foolish to let a stranger have it because he marries your daughter, and takes your name.”¹⁴⁴

It is fascinating to see this combination of two fundamentally conflicting cultural doctrines/logics in Marvell’s portrayal of Sir Thomas. He is presented as an improving landlord, a proto-type representative of emerging agrarian capitalism, but his handling of the family estate diverges from its related logic, that is, the logic of the consolidation of landed capital that manifested as the strengthening of primogeniture in the matter of family conveyance. Rather, Sir Thomas adopts the more “traditional” and egalitarian option of equitable, partible inheritance between male and female children. I tend to think that this unique combination was a production of Marvell’s (and also possibly of Sir Thomas’) engagement with the crucial historical time that was witnessing the polyphony of utopian visions for the future, before the final ascendancy and ossification of progressive-liberal ideas and its economic counterpart, possessive individualism.

The ascendancy of the strict settlement and the reinforcement of primogeniture in the late seventeenth century run parallel to the general retreat of radicalism and the disenchantment that accompanied the Restoration. The very need for such restrictions shared by the landed elite in general at this historical juncture, however, evidences the clear ascendancy of the values of the nuclear family and of individualism, the increasingly powerful sway of affection for the immediate family members over against

Transformation of Kinship in English Literature and Culture, 1748-1818 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

¹⁴⁴ Cited in Perry, *Novel Relations*, 48-49.

the traditional loyalty to kinsmen and the concern for the dynastic future of the extended family.¹⁴⁵ The late seventeenth-century development in conveyance practices did not seem to reverse the more fundamental trend towards the nuclear conjugal family and individualism. Rather, the development of the property law culminating in the strict settlement, I believe, needs to be viewed as an effort by large land owners to protect their class interests in response to this irreversible trend of individualism and to divest it of its militant teeth, so to speak. Placed in this historical context, we could argue that unlike many fathers of the next generation, Sir Thomas has had a chance to exercise his fatherly affection for his little “Molly”¹⁴⁶ utilizing the short-spanned historical window of opportunity that was about to close. By the same token, Marvell’s portrayal of familial utopia in the household of this retired general of the New Model Army captures the short-lived moment of radical liberalism and its ideas.

We have seen that, instead of idealizing the manorial household in general terms, Marvell situates it as an actual presence in the web of sociocultural contexts, and specifies its utopian qualities in terms resonant of the transformation that the state and the family were going through at this historical juncture. If Marvell presents that Sir Thomas’ decision was motivated by her fatherly affection to his only child rather than the patriarchal-dynastic ambition for the family, I would also argue that Marvell is trying to

¹⁴⁵ According to Eileen Spring, “the strict settlement reduced portions and more efficiently reduced heiresses exactly because it precluded father’s determining family matters by their wills.” *Law, Land & Family: Aristocratic Inheritance in England, 1300 to 1800* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1993), 155

¹⁴⁶ In his private letters and memoir, Sir Thomas, a man famous for his reticence and reserve, revealed his touching affection for his only child Mary whom he affectionately called Molly. In his *Short Memorials* he records the way his daughter shared the hardship of the battlefield together with him: “my Daughter, not above five Years old, being carried before her Maid, endured all this Retreat a Horseback; but Nature not being able to hold out any longer, she fell into frequent Swoonings, and in appearance was ready to expire her last.” *Short Memorials of Thomas Lord Fairfax* (London: Ri. Chiswell, 1699) 56. In the August 1670 letter, the last one written by his own hand, he desperately inquires after his now grown-up and married daughter’s whereabouts and well-being. See Bell, *Memorials of the Civil War*, 2:223-24.

construct a new sort of familial succession in his idealization of Mary and of her succession to her father, the one based not on birth but on merit. Considering that Sir Thomas' action was taken so recently, it is not surprising that the issue looms large in the poem. Marvell makes a special effort to address it and justify Sir Thomas' decision by responding proactively to actual and possible critiques of the decision. By rebutting the possible attack -- that Sir Thomas has forgotten his responsibility to his extended family because of his excessive fatherly affection and has succumbed to Lady Fairfax's strong will -- the poet adopts the familiar strategy that Elizabethan panegyrists used in separating out their virgin queen from ordinary/vain women.¹⁴⁷ In fact, the virulent attack on vain women in stanza 92 that seems almost out of place at first glance makes sense in this light -- Marvell tries to preempt any generalization and makes it clear that Mary deserves to succeed Sir Thomas thanks to her merits that single her out from other women. He emphasizes that Mary, unlike most women, has exceptional merit and has more than enough reason and grace (that is, she is "beyond her sex") to keep her from falling into the temptations of fortune hunters or poor lovers (stanza 90).

Such an emphasis on Mary's perceived merit, however, is itself a testament to the progressiveness of the retired general of the New Model Army. Marvell suggests that the general's decision was based on the same principle as the one with which he organized the New Model Army: that of meritocracy. Though due to her *birth* as a girl she is not eligible to succeed to her father's title, Marvell seems to argue, her excellent *merit* has

¹⁴⁷ See John Watkins, "'Out of her Ashes May a Second Phoenix Rise': James I and the Legacy of Elizabethan Anti-Catholicism" in *Catholicism and Anti-Catholicism in Early Modern English Texts*, ed. Arthur F. Marotti (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999). According to Watkins, panegyrists often identified the queen with Virgin Mary.

made her succeed her father in a *real* sense: she is the one who inherits the “goodness” of her parents.

This 'tis to have been from the first
 In a domestic heaven nursed,
 Under the discipline severe
 Of Fairfax, and the starry Vere;
 Where not one object can come nigh
 But pure, and spotless as the eye;
 And goodness doth itself entail
 On females, if there want a male. (721-28)

Emphasizing the element of ‘merit’ that could be separated out from ‘birth’ and ‘sex’, Marvell seems to set up a teleology that would replace that of traditional patrilineal succession but that also would challenge the newly fortified patriarchal succession represented by rigidified primogeniture and strict settlement, which would soon become the dominant practice. Mary is not merely the conduit of male honour but the embodiment of “goodness” which she will carry on in her “real,” if virtual, succession of her father.

Indeed, one could even argue that the whole structure of the poem is determined by the teleological impulse that would legitimize the kind of succession and assumptions behind it that Marvell locates in Sir Thomas’ settlement on Mary. The pre-history of the family portrayed in the nunnery sequence functions like a biblical typology of what is to come when Mary succeeds Sir Thomas and Lady Vere. The structure of the poem seems to argue that Mary’s future is prefigured by Isabel Thwaites, who, by marrying William Fairfax, contributes to the founding of this great family. By presenting Isabel Thwaites as Mary’s prototype, Marvell’s poetic language makes it sound as if it is the Fairfacian line

that will continue through Mary's marriage. ("Till Fate her worthily translates, /And find a Fairfax for our Thwaites" 747-48).

This teleological structure is even more fortified by Marvell's comparison of Mary/Thwaites to Virgin Mary. Calling Sir Thomas' only daughter Maria, a name that has a Roman Catholic resonance, rather than Mary, sets the stage for introducing the language of the cult of the Virgin Mary that was heavily used at the court of Charles I's Queen, Henrietta Maria.¹⁴⁸ Marvell, however, dissociates the language from its royalist and Catholic overtones, and turns it around to justify the new kind of succession, and the Puritan-Parliamentarian values, that this heiress inherits. Like the Virgin Mary, Marvell argues, Maria could go beyond the role of women in patrilineal economy in which the female body functions as a medium of reproduction of her husband's dynastic line and in which women are not supposed to inscribe any part of themselves upon their children. She will go "beyond her sex" and convey the values of her godly father to her offspring like Christ's mother who conceived and reproduced independent of male agency.

The foundation for idealizing Mary using the language of Mariology is already laid down in the story of Thwaites in the typological architecture of this poem. The nun's speech to the young virgin Thwaites associates her with the Virgin Mary.

'But much it to our work would add
If here your hand, your face we had:
By it we would Our Lady touch;
Yet thus She you resembles much.
Some of your features, as we sewed,
Through every shrine should be bestowed.
And in one beauty we would take
Enough a thousand saints to make. (129-36)

¹⁴⁸ Erica Veevers, *Images of Love and Religion: Queen Henrietta Maria and Court Entertainments* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 7.

The Virgin Thwaites would facilitate the nuns' reproduction ("And in one beauty we would take/Enough a thousand saints to make") and would ensure the future of the nunnery by succeeding the abbess ("Our abbess too, now far in age,/Doth your succession near presage," 157-58). But the nun's speech also associates Thwaites with Eve, another mother of humankind. Sarah Monette has pointed out that by using the word "subtle" to describe the nuns ("Discoursing with the subtle nuns" 94), the word used to describe the serpent in the King James Bible,¹⁴⁹ Marvell triggers the association of the nuns with the serpent, and hence of Thwaites with Eve and the danger of getting "sucked in" by this serpent ("The nun's smooth tongue has sucked her in," 200). In other words, while the abbess appeals to Thwaites, arguing that she will become a "Maria" for the nunnery, the poem suggests that by falling into the nun's temptation, Thwaites puts herself in danger of becoming Eve, instead. Again, Marvell is playing with Biblical typology in a very interesting way. While associating the danger of becoming "Eve" with the celibate life of nunnery, he implies that the future marriage of Maria/Thwaites will make her a Virgin Mary and hence make her "entail" her father's values. In other words, he is implicitly equating single, unmarried women with Eve in great danger of falling prey to moral corruption.

Such an equation is especially intriguing in that we find a similar reading of the Edenic myth in another great literary production of the period, John Milton's *Paradise Lost*. Milton's Eve demonstrates a similar hesitance in accepting Adam's hand, and is almost forced to join Adam, as is Isabel Thwaites in marrying William Fairfax. Satan precisely focuses his attack on Eve's 'self-love' which is reminiscent of the nun's temptation of Thwaites. I would not here argue for any intertextual influence between

¹⁴⁹ Sarah Monette, "Speaking and Silent Women in *Upon Appleton House*," *SEL* 42, no.1 (2002): 159.

the two poems. Rather I would point out that such a similar reading of the Edenic myth by two contemporary poets attests to contemporary assumptions about marriage and women. Protestantism emphasized the superiority of married life over celibacy, sanctifying marriage as the holy union, contributing to the growing importance of the family as the crucial institution. Such an emphasis on the family often went with the emphasis on patriarchal authority, and hence an attack on independent women. Misogynists' attacks often dwell on women's talkativeness, associating it with their refusal to stay in their own place.¹⁵⁰ In this regard, it is suggestive that Marvell contrasts the volubility of the nuns with the silence of Thwaites and Maria. While the abbess is given many lines to articulate her seductive depiction of collective female life to Thwaites, Thwaites has no voice. While the main target of this sequence is the Catholicism/Royalism that the Protestantism of Sir Thomas' replaced, Marvell conflates the contemporary attack on independent women with it by utilizing the conventional logic of misogynists in his depiction of the nuns.

IV. A Female Community and Non-productive Sex

Women's voices were indeed perceived as threatening. Female preachers of radical sects like the Quakers subverted the hierarchy of man and wife by assuming the role of the preacher, the role assigned to the patriarch of the family in the teachings of Protestant preachers. We've already encountered Thestylis in the meadow, who voices her own millenarian ideas, refusing to be contained within the male poet's representation. As in the nuns' case, women's tongues become their weapon to challenge the established

¹⁵⁰ See, for example, a sixteenth-century pamphlet "The Schoolhouse of women," *Half Humankind: Contexts and Texts of the Controversy about Women in England, 1540 -1640*, ed. Katherine Usher Henderson and Barbara F. McManus (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1985), especially 148.

patriarchal order: it was the abbess's tongue that "sucked" the heiress Thwaites away from her appointed position in the patriarchal-heterosexual economy to a different kind of family/community, a community of single women.

Marvell's conflated attacks on Catholicism and the emergent legion of vocal women seem quite successful. By giving the whole sequence the flavor of the fairy tale/romance (witch-like nuns, an imprisoned beautiful maiden, and a knight who saves her), and by adopting the non-serious tone of the burlesque for the narrative,¹⁵¹ Marvell effectively relegates both the Catholic past and the female community of the nunnery to the margins of history: it is something of the past, almost comical and hence no longer threatening to the ascendant Protestant order. He is of course conjuring up a poetic fiction, covering up the emerging new elites' deep-seated anxiety towards Catholicism and its continuing attraction. Indeed the Fairfax family had to deal with its own recusant members, in which Sir Thomas himself was deeply involved.¹⁵² As Marvell's own brief involvement with the Jesuits demonstrates, and as his own major effort in his last pamphlet, *An Account of the Growth of Popery and Arbitrary Government* (1677) evidences, not to mention the trajectory of English history up to the Glorious Revolution of 1688, Catholicism was a real threat to the Protestant regime, represented by the court of Queen Henrietta Maria and closely associated with Royalists. By the same token, the comic depiction of the nuns' futile defense against Sir William reveals Marvell's clear perception of the ever-increasing women's claims that not only question patriarchal ideology but could potentially threaten the institution of the family *per se* as the basic unit of a hetero-sexual economy. In fact, the nunnery sequence brings to attention the

¹⁵¹ Wilding, *Dragons Teeth*, 148.

¹⁵² Cotterill, "Watery Maze," 115-16.

consistent undercurrent of the poem that questions the very values of the protestant nuclear family that the teleological structure of the poem seems to legitimize and idealize. The nun's long speech effectively portrays a utopian female community that presents a stark contrast to the bare, ascetic, and almost claustrophobic space of the Puritan house of Sir Thomas.

‘Nor is our order yet so nice,
Delight to banish as a vice.
Here pleasure piety doth meet;
One perfecting the other sweet.
So through the mortal fruit we boil
The sugar's uncorrupting oil; (169-74)

In this poem, the remnants of the cornucopian hospitality of the manor house, the central scene of earlier country house poems, are found in the nunnery, if with the implication of degeneration: it is the nunnery that overflows with sweets and “pastes”(181). When Margaret Cavendish portrays a female utopian community in her play, it is the non-ascetic character of the community that she emphatically calls attention to by calling it a “convent of pleasure.” Indeed the early modern period saw a movement of protestant convents for women, and many contemporaries seemed to have a nostalgic, if ungrounded, view of medieval convents as an alternative path to married life for women.¹⁵³ Marvell's nunnery sequence gives voice to this exploration of alternative to married life for women, demonstrating the utopian character of his surveying practice. Thwaites' silent tears (263-66) in the nunnery sequence and the cruelty implied in the grafting (741-42) in the Maria sequence (741-42) question the validity of “some universal

¹⁵³ See Bridget Hill, “A Refuge from Men: The Idea of a Protestant Nunnery,” *Past and Present* 117 (1987): 107-30. Barbara Harris has argued that already in the late medieval period, the convent ceased to offer a viable alternative to married life for girls from aristocratic families. Barbara Harris, “A New Look at the Reformation: Aristocratic Women and Nunneries, 1450-1540,” *Journal of British Studies* 32 (1993): 89-113.

good” for which these buds are cut, and challenge the legitimacy of the Protestant teleology and its relentless pursuit of progress and productivity at such human cost.¹⁵⁴ While the exigencies of the poet’s task in this poem, idealizing his patron’s nuclear conjugal family, dictate the teleological progression toward the anticipated marriage of Mary Fairfax, questioning Maria’s seemingly inevitable participation in the heterosexual economy stealthily comes into play even in his paean of his pupil’s authority over the estate and its surrounding nature. John Rogers has argued that a fascination with apocalyptic powers of virginity coexisted with the general idealization of married chastity by Protestantism in the mid-seventeenth century, giving Milton’s *Comus* and Marvell’s “The Picture of Little T.C. in a Prospect of Flowers,” as poetic examples.¹⁵⁵ Marvell’s subtle adoption of this alternative idiom of virginity in his idealization of Maria’s “[m]eantime”(745) “Till Fate her worthily translates,/and find a Fairfax for our Thwaites”(747-8) seems to be in line with his ambivalent treatment of female community, questioning the wisdom of the impending “cutting” and sacrificing of this sacred bud and its magical power.

If the nun’s seductive voice offers a vision of a female community that, in spite of its historical defeat by this Protestant family, still maintains a tempting presence in this poem, the tutor’s retreat into the forest presents yet another alternative to the world of Appleton. Wilding has argued that the convent life offered to Thwaites and the tutor’s retirement in the wood share the “lack of discipline” that contrasts with the “severe”

¹⁵⁴ Cotterill, “Watery Maze,” 123.

¹⁵⁵ John Rogers, “The Enclosure of Virginity: The Poetics of Sexual Abstinence in the English Revolution,” *Enclosure Acts: Sexuality, Property, and Culture in Early Modern England*, ed. Richard Burt and John Michael Archer (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994).

religious discipline of the Fairfax household.¹⁵⁶ Indeed the utopian space this single male persona stakes out in the middle of the natural world points to a different set of values from that of Sir Thomas' family with its heavy investment in agrarian improvement and in "productive" Protestant line. It conjures up the image of 'Eden before Eve,' a space of auto-erotic pleasure and of harmonious, but so intense as to be eroticized, bond with the natural world.

Bind me ye woodbines in your twines,
Curl me about ye gadding vines,
An oh so close your circles lace,
That I may never leave this place: (609-13)

Once leaving this self-sufficient world, it feels logical, therefore, that the tutor presents himself as an angler, a figure charged with the relaxed fraternal culture of Merry England.

Oh what a pleasure 'tis to hedge
My temples here with heavy sedge;
Abandoning my lazy side,
Stretched as a bank unto the tide;
Or to suspend my sliding foot
On th'osier's underminèd root,
And in its branches tough to hang,
While at my lines the fishes twang! (641-48)

The prevalence of angling literature¹⁵⁷ even before Izaak Walton's *The Compleat Angler* (1653) attests to the popularity of traditional forms of festivities towards which puritans

¹⁵⁶ Wilding, *Dragons Teeth*, 164-65.

¹⁵⁷ For example, John Dennys, *The Secrets of Angling* (London, 1613). The popularity of Denny's book is suggested by its multiple reprintings (in 1620, 30, 52), not to mention, also, by the fact that Gervase Markham borrowed from it generously in his *A Discourse of the General Art of Fishing with an Angle* published as part of his *The Second Book of the English Husbandman* (1614). Marvell's language remotely resonates with Denny's lines, presumably well-known considering that the angler in Walton's book recites them from memory: "Let me live harmlessly, and near the brink/Of Trent or Avon have a dwelling place,/Where I may see my quill or cork down sink,/With eager bit of Pearch, or Bleak, or Dace." Cited in Izaak Walton, *The Compleat Angler*, ed., Jonquil Bevan (Oxford: Clarendon, 1983), 77. Though

were believed to be hostile.¹⁵⁸ Walton, for example, specifically juxtaposes the harmless leisure of angling with the relentless industry of puritan culture. One of his characters, Piscator, who claims to be a “Brother of the Angle,” distinguishes members of his “Fraternity” from the following kind:

Sir, There are many men that are by others taken to be serious grave men, which we contemn and pitie; men of sowre complexions; money-getting-men, that spend all their time first in getting, and next in anxious care to keep it: men that are condemn'd to be rich, and always discontented, or busie. For these poor-rich-men, wee Anglers pitie them; ...For (trust me, Sir) we enjoy a contentednesse above the reach of such dispositions.¹⁵⁹

The tutor-surveyor seems to share the way in which Walton locates the cultural divide between the relaxed world of anglers and the Puritan emphasis on industry and discipline. It is Maria and the puritan discipline embodied by her that abruptly breaks up the tutor’s leisured retreat of angling.

But now away my hooks, my quills,
And angles, idle utensils.
The young Maria walks tonight;
Hide trifling youth thy pleasure slight.
'Twere shame that such judicious eyes
Should with such toys a man surprise: (649-54)

In spite of the self-reproving tone, the persona’s association with harmless pleasure and a relaxed rhythm of life subtly questions the world of Puritan-progressive values where

Walton attributes the authorship of the poem to Jo. Davors, Esq., the Registers of the Stationers’ Company records its author as John Dennys, Esquire. For the publication history and the issue of authorship of *The Secrets of Angling*, see Thomas Westwood, Introduction, *The Secrets of Angling*, by John Dennys (London: W. Satchell, rpt. 1883). For a brief introduction to the angling literature in early modern England, see Carl Otto V. Kienbusch, Introduction, *The Arte of Angling*, ed. Gerald Eades Bentley (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1958).

¹⁵⁸ For the Puritan government’s ban on traditional sports and festivities during the Interregnum, see Gregory M. Colon Semenza, *Sport, Politics, and Literature in the English Renaissance* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2003).

¹⁵⁹ Walton, *The Compleat Angler*, 64.

innocent pleasures like angling should be shameful and where the festivity of the laboring poor exists as a ‘folk culture’ in separation from the manor house. But, as Hirst and Zwicker point out, “it is not mere idleness that shames this angler. The language, inescapably sexual, suggests a wastefulness, a trifling, of a different kind.”¹⁶⁰ The poet’s “non-productive” sex, like that of the nuns, with its socio-culturally inflected associations with the natural world and with the “non-procreative” human bonds of the residual culture, subtly questions the severely purposive sex that is needed to progress the Protestant line.

The concluding lines of the poem seem to position Maria as the legitimate future of this house, poised to perpetuate the “goodness” entailed on her. She is the one who bestows order and “straightness” on this estate, ‘vitrifying’ the surrounding nature with “her flames, in heaven tried” (687). She is the spirit of this house, avatar of its value, the map of this Paradise.¹⁶¹ Even in this very final stage of his poetic work, however, producing the map based on his survey, the surveyor-poet does not forget other voices that question Maria’s map. As he has allowed Thestylis to have a voice, he lets amphibian salmon fishers occupy the final lines of this poetic-survey,¹⁶² conjuring up, with their ominous world-turned-upside-down look of “Antipodes in shoes”(771), other visions of utopia that wouldn’t be contained within Maria’s map.

Writing at a critical juncture in English history when the old order was leveled down and a new history was about to be written on this “table rase” (446), Marvell maps out competing visions of England’s future in this poem. By subjecting his patron’s

¹⁶⁰ Hirst and Zwicker, “High Summer,” 267.

¹⁶¹ At least one reader mistakenly thinks that “Paradise’s only map” refers to Mary, not the estate. I think the confusion is probably intended on Marvell’s part. See Erickson, “Fairfax Family,” 168.

¹⁶² See pages 50-54 of this chapter for my discussion of topical allusion of “salmon-fishers.”

country estate, a microcosm of England, “that dear and happy isle”(321), to the empirical analysis of a surveyor, the poet finds that the estate has several parts, each with its separate utopian vision. The poem empirically grounds, that is, situates, each of them as an actual presence embedded in the web of socioeconomic and cultural contexts of mid-seventeenth century England. Rather than idealizing his patron’s household in conventional poetic terms, the surveyor-poet analyzes its values and its challenges in specific terms of ongoing agrarian revolution and familial transformations.

At the same time, Marvell exercises his surveying in poetry, in “[t]hose short but admirable lines”(42). His poetic language, while inviting readers to follow out the hints towards a deep historicization of itself, the kind that I have attempted in this chapter, simultaneously conjures up images of utopian otherworldliness, for example, in its evocation of the lost Eden of England, and in its intensely beautiful depiction of the prelapsarian world of the forest, where things high and low, weak and strong, beautiful and lowly coexist in paradisiacal relation to each other.

The nightingale does here make choice
 To sing the trials of her voice.
 Low shrubs she sits in, and adorns
 With music high the squatted thorns.
 But highest oaks stoop down to hear,
 And list’ning elders prick the ear.
 The thorn, lest it should hurt her, draws
 Within the skin its shrunken claws. (513-20)

The tension between the figurative otherworldliness of the poetic images and the powerful impulse toward an empirical grounding finds its counterpart in the figure of the poet who is a surveyor, but at the same time, an “easy philosopher” of the forest and a

“lazy” angler. It is this delicate balance and sustained tension between the oppositional tendencies that characterize this surveyor-poet’s work and its outcome.

2. “Order of Chastity in marriage”: Utopian Marriage and Female Community in Margaret Cavendish’s Plays¹⁶³

We have seen the way in which Andrew Marvell’s “Upon Appleton House” (written c. 1651) projects Mary Fairfax’s impending marriage and her virtual succession of her father as the utopian future of Sir Thomas Fairfax’s family. The female community of the Cistercian convent that represents the vanished Catholic past of this house, however, occupies many lines in the poem, claiming a firm presence and effectively evoking its potential as an alternative to marriage for women. Even though it is the past that this Puritan household has defeated and replaced, even though the nunnery’s life of sensuous pleasure and physical warmth reeks of moral corruption, the lines present a female fellowship and community that posit an alternative to the heterosexual economy that Mary Fairfax was about to participate in.

While Marvell takes a complex stance and suggests only understated interest in the same-sex religious community as a potential alternative to married life, Marvell’s contemporary, Margaret Cavendish, the Duchess of Newcastle, actively explores the potential of the institution as a space for utopian families. Her plays revise and secularize the tradition of the Catholic convent in order to explore the possibility of utopian space, which is distinct from and yet still open to the society. The Catholic monastic tradition

¹⁶³ Margaret Cavendish, *The Religious in Playes* (London, 1662), act 5, sc. 35. This and the second collection of her plays (1668) are the editions that I used for *The Religious* and all the other Cavendish plays except *Bell in Campo* and *The Convent of Pleasure*, hereafter cited parenthetically in the text with act and scene numbers. For *Bell in Campo* and *The Convent of Pleasure*, citations are from Anne Shaver, ed., *The Convent of Pleasure and Other Plays* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999). None of Cavendish’s nineteen plays were performed during her life time. She published them in two folio volumes: *Playes* (1662) and *Plays, Never before Printed* (1668). The plays in the 1662 collection were probably written earlier, during her European exile with her husband. Letter 143 in *Sociable Letters* (1664) reports that the manuscript of twenty plays intended for publication was lost due to a ship-wreck, though fortunately Cavendish kept the original with her. James Fitzmaurice, ed., *Sociable Letters* (New York: Garland Reference Library of the Humanities, 1997), 153-54.

gave an example of utopian community, with its combination of simple communitarian life with highly civilized culture.¹⁶⁴ Cavendish is tapping into this repository of utopian ideas and revises it into secular familial utopias. The model of the Catholic convent is revised to function as various forms of utopian space: a retreat for a widow, a separatist female community, and a sanctified space for a Protestant marriage based on love and chastity. They all share, however, a secular bent and a fundamental openness to the world, which distinguishes them from the Catholic tradition. The situating process, in a sense, goes both ways. The Catholic institution provides a separatist space to concretize and accommodate Cavendish's radical vision for familial utopias. At the same time, these utopian families and their militant secularism firmly anchor the once-religious space in this world and its present concerns. Furthermore this spirit of situatedness characterizes not only the nature of the utopian families that Cavendish explores, but also the manner in which she explores them. In this chapter, I would like to examine the ways in which Cavendish situates utopian sociability by revising the traditional idea of religious houses. I will focus mainly on *The Convent of Pleasure* (1668) and *The Religious* (1662), although I will discuss *Bell in Campo* (1662) to some extent, and briefly touch on other plays by Cavendish. In the latter part of the chapter, I will discuss the ways in which Cavendish takes advantage of the imaginative potential opened up by the emergence of print culture in her formal innovations.

1.

¹⁶⁴ "Some of the same impulses toward original monasticism in the West – the desire to separate oneself from the world as it was and to build an order of perfection in this life – underlay the search of the utopian as they had that of the monk." Manuel and Manuel, *Utopian Thought*, 48.

Cavendish's contemporaries expressed interest in the tradition of the Catholic convent, and it often figured as a safe haven for women in literature. The religious retreat is a recurrent trope in the works of Aphra Behn who, like Cavendish, spent many years on the Continent, where religious houses still functioned as respectable shelters for those who were failing or unwilling to marry.¹⁶⁵ In *Love-Letters between a Nobleman and his Sister* (1684-7), Calista, at the catastrophic exposé of her affair with Philander and the ensuing death of her husband Count Clarinau, seeks shelter in the convent where she stayed before her marriage (310) and eventually takes the vow (315).¹⁶⁶ Octavio, who himself elects to retreat into a religious house following the disastrous love affair with Sylvia, recommends the religious retreat as a desirable option for her as well. *The History of the Nun* (1689) depicts a heroine who struggles between life as a devotee and marriage. The narrator sees marriage and life in the nunnery as competing parallel paths for women, posing similar risks and quandaries for young women:

I could wish, for the prevention of abundance of mischiefs and miseries, that nunneries and marriages were not to be entered into till the maid so destined were of a mature age to make her own choice, and that parents would not make use of their justly assumed authority to compel their children neither to the one or the other.¹⁶⁷

In England the Catholic convents ceased to offer a meaningful alternative to marriage for girls from aristocratic families long before the Reformation. Religious

¹⁶⁵ In the 1660s, Aphra Behn worked as a secret agent for Charles II in the Low Countries which provided a setting for *Love-letters* and many short stories. Pointing to her fascination with the Catholic convent, critics have speculated that Behn might have been a religious herself and stayed in a convent, if briefly. The narrator in *The History of the Nun* mentions "I was designed an humble votary in the house of devotion." *The History of the Nun*, Paul Salzman, ed., *Oroonoko and Other Writings* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 140.

¹⁶⁶ Aphra Behn, *Love-Letters between a Nobleman and his Sister*, ed. Janet Todd (London: Penguin, 1996). Page numbers are given parenthetically in the text.

¹⁶⁷ Behn, *The History of the Nun*, 141.

houses were already dwindling in numbers and in influence in the late medieval period.

¹⁶⁸ But a nostalgic view of convents persisted and it was thought that nunneries had functioned as an alternative to marriage. As Bridget Hill's survey demonstrates, many seventeenth-century writers continued to express their belief that the dissolution of religious houses degraded women's education, and resulted in "closing one possible opening – even a successful career – for single women."¹⁶⁹ Arguing that Catholic nunneries had functioned as "good Shee-schools, wherein the girls and maids of the neighbourhood were taught to read and work," Thomas Fuller, a moderate Protestant, wrote, "Yea, give me leave to say if such Feminine Foundations had still continued, provided no vows were obtruded upon them ... haply the weaker sex (besides the avoiding modern inconveniences) might be heightened to a higher perfection than hitherto hath been obtained."¹⁷⁰ Some expressed a need for a Protestant version of the nunneries as a possible solution. In *Anatomy of Melancholy* (1621) Robert Burton proposed to build "a monastical college for old, decayed, deformed, or discontented maids to live together in."¹⁷¹ Though not exclusive to women, Nicholas Ferrar's experimental religious community of Little Gidding worked as both an extended communitarian family and an academy for girls. Clement Barksdale, the translator of Anna Maria Schurman's *The Learned Maid: or, Whether a Maid May be a Scholar* (1659), called for a girls' college in *Letter touching a College of Maids or a Virgin Society* (1675).

¹⁶⁸ Harris, "Aristocratic Women and Nunneries," 89-113.

¹⁶⁹ Hill, "Refuge from Men," 110. I am deeply indebted to Hill's essay for the survey of seventeenth-century discussion of the Protestant convent. See also, Ruth Perry, *The Celebrated Mary Astell: An Early English Feminist* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1986), chapter 4.

¹⁷⁰ Thomas Fuller, *The Church History of Britain* (1655), with a preface and notes by James Nichols, 3 vols. (London, 1868), iii, 215. Cited in Hill, "Refuge from Men," 112.

¹⁷¹ Robert Burton, *The Anatomy of Melancholy* (1621), Everyman edn., 3 vols. (London, 1932), I, 418. Cited in Hill, "Refuge from Men," 111.

The seventeenth-century interest in the Catholic convent is characterized by secular concerns and the spirit of this-worldliness. Proposals to revise the Catholic tradition into “Protestant nunneries” do not show much interest in the religious functions that Catholic nunneries had traditionally played. Rather, people mainly focused on the social roles that they believed medieval nunneries had played, especially in educating women and providing a home for women who did not marry. The proposed Protestant convents, though retreats from society, were not envisioned as a space of absolute separation, but more as a complementary institution, working to address the pressing concerns of society. Many proposals took pains to emphasize that a vow would not be required of the inmates, and emphasized the education of women as the central function, which they believed, would make a key contribution to society. It was argued that single women would acquire “some profitable Art whereby they would be useful to the World.”¹⁷²

Mary Astell’s *A Serious Proposal to the Ladies* (1694) is a prime example of the seventeenth-century appropriation of the Catholic convent as a model for a female community. In this influential essay, Astell proposes to build a religious retreat for young women. Addressing two main concerns that faced women, Astell’s religious retreat is conceived to work both as an educational institution, and as an alternative, if temporary, family for women who sought shelter from the pressures of the marriage market and society.

[W]e will call it a Religious Retirement, and such as shall have a double aspect, being not only a Retreat from the world for those who desire that advantage, but

¹⁷² George Wheler, *The Protestant Nunnery* (London, 1698), 16. Cited in Hill, “Refuge from Men,” 115.

likewise, an institution and precious discipline, to fit us to do the greatest good in it.¹⁷³

In her proposal, Astell shares the spirit of “situatedness” that characterizes the seventeenth-century interest in the Catholic convent. While imagining her community as a retreat, and hence separating it from society, Astell does not merely propose a spiritual retreat for individual salvation. Rather she emphasizes the engaged character of this community by illuminating the contribution it will make as an educational institution to prepare its members for productive roles in society.

It shall not so cut you off from the world as to hinder you from bettering and improving it, but rather qualify you to do it the greatest Good, and be a Seminary to stock the Kingdom with pious and prudent Ladies. (21)

Like other proponents of the Protestant nunnery, Astell addresses the poor state of female education in seventeenth-century England, which she argues inadequately equips women for the challenges they face in the marriage market and in married life. But, Astell’s community is not conceived just as an educational institution. Like the Catholic nunneries, her religious retreat will be a residential community, functioning like a family. If elected by the inmate, it could work as a permanent alternative to the conjugal family. And Astell underlines the fundamentally situated nature of this utopian family by emphasizing that this community does not require a vow and hence depends entirely on voluntary and revocable participation.¹⁷⁴

¹⁷³ Mary Astell, *A Serious Proposal to the Ladies*, Parts 1 & II, ed. Patricia Springborg (London: Pickering & Chatto, 1997), 17. All the quotations of *Serious Proposal* are from this edition, with page numbers given parenthetically in the text.

¹⁷⁴ “Astell’s vision is not of a closed order, but a flexible separatist retreat, which acknowledges, and makes integral, responsibilities in the world at large.” Kate Lilley, “Blazing Worlds: Seventeenth-Century Women’s Utopian Writing,” in *Women, Texts and Histories 1575-1760*, ed. Clare Brant and Diane Purkiss (London: Routledge, 1992), 114.

[T]here shall be no Vows or irrevocable Obligations, not so much as the fear of Reproach to keep our Ladies here any longer than they desire. No: Ev'ry act of our Religious Votary shall be voluntary and free, and no other tye but the Pleasure, the Glory and Advantage of this blessed Retirement to confine her to it. (29)

In other words, Astell's is going to be a voluntary community, an alternative family for women based on their voluntary engagement. As an emotional foundation for this family, female friendship between the inmates replaces the heterosexual affection between the conjugal couple.

So that you only withdraw from the noise and trouble, the folly and temptation of the world, that you may more peaceably enjoy yourselves, and all the innocent Pleasures it is able to afford you, and particularly that which is worth all the rest, a noble virtuous and Disinterest'd Friendship. (20)

Alessa Johns has argued that utopia “concerns itself with questions of love, friendship, and marriage, since an ideal society no less than an actual one begins with and is made up of human relationships.”¹⁷⁵ In her promotion of female friendship, Astell touches on the fundamental component of female community.

[T]his happy Society will be but one Body, whose Soul is Love, animating and informing it, and perpetually breathing forth it self in flames of holy desires after GOD and acts of Benevolence to each other. (27)

In her emphasis on female friendship, Astell follows Katherine Philips' poetic construction of a society of female friends and tries to substantiate it as a practical vision. Philips' poems on friendship elevate female friendship to a level as noble as that of men

¹⁷⁵ Alessa Johns, “Mary Astell's ‘Excited Needles’: Theorizing Feminist Utopia in Seventeenth-Century England,” *Utopian Studies* 7, no. 1(1996): 60-74.

and “validated women’s love for others of their own sex.”¹⁷⁶ In her poems, like “To the Excellent Mrs. Owen, upon her receiving the name of Lucasia, and Adoption into our Society, December 28, 1651,” “the English Sappho” constructed an imagined “Society” of female friends, celebrating the initiation of a member into this society as a serious occasion worthy of poetic celebration. She posits this idealized world of female friendship and its “happy quiet”(14) against “the boisterous world”(34) and its “disguise”(9) and “treachery”(9) (“A Retir’d Friendship. To Ardelia”).¹⁷⁷ Astell draws on this tradition and proposes to realize this virtual community of friends in a real one. She envisions an alternative family of women based on voluntary sociability between its members.

Written decades earlier than Astell’s proposal, Cavendish’s plays exhibit a poetic attempt to realize a female separatist family and explore its potential and practical implications in fictional space, an exploration strikingly similar to Astell’s proposal. In the process Cavendish’s vision in some ways goes further in its radicalism and secularism. *The Female Academy* (1662) reads like a direct response to contemporary calls for good institutions of female education, and to the argument made by the famous Dutch female scholar, Anna Maria von Schurman, in *The Learned Maid: or, Whether a Maid May Be a Scholar* (1640, translated into English in 1659). In Cavendish’s play, a female academy is set up “wherein a company of young Ladies are instructed by old Matrons, as to speak wittily and rationally, and to behave themselves handsomely, and to live virtually.” This academy is conceived as a separatist space of retreat that looks like a convent. In the

¹⁷⁶ Perry, *Celebrated Mary Astell*, 116.

¹⁷⁷ The quotations are from James Fitzmaurice et al., eds., *Major Women Writers of Seventeenth-Century England* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1997), with line numbers given parenthetically.

ladies from families of “honourable Birth” and “antient Descent”¹⁷⁸ practice rhetoric and perform orations on serious topics, displaying their capacity to argue rationally and knowledgeably on serious topics. Meanwhile men’s opposition to this academy ever increases, portraying it as a serious threat to society. The tension is finally resolved when the matron clarifies that this is just an academy that prepares ladies for their eventual marriage: “for these Ladies have not vowed Virginitie, or are they incloystred; for an Academy is not a Cloyster, but a School, wherein are taught how to be good Wives when they are married.” (act. 5, sc. 28)¹⁷⁹

Published six years later, *The Convent of Pleasure* (1668) goes further in that it proposes a separatist female community not as a preparation for but as an alternative to marriage. The heroine, Lady Happy, argues that marriage is only for women who do not have the means to support themselves, claiming:

Wherefore those Women that are poor, and have not means to buy delights, and maintain pleasure, are only fit for Men; for having not means to please themselves, they must serve only to please others; but those Women, where Fortune, Nature, and, gods are joined to make them happy, were mad to live with Men, who make the Female sex their slaves; but I will not be so inslaved, but will live retired from their Company. (act 1, sc. 2)

As a well-endowed heiress at the death of her father, she establishes a secular retreat from men for gentle women who “are resolv’d to live a single life and vow Virginitie.” Going further than the academy in *The Female Academy* that admits only ladies of birth and wealth, and suggesting Cavendish’s growing sense of the economic reality that most

¹⁷⁸ “If your Daughter were not of honourable Birth, they would not receive her, for they take in none but those of antient Descent, as also rich, for it is a place of charges.” Margaret Cavendish, *The Female Academy*, in *Playes* (London, 1662), act 1, sc. 1.

¹⁷⁹ Cavendish marks this as “Scene the last”. Cavendish numbers scenes sequentially rather than starting anew in each chapter in her plays published in the 1662 collection.

unmarried women face, Lady Happy opens this utopian community to young women from families who do not have material means to support their single life.

I will take so many Noble Persons of my own Sex, as my Estate will plentifully maintain, such whose Births are greater then their Fortunes, and are resolv'd to live a single life, and vow Virginitie. (act 1, sc. 2)

Like Astell's proposal for a Protestant retreat, Lady Happy's female community is based on the model of the Catholic convent but revised in the spirit of situatedness. At first glance, Lady Happy's convent seems completely separated from society in its absolute insulation. By eliminating even the grates from its design, where traditionally male visitors could see the inmates ("she will suffer no grates about the Cloister"), this convent seems to have gone even further than the Catholic convents in its intention of impregnable enclosure (act 1, sc. 1). It demonstrates its intention of absolute separation from the world of men, by not allowing any men either as members, functionaries or visitors. Lady Happy herself functions as the "chief Confessor" as well as "Lady-Prioress," eliminating the need for a male priest. This is a self-sufficient community entirely composed of women where both material and spiritual needs are fulfilled by women, as Madam Mediator informs the male public.

[She] has also Women-Physicians, Surgeons and Apothecaries, and she is the chief Confessor her self, and gives what Indulgences or Absolutions she pleaseth . . . and hath Women for every Office and Employment: for though she hath not above twenty Ladies with her, yet she hath a numerous Company of Female Servants, so as there is no occasion for Men. (act 2, sc. 1)

In response to this absolute separation, the male population perceived the convent as a threat to "the good of the Commonwealth," not to mention to the patriarchal institution of

marriage. The battle line is clearly drawn by the end of the second act between this utopian space and society at large, especially the male suitors who plot the penetration of this female space (act 2, sc.4).

In spite of this physical insulation from the world of men, however, this convent takes a more secular tone than, for example, Mary Astell's proposed religious retirement, in its epicurean endorsement of worldly pleasure. Inmates are not expected to sacrifice any of the comforts and pleasure of the world by residing in here. Rather, Lady Happy emphasizes, all the supreme comforts, those that would be expected from an aristocratic household, will be provided for them. Indeed, the site of the convent is originally Lady Happy's house, and though transformed into a convent, it refuses to part with the pleasant daily comfort of the domestic space. Like the nunnery in Marvell's poem, this convent endorses the material comfort of this world. In fact this is not really a religious house, because Lady Happy "is not a Votress to the gods but Nature" (act 2, sc. 1). In her bold claim for pleasure as a legitimate component of this utopian space, Lady Happy's convent is figured as a fundamentally situated utopia in spite of its separation from the world of men. As Lady Happy puts it, she does not intend to give up anything of this world other than the troublesome company of men in constructing this female community: "My Cloister shall not be a Cloister of restraint, but a place for freedom, not to vex the Senses but to please them" (act 1, sc. 2).

Mediat. You intend to live incloister'd and retired from the World.

L. Happy. 'Tis true, but not from pleasures; for, I intend to incloister my self from the World, to enjoy pleasure, and not to bury my self from it; but to incloister my self from the incumbred cares and vexations, troubles and perturbation of the world. (act 1, sc. 2)

After such a promising start, and the inmates' professed satisfaction with their life in this utopian community ("None in this World can be happier." act 2, sc. 2), Lady Happy's marriage with the Prince certainly feels anticlimactic. Though the play leaves it as a possibility that the convent might continue its existence, it is undeniable that Lady Happy's utopian project practically collapses with her wedding.¹⁸⁰ It is fascinating to see that the breakdown of this utopian secular convent is initiated by the infiltration of a cross-dressed Prince into the community that has been presented as physically invincible. Among the proponents of the female separatist community, the possibility of infiltration by men was one of the biggest concerns.¹⁸¹ As already mentioned, this play shows that men continue to plot to get inside the convent by any means, suggesting the eventual outcome. Such steps, of course, do not prevent the feeling of disappointment at the ending. Many feminist critics have expressed frustration at the ending of *The Convent of Pleasure*, which they see as a containment of potentially subversive female energy. As Irene G. Dash reports about her experience of teaching the play in an undergraduate class, following the declaratory set-up of this utopian female community, the marriage between Lady Happy and the Prince, accompanied by the sudden silencing of Lady Happy, comes as a disappointing, if convenient and conventional, denouement.¹⁸² The impression of containment seems to be compounded by the fact that a large chunk, if not the whole, of

¹⁸⁰ Critics read Lady Happy's marriage as the automatic dissolution of the convent, but the play seems to leave the issue unclear. See, for example, the jocular exchange between the Prince and Mimick, a fool, about the future of the convent in act 5, sc. 3., as well as the following dialogue between the Prince and Madam Mediator at the end of act 5, sc. 1.

M. Mediat. O the Lord! I hope you will not bring an Army, to take away all the Women; will you?
Princ. No, Madam Mediator, we will leave you behind us.

¹⁸¹ See Hill, "Refuge from Men," 120.

¹⁸² Dash reports that the students liked the idea of the ideal convent as a refuge for women from the injustice of patriarchal marriage and "felt betrayed" by the surprise ending. Irene G. Dash, "Single-Sex Retreats in Two Early Modern Dramas: *Love's Labor's Lost* and *The Convent of Pleasure*." *Shakespeare Quarterly* 47, no. 4 (1996): 392-93.

the concluding scenes of the play was written not by Margaret but by her husband, William Cavendish, Duke of Newcastle, an amateur but experienced playwright, as specified in the 1668 text (*Plays, Never Before Printed*).¹⁸³ Why did Margaret Cavendish choose to let her husband finish the crucial final scenes of the play? Or, was such collaboration really her “choice”?¹⁸⁴ Not surprisingly, feminist critics have directed their critique of the play at the ending, arguing that it attempts to accommodate the patriarchal status quo and to domesticate radical ideas of feminine desire explored in the earlier part of the play. Nicole Pohl, for instance, sees such a pattern in seventeenth-century plays, and argues that “[u]nder the guise of comedy... *A Convent of Pleasure* [allows] for lesbian desire only within the context of the conventional and rather unconvincing ending of heterosexual marriages.”¹⁸⁵

It is certainly true that we witness a silencing of Lady Happy towards the end as the Prince emerges as the pivotal center of the play and commands this space like an absolute ruler. The Prince’s song in the masque scene of act 4 indeed sounds like a monarch proclaiming his absolutist rule over his territory.

And thus with Method order I,
 And govern all with Majesty;
 I am sole Monarch of the Sea,
 And all therein belongs to me. (act 4, sc. 1)

¹⁸³ The text marks the start of William’s writing as “Written by my Lord Duke.” It is first marked so in the middle of act 4, scene 1, and two more times, in act 4, scene 1, and at the very beginning of act 5, scene 2. Since it is not marked where his writing ends, Anne Shaver thinks that he authored the final two scenes (scenes 2 and 3 of act 5) and the epilogue. Shaver, ed., *Convent of Pleasure*, 238, footnote. Dedicating the 1662 collection to her husband, Margaret Cavendish claims that she was inspired to write plays because of Williams’ example as a playwright. See “The Epistle Dedicatory,” *Playes* (London, 1662).

¹⁸⁴ Another instance of William Cavendish’s intervention in his wife’s writing that invites questions is in *Bell in Campo*, where the text specifies that the duke has written much of Lady Jantil’s highly formalized speeches towards the end of the play.

¹⁸⁵ Nicole Pohl, *Women, Space and Utopia, 1600-1800* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2006), 99.

Lady Happy's convent increasingly takes on the look of the royal court with its masquerade-like entertainments. The initial theme of the self-sufficient female collective gets sidelined by the courtly romance of Lady Happy and the Prince. The initial conflict between the utopian community and society gets replaced by the pseudo-conflict between the "lesbian" desire of Lady Happy and the Prince's heterosexual desire, which finds a convenient solution when the Prince's true sexual identity gets revealed.

But is this really a case of containment, a containment of "lesbian desire"? Has Lady Happy's convent community managed to build a real female sociability that gets domesticated at the end of the play? It might be more accurate to say that the play reaches a deadlock even before the appearance of the Prince. While Lady Happy's convent is set up as an alternative family, it fails to achieve a sociability alternative to heterosexual affection that will constitute the emotional foundation in which to build an alternative family. This shortcoming becomes clear when compared to Astell's utopian proposal for a female community. As we examined earlier, one crucial benefit of belonging to her community, Astell envisions, would be to build a genuine network of female friendships. Astell sees female sociability between two equal friends as constituting the crucial emotional foundation for this family. As Alessa Johns points out, "an ideal society... is made of human relationships." In the case of *The Convent of Pleasure*, however, Lady Happy's relationship to the other inmates remains distanced and fundamentally hierarchical, one of patronage and clientage, not just in a financial but also in an emotional and spiritual sense. The only strong human relationship that Lady Happy forms turns out to be a heterosexual one with the Prince disguised as a princess. The play fails to imagine any genuine female friendship between two equals, a utopian sociability

to hold this utopian community together. The convent doesn't function as an alternative family in the fundamental sense. The failure of the female community does not lie so much in its "containment" by a heterosexual economy as in its failure to envision an alternative family of female sociability.

2.

But what characterizes this conjugal marriage that Lady Happy elects over her female community? While her marriage certainly feels like the defeat of her original project, it is not clear whether Lady Happy's marriage with the Prince should be seen as her submission to her husband's absolute authority. Before concluding that *The Convent of Pleasure* ends with a disappointing collapse of proto-feminist ideals, it might be more constructive to examine what sort of marriage Cavendish has in mind for her spirited heroine. Indeed, marriage is the central concern in Cavendish's plays. They dramatize the realities of contemporary marriages and of the marriage market. *Matrimonial Trouble* (1662), for example, covers the whole gamut of married couples, featuring many who are unhappy in their marriages. Acutely aware of the grim realities of marriage, however, Cavendish also idealizes the idea of a conjugal marriage as a loving bond between two equals. Such a marriage is figured as a situated utopia in *The Religious* (1662), a play structured by the conflict between the traditional view and the newly emerging view of marriage.

Cavendish wrote in a period that witnessed a critical transformation of the ideas of marriage and the family. In spite of debate on the nature of that change, family historians seem to agree in locating in the early modern period a crucial development in

ways in which people form their families and prioritize one or another kinship group.

According to Ruth Perry, early modern England witnessed a fundamental “change in the definition of what constituted the primary kin group,” one that

involved a movement from an axis of kinship based on consanguineal ties or blood lineage to an axis based on conjugal and affinal ties of the married couple. That is, the biologically given family into which one was born was gradually becoming secondary to the chosen family constructed by marriage. For the individual caught in this cultural shift, the conflict was between belonging to a family with intergenerational blood lines that ran through both parents, or belonging to a nuclear family with responsibility only to one’s spouse and immature offspring. In a kinship system based on the conjugal bond, the obligations of spouses to each other are stressed above and against their ties of filiation. In a consanguineal kinship system, bonds of filiation and siblinghood are stressed above and against the conjugal tie.¹⁸⁶

Cavendish’s plays often thematize the tension between these two different kinds of allegiance, that is, the allegiance to consanguineal family (filial obligation) and the spousal, affiliative, bond. Furthermore, I’d argue, the idealized married love that Cavendish presents as a situated utopia in her plays reflects the increasing ascendancy that the nuclear family with strong conjugal ties was beginning to assume in the emotional life of her contemporaries. As in the case of Lady Perfection in *The Religious* and Lady Jantil in *Bell in Campo*, Cavendish’s heroines often display an intense focus on the spousal bond, combined with the virtual neglect of the claims of consanguineal ties and no interest in accommodating patrilineal concerns. Emotional bonds with the members of the conjugal family that share the daily life triumph over the traditional preoccupation with the family lineage and its perpetuation.

Interestingly, in the plays to which I’ll now turn, it is again the space of religious retreat that figures as a locus for this utopian conjugal love. The radically idealized love

¹⁸⁶ Perry, *Novel Relations*, 2.

of the heroines gets a chance to flower in the secured space of religious retreat, while in that process the religious space itself gets secularized and situated into a domestic space. In other words, this situating process is bilateral: the retired space of religious houses opens up a site of realization for the radically ideal bond that differs from normative practices. At the same time, the refiguration of the religious space as a “domestic” space of married love secularizes and situates the religious house back into the social fabric.

The story of Lady Jantil in *Bell in Campo* (1662) illustrates the way Cavendish revises the traditional idea of the convent to situate her utopian marriage. When her beloved husband gets killed in a civil war, Lady Jantil builds an elaborate memorial compound for her husband, with a cloister next to his tomb, and retreats into it permanently. Society expects her, a young, beautiful, and rich widow, to marry again, but her refusal to go back to the marriage market is Lady Jantil’s first act of agency as a widow, a *femme sole*. Using the extremely limited leverage of refusal, Lady Jantil carves out an individual space of retreat for herself, revising the long-standing tradition of aristocratic women, as well as the Catholic tradition of religious retreat for widows. According to Barbara J. Harris, aristocratic women often directed the construction of tombs and funerary memorials for their husbands as executors of their wills. In the pre-Reformation era, these tombs had a religious character, often inciting onlookers to pray for the souls of the dead. Chantries, Catholic institutions established to perform masses and say prayers for the soul of a deceased person, were often endowed. Usually attached to the parish church of their estates, however, these memorials, chapels, and chantries served a double purpose: not only did they ensure the salvation of the soul of the dead, they also displayed to the living the family’s social status and lineage. The expensive

aristocratic funerals attended by large number of kinsmen, retainers, servants and tenants were a public occasion to celebrate the extensive network of kinship and clientage. In tombs and funerary memorials, individuals' identities were represented by their relation to the extensive kin network.¹⁸⁷

Lady Jantil's construction of the tomb and the memorial for her husband continues this tradition. What is striking about her case, however, is her radically individualist and secular approach to it. Aristocratic tombs and memorials were usually built within the parish church, preferably as close to the high altar as possible – the most powerful were usually buried in the chancel.¹⁸⁸ Lady Jantil's memorial, however, doesn't have any association with a religious institution. She builds it inside her own house, a domestic space and the seat of her conjugal love. Her memorial for her husband lacks any religious trappings, but is decorated by Greco-Roman figures like Mercury, Minerva, and Mars, pagan gods who therefore can represent the secular virtues of her late husband (Part I, Act 4, Sc. 21). Without displaying much concern for the spiritual salvation of the dead, Lady Jantil pays more attention to memorializing the humanist virtues of her husband in order to ensure his perpetual fame in this world. Such an approach certainly reflects the changed practice of aristocratic tomb-building following the Reformation,¹⁸⁹ but Lady Jantil's marked indifference to the religious aspect of the tradition stands out as a radical instance of its secularization. Nor is she concerned at all with displaying her husband and herself in their familial relations. She has no interest in the patrilineal

¹⁸⁷ See Barbara Harris, "The Fabric of Piety: Aristocratic Women and Care of the Dead, 1450-1550," *Journal of British Studies* 48 (April 2009): 308-35; see also Stone, *The Family, Sex and Marriage*, 125.

¹⁸⁸ Harris, "Fabric of Piety," 326.

¹⁸⁹ Aristocratic practices of tomb building changed significantly once the Crown issued the Ten Articles and initiated a program of doctrinal reform in 1536. For instance, no new chantries were constructed after 1536. See Harris, "Fabric of Piety," 319-22.

concerns of the consanguineal families. It is the supreme virtue of their married love that she mainly aims to project in her elaborate and luxurious monument. The wedded love of Lady Jantil and her husband is separated from the diachronic concerns of patrilineage.

The story of Lady Perfection in *The Religious* (1662) traces a similar pattern in adopting the model of a Catholic institution while drastically secularizing and modernizing it into a radically individualized shrine of conjugal love. Indeed, it exhibits a more radical case in fuller scale, exalting conjugal love to the height of religion. Here again, as in the case of *The Convent of Pleasure* as well as the story of Lady Jantil in *Bell in Campo*, the Catholic convent works as a paradigm to imagine a new kind of family that provides a utopian space for women away from mercenary marriage practices backed by patriarchal and state authorities.

The Religious thematizes the conflict between consanguineal obligation and conjugal bond. The fault line lies between the mercenary world of the patriarchal state-familial apparatus and the religious space of the convent that is sought by the heroine. Two young lovers, Lady Perfection and Lord Melancholy, marry while his father, Lord Dorato, is stationed abroad on a diplomatic mission. Even though the marriage of the lovers is consummated with the permission of Lady Perfection's mother and of her step-father, who is also Lord Melancholy's guardian, the news of the wedding infuriates Lord Dorato. His reaction is quite understandable in the context of early modern English society, where the choice of the marriage partner was one of the prime prerogatives of parental authority, and a critical instance of filial obedience, especially among the landed elite.¹⁹⁰ Indignant that his only son has married without his prior knowledge, let alone consent, Lord Dorato's main point of displeasure with the marriage is clear. He is angry

¹⁹⁰ See Stone, *The Family, Sex and Marriage*, 180-91.

that his hope of securing an advantageous marriage for his son is frustrated (“O the very thought doth almost make me mad, especially when I remember the hopes I had to advance my Son by marriage”), and that his son has married “a Girl whose Estate hath more Debts than Lands”(act 1, sc. 4). For him, the primary value of the son lies in the prospect of advancing and perpetuating the patriline. He quickly decides he will disinherit his son or marry again and get another son that “may prove more wise and happy to me” if Lord Melancholy doesn’t obey his demand to “break the marriage-knot asunder”(act 1, sc. 4). Lord Dorato’s authority is supported by that of state law, enabling him to annul the marriage and to force his son to marry the Arch-Prince’s niece, as he intended. As Stone has argued, the early modern state and the ruling elite operated with the assumption that “the subordination of the family to its head is analogous to, and also a direct contributory cause of, subordination of subjects to the sovereign.”¹⁹¹

When her marriage is thus annulled by the state and when she refuses to follow her friends’ advice to put herself back on the marriage market since she is “freed by the law” and “may marry again,” Lady Perfection becomes somebody who is “neither Maid, Virgin, Widow, nor Wife” (act 2, sc. 13). She is no longer a proper member of society since she does not fit into any available category that defines a woman’s identity based on her relation to father or husband. By acting against the interests of patriarchy and the apparatus of the state that supports it, she loses her place in society, effectively becoming a social cipher and outcast.

Even worse, Lady Perfection is soon faced with unwanted courtship from the Arch-Prince. In response to his threat that if she doesn’t consent to marry, he will exercise his power to take her “either for a Mistriss, or for a Wife”(act 2, sc. 21), she

¹⁹¹ Stone, *The Family, Sex and Marriage*, 152.

seeks a shelter in the space of religious retreat. According to Rosemary Radford Ruether, the medieval Catholic Church affirmed the mutual consent between a couple as the definition of a binding marriage, emphasizing it more than parental consent. “The emphasis on the consent of the couple, rather than parental approval, as the key to marriage opened the way for a clandestine elopement of young lovers to be declared a binding marriage, even against the wishes of their parents for a more suitable spouse.”¹⁹² The Church was not very accommodating to the dynastic desire of the patriarchal family.¹⁹³ The Church’s position should be understood in the historical context of the power struggle between the Church and secular princes throughout the medieval period. The struggle was particularly waged around the issue of monogamy, with the Church emphasizing monogamy against the widespread practice of polygamy, or serial marriages, especially among the elite, resulting in the “Christianizing” of the institution of marriage. Coupled with its emphasis on monogamy, the medieval Church was often in the way of princely patriarchal authority that mainly saw the wife (or wives) as part of patriarchal property and a means to perpetuate the patriarchal dynastic line. Certainly the Church’s position on the issues surrounding marriage was not disinterested, but rather an expression of long-standing and overarching policy that aimed at “the promotion of Church interests through the subversion of kinship solidarity.”¹⁹⁴ In light of this tradition and the public’s perception of it, therefore, it is only fitting that Lady Perfection seeks the protection of a religious institution when faced with the prospect of an unwanted

¹⁹² Rosemary Radford Ruether, *Christianity and the Making of the Modern Family* (Boston: Beacon, 2000), 54.

¹⁹³ The early modern public seemed to have such a conception of the Church’s position on marriage, as exemplified by the character of Friar Laurence in *Romeo and Juliet*. He is figured as an ally of the young lovers whose love clashes with kinship solidarity.

¹⁹⁴ Michael McKeon, *The Origins of the English Novel 1600-1740* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987), 142. See also Jack Goody, *The Development of the Family and Marriage in Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 146-56.

marriage with the Arch-Prince, who threatens to take her regardless of her wishes. It is true that since the Reformation, this no longer was the case in England. But this play seems to be set in the Continent, where such tradition was still alive and the Church functioned as another center of power over against the power of the patriarchal state.¹⁹⁵ It is this tradition that Cavendish taps into in this play.

Though grounded on such Christian paradigm, however, what Lady Perfection stakes out as her retreat is a surprisingly secular and independent space, distinguished from any church institutions.

Lady Perfection. I have thought of a way, that best suits with my Condition and Disposition, which is to take a Religious habit, and enter into a Religious Order; for though I cannot vow Virginitie, nor a single-life, having a Husband, and been used as a Wife, yet I can vow Chastity and retirement; and if I could be permitted into an Nunnery, as perchance I cannot, yet I would not go into any of them, for there is too much Company in ordinary Nunneryes, and I love solitariness; wherefore I will live a kind of Hermits life, only my Nurse and I; and that-little Tower my Father built for pleasure, shall be my Cloyster...(act 2, sc. 23)

Though she attributes the primary reason for setting up her own convent to her ineligibility for a vow of virginity and a single life, Lady Perfection's speech makes it clear that what she envisions would not be satisfied in a conventional nunnery even if she met the standard requirements for admittance to existing convents. In addition to substituting chastity for virginity, she replaces the female company of the convent by solitary, individual retreat. Though modeled on Catholic convents, Lady Perfection's vision does not demonstrate any religious motivation. Like Lady Happy in *The Convent*

¹⁹⁵ The setting of *The Religious* is not specified, but the political structure of this society – the Arch-Prince is the magistrate, and there is a talk of his potential marriage alliance with “the Emperor” -- as well as the presence of religious fathers, suggests that this play is set on the Continent where Margaret Cavendish stayed with her royalist husband when writing this play.

of Pleasure and Lady Jantil in *Bell in Campo*, Lady Perfection effectively sets up a new domestic space for herself by locating her religious retreat in her own home, and by renouncing crucial aspects of Catholic nunneries. The claim of religion protects her from the unwanted counter-claims of patriarchal society as embodied in the character of the Arch-Prince. But her main interests lie in maintaining her fidelity to Lord Melancholy in the space secured in the name of religious retreat.

A more drastic revision of the tradition of religious retreat, however, is made when Lord Melancholy and Lady Perfection reunite as a couple in the protected space of her cloister. After his wife's death, Lord Melancholy seeks a reunion with Lady Perfection but she is bound by the religious vow. They decide to die together, but religious fathers thwart their suicide attempt and suggest a new religious order of conjugal couple as a solution for them.

Religious Father. You have vowed Chastity, and a retir'd Incloyster'd life.

Lady Perfection. I have so.

Religious Father. Why, then marry this Lord again, and let him make the same Vow, and enter into the same Cloyster, and into the same Religious Order of Chastity, and being Man and Wife you are but as one person, so that if you be constant and true to your selves, you keep the Vow of Chastity; for what is more Chast than lawfull Marriage, and Virtuous Man and Wife? (act 5, sc. 35)

The conjugal reunion of Lady Perfection and Lord Melancholy within the sanctified space of religious retreat idealizes their conjugal marriage as a holy union, "an earthly paradise of happiness."¹⁹⁶ This idealization of the conjugal family as a holy union was promoted by Puritan preachers and increasingly shared by the wide spectrum of society

¹⁹⁶ Robert Crosse, *The Lover, or Nuptial Love* (London, 1638). Cited in Stone, *The Family, Sex and Marriage*, 137.

in the seventeenth century.¹⁹⁷ This view was becoming so influential in the seventeenth century as to impact the official image of the royal family: Charles I and Henrietta Maria were “the first English royal couple to be glorified as husband and wife in the domestic sense.”¹⁹⁸

This figuration of the convent as the domestic space of a married couple is also a prime act of secularization. Though conveniently proposed by a religious father in this play, this new religious “Order of Chastity in marriage” (act 5, sc. 37), with the conjugal reunion of Lady Perfection and Lord Melancholy within the space of the convent, challenges the Catholic ideal that esteems celibacy higher than married state, and aligns itself with a major Protestant impact on the institution of marriage.

This shift of emphasis towards the nuclear family was given powerful support by Reformation theology and practice. The medieval Catholic ideal of chastity, as a legal obligation for priests, monks and nuns and as an ideal for all members of the community to aspire to, was replaced by the ideal of conjugal affection.¹⁹⁹

The ideal of celibacy/virginity gets replaced by the more accommodating doctrine of married chastity and spousal fidelity. Unlike celibacy, married chastity is fundamentally a “situated” virtue in the sense that it is attainable not just by selected clerics but by the general lay population engaged in ordinary daily lives. Protestant reformers rejected the

¹⁹⁷ For the new cultural sanction granted to the institution of conjugal marriage by Puritan teachings, see William and Malleville Haller, “The Puritan Art of Love,” *Huntington Library Quarterly* 5, no. 2 (Jan. 1942): 235-72.

¹⁹⁸ Stone, *The Family, Sex and Marriage*, 137. Rubens’ painting of the royal couple in the early 1630s is a good example. In this painting of King Charles as St. George (*Landscape with St George and the Dragon*, 1630-34), the royal couple occupies the center of the picture. This deviation from the traditional presentation of St. George on horseback at the moment of the encounter with the dragon, with the maiden usually relegated to the margin of the painting, reflects the new cultural emphasis on married love and companionship. The image of the painting is available on line at <http://www.royalcollection.org.uk/eGallery/object.asp?maker=12498&object=405356&row=16>.

For a discussion of the centrality of the figure of Henrietta Maria in this painting, and its religious and political symbolism, see Veevers, *Images of Love and Religion*, 187-91.

¹⁹⁹ Roy C. Strong, *Van Dyck: Charles I on Horseback* (London: Allen Lane, 1972), 70, cited in Stone, *The Family, Sex and Marriage*, 135.

moral superiority granted to the celibate life of the clergy and monastic members over the married life of the lay people, triggering “the normative affirmation of temperate conjugal sexual behavior,”²⁰⁰ of the desire of the flesh, if within the boundary of the marriage. On the Continent, many prominent reformers including Martin Luther vehemently attacked the Catholic assumption of the spiritual superiority of celibacy over marriage. In their own personal lives, they practiced what they preached, choosing to live a married life.²⁰¹ In England, Puritan preachers idealized and encouraged marriage and conjugal affection, granting cultural sanction to the institution of marriage, and establishing the ideal of married chastity as the cultural doctrine. Marriage came to be seen as “a state far more excellent than the condition of a single life.”²⁰² In this context, Cavendish’s revision of the Catholic religious house into the domestic space of a conjugal married couple represents on the one hand, a sanctification of the institution of conjugal marriage, but on the other, a secularizing domestication of the sanctified religious space itself.

The injunction of chastity, especially of female chastity, was historically emphasized not just by Christian culture. While the Catholic Church encouraged chastity “not only as a moral virtue but also to encourage, over all competing kinship ties, the ‘spiritual’ kinship of the Church and its enrichment as alternative beneficiary,” the genealogical aspect of the injunction of chastity came to have more significance in early modern England. “In the English kinship system, one of the most important kinds of

²⁰⁰ Rogers, “The Enclosure of Virginitly,” 230. Rogers identifies “a brief chapter in the cultural history of the English Revolution,” where the “unmatrimonial virtue of absolute virginitly” was elevated to a moral and political principle. He locates its poetic expressions in John Milton’s *Comus* and Andrew Marvell’s poems including *Upon Appleton House*.

²⁰¹ Eric Josef Carlson, *Marriage and the English Reformation* (Oxford, UK: Blackwell, 1994), 3-8.

²⁰² William Perkins, “Of Christian Oeconomie or Household Government,” *Works* (London, 1626), cited in Stone, *The Family, Sex and Marriage*, 135.

relation between men is the transmission of property by the direct descent of patrilineage. For this reason the English system stresses, as strongly as the prohibition of incest, the injunction of female chastity (or constancy, in its moralized enlargement).”²⁰³ Chastity was encouraged as a crucial virtue in women, a virtue that ensures the integrity and perpetuity of the patriline. In Cavendish’s play, however, chastity is important not because of genealogical concerns but because it is living proof of husband’s and wife’s affectionate commitment to each other. Cavendish separates the virtue of chastity both from patrilineal concerns as well as from Christian injunction, and idealizes it as an independent ideal.

We see an instance of this separation of the ideal of chastity from patriarchal-patrilineal concerns even when Cavendish idealizes the choice made by Lady Jantil in *Bell in Campo* to virtually give up her life following the death of her husband, seemingly endorsing the ultra-patriarchal premise that a wife is merely the property of her husband rather than a separate human being.²⁰⁴ As we have seen, Lady Jantil builds an elaborate tomb for her husband and sets up a cloister for herself next to the tomb, where she elects to shut herself off and spend the rest of her days in complete retreat. Her request that her bed-chamber be decorated in “white, to signify the Purity of Chastity,” clearly shows the central value that dictates her decision. Though it certainly is a harsh decision that would

²⁰³ McKeon, *Origins of the English Novel*, 157.

²⁰⁴ According to Ruether, such a religious retreat by a widow with financial means had a long history. In early Christianity, older women who made a vow, “particularly widows with property, might turn their houses into monasteries, gathering female relatives and servants into a community of pious study, prayer, and fasting. In the fourth century some of these upper-class women ascetics journeyed to the Holy Land, there to found extensive monastic settlements for hundreds of women, together with hospitals, hospices, and parallel male monastic institutions led by male associates.”(55) Medieval convent often worked as a temporary or permanent shelter for aristocratic women. See Eileen Power, *Medieval English Nunneries c. 1275 to 1535* (Cambridge: The University Press, 1922), 409-13. Religious retreat after the death of the patriarchal husband is a common trope also in Aphra Behn, as in the case of Calista in *Love-Letters*. In the case of Lady Jantil, however, the secularist revision of that tradition is yet again clear, in the radically individualistic character of her retreat and her fidelity to her deceased husband.

invite questions from modern readers, it is also clear that her choice of chastity and fidelity to her dead husband over a more conventional route of second marriage was not made in the interest of genealogical integrity. The play does not show any concern with the issue of dynastic succession, but rather illuminates the narrow and dreary possibilities left for aristocratic women when they survive their husbands. Indeed Lady Jantil's virtual annihilation of herself paradoxically constitutes a way of exerting an individual agency, rather than passively following the path laid for women like her by society. It is significant that Lady Jantil's choice is reminiscent of Cavendish's own mother's life following the sudden death of her beloved husband. As Cavendish endearingly records in her memoir, she "made her house her cloister, inclosing herself, as it were, therein, for she seldom went abroad, unless to church."²⁰⁵ The play certainly honors Lady Jantil's path over that of Lady Passionate, whose second marriage turns out to be disastrous. Lady Passionate's conventional choice and her disastrous second marriage demonstrate the undesirability of the conventional path. By choosing to adhere to her chastity and fidelity to her husband, even at dear cost, Lady Jantil exemplifies the way Cavendish separates the ideal of chastity from its genealogical and religious implications and reconstitutes it as the foundation of secular marriage. In this process Cavendish detaches the idea of chastity from the diachronic concern of patrilineage and refigures it as the anchor of the synchronic bond. The tremendous emotional investment in chastity displayed by the heroines indicates the intensity of their spousal bond, affiliation rather

²⁰⁵ In fact, this biological backdrop also sheds interesting light on the hard-earned union of the two lovers in *The Religious*, considering that Cavendish's own parents eloped as young lovers, and her father had to spend decades overseas while her mother was waiting, raising their first child, born out of wedlock, who failed to be recognized as the heir to the family even after the parents' marriage was solemnized. *The Religious* seems to utilize the story of Cavendish's own parents' marriage, and their home that was originally a convent, purchased during the dissolution of the monasteries in the reign of Henry VIII.

than filiation, to use Braverman's conceptualization.²⁰⁶ Chastity gets refigured as an individualist virtue, grounded on inner conscience, that works as the emotional foundation of the spousal bond. This is again a process of situation: affiliative bond with those who share the daily life in the present triumphs over the diachronic interest in dynastic lineage and its perpetuation.

Cavendish attempts to separate the marriage from the material interests of family, like the issue of the reproduction of the patriline, factors that dominated the practice of marriage, especially among members of the propertied class. Rather she attempts to associate marriage decisions with individual conscience and personal emotion. Lady Perfection's articulation of her position exemplifies it. After her husband marries another lady in obedience to his father's will, she is bombarded by her mother who tries to persuade her to marry the Arch-Prince. Faced with her mother's insistence, Lady Perfection frames her decision to stay chaste as an issue of individual conscience. She places her personal conscience higher than her filial obedience to her parents, staking out a very modern position. She regards conscience as a major dictator of her decisions and as the ultimate touchstone of her values, superseding social convention and loyalty to family and community.

Lady Perfection. If he to obey his Father forgot, or neglected his obedience to Heaven, you must pardon me if I do not follow his precepts, not that I accuse him, for perchance his Conscience hath acquitted him, and set him free, from fault, and so from blame, but mine doth not acquit me; wherefore dear Mother, do not persuade me against my Conscience, I have had misfortunes enough to trouble my life, I shall not need to add the guilt of Conscience, and what can outward Title do me good? What pleasure can I take, when that my Mind, or Soul, is tortured with black guilt? (act 2, sc. 23)

²⁰⁶ Richard Braverman, *Plots and Counterplots: Sexual Politics and the Body Politic in English Literature, 1660-1730* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 248-71.

The play sets Lady Perfection's adherence to her conscience against her husband's filial obedience to his father, and values her individualist principle over his by endorsing her choice at the end of the play. Even the course of action taken by her beloved husband doesn't shake her decision. Rather than unconditionally and submissively following her beloved husband's words or actions as a guide for her own, as patriarchal ideology dictates, she decides for herself what is right and wrong. Her private conscience is the prime mover of all her actions.

While Lady Perfection's emphasis on her conscience as an ultimate standard, and her claim that nobody else but herself has power over herself ("You have no power, the power lives within my self" act 2, sc. 21) clearly shares with Protestantism its central emphasis on the individual's "inner light," her belief is a secular one, largely devoid of religious vocabulary. The conjugal bond is posited as quintessentially private, separated both from genealogical and religious considerations. In fact, this notion of personal affection bears surprising affinity to Allan Silver's conceptualization of modern personal sociability as the product of market economy. According to him, the radically private notion of a human bond, as represented by the notion of friendship, was made possible only by the arrival of modern society.

In modern societies, with their unprecedented depersonalization of economy, polity and administration, concerns for personal safety and the advancement of competitive interests are addressed – to an extent not earlier imaginable – by impersonal means. This degree of impersonality in modern society, which frees us from dependence on particular others for a host of practical needs, is precisely what creates the possibility of personal relations valued as expressions of inner intention and commitment, apart from practical agendas and formal obligations.²⁰⁷

²⁰⁷ Allan Silver, "'Two Different Sorts of Commerce' – Friendship and Strangership in Civil Society" in *Public and Private in Thought and Practice: Perspectives on a Grand Dichotomy*, ed. Jeff Weintraub and Krishan Kumar (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 48-49.

Cavendish's figuration of conjugal marriage as an embodiment of private conscience anticipates this uniquely modern sociability. While she fails to imagine a viable female sociability, she successfully portrays a conjugal family based on such sociability as situated utopias, far ahead of its actual arrival in history.

3.

Frustration with the formal characteristics of Cavendish's plays seems to have been shared by many modern critics. Virginia Woolf comments, "Worse still, without an atom of dramatic power, she turned to play-writing."²⁰⁸ Cavendish's biographer Douglas Grant calls Cavendish's plays "a collection of disconnected scenes."²⁰⁹ Jacqueline Pearson thinks that Cavendish's ambivalence on women's issues undermines "the coherence of Cavendish's plays."²¹⁰ In recent attempts to reassess Cavendish's works, some critics have become more tolerant of, and even favorable toward, the "flaws" of Cavendish's plays. Alexandra Bennett, for example, sees Cavendish's differences from other seventeenth-century dramatists as an outcome of her generic experiments and "a deliberate, conscious choice."²¹¹ Based on a successful staging of *The Convent of Pleasure*, Erna Kelly and other critics have challenged the common view that

²⁰⁸ Virginia Woolf, "The Duchess of Newcastle," *The Common Reader: First Series* (New York: Harcourt, 1925), 106.

²⁰⁹ Douglas Grant. *Margaret the First: A Biography of Margaret Cavendish Duchess of Newcastle 1623-1673* (London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1957), 162-63.

²¹⁰ Jacqueline Pearson, "'Women may discourse . . . as well as man': Speaking and Silent Women in the Plays of Margaret Cavendish, Duchess of Newcastle," *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature* 4, no.1 (1985): 36-37.

²¹¹ Alexandra G. Bennett, "Fantastic Realism: Margaret Cavendish and the Possibilities of Drama," *Authorial Conquest: Essays on Genre in the Writings of Margaret Cavendish*, ed. Line Cottagnies and Nancy Weitz (Madison: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2003), 180.

Cavendish's plays are not fit for the stage.²¹² In terms of structure *The Convent of Pleasure* is closer to conventional plays than are others by her: it has a unified plot, unlike plays like *Matrimonial Trouble* or *Loves Adventures* or even *The Religious*, where "the main plot and subplots are juxtaposed in alternation without connecting links between the different plot elements: each thread is carried on by itself, as if it were alone in the play's universe."²¹³ Considering that both sides of the controversy over the stage-fitness of Cavendish's plays agree on their general lack of a coherent structure, I would like to explore the significance of this putative formal flaw in relation to the subject of women and marriage that constitutes the main content of her drama.

Margaret Cavendish herself was fully aware of how different her plays were from those of her contemporaries, and she attempts to prevent potential attacks on them:²¹⁴

[A]s for the nicities of Rules, Forms, and Terms, I renounce, and profess, that if I did understand and know them strictly, as I do not, I would not follow them: and if any dislike my writings for want of those Rules, Forms, and Terms, let them not read them, for I had rather my writings should be unread than be read by such Pedantical Sholastical[sic] persons.²¹⁵

With her typical defiance and bravado, Cavendish refuses to follow the classicist rules of drama emphasized by her contemporaries. As Sara Mendelson has pointed out, however, her prefaces "betray a keen and constant awareness of genre." Though Cavendish claims that she does not understand the neoclassical rule of the three unities, "[h]er prefatory

²¹² Erna Kelly, "Drama's Olio: A New Way to Serve Old Ingredients in *The Religious* and *The Matrimonial Trouble*" in *Cavendish and Shakespeare, Interconnections*, ed. Katherine Romack and James Fitzmaurice (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2006), 60-61, footnote 22, 23.

²¹³ Sara Mendelson, "Playing Games with Gender and Genre: The Dramatic Self-Fashioning of Margaret Cavendish," in *Authorial Conquests*, ed. Cottagnies and Weitz, 196.

²¹⁴ Such attempts certainly did not prevent contemporary attacks on her plays, as she complains in "The Preface" addressed to "Noble Readers" in *Sociable Letters* (1664), and again in her prefatory letter, "To the Readers of My Works" in *Orations of Divers Sorts* (1662), second ed. (London, 1668).

²¹⁵ Cavendish, "To the Readers," *Playes* (1662).

matter implies that she has rejected the canons of genre, not because she lacks the knowledge or skill to follow the ‘ancient Rules,’ but because she refuses to be constrained by their artificial limitations.”²¹⁶

Cavendish’s conscious efforts to experiment with and expand on the dramatic mode are consistent with her admiration for Shakespeare. In her *Sociable Letters* (1664), Cavendish defends Shakespeare’s plays against criticism of their lowly characters by making a case that Shakespeare’s genius can be seen in his ability to introduce and make alive characters taken from a broad spectrum of society.

...for ‘tis harder to Express to the Life all Sorts of Persons, of what Quality, Profession, Degree, Breeding, or Birth soever; nor did he want Wit to Express the Divers, and different Humours, or Natures, or Several Passions in Mankind; and so Well he hath Express’d in his Playes all Sorts of Persons, as one would think he had been Transformed into every one of those persons he hath Described. . . .²¹⁷

Following Shakespeare’s example, Cavendish intends to introduce diverse characters even at the expense of classical rules. But her concern is not simply to introduce more variety. She would not be constrained by the prescriptive rules primarily because she wants her plays to reflect the real world more closely.

I would have my Playes to be like the Natural course of all things in the World, as some dye sooner, some live longer, and some are newly born, when some are newly dead, and not all to continue to the last day of Judgment; so my Scenes, some last longer than othersome [sic], and some are ended when others are begun; likewise some of my Scenes have no acquaintance or relation to the rest of the Scene, although in one and the same Play.²¹⁸

²¹⁶ Mendelson, “Dramatic Self-Fashioning,” 198.

²¹⁷ Cavendish, *Sociable Letters*, 130.

²¹⁸ Cavendish, “To the Reader,” *Playes* (1662), sig. A4.

This effort to open up her plays to “the Natural course of all things in the World” is a formal correlative of her effort to uncloister and situate utopia that I already have discussed. As Cavendish herself anticipated, this experiment and the resulting loose structure is one of the prime formal issues regarding her plays. Mendelson believes that Cavendish’s “habit of constructing her plays from isolated plots and subplots that bear little or no relation to each other within the play’s frame of reference” is even more problematic to modern readers than her failure to comply with the rules of the three unities.²¹⁹ The stage-worthiness of Cavendish’s plays has been questioned, because they seem to challenge the defining characteristics of drama. Citing the missing wives of Lear and Gloucester in Shakespeare’s play as an example, Georg Lukács makes an argument on the formal nature of drama as Mendelson does:

By concentrating the reflection of life upon a great collision, by grouping all manifestations of life round this collision and permitting them to live themselves out only in relation to the collision, drama simplifies and generalizes the possible attitudes of men to the problems of their lives. The portrayal is reduced to the typical representation of the most important and most characteristic attitudes of men, to what is indispensable to the dynamic working-out of the collision, to those social, human and moral *movements* in men, therefore, out of which the collision arises and which the collision dissolves. Any figure, any psychological feature of a figure, which goes beyond the dialectical necessity of this connection of the dynamics of the collision, must be superfluous from the point of view of the drama.²²⁰

To use Lukács’s language, the multiple episodes and characters of Cavendish’s plays are “superfluous” from the point of view of drama, and they undermine their dramatic efficacy as including the wives of Lear and Gloucester would do. Then why does Cavendish consciously engage in such experiments? What makes her refuse to remain

²¹⁹ Mendelson, “Dramatic Self-Fashioning,” 196-97. Anne Shaver is of the same opinion. See her introduction to *The Convent of Pleasure and Other Plays*, 10.

²²⁰ Georg Lukács, *The Historical Novel* (London: Merlin, 1962), 94.

within these formal guidelines? One way to engage this question might be to ask what is gained by such an experiment. I think Jacuqeline Pearson's view that Cavendish's ambivalence on women's issues undermines "the coherence of Cavendish's plays"²²¹ points us in a productive direction. In examining the possibilities open to women, Cavendish chooses to question the very ideal that the play as a whole seems to endorse. This takes us back to *The Religious*. As I have discussed earlier in this chapter, Cavendish presents the marriage of Lady Perfection with Lord Melancholy as an ideal norm and a utopian union. But the play has a subplot which challenges that very ideal: the story of Mistress Odd-Humour.²²² She does not personally know Lady Perfection, nor does she have any encounter with Lady Perfection in the play. She knows about Lady Perfection, because Lady Perfection belongs to the elite ruling class, and her story is known to the general public. The subplot develops separately from the main plot, and the two characters never cross paths. But Mistress Odd-Humour of the subplot wrestles with the same issue as Lady Perfection, the issue of marriage. While Mistress Odd-Humour prefers her familiar environment to the expected trouble of married life, as expressed through her comical attachment to an old chair that has become too small for her plump figure, her father tries to force her to a marriage, arranged according to the rules of mercantile transaction.

Mistriss Odd-Humour. That is not a Suters preparation, that is a Merchants Trafficking, that is to make a bargain, not to woo a Mistriss; but the preparations of a Suter, are fine Clothes, Coaches, and great Attendance, with rich presents; otherwise a woman is not wooed, but a Husband bought.
Nan. Or a Wife sold.

²²¹ Pearson, "Speaking and Silent Women," 37.

²²² Erma Kelly thinks the subplot works as a "satirist commenting on the main action of the play." See "Drama's Olio," 54.

Mistriss Odd-Humour. No, the woman or her friends are the purchasers; for Husbands never give any thing for a Wife, but the woman or her friends, pay down ready money for a Husband, although they sell Land for it: Portions, portions undo a Family *Nan.* (act 2, sc.10)

In spite of her almost cynical perception of the nature of contemporary marriage transactions, however, Mistress Odd-Humour doesn't have many options to choose from, faced with insistent pressure from her father. Lady Perfection's example does not offer any solution for Mistress Odd-Humour's problem. As a daughter in a family of the "middling sort," she doesn't have the financial resources Lady Perfection has to build her own cloister even if she wants to, nor is there high possibility for her to find a husband who would treat her fairly, much less lovingly. The cruel, if realistic, response by her maid, Nan, to her modest wishful thinking illuminates the gloomy reality and the limited possibility open to a woman like her.

Mistriss Odd-Humour. ...but if my Father would not cast me and my Portion away, [he should] marry me to a man whose bounty or liberality is within one part of his wealth, as three parts liberality, and four parts wealth; and one that hath more love than jealousy, more merit than title, more honesty than wealth, and more wealth than necessity.

Nan. But if you never marry till your Father get you such a Husband, you will dy an old Maid. (act 2, sc. 10)

Proceeding side-by-side with the main plot, the funny yet poignant story of Mistress Odd-Humour continuously challenges the idealistic and serious tone of Lady Perfection's story and the validity of her utopian marriage as a general solution to the issues that women faced. Although I've focused my discussion on *The Religious*, the same case could be made for other plays --- like *Bell in Campo*, which deals with the different choices women make when they are faced with the possible or actual loss of

their husbands. In fact, some other plays of hers deviate even further from conventional dramatic form. *The Matrimonial Trouble* (1662), for example, has a plot structure of multiple parallel story lines, presenting all kinds of contemporary marriage. It lacks a central plot, and does not advocate one kind of marriage over another. Cavendish's plays would certainly have a more focused structure without subplots like Mistress Odd-Humour's story in *The Religious* or Lady Jantil's story in *Bell in Campo*. They would work more effectively as drama if they had a central plot rather than multiple story lines. But her actual practice allows Cavendish to avoid imposing a simple ideal on a complex issue but rather to explore various answers to it and her experimentation with dramatic form enables a relentless exploration of issues of marriage across the wide social spectrum.

The double-plot structure of *The Religious* does seem to follow the peculiarly English tradition of "tragicomedy" that Lysideius, the admirer of the neoclassical French stage in John Dryden's *Of Dramatic Poesy: An Essay* (1668), criticizes as an "Oleo of a Play; this unnatural mixture of Comedy and Tragedy."²²³ As in Shakespeare's history plays, the high plot of Lady Perfection's story is juxtaposed with plain-faced, plump-figured Mistress Odd-Humour's scenes of mirth and comic blunders. But there is a critical difference. Unlike the case of Prince Hal and Falstaff, for instance, there is no dramatic connection between Lady Perfection and Mistress Odd-Humour.²²⁴ As

²²³ John Dryden, *Of Dramatick Poesie: An Essay* (London, 1668), 30. Joseph Addison thinks that tragicomedy, "the Product of the English Theatre, is one of the most monstrous Inventions that ever enter'd into a Poet's Thoughts." *The Spectator*, no. 40 (16 Apr. 1711), Cited in McKeon, *Secret History*, 390.

²²⁴ In *The Winter's Tale* (1611), one of Shakespeare's late plays, dramatic connection is still maintained between Autolycus, a wandering rogue, and the characters from the high plot, though it has become more problematic. It is suggestive that Shakespeare demonstrates his keen sense of the emergent news culture in this formally innovative play. Autolycus, disguised as a peddler, sells ballads, more prized than his trinkets, that contain outrageously sensational news to peasant girls who express enthusiasm for printed news: "Pray now, buy some: I love a ballad in print, a life, for then we are sure they are true" (4.4.261-2).

mentioned earlier, they never cross paths in the play, and they orbit in social circles worlds apart from each other. The two plots proceed without encounter, efficiently highlighting the social distance between the two characters. Cavendish doesn't "perceive any reason why that the several persons presented should be all of an acquaintance, or that there is a necessity to have them of one Fraternity, or to have a relation to each other, or linck'd in alliance as one Family;....("To the Readers" *Playes*, A4)

In the case of *Bell in Campo*, which also features double plots, the difference with the tragicomedy is even more obvious. Here both the heroines, Lady Victoria and Lady Jantil, are from aristocratic families, but they have no dramatic connection and the two plots proceed independently. What is interesting, however, is that somehow we get the sense that they are connected as members of the same community, a community that emerges as a presence out of the scenes of news exchange. Recurrent scenes of two or more anonymous gentlemen discussing the news regularly intersect the main plots of the play. There are five such scenes out of twenty-five scenes in Part I of *Bell in Campo*, and six out of twenty-two in Part II. These gentlemen do not have any dramatic connection with any other characters in the play. Often greeting each other with enthusiastic "What news?," they eagerly seek and recount a variety of news: not only the news of the ongoing war, but also the news that "[a]ll the young Gallants in the Town are preparing themselves with fine Cloths and Feathers to go a woing to the two rich Widows, the Lady *Jantil* and the Lady *Passionate*" who just lost their husbands (Part I, act 5, sc. 23). These gentlemen might meet at St. Paul's Walk, the major locus of news exchange in London until the mid-seventeenth century,²²⁵ but the locations of these exchanges are not

²²⁵ A contemporary remarked, "it was the fashion of these times...for the principal gentry, lords, courtiers and men of all professions ... to meet in Paul's Church by eleven and walk in the middle aisle till twelve,

specified in the play. Their anonymity and recurrent appearance suggest a plurality of such occurrences, evoking an image of many other unnamed people discussing the same news in multiple unspecified locations.

Drawing on Walter Benjamin's, Benedict Anderson's discussion of the importance of modern, empty time in the formation of the novel genre suggests a possible way to see the fragmented plots common in Cavendish's plays. Explaining how the novel and the newspaper imagine communities, Anderson argues that characters in novels who never meet in the plot still create the impression that they are somehow connected because "they are embedded in societies [that] are sociological entities of such firm and stable reality that their members... can even be described as passing each other on the street, without ever becoming acquainted, and still be connected." According to Anderson, the sense of community is made possible also because all the characters that are unaware of each other nonetheless "are embedded in the minds of the omniscient readers."²²⁶

The formal innovations of Cavendish's plays evidence the incipient sense of an "imagined community" (London and its readers) that enables the assumptions that underlie Cavendish's experiments with such fragmentary plots. A sense of society as a reality sustained by the collective imagination of its members is palpable in Cavendish's plays. In *Bell in Campo*, for instance, the sense of a reading public composed of strangers connected through their common consumption of news is conjured up in the very beginning when two anonymous gentlemen discuss the news of the impending war, and the presence of this community is sustained throughout the play by the regular

and after dinner from three to six, during which times some discoursed of business, others of news." Cited in Raymond, "The Newspaper," 114.

²²⁶ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 22-36.

recurrence of such scenes. *The Religious* shows a similar case. This play also has many scenes of two gentlemen exchanging news, interwoven with the main plot lines. In one such case, right after two gentlemen discuss the news of Lady Perfection's retreat into the convent, Mistress Odd-Humour, in the immediately following scene, expresses her opinion about the same news to Nan, conjuring up the sense of a virtual community, which Odd-Humour, Nan, anonymous gentlemen and many unnamed others constitute and sustain by their collective imagination. I'd like to suggest that the loose structure of Cavendish's plays might reflect this newly emerging sense of a virtual community that unites the characters of multiple story lines who don't have any direct contact with each other.

It is true that the news exchanges in Cavendish's plays are presented as oral communication between gentlemen, as characteristic of traditional, face-to-face community. The gentlemen often mention they "heard" rather than "read" the news. But there is a clear sense of emerging print culture that has started to subsume and reorganize the traditional manner of news exchange.²²⁷ In *The Convent of Pleasure*, for example, Madam Mediator exhibits her sense of the way in which the news gets circulated, partly as a heard rumor, but ultimately via the print news media like the *London Gazette* and popular ballads, when she worries that the news of the Prince's infiltration into Lady Happy's convent will be shared by the entire society.²²⁸

²²⁷ "Of course news continued to be transmitted orally, but newsbooks affected this process: Thomas Fuller suggested that the men of the civil war armies were for the most part illiterate, but they did have newsbooks read to them by their officers." Joad Raymond, *The Invention of the Newspaper: English Newsbooks 1641-1649* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1996), 244.

²²⁸ The *London Gazette* was the official newspaper of the Restoration government (inaugurated in 1665 as the *Oxford Gazette*), and it is the first "newspaper" in the sense that it was printed on a half-sheet of paper rather than in a book format like earlier news periodicals. See Raymond, *Invention of the Newspaper*, 14-15.

M. Mediat. ... Well, this will be news for Court, Town and Country, in private Letters, in the Gazette, and in abominable Ballets before it be long, and jeered to death by the pretending Wits; but, good Gentlemen, keep this as a Secret, and let not me be the Author, for you will hear abundantly of it before it be long. (act 5, sc. 2)

Even though she still uses the verb “hear,” Madame Mediator shows her sense of the virtual community whose “situatedness” is confirmed daily by the act of reading and by face-to-face discussions, but that transcends such local exchanges and “knits together a plurality of such spaces into one larger space of nonassembly.”²²⁹ But one still has to ask whether Anderson’s point regarding the genre of the novel is really relevant in discussing plays.

It is true that Anderson’s point depends on the experience of reading rather than of watching a dramatic performance. But this might be a moot issue in this case. Cavendish addresses her nine prefatory letters to “readers” rather than to an “audience” in her 1662 collection of plays. As one of the prefaces makes clear, Cavendish chose to publish the plays before ever having them performed, because she felt their experimental and hybrid character make them more suitable for reading. It’s not just because of the closure of the English theater that she decided to have them published first.²³⁰ She also has “[t]he other reason,” probably the more crucial one,

²²⁹ Taylor, *Modern Social Imaginaries*, 86. I borrow the words that Taylor uses to explain the notion of the public sphere as “a metatopical common space.” Taylor, like Habermas, associates the emergence of the public sphere with the eighteenth century, but he acknowledges that England witnessed the development of this new sociability a bit earlier. See *ibid.*, 46. Joad Raymond has argued that the public sphere started to emerge in the mid-seventeenth century in England that saw an unprecedented outpouring of news books and pamphlets following the collapse of censorship. See “The Newspaper,” 109-40.

²³⁰ “The reason why I put out my Playes in print, before they are Acted, is, first, that I know not when they will be Acted, by reason they are in English, and England doth not permit, I will not say of Wit, yet not of Playes;” “To the Readers,” *Playes* (1662). In fact, by the time *Playes* was published in 1662, the public theater had been reopened for two years. This suggests that not only the plays but also prefatory letters in the first collection were written before 1660. See footnote 164.

that most of my Playes would seem tedious upon the Stage, by reason they are somewhat long, although most are divided into first and second Parts; for having much variety in them, I could not possibly make them shorter, and being long, it might tire the Spectators, who are forced, or bound by the rules of Civility to sit out a Play, if they be not sick; . . . but for the Readers, the length of the Playes can be no trouble, nor inconveniency, because they may read as short or as long a time as they please, without any disrespect to the Writer²³¹

Believing that the publication will probably “[spoil] them for ever to be Acted,” she declares “I shall never desire [my plays] should be Acted; but if they delight or please the Readers, I shall have as much satisfaction as if I had the hands of applause from the Spectators.”²³² In her prefatory letter to her second collection of plays (1668), Cavendish again acknowledges the unconventional character of her plays.

When I call this new one, Plays, I do not believe to have given it a very proper Title: for it would be too great a fondness to my Works to think such Plays as these suitable to ancient Rules, in which I pretend no skill; . . . But having pleased my Fancy in writing many Dialogues upon several Subjects, and having afterwards order’d them into Acts and Scenes, I will venture, in spite of the Criticks, to call them Plays.²³³

One might say that Cavendish’s prime concern was not whether her experimental plays were going to be performed on stage. While probably not giving up on such a possibility, she seems to be more invested in building an imagined community of readers, who, though unknown to each other, will constitute and sustain this community through reading her plays. Cavendish demonstrates enormous commitment in the construction of such a community. Her numerous letters “To the Readers”²³⁴ make multi-faceted efforts to build a rapport with this imagined community of readers. Having failed to find a

²³¹ “To the Readers,” *Playes* (1662).

²³² “To the Readers,” *Playes* (1662).

²³³ “To the Readers,” *Plays, Never before Printed* (London, 1668).

²³⁴ She has as many as ten letters “To the Readers” in the 1662 collection, nine in the beginning and one at the end. The 1668 collection has one prefatory letter addressed to the readers.

receptive readership in her own time for the first collection of plays, she even invites readers of future times into this utopian community in her preface to the second collection of plays: “[envious detractors’] malice cannot hinder me...from Printing what I write, since I regard not so much the present as future Ages, for which I intend all my Books.”²³⁵ This effort in prefatory materials continues the community-building done in the main text, conjuring up a sense of community embracing main characters, gentlemen reader/spectators inside the text, and the readers of her plays. The reader-spectators within the plays consume the news story of the main plots together with the readers outside the text, weaving the fabric of a community that encompasses all of them. It is a virtual, imagined community, but also an actual and tangible one, becoming situated through the act of reading and recounting in daily lives. Sustained by the collective imagination of the readers, this community is based on the voluntary and consensual association of its members, without regard to their social status. In other words, it is built on the same modern sociability that Cavendish idealizes in conjugal marriages. Making use of the new imaginative capacity enabled by the emerging print culture, Cavendish continues to carry on her effort to imagine a utopian community in her formal innovations as well.

²³⁵ “To the Readers,” *Plays, Never before Printed* (1668).

3. Imagining a Utopian Family Here and Now: Christiana's "Community Family" in *The Pilgrim's Progress*, Part Two

One of the most haunting scenes of *The Pilgrim's Progress* (1678) for readers has been the one in which Christian, in the depth of his agony, and in his desperate attempt to save himself, chooses to run away from his family at the outset, deaf to their plea to return and leaving his wife to fend for herself and her young children in a harsh world. We can only guess what kind of responses Bunyan received from his contemporary readers about this decision, especially from the notably vocal female members of his own Baptist congregation.²³⁶ Readers of later centuries certainly seem to have found Christian's decision memorable if not somewhat troubling. As Vincent Newey has pointed out,²³⁷ when George Eliot appropriates Bunyan in *Middlemarch* to describe the flashing moment of Dorothea's enlightenment for the need to engage in the struggles of fellow humans, she chooses to rework the classic image of Bunyan's Christian and pointedly depicts a traveling, burdened laborer, *with his young family in tow*.²³⁸

²³⁶ We see intimations of possible responses from the female members in the House Beautiful episode where Christian gets many questions concerning his decision to leave his family. See *The Pilgrim's Progress*, ed. N. H. Keeble (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), 42-43. This edition of *The Pilgrim's Progress* is parenthetically cited henceforth in the text by page number. Bunyan's congregation boasted active female members who even demanded separate women's meetings. Bunyan's rejection of the request and the ensuing debate have become a focal point of feminist criticism, which I will discuss later in this chapter.

²³⁷ Vincent Newey, "Bunyan's Afterlives: Case Studies," in *Reception, Appropriation, Recollection*, ed. W.R. Owens and Stuart Sim (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2007), 37-39.

²³⁸ "It had taken her long to come to that question, and there was light piercing into the room. She opened her curtains, and looked out towards the bit of road that lay in view, with fields beyond, outside the entrance-gates. On the road there was a man with a bundle on his back and a woman carrying her baby; in the field she could see figures moving – perhaps the shepherd with his dog. Far off in the bending sky was the pearly light; and she felt the largeness of the world and the manifold wakings of men to labour and endurance. She was part of that involuntary, palpitating life, and could neither look out on it from her luxurious shelter as a mere spectator, nor hide her eyes in selfish complaining." George Eliot, *Middlemarch* (1871-2), ed. W.J. Harvey (Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin, 1985), 846.

Of course, this response to the initial episode is partially the result of misreading this allegorical narrative, falling for Bunyan's "dark and cloudy words"(4) at the expense of the Godly truth that is hidden inside them.²³⁹ Christian's desertion of his family at the outset of the narrative is part and parcel of the overarching allegorical scheme of *The Pilgrim's Progress* where individual characters Christian meets in his way are not real people but signify Christian's inner states of mind in his spiritual progress.²⁴⁰ Christian's physical journey from the City of Destruction to the Celestial City allegorizes his spiritual redemption. Geographical locations that Christian passes through and the characters that he meets are projections of his soul. Heeding Bunyan's warning against "mis-interpreting," we should not mistake "the outside of [his] Dream" for "the substance of [his] matter." (134) Placed in the context of this allegorical scheme, however, it is still unclear whether his family is comparable to the many false pilgrims that Christian encounters in his travel and "leaves behind" as so many layers of worldliness that he is in the process of mentally peeling off. Are we to see his family as the carnal family that is both a fallen model for, and a contradiction of, the holy family toward which Christian travels? The narrative's own unease with the allegorical status of Christian's family is palpable in Christian's session with the damsels in the House of Beautiful: the narrative provides a chance for Christian to defend his action at a scene where a female member of the house, Charity, questions whether such desertion was the only available option (42-

²³⁹ For a cogent attempt to 'misread' *The Pilgrim's Progress* as a narrative of upward mobility, see McKeon, *Origins of the English Novel*, 295-314. I am deeply indebted to his reading.

²⁴⁰ Roger Sharrock warns "[t]he modern reader ... must remember that the many personages whom Christian meets along the road stand for states of mind, however much Bunyan's skill ... has turned them into lively minor characters." Roger Sharrock, *John Bunyan* (London: Hutchinson's University Library, 1954), 75.

43). The second part of *The Pilgrim's Progress* where this very family undertakes its own pilgrimage complicates the matter even further.

Unlike the first part, Bunyan's sequel to *The Pilgrim's Progress*, the second part, begins as a story of a family, Christian's widow and her children. This leads one to wonder whether the author might have had second thoughts about Christian's decision or might have felt compelled to respond to an earful of comments on it from his congregation members. The narrative in the second part indeed shows a shift of focus on many issues, most noticeably, a new emphasis on the communitarian experience of salvation. Obviously Bunyan's personal circumstances changed greatly since he had written the first part of TPP more than a decade before in the Bedford county jail²⁴¹: as the active pastor for the Bedford open-communion Baptist Church, nicknamed "Bishop Bunyan," we can assume, he had become far more concerned in the spiritual salvation of his church members with their widely ranging spiritual needs, than just his own individual one, as many critics have already pointed out. Roger Sharrock, for example, has observed that in the second part Christian's lonely heroism is replaced by "a cheerful picture of the life of a separatist church."²⁴² Henri Talon has noted that "[a]fter the great solitary battles come the warmth of fighting shoulder to shoulder and the sweetness of wider fellowship."²⁴³ The second part, however, is still full of characters who repeat

²⁴¹ Bunyan was imprisoned in 1660-72, and then again shortly in 1676-77. *The Pilgrim's Progress* was published in 1678 and the second part was published in 1684. Critical tradition associated the composition of the first part with the second imprisonment, but the argument, first made by the editors of the Oxford edition, that it was written during the first imprisonment, probably during the second half of the term, seems to have gained critical consensus. See James Blanton Wharey, ed., *The Pilgrim's Progress*, Oxford English Texts, 2nd edn, rev. Roger Sharrock (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1960); Christopher Hill, *A Tinker and a Poor Man: John Bunyan and his Church 1628-1688* (New York: Norton, 1988), 197-98; Keeble, ed., *The Pilgrim's Progress*, 264.

²⁴² Sharrock, *John Bunyan*, 138-41.

²⁴³ Henri Talon, *John Bunyan: The Man and His Works*, trans. Barbara Wall (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1951), 158-66.

Christian's pattern, abandoning the native land and severing the tie to their blood families in order to seek "Eternal Life"(10): Mercie leaves behind her "Father and [her] Mother, and the Land of [her] Nativity" to join Christiana's pilgrimage; Mr. Valiant-for-Truth takes pilgrimage in spite of his parents' attempt to dissuade him; Mr. Stand-fast, only in his final moment when he was summoned to cross the river to the Kingdom, reveals that he had left home his wife and five young children. Both in the first and the second part, neighbors who try to exercise undue influence over pilgrims and keep them in their native villages are treated negatively, as in the case of Obstinate in the first, and Mrs. Timorous in the second part.

Adam Sills has claimed in his essay on the concept of the neighborhood in *The Pilgrim's Progress* that, while Bunyan is certainly accusatory of families' and neighbors' often negative impact on the spiritual redemption of pilgrims, this is an attempt to imagine a different sort of community from the one based on geographical contiguity, not a wholesale rejection of the role that human fellowship could play in the spiritual salvation of individuals.²⁴⁴ Such a complex attitude on individual and community and a heightened sensitivity to the tension between the two characterize the Puritan experience. As Christopher Hill has illustrated, Puritanism, formed in the historical juncture that witnessed the dissolution of traditional communities, not only exhibits an individualist rejection of the restraints imposed by traditional authorities. Rather, such a rejection involves, by definition, an active effort to construct alternative communities of voluntary

²⁴⁴ Adam Sills, "Mr. Bunyan's Neighborhood and the Geography of Dissent," *ELH* 70 (2003): 67-87.

members. The result was the transition from the compulsory and geographical unit of the parish to a religious sect, a voluntary organization.²⁴⁵

This cultural transition occurred in close interaction with the experience of uprooting and mobility, the defining experience of modernity for the laboring population in early modern England. The experience of uprooting loosened ties to the native land and natal family, the sense of loyalty to native communities and bonds of mutual obligation to fellow kinsmen, and it contributed to the acceleration of mobility. The corollary of this transition from a given community to a voluntary organization is the critical transformation of the family that family historians have located in the early modern period. Ruth Perry argues that this period witnessed a historical shift “in the definition of what constituted the primary kin group. It involved a movement from an axis of kinship based on consanguineal ties or blood lineage to an axis based on conjugal and affinal ties of the married couple. That is, the biologically given family into which one was born was gradually becoming secondary to the chosen family constructed by marriage.”²⁴⁶ As Allan Silver suggests, the traditional sociability of given human bonds, “the exclusivistic bonds defined by custom, corporate group, station and estate” was evolving into a new sociability, like friendship and brotherhood, which is voluntary and universalistic.²⁴⁷ I will argue that this new socio-cultural emphasis on voluntariness as an organizing principle in all levels of human sociability, from family to state, is the key in contextualizing Christian’s decision to leave his family. I see Christian’s pilgrimage as a journey to join a new utopian family, and I’d like to argue that the second part of TPP

²⁴⁵ Christopher Hill, *Society and Puritanism in Pre-Revolutionary England*. 2nd ed. (New York: Schocken Books, 1967), 219-58, 482-501.

²⁴⁶ Perry, *Novel Relations*, 2.

²⁴⁷ Silver, “Friendship and Strangership,” 55.

demonstrates a fuller development of this new sociability and presents a formation of a utopian family that combines this new logic of human fellowship with the idealized elements of traditional sociability. In this chapter, I will examine the characteristics of this alternative “community family,”²⁴⁸ which is intimated in the first part and gets much more developed and situated in the second. In Emmanuel Todd’s anthropological classification of various family forms, “community family” is a term for a type of extended family with a weak urge toward primogeniture and where the vertical tie between father and eldest son coexists with a strong bond between brothers due to an egalitarian sharing of family resources between brothers, resulting in a horizontally denser and larger family than one that characterizes the patriarchal form. Borrowing this term rather freely, I argue, in Bunyan’s narrative, this “community family” is constructed as a large extended and inclusive family. Unlike the traditional extended family, however, it is founded on the spirit of voluntary membership and affinitive relationship rather than on patriarchal bonds of kinship: in short, on affiliation rather than filiation.²⁴⁹ By placing the book in the historical context of the critical shift that profoundly transformed the way that collective units, from family to state, get imagined, I hope to illustrate how Bunyan engages both with the traditional and emergent ideas of sociability in coming up with his own utopian vision of the family. I will also make the case that the reinforced attention to a collective experience of salvation in the second part can be seen in Bunyan’s formal innovations, by looking into the ways in which he anticipates the realist novel by negotiating allegorical structures with a new sensitivity to empirical epistemology and

²⁴⁸ Emmanuel Todd, *The Explanation of Ideology: Family Structures and Social Systems*, trans. David Garrioch (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1985), 1-18.

²⁴⁹ I have borrowed the opposed terms “filiation” and “affiliation” from Braverman. See his *Plots and Counterplots*, 248-71.

narrative convention and by incorporating the everyday details of the life of the family in this world.

1. A New Family in the Age of Mobility

The memorable scene of Christian's leaving his family assumes a historical dimension when placed in the context of early modern England. Our unease with Christian's *irresponsible* decision was in fact acutely shared by the contemporary landed elite. The ruling class was anxious over the surging wanderlust among the poor and the resulting dissolution of the institution of the family, the bedrock of social stability. Growing landlessness among the bottom stratum of the population and the concomitant vagrancy, especially of male members, often in search of employment, also meant increasing family desertion among the poor since the sixteenth century. The majority of village poor relief was claimed by women with children who had been abandoned by suitors and husbands. "The spectre of family disintegration among the poor – a complete rupture with conjugal monogamy and durable cohabitation – haunted the imaginations of the propertied classes." Repeated lamentations in public rhetoric of "vagabonds, rogues and masterless men" and their sexual iniquities registered moral panic of the ruling elite.²⁵⁰ The initial look of Christian, "a Man clothed with Raggs"(8), leaving his village without seeking any permission from manorial authorities, suggests that he is one of these "masterless" men at this stage.

²⁵⁰ Wally Secombe, *A Millennium of Family Change: Feudalism to Capitalism in Northwestern Europe* (London: Verso, 1992), 178-81. "The response of state authorities to surging vagrancy was repression. Between 1522 and 1545 sixty towns across Western Europe introduced ordinances which prohibited begging or strictly licensed beggars and tightened the administration of poor relief."

The masterlessness of the poor meant that they moved outside the traditional system of local control, outside the constrictions of parochial-feudal machinery, free from *parson* as well as *squire*. They were considered not only a security concern, but also ready disseminators of radical ideas. As Christopher Hill points out, the New Model Army, a hotbed of radical ideas, was in a sense a supreme example of a collection of these masterless men.²⁵¹ In other words, this vagrancy worked as a double-edged sword for the displaced population.²⁵² It was a socio-economic by-product of the centuries-long transition from the feudal-seignorial to the industrial-capitalist system of production, which witnessed a fundamental change in land ownership and the accompanying pauperization of the majority of the peasant population, a historical tragedy that Karl Marx terms “primitive accumulation.”²⁵³ But it also meant a new mobility for some of these “masterless” men: he is “freed” not only from the land, his means of production, but also from the pre-modern social machinery that constrained both his body and soul. “What produced alarm and anxiety in some was an opportunity for others... A masterless man was nobody’s servant: this could mean freedom for those who prized independence more than security.”²⁵⁴ A liberating and upward-lifting aspect of this historical experience, the “expropriation” of the producer class, is well captured in the literal dimension of Christian’s *progress*: from a despondent vagrant in rags to a knight in “Broidred Coat,” and ultimately, a courtier in King’s court.²⁵⁵ This is, of course, “mis-interpreting” Bunyan’s allegory, ignoring Bunyan’s advice in “The Conclusion” to “look within the

²⁵¹ Hill, *The World Turned Upside Down*, 57-63.

²⁵² For a discussion of Bunyan’s own sense of mobility and its doubleness, as expressed in his autobiography, see McKeon, *Origins of the English Novel*, 303.

²⁵³ Karl Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*. Vol. 1. intro. Ernest Mandel, trans. Ben Fowkes (1976; London: Penguin, 1990), 873-907.

²⁵⁴ Hill, *The World Turned Upside Down*, 48.

²⁵⁵ McKeon, *Origins of the English Novel*, 302-11.

Vail” and see “the substance of [his] matter.” (134) To illuminate the socioeconomic aspect of Bunyan’s vision, however, let me pursue this method of “playing with the outside of [his] Dream”(134) and continue to read Christian’s progress materially rather than spiritually.

Christian’s pilgrimage not only resonates with the experience of Bunyan’s contemporaries but also harks back to the earlier phase of this historical development, conflating several hundred years’ worth of history into Christian’s travel. In fact certain episodes are more evocative of earlier historical experience than that of Bunyan’s own time. In particular, Bunyan’s narrative contains images and idioms that echo the peasant unrests of the late 14th century culminating in the Peasant Revolt of 1381, a famous historical precedent where the antipathy of the landed class toward the laboring population’s new mobility played a key role in the crisis. The landed elite’s concern over laboring mobility is not new to Bunyan’s time but was already seen in the late medieval period, although it had its origins in different motivations. This earlier phase of the long drawn-out dissolution of the feudal-seignorial system witnessed the landed class taking active measures to maintain its firm control over the peasant population. Countless statutes and parliamentary ordinances were issued as far back as the mid-fourteenth century in order to keep a tight lid on the mobility of the working poor, starting with the Ordinance of Labourers of 1349.

In the late medieval period, the effort to control peasants’ mobility was closely related to the landed class’s desire to suppress the rising wage. The Great Famine of 1315-1317, the Black Death of 1351 and the recurrent plague epidemics of the rest of the century, halved the population, resulting in an acute shortage of labor. In the aftermath,

the oversupply of arable land and the increase in wages opened a historical window for peasants to better their fortunes. Indeed historians seem to agree that despite the political turmoil, the period, roughly between 1381 and 1489, witnessed economic conditions favorable to small farmers and their desire for upward mobility.²⁵⁶ Faced with tenants seeking to utilize this opportunity to seek better terms for themselves or to purchase land to become small holders, the landed elite took aggressive measures to restrain their movement, persecuting those who deserted their tenancies in pursuit of more favorable conditions.²⁵⁷ A 1376 parliamentary petition attests to tenants' new and potentially upward mobility and to the aggressive measures taken by the landlords to clamp down on it.

As soon as their masters accuse them of bad service, or wish to pay them for their labour according to the form of the [Statute of Labourers], they take flight and suddenly leave their employment and district, going from county to county, hundred to hundred and vill to vill, in places strange and unknown to their masters. So the said masters do not know where to find them to have remedy or suit against them by virtue of the said statutes.²⁵⁸

²⁵⁶ According to historian R. H. Tawney, “there has been a period – one may date it roughly from 1381 to 1489—of increasing prosperity for the small cultivator. We have emphasized the evidence of this upward movement which is given by the growth among the peasantry of a freer and more elastic economy. We have watched them shake off many of the restrictions imposed by villeinage and build up considerable properties.” See R. H. Tawney, *The Agrarian Problem in the Sixteenth Century* (1912, New York: Burt Franklin, rpt. 1961), 136. Seccombe shares this view.

²⁵⁷ For example, “[t]he lords were busy trying to turn the ancient villain right to inherit customary holdings into an *obligation* to do so.” Seccombe, *Millennium of Family Change*, 145.

²⁵⁸ *Commons' Petition against Vagrants*, 1376. The full text is in R. B. Dobson, ed., *The Peasants' Revolt of 1381* (London: Macmillan, 1970), 73. According to Christopher Dyer, the landed class's efforts to thwart the peasants' rising expectations were the major cause of the 1381 Peasant Revolts. Indeed many of the rebel leaders were leading members of the village who were capitalizing on the favorable economic conditions, acquiring land and experiencing upward mobility. The main target of peasants' attacks was the manorial court documents that enabled landlords to keep the aspiring tenants ‘in their place.’ Christopher Dyer, “The Social and Economic Background to the Rural Revolt of 1381,” in *The English Rising of 1381*, ed. R. H. Hilton and T. H. Aston (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984). See also R. H. Hilton, “Peasant Movements in England Before 1381,” in E. M. Carus-Wilson, *Essays in Economic History*. Vol 2 (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1962), 73-90.

This 14th-century petition by land owners is amazingly resonant of Apollyon's argument against Christian in TPP. In fact Christian's battle with Apollyon is one of those episodes in Bunyan's narrative that seem to allude as much to this earlier phase of the dissolution of seigniorial relations as to the historical conditions of his own times. Apollyon phrases his Satanic claim over Christian's soul in terms that strongly evoke manorial lords' efforts to suppress desertion of the home village by the peasant population in search of better conditions. Let me examine more closely this crucial episode, the first major challenge posed to the newly knighted Christian.

Apollyon's episode bears a close similarity to knightly adventures in popular romances, temporally associating the episode with the feudal times. With its body covered "with scales," with "Wings like a Dragon," and shooting out "Fire and Smoak," Apollyon has a great deal in common with the dragon of popular romance and fairy tales. Richard Johnson's *The Seven Champions of Christianity* (1596), for example, has a very similar scene of an encounter between St. George and the dragon: the initial defeat and near-death experience of the protagonist, the protagonist's supplication for divine help, and the critical divine intervention offered in herbal forms – a healing fruit in St George's case and "the leaves of the Tree of Life"(50) for Christian.²⁵⁹ But there is a critical novelty that differentiates Apollyon's episode from those of popular romances: the lengthy debate that dominates the scene, and the kind of language in which the debate is couched. Unlike St George's encounter with the Egyptian Dragon in Johnson's romance, where the dragon goes straight into action and attacks the knight without any verbal

²⁵⁹ Nick Shrimpton, "Bunyan's Military Metaphor" in *The Pilgrim's Progress: Critical and Historical Views*, ed. Vincent Newey (Totowa, NJ: Barnes and Noble, 1980). For a more general discussion of the popular contemporary romance's impact on Bunyan, see Harold Golder, "Bunyan and Spenser," *PMLA* 45, no.1 (1930): 216-37.

preamble, Christian and Apollyon hold a lengthy debate on Christian's legal status before getting into a physical struggle. Learning that Christian is from the City of Destruction, part of his dominion, Apollyon claims Christian as his subject and orders him to return, accusing him of arbitrary desertion of the service that he is born into. Initially Apollyon's main desire is to coax Christian back to his service rather than punishing him for his vagrancy. This is of course fitting, considering that in the overarching allegorical scheme, Apollyon is a Satanic figure whose *raison d'être* is to tempt humans to sin so as to maximize the denizens of his dominion. At first, therefore, he strikes quite a conciliatory tone:

Apol. By this I perceive thou art one of my Subjects, for all that Countrey is mine; and I am the Prince and God of it. How is it then that thou hast ran away from thy King? Were it not that I hope thou maiest do me more service, I would strike thee now at one blow to the ground. . . . There is no Prince that will thus lightly lose his Subjects; neither will I as yet lose thee. But since thou complainest of thy service and wages, be content to go back; what our Country will afford, I do here promise to give thee. (47)

The argument between Apollyon and Christian, with its references to the technical terms of land service powerfully invites readers to read Bunyan's narrative literally and historically. Not only does the medievalism of this character with his monstrous features locate this knightly episode in the pre-modern historical period, the language of the debate provides further historical specificity. When read in literal terms, Apollyon's strong desire to reclaim Christian as his subject suggests an underlying concern for the depletion of labor forces and seems to associate this character with the landowning barons of an earlier period rather than the landed class of Bunyan's own times. Early modern England saw the recovery of the laboring population and a dramatic spike in land

prices, accompanied by individual landlords' aggressive efforts to enclose and engross their landholdings, which often involved the mass evictions of tenants. In this historical phase of agrarian transition, it was the landlords' consolidation of farm lands that pushed out the peasant population, a different trigger of dislocation. Anti-enclosure pamphlets of the time saw the situation as Raphael Hythloday does in Thomas More's *Utopia* (1516): "Each greedy individual preys on his native land like a malignant growth, absorbing field after field, and enclosing thousands of acres with a single fence. Result – hundreds of farmers are evicted."²⁶⁰ In the early modern period, the landed elite's collective concern over vagrancy was more directed to the threat this marginalized population posed to social stability and the financial burden that they imposed on parish communities than the depletion of labor forces.

Not only does the Apollyon episode evoke the socioeconomic conditions of the late medieval period, the debate between Christian and his antagonist is phrased in political terms current in that same age. Michael McKeon has convincingly illustrated that Christian's verbal argument with Apollyon is phrased in language evocative of the crown's alliance with the peasant population during the late-feudal and early absolutist period in its struggles against the mighty barons.²⁶¹ Christian makes a case that his allegiance to "the King of Princes"(47) absolves him of any previous obligation to Apollyon, a lesser lord. ("I count that the Prince under whose Banner now I stand, is able to absolve me; yea, and to pardon also what I did as to my compliance with thee;" 47-48). Christian's logic in justifying his arbitrary desertion of feudal service to Apollyon associates his claim with the late-medieval peasants' archaic ideal of *popular monarchy*,

²⁶⁰ More, *Utopia*, trans. Paul Turner, 47.

²⁶¹ McKeon, *Origins of the English Novel*, 307.

a utopian notion of a society without exploiting barons but only with peasants and their benevolent king.²⁶² It is therefore not surprising to see in Christian's narrative the language and images that echo those of peasant unrests of the late fourteenth century leading to the Peasant Revolt of 1381, the historical juncture that gave voice to the ideal of popular monarchy. For example, earlier in the journey, when Christian's burden falls off at the sight of a Cross (31), "three shining ones" give Christian "a Roll with a Seal upon it"(31) together with the "Broidred Coat"(40), as a token of his salvation and of his subjecthood in the kingdom of the Lord of the Hill. These are the critical markers of Christian's redeemed and elevated status as a member of the Lord's kingdom and they justify Christian's refusal to honor Apollyon's anterior claim over his body and soul. Interestingly, this sealed letter, presumably from the Lord of the Hill, "the King of Princes," is evocative of the "exemplications" from the Domesday Book that many peasants sought to attain in the years leading to the 1381 Peasant Revolt. Christian's logic against Apollyon's claim over himself bears a striking similarity to the faith that peasants had in the authority of the exemplications to free themselves from local barons' demands. The peasants believed, probably mistakenly, that these exemplications, certified copies of the Domesday Book, the official survey of the land of England that William the Conqueror had had compiled in 1084, could prove their privileged status as a tenant of the king's "ancient demesne" based on the tradition going back before the Norman conquest, and hence ensured their freedom from local barons' and magnates' requests of tenurial services. In the popular imagination, the exemplications, "which were issued as letters patent with the Great Seal attached," took the form of official letters

²⁶² Rosamond Faith, "The 'Great Rumour' of 1377 and Peasant Ideology" in Aston and Hilton, eds., *English Rising*, 43-70.

“from the king,” with a conclusive, almost biblical, authority similar to the ultimacy of the Last Judgment, evoked by the title of the book, “Domesday.”²⁶³

This widespread effort to secure the exemptions attests not only to the widespread ideal of popular monarchy, but also to the collective memory and utopian nostalgia among the peasant population of the idealized pre-Norman society, a society conceived to have been free of landowning Norman barons and characterized by “Anglo-Saxon freedom.” The demand to Richard II made by Wat Tyler, the peasants’ leader, that the law of Winchester be made the only law of the country ²⁶⁴ suggests the powerful sway of the legend of a free Anglo-Saxon past among the peasant population in the late feudal period and “the underworld of largely unrecorded thinking.”²⁶⁵ This cultural heritage of the myth of pre-Norman society,²⁶⁶ together with the collective memory of the late-medieval struggles, seems to have passed down, mostly unrecorded, to Bunyan’s generation. As a letter from the King that ensures his status as his King’s subject, “his Pass into the Celestial City”(36), Christian’s “Roll with a Seal upon it” certainly resonates on a general level with the energy of the late-medieval alliance between peasants and the crown, and more specifically may evoke the legend of the

²⁶³ Faith, “Great Rumour,” 43-70.

²⁶⁴ The law of Winchester refers to Domesday Book, which was sometimes called the book of Winchester, the city being the capital at the time the book was compiled. See Rosamond Faith, 60. Alan Harding disagrees and argues that “the law of Winchester” refers to Edward I’s Statute of Winchester. See Alan Harding, “The Revolt against the Justices” in Hilton and Aston, eds., *English Rising*, 166.

²⁶⁵ V.H. Galbraith, “The *Modus Tenendi Parliamentum*” in *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, XVI, 94, cited in Christopher Hill, “The Norman Yoke,” *Puritanism and Revolution* (1958, New York: Schocken Books, 1964), 59.

²⁶⁶ This idealist view of pre-Norman society, it appears, has substantial material grounding. Peasant population suffered a drastic loss of social and economic standing following the Conquest and the land grab by William and his Norman barons, according to Rosamond Faith. “Far from England having seen no significant change in the real status of the peasantry, large real changes had in fact taken place. Not only had the very foundations of many peasants’ lives, their homes and land, been widely subject to great upheaval, but many people had undergone, or were in the process of undergoing, exactly that loss of status that legal historians have attributed to legal change and court process alone.” *The English Peasantry and the Growth of Lordship* (London: Leicester University Press, 1997), 246.

exemplifications that aspiring ancestors of Bunyan's class hoped to obtain in order to free themselves from arbitrary manorial services and to improve their socio-economic condition. Obviously we do not know what degree of collective memory of their ancestors' struggle survived among the laboring class in Bunyan's time, but we do know that the idealist view of pre-Norman society was shared across the wide spectrum of political thought in early modern England, as Christopher Hill has shown. While radicals like Gerrard Winstanley demanded the use of the commons for the poor based on the authority of an idealized pre-Norman past, a supposedly free society before the "Norman yoke," even Parliamentarians relied on the ideal of Anglo-Saxon liberties and the pre-Norman origin of the common law to defend property against the Crown and its arbitrary taxation.²⁶⁷ Indeed the language of the Norman yoke had enough currency in Bunyan's own hometown in his own time that the petitioners of Bedford County relied on that idiom when they asked the Parliament to relieve the burden of copy holders in 1659, observing the fundamental inequity of the abolition of tenures (1646, 1656) that freed large land owners from their feudal obligations towards the crown but did little to relieve tenants' heavy manorial burden.

That as you thought fit to take away wardships as a badge of the Norman yoak, to the great ease of persons of great estates (though they much enriched the publick Treasury) so you would take some effectual course for the alteration of Copsyhold tenures (as great a mark of Tyranny) that the poor Tenants thereof may not be left to the mercy of the Lords of such Mannors (whilest great men are made free) but may all have proportionable taste (in their capacities) of the benefit of a Commonwealths freedom.²⁶⁸

²⁶⁷ Hill, "The Norman Yoke," 67-74.

²⁶⁸ *To the Parliament of the Commonwealth of England: The Humble Representation and desires of diverse Freeholders and others well affected to the Commonwealth of England, inhabiting within the County of Bedford* (London, 1659). For the context of the abolition of feudal tenures in 1646 and 1656, see Christopher Hill, *The Century of Revolution, 1603-1714* (New York: Norton, 1961), 126-27.

For the purposes of our reading it is also significant that this long-standing peasant tradition of popular monarchy took a religious form of radical millenarianism in Bunyan's time. Seventeenth-century millenarianism acted as a vehicle for the resurrection and refiguration of popular monarchy ideals. If viewed in a literal sense and placed in a political context, the millenarian vision of the New Jerusalem when Jesus, the "King of kings and Lord of lords"²⁶⁹ comes to reign here and now, bears a strikingly analogous structure to the archaic, but utopian, vision of peasants' popular monarchy. It shares the same political structure as the late-medieval peasants' vision of "a state without nobles, perhaps without churchmen, in which the peasants and their king are the only social forces."²⁷⁰ While such a chiliastic belief was widespread during these volatile years and was shared in varying degree across the whole spectrum of society,²⁷¹ its most outspoken and politically subversive version was advocated by the Fifth Monarchists. Their version exhibits a combination of the Norman myth with millenarianism²⁷² and argues for the Kingdom of Jesus *here and now* composed of "saints" and soldiers, *sans* magnates and aristocrats. Active in the early 1650s, the Fifth Monarchists expected the imminent arrival of the millennial reign of King Jesus in England and campaigned to remove all existing institutions, "Norman and Babylonian yokes," to clear the way for

²⁶⁹ Revelation 19:16.

²⁷⁰ Faith, "Great Rumour," 60.

²⁷¹ As B. S. Capp argues, the millenarian belief in the imminent arrival of the Kingdom of Christ was not unique to the sectarians but widely accepted among contemporary puritans. Its idioms were familiar, if not commonly employed, across the board so much so that the future James I used its language, declaring in 1588 that the Pope was the Antichrist and that the last age was at hand. *The Fifth Monarchy Men: A Study in Seventeenth-century English Millenarianism* (London: Faber and Faber, 1972), 31.

²⁷² "In the English Revolution Fifth Monarchist ideas mingled curiously with those of the Norman Yoke. John Rogers in 1654 wrote a pamphlet demanding 'new laws and the people's liberties from the Norman and Babylonian yokes, making discovery of the present ungodly laws and lawyers of the Fourth Monarchy and the approach of the Fifth.'" Hill, "The Norman Yoke," 56-57. The title of John Rogers' pamphlet goes *Sagrir: or Doomes-day drawing nigh, With Thunder and With Lightning to Lawyers, In an Alarum for New Laws, and the Peoples Liberties from the Norman and the Babylonian Yokes. Making Discoveries of the Present ungodly Laws and Lawyers of the fourth Monarchy....*(1654).

King Jesus and usher in the Fifth Monarchy, based on Daniel's prophecy.²⁷³ Moreover the Fifth Monarchists were closely associated with Particular Baptists, Bunyan's own sect, although Bunyan himself doesn't seem to have endorsed the use of arms as many Fifth Monarchists did, nor did he explicitly express millenarian views in his early writings like *Some Gospel-Truths Opened* (1656), written in the heydays of chiliasm and the Fifth Monarchists.²⁷⁴ Considering, however, that some of Bunyan's fellow congregational members were the Fifth Monarchists, not to mention his own early exposure to radical ideas during his New Model Army days at Newport Pagnell, there is no reason to doubt Bunyan's knowledge of the tenets of millenarianism and its religious version of popular monarchy.²⁷⁵ As we have seen, Christian's response to Apollyon's feudal claim is richly redolent of popular monarchy ideals and his progress to "Mount Zion" is regularly punctuated with campaigns to clear monstrous feudal lords like Apollyon and Giant Despair out of the "King's highway." As Bunyan sees it, "Sins are all Lords and Great ones." (77) All the countries under the rule of the Lord of the Hill seem to be "common... for all the Pilgrims" (45). The "Mount Zion" that Christian is heading to is certainly without aristocratic lords. It is a heavenly kingdom built by the "King of Princes" (47) for saints of humble origins, who "were Beggars born, and their original had been the Dunghil" (44).

Bunyan's narrative taps into the underground of inchoate and largely unrecorded utopian aspiration among the common people, which is certainly anachronistic and

²⁷³ Daniel, vii. For the various interpretations of Daniel's prophecy by different parties in late Medieval and early modern Europe, see Capp, *Fifth Monarchy Men*, 20-24.

²⁷⁴ Aileen Ross has argued that Bunyan's millenarianism is post 1665, and is mainly pacifist. See "Paradise Regained: The Development of John Bunyan's Millenarianism," *John Bunyan in England and Abroad*, ed. M. van Os and G. J. Shutte (Amsterdam: VU University Press, 1990), 73-74.

²⁷⁵ William York Tindall, *John Bunyan Mechanick Preacher* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1934), 118-43; Richard L. Greaves, "John Bunyan and the Fifth Monarchists," *Albion: A Quarterly Journal Concerned with British Studies* 13, no. 2 (1981): 83-95; Hill, *A Tinker and a Poor Man*, 96-99.

archaic in its backward-looking perspective. But the poetic intensity of Christian's experience not only testifies to the utopian energy of this residual view, charged by the tradition of centuries-long struggle, but also to its relevance as "an effective element of the present."²⁷⁶ In addition, such a view is combined with a more modern perspective in Bunyan's narrative. In fact, it might be more accurate to say that, when they take the form of millenarianism, the ideals of popular monarchy could easily morph into something that sounds much more republican. When the Manchester soldiers proclaimed in their agreement that they wouldn't accept any king but Jesus, their view cannot but be viewed as virtually republican for all practical purposes, especially when placed in an earthly context.²⁷⁷ Therefore, it is not surprising that idioms of popular monarchy get mixed with modern political terminology in Christian's debate with Apollyon. While Christian's argument against Apollyon is infused with the language of popular monarchy and of his allegiance to the "King of Princes," a vertical relation with the pinnacle of absolute authority, we also see a different sort of idiom, a language of horizontal, voluntary sociability and of contract and freedom, slowly percolates into Christian's diction. Though readily acknowledging that he belonged to Apollyon's kingdom by birth, Christian seems to assume that he has the right to break free of such obligation and to enter into a new contract with a different prince if that works better for his interests: "I was born indeed in your Dominions, but your service was hard, and your wages such as a man could not live on....therefore when I was come to years, I did as other considerate

²⁷⁶ This is one of the criteria that Raymond Williams uses to distinguish residual from archaic. Williams, *Marxism and Literature*, 122.

²⁷⁷ "On the other hand the terminology employed by their sect, with its faith in Christ as head and lawgiver and their belief that the kingdom of Christ was at hand, crept into the language of the soldiers' agreements, such as that of Manchester, August 1, 1650, which proclaimed unwillingness to accept any king but Jesus." Louise Fargo Brown, *The Political Activities of the Baptists and Fifth Monarchy Men in England During the Interregnum* (Washington: American Historical Association, 1912), 11-12.

persons do, look out, if perhaps I might mend my self. ...I like his Service, his Wages, his Servants, his Government, his Company, and Countrey better then thine”(47-48). While subscribing to the logic of popular monarchy, Christian emphasizes his *voluntary* consent to join his Lord’s godly kingdom.

Christian’s journey demonstrates a modern perspective on his political identity as well as marking an upwardly mobile progress that looks forward to an elevated future for himself. Rather than succumbing to the restrictions imposed on him by his birth, he makes a choice to leave his home country and as the debate with Apollyon illustrates, he makes a voluntary decision to shift his allegiance to the Lord of the Hill, “King of Princes,” and becomes a retainer-courtier in His blessed household. Christian’s attitude is suggestive of his belief that he is entitled to make such a choice based on his volition and self-interest. Such an emphasis on voluntary will and liberty suggests a new way of thinking about human sociability. Simply put, this new attitude is in line with Christian’s self-repositioning from a given community to a community of choice and volition, as memorably captured in the *locus classicus* of Christian’s departure. Human association is no longer conceived as fate determined by birth and blood, but as a choice made by the voluntary decisions of individuals freed from feudal and parochial restraints. Kinship becomes secondary to friendship, and the consanguineal family that is given becomes secondary to the conjugal family that individuals choose to form. In that sense, Christian’s journey is also a move from a given kin/family to a “community family” that he chooses to belong to, a move away from the primacy of a given family to a new sociability. The House Beautiful, the members of which call themselves a family, adumbrates this new sociability in ideal form, a utopian family composed of like-minded

saints. In Christian's mind, his joining the benevolent king in the city of Zion seems to be predicated on his "[dwelling] with such Company as I like best"(42). A subordination to the absolute authority of King Jesus seems to invite close association with one's brothers who have an equal standing with their lord/father. In the allegory of the first part, however, the focus is more on Christian's vertical union with his Lord Jesus, the ultimate telos that he pursues throughout his journey. His horizontal relation with fellow pilgrims, in House Beautiful, and with Faithful and Hopeful, gets only subordinate treatment. In the second part of TPP, where the focus is much more directed to the life in this world, the new family and the new sort of human sociability get fuller coverage.

2. Situating the Blessed Family Here and Now

Focusing on the socio-economic implications of Christian's progress, what I have done so far is a literalizing misreading of Bunyan's allegorical narrative in the first part of TPP. In the allegorical structure of the narrative, the blessed family of the Lord of the Hill that Christian journeys towards is ultimately not of this world. In spite of moments of its situation in this world, for instance, in the episode of the House Beautiful, this blessed family is ultimately beyond this world, irrevocably separated by the river of death. We see a changed world and a different narrative in the second part, written a decade later. In the second part, I would like to argue, the impulse to situating this utopia on this side of the river and to affirm the pilgrims' ordinary life as a family has strengthened so much that it can be felt to inhabit the telling of what still purports to be an allegory.

From the very beginning, the narrative of the second part of TPP has a substantially different feel from the first. The narrator/dreamer apologizes to the reader

that as he has “been much hindred, and kept back from [his] wonted travels into those parts” due to “the multiplicity of business,” he hasn’t been able to give an account of what has happened to Christian’s family after Christian left them. Considering that the second part claims to be a dream vision like the first part, this is a very strange apology. Why does the narrator have to visit Christian’s town *in person* in order to learn the story of Christian’s family when, after all, it is just a dream? The narrative in the second part exhibits a new sensitivity to empirical conventions and the requisites of truthful story telling. And here at the beginning, such overzealous concern with the empirical truth of the story and the effort to incorporate it into the narrative generates confusion as well as a cumbersome narrative structure. When the narrator finally has a chance to visit the area, he dreams again, and in his dream he meets “an aged gentleman,” Mr. Sagacity, who reports to the narrator what has happened to Christian’s family while the narrator was away. Mr. Sagacity is supposed to be the person “who may report it for truth,” because he is an eyewitness of Christiana’s story. In Mr. Sagacity words, “ ’Tis true, I can give you an account of the matter, for I was upon the spot at the instant, and was thoroughly acquainted with the whole affair”(145). The fact that the narrator is dreaming does not make a material difference to the narrative, and Christiana’s story is told by Mr. Sagacity as an eyewitness’s account. Bunyan seems to realize this cumbersome narrative framework does not deliver much benefit: without bothering to provide any excuse, he removes Mr. Sagacity from the narrative as soon as he completes his report of what has happened while the narrator was away. The removal of this empirical reporter, however, does not mean a return to a dream vision. Rather than being motivated by the concerns of naive empiricism, the narrator begins to display a more mature attitude that prefigures the

omniscient storyteller of realist novels. As a result, the narrative almost attains the texture of a realist novel, largely shedding the characteristics of the dream vision. Indeed, reference to a dream vision is barely present after the opening pages, unlike in part one, where the narrative is punctuated by the narrator's repeated remarks "Now I saw in my Dream." While the narrator in part one neatly bookends the story as a dream by waking up from it at the end ("So I awoke, and behold it was a Dream"), the narrator of the second part even forgets to mention that he has woken up from his dream. Rather, he maintains the tone of the truthful reporter by concluding the story with a promise to update the readers on Christiana's children and their families if "it be my Lot to go that way again" (261). Moreover for most of the story, he is an omniscient narrator who knows what will happen later in the narrative as well as what is happening now, and what has happened before to every character. In the scene at Gaius's house, for instance, after telling how the pilgrims are welcomed with hospitality on the night they get there, the narrator informs his readers that "in process of time," Mercie and Mathew will get married, and that he will tell "more of that hereafter" (217).

These proto-realist conventions are just a few of the prominent changes in the second part that make it even harder to resist the temptation to read the story of Christiana's group literally rather than allegorically. Already, in the original story, Bunyan's allegory often powerfully invites us to read his narrative literally, as populated by actual individuals. Still, the first book largely maintains the structure of an allegorical *psychomachia* where good and evil characters represent virtual aspects of Christian's spiritual progress. The physical journey allegorizes the spiritual progress in which he peels off his worldliness layer by layer. Many characters that he meets on the road

represent his worldly temptations and carnal weaknesses that he needs to overcome. This is not the case in the second book. Most strangers that Christiana meets on the road get embraced as new family members and stay with her till the end of the journey, making it harder to read them as projections of Christiana's state of mind. These figures come across as real human beings, each with distinct characteristics and human foibles, rather than as representations of Christiana's mind and passions. Now it is much harder to read them and their stories allegorically rather than literally.

This important formal difference is directly related to a major change in the nature of what occurs on the level of content, namely, the further situation of utopian family in this world. And as with form, this shift is evident early on in the second part. When Mercie, a young maid in the village, decides to join Christiana's pilgrimage and, unlike Pliable in the first part, sticks with Christiana despite daunting trials, the plots begins to take shape as a process of building a family, adding one new member after another. Almost all the strangers that Christiana meets on the road become her friends and get added to her ever-expanding family. This marks a stark structural contrast from the movement of the plot in part one, where momentum is generated by Christian's burning desire to remove his worldly trappings and to prepare himself for God's kingdom. He severs his ties to his family, his neighbors, and his native land to begin his journey, and he jumps with joy when his worldly burden falls off of his back. Most of the characters that he runs into on the road represent carnal temptations that he needs to fight off as if peeling off layers of worldliness one after another. Each step toward God's kingdom is tantamount to stripping off yet another layer of worldliness. It is significant that Christian loses his raiment, the final layer of this world, when crossing the river to the

Lord's Kingdom. This is not the case just for Christian. Faithful's story reiterates this process of stripping off. He describes his struggle with Old Adam as losing a material part of himself: "I felt him take hold of my flesh, and give me such a deadly twitch back, that I thought he had pull'd part of me after himself." (58) Evangelist's advice to Christian and Faithful touches the gist of the main task of their journey: "Let nothing that is on this side [of] the other world get within you" (71). Vigilance against sin seems to equal a wholesale rejection of this world and its people.

But while the first part repeatedly emphasizes the rejection of this world through the rejection of its people, the second seems to take a much more sociable stance and opens up a possibility of living a godly life in this world, in the community of fellow pilgrims, while waiting the call. This utopian community in this world already embodies in some fashion what it means to be saved. The plot is structured, accordingly, on a different principle. In the second part, almost all the travelers that Christiana and her growing group meet on the road join them, expanding this family every time. The plot is shaped as a process of building a family, adding one new member after another, starting with Mercie. To risk a simplification, while the narrative in the first part is structured to emphasize Christian's vertical filiation with God/father, the narrative in the sequel is a process of horizontal expansion, constructing a utopian family in this world. The story now makes better sense on the literal level, that is, when we read it as a story of actual individuals in the process of building a utopian family, a progress towards a blessedness certainly, but of one situated in this world. The allegorical structure is breaking down.

The second part contains many instances where the dual structure of allegory does not hold. When Christiana's group meets lions, for instance, Christiana's young boys,

who were traveling bravely in the vanguard of the group, “cringe behind” Great-heart at seeing these beasts. In the margin Bunyan offers an allegorical interpretation of the episode, saying that this is “an emblem of those that go on bravely, when there is no danger; but shrink when troubles come”(180). That could certainly be an allegorical interpretation of this episode, but it is at best a very strained one. Readers tend to smile at the young boys, as does Mr. Great-heart within the text, rather than associating this typically youthful behavior with spiritual sin. In other words, these boys come across as actual individuals with typical short comings for that age rather than as some sinful aspects of the human soul. The literal narrative has become self-sufficient rather than, through the dual structure of allegory, signifying a spiritual reality. Such examples abound in the second part. Indeed some episodes are even very hard to read as allegorical. One such example is the episode of Gaius’ house. Enjoying Gaius’ hospitality, Christiana’s company stays there for a month or so, and the marriages of Mathew with Mercie, and James with Gaius’ daughter, get solemnized. With such domestic events and the vivacious social scene around the dinner table at this comfortable house, it is hard to read Gaius’ house other than as a public inn, or as the house of a middling sort of nonconformist, where wayfaring Christians stay during their travel, socializing with like-minded friends.²⁷⁸ Furthermore, Gaius does not seem to have any plan to leave for a pilgrimage, but the text does not question that he is a good Christian. Indeed he is not the only character who has no plan for pilgrimage yet seems in no danger of spiritual condemnation. We are expected to see Mneson in Vanity Fair as another true Christian even though he does not consider leaving that sinful town. We learn that quite

²⁷⁸ According to Christopher Hill, middle-class homes, equipped with modern comforts, “began to replace churches as the centres of social life” especially in urban centers, where “friends could be invited, to sing, to play, to discuss.” *Society and Puritanism*, 488.

a few Christians live in that town, leading a respectable Christian life. Does this mean that a pilgrimage is no longer a necessary condition for salvation? If a physical pilgrimage signifies the spiritual process of redemption as in part one, how is it possible to achieve salvation without pilgrimage? Now the journey, the crux of the allegorical structure in part one, makes better sense when read on the material level, that is, as a real physical journey of pilgrims. Other details of the narrative support this observation. For many of the second part's travelers, the journey is not absolutely teleological and hence not vertical. The guide, Mr. Great-heart, travels back and forth along the route, and intends to return to his home, the interpreter's house, on completion of his service for Christiana's group. In fact this is not even his first tour as a guide on this route: he has already traveled on this road with other pilgrims (199). Mr. Honest also seems to have been to Gaius's inn before (215). This relatively loose approach to the unidirectional progress is in stark contrast with the first part where physical retreat signifies a spiritual set-back. Christian is heartbroken to find he has to track back to retrieve the roll that he lost because he had fallen asleep in the bower (35-36). In the first part of TPP, Atheist's fallen state is signaled by the fact that he walks with "his back towards *Sion*" (111), heading in the wrong direction.

The self-sufficiency of the material narrative in the second part reflects its friendlier stance toward this world and its investment in situating a utopian community of like-minded pilgrims in this world. This world, which is full of dangers that constantly plot to derail Christian's spiritual progress, has become a much more friendly and pleasant place, not as threatening for the pilgrims' salvation as before. Once within the Wicket Gate, houses are provided for the pilgrims, as well as a conductor to guide them

safely thereafter. As Mr. Contrite, though a denizen of Vanity Fair a true Christian, reports, the persecution has decreased and the townspeople of Vanity Fair “are much more moderate now then formerly.” Even in Vanity Fair, pilgrims do not need to be so afraid, because “specially in some parts of our Town (for you know our Town is large) Religion is counted Honourable.”(229). As a sequel to the story of Christian’s successful pilgrimage, it is true that the internal logic of the narrative justifies this changed atmosphere. The transformed landscape is the result of Christian’s successful completion of the pilgrimage as the King’s Knight in the first part, fighting and domesticating feudal-demonic threats and hence inscribing the Lord’s dominion of the territory. Indeed the King’s newly reclaimed dominion is dotted by the memorials to Christian’s pilgrimage. This changed milieu also reflects the improved socio-economic status of non-conformists in late seventeenth century, in spite of continued threats of persecution.²⁷⁹ But the second part’s relaxed affirmation of the life in this world primarily results from the sizeable number of fellow pilgrims that form a community and function as a family. With so many fellow pilgrims, and the community family that they form, this world has stopped being something just to be rejected and to pass by as quickly as possible. Pilgrims saunter along the route almost in the fashion of tourists, enjoying each other’s company. They stay in House Beautiful “for a month or above,” and as many days both in Gaius’s inn and Mneson’s house. On reaching the Land of Beulah, the pilgrims do not hasten to cross the river but wait for their time, departing this world one by one and leaving behind the younger generation to work in this world. For Christiana’s family, this world has become a place where they get married, watch their children grow, and share hearty

²⁷⁹ Christopher Hill, “Bunyan’s Contemporary Reputation,” in *John Bunyan and His England 1628-88*, ed. Anne Laurence, W.R Owens and Stuart Sim (London: Hambledon, 1990), 12.

dinners with their friends and neighbors, enjoying domestic life and friendship with fellow pilgrims. Blessedness has become achievable while living in this world thanks to friends who form a communitarian family. As Gaius advises Christiana, the journey in the second part is about building a godly family *here and now*:

Gaius. That is it that I said, wherefore *Christians* Family is like still to spread abroad upon the face of the Ground, and yet to be numerous upon the Face of the Earth. Wherefore let *Christiana* look out some Damsels for her Sons, to whom they may be Betroathed, & c. that the Name of their Father, and the House of his Progenitors may never be forgotten in the World. (216-17)

It is perhaps only natural, therefore, that in many scenes we feel as if we are reading a domestic novel. The first resting-house of the pilgrims, the House Beautiful, for example, functions like a domestic space for this family. Mercie is being courted by a false pilgrim Mr. Brisk, who imagines Mercie will make a good housewife due to her industriousness. Here Christian's son, Mathew, falls ill from a green plum of Balzabub's orchard, which, like any typical boy, he has carelessly picked up and eaten. When the physician examines and prepares the medicine for him,

. . . [Mathew] was loth to take it, tho' torn with the Gripes, as if he should be pulled in pieces. *Come, come, said the Physician, you must take it.* It goes against my Stomach, said the Boy. *I must have you take it, said his Mother.* I shall Vomit it up again, said the Boy. Pray Sir, said *Christiana* to Mr. *Skill*, how does it taste? It has no ill taste, said the Doctor, and with that she touched one of the pills with the tip of her Tongue. Oh *Mathew*, said she, this potion is sweeter then Hony. If thou lovest thy Mother, if thou lovest thy Brothers, if thou lovest *Mercie*, if thou lovest thy Life, take it. (190)

This wonderfully captured domestic scene has a life of its own, though it has only marginal significance in the allegorical scheme of this family's spiritual journey. Scenes like this encapsulate the domestic life of this new sort of family that Christiana and

Mercie have embarked to construct. We have discussed earlier that the first part of TPP already adumbrates a new sort of family in the episode of House Beautiful and in the fellowship of Christian with Faithful and with Hopeful. Especially with Hopeful, a younger pilgrim with less experience but more optimism and vitality, Christian forms a strong brotherhood that turns out to play a crucial role in his eventual salvation. It is Hopeful who dissuades Christian from ending his own life when they are imprisoned in the “dark Dungeon” of Giant Despair’s Doubting-Castle (94-96). It is Hopeful who saves Christian from drowning out of fear when they cross the river (128-29). Still, it is the vertical allegiance with King Jesus that the narrative, as well as its hero, is mainly occupied with in this hurried and single-minded pilgrimage, and the lateral association with fellow pilgrims remains secondary. Appropriately, as a character Hopeful remains well within the overarching allegorical framework, providing ‘hope’ to Christian whenever he despairs of his salvation in his recurrent crises.

It is in the second part that the fellowship of pilgrims takes the center stage, and Christiana’s pilgrimage becomes tantamount to a process of forming a utopian family with them, a process that is felt much more strongly as horizontal than as vertical. But the family that gets constructed here is critically different from the family model that was becoming increasingly dominant at this historical juncture, namely, the patriarchal conjugal family composed of a married couple with their children, or what Lawrence Stone terms “the patriarchal nuclear family.”²⁸⁰ In fact, though a story of building a family, the narrative does not show much interest in marriage *per se*. This is not a narrative of a marriage plot. Though beginning with a widow who holds the key to Christian’s ‘estate,’ this is not a story of her courtship and marriage, as might have been

²⁸⁰ Stone, *The Family, Sex and Marriage*, 123-218.

the case in a contemporary Restoration drama, where plots often build as a fight over possession of a wealthy and marriageable widow.²⁸¹ Christiana's utopian family is not formed and expanded by marriage and kinship, but mainly by voluntary membership based on friendship. This is best exemplified by Christiana's sisterly friendship with Mercie, a young maid. Since their friendship not only constitutes the core of this family but also functions as a template for the subsequent relationships that this group forms on the road with fellow pilgrims, Mercie's character and Christiana's sororal bond with her demand our close attention.

Mercie is a crucial character that emblemizes the shifted focus in the second part of TPP. As already mentioned, she illustrates Bunyan's renewed appreciation of the role of human solidarity in spiritual salvation. Initially she decides to "go a little way with [Christiana], and help her," because "her Bowels yearned over Christiana"(150). Her desire for spiritual salvation comes only second to her human sympathy for her friend. While a counterpart of neighbor Pliable in part one, unlike him Mercie sticks with Christiana's family in spite of early trials, initiating a plot that builds as a process of adding each new member to this family. More important, her name signals the Christian virtue that Bunyan emphasizes in the second part, perhaps in response to the growing conservative tide within the sectarian churches. As Christopher Hill has pointed out, in the latter days of the Interregnum and after the Restoration, the sectarian churches stopped proselytizing the poor, mainly because that interfered with the interests of the increasingly prosperous middle-class church members.²⁸² I suggest that we can sense Bunyan's concern about the increasingly conservative atmosphere of sectarian churches

²⁸¹ Braverman, *Plots and Counterplots*, 48-82.

²⁸² Hill, *The World Turned Upside Down*, 303-4.

in the second part. After all, Mr. Brisk, a character that recalls Mr. By-ends of the first part, hangs out among dissenters, as is evidenced in that we meet Mr. Brisk *in House Beautiful*. In that regard, it is very significant that Mercie is marked as someone of humble origin both spiritually and socially. Unlike Christian or Christiana, she is not sent for. Instead she chooses to become a pilgrim because of her human sympathy for Christiana.²⁸³ The unusual morphology of her conversion is repeatedly emphasized by Mercie's extreme anxiety that she might not be a chosen one ("I am come, for *that*, unto which I was never invited, as my Friend *Christiana* was."). When the Wicket-Gate closes behind Christiana, leaving Mercie outside it, she bangs on the door so desperately as to startle Christiana, and faints with fear that "no Gate should be opened to her" (156).

Mercie's humble spiritual origin also corresponds to her humble social origin. When leaving with Christiana, Mercie is technically employed as her maid servant: "if thou wilt, I will hire thee, and thou shalt go along with me as my servant" (152). Mercie belongs to the class of young working women who had to leave their own families to work as servants in a different household. In fact, Christiana's arrangement with Mercie traces a widely-shared and bleak life experience of the young rural population, but revises it into a utopian relationship. In this period, "swelling numbers of young men and women were sent into service, as the age of marriage rose and the life-phase from puberty to marriage was stretched out," due to the acute shortage of ways for young people from the land-poor to marry and support themselves.²⁸⁴ The land was becoming prohibitively expensive, and there was not yet enough stable employment to support a family solely on

²⁸³ Kathleen M. Swaim has argued that the characterization of Mercie revises the doctrine of the elect. "Mercie and the Feminine Heroic in the Second Part of *Pilgrim's Progress*," *Studies in English Literature* 30, no.3 (1990): 400.

²⁸⁴ Seccombe, *Millennium of Family Change*, 197.

wage income. According to Ann Kussmaul, sixty percent of youth aged fifteen to twenty-four were servants at any point in time in the first half of the eighteenth century.²⁸⁵ Domestic service was a standard experience for young adults, particularly if they were from land-poor families. Youths spent a few years as domestic servants to save enough money to acquire a land holding so that they could marry and support their family, or in the case of girls, to build up their dowries. In the contemporary understanding of that term, Mercie, as a domestic servant, is part of Christiana's "family," because the "family" included servants living in the same household. They ate and slept in the same room with the master's family.²⁸⁶ In spite of this familial arrangement, however, this was certainly a hierarchical relation of employment. Not only were they under master's and mistress' supervision and discipline around the clock, they were not allowed to leave the master's employ with impunity. They were legally obliged to remain in the master's employ till the end of the contract term.²⁸⁷ The historical fact that young adults ordinarily took up service in the households of their parents' social superiors further illuminates the utopianism of Christiana's egalitarian relationship with Mercie: she ignores the status differential between herself and Mercie, "this poor Maid"(153), treating her as a friend, and Mercie eventually marries into Christiana's family. Christiana moreover offers Mercie that they "will have all things in common" (152/179).²⁸⁸ Against nonconformists' growing trend of compromise with the given class

²⁸⁵ Ann Kussmaul, *Servants in Husbandry in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 1.

²⁸⁶ For the inclusiveness of the term "family" in early modern period, see McKeon, *Secret History*, 120-21.

²⁸⁷ Seccombe, *Millennium of Family Change*, 198-99. This restriction was further ensured by the common practice that the master held the monetary portion of the wage in reserve and paid out at the end of the term.

²⁸⁸ Christiana's friendship with Mercie also locates this narrative in the historical window that opens up after the loosening up of traditional rural hierarchies but closes before the stratification of rural producer population is firmly established. The transient and fluid character of our period looks clear when compared to the relationship between the employer and farm-hands a century or so later, when the decline of the

structure, against the backdrop of the doctrine of the elect that too often functioned as an excuse to exclude the poor from their congregations, and against the ever-increasing emphasis on the importance of exclusive property rights, increasingly shared by prosperous nonconformists, Christiana and Mercie's sisterly friendship establishes the organizing principle of this utopian communal family of common property and of equality that gets built in the second book.

Not only does Christiana's friendship with Mercie mark the egalitarian and communitarian character of this family, the adventures of these female heroines illustrate the way that the utopian character of this family is informed by proto-feminist ideals voiced and practiced in the opened-up space of the mid-seventeenth century. The Civil War and Interregnum years witnessed unprecedented participation of women in activities outside the narrowly defined women's sphere, especially in the life of sectarian churches. Women spoke in public meetings and participated in church governance in the more radical sects. Quakers and Ranters even allowed women to preach in public. Such a public presence of women, however, doesn't seem to have been well accepted not just by the general public but even by many puritans of the time. Women's preaching allowed by the sectaries was the major point of attack by and the rallying point of the Royalist pamphleteers in the early 1640s, who exploited the widespread public anxiety over the practice, which was often associated with sexual impropriety.²⁸⁹ Even the parliamentarians and the Levellers excluded and marginalized women in their conceptions of public life. The radicals of the Putney debates did not include women and

institution of domestic service became evident to contemporaries, and when farmers were "unwilling to associate with the labourers, and a second table was out of the question." See Kusmaul, *Servants in Husbandry*, 128; Seccombe, *Millennium of Family Change*, 204-5.

²⁸⁹ Tim Harris. "Charles I and Public Opinion on the Eve of the English Civil War," Unpublished paper, British Historical Studies Colloquium, Yale, Sep. 16, 2010 (forthcoming in print).

the propertyless when they argued for the general suffrage. Placed in this historical context, Bunyan's narrative displays an unexpectedly progressive perspective on women's issues. It is in fact quite surprising even in the light of Bunyan's own personal history. In the early 1680s, Bunyan opposed and stopped the separate meetings that the women of his congregation had been holding. When a paper justifying such meetings circulated among the congregation members, Bunyan defended his decision in *A Case of Conscience Resolved* (1683), published a year earlier than the second part of *The Pilgrim's Progress*. The tract expresses quite a traditional view, arguing against women's independence by relying on the traditional analogy of the husband as the head of the wife.²⁹⁰ Citing this episode, feminist critics like Margaret Soenser Breen have argued that the second part enacts Bunyan's conservative position concerning women.²⁹¹ Projecting Bunyan's position in *A Case* directly onto the second part, however, is at best misleading, missing out many details of the text that suggest a different story. In fact the conservative and traditionalist perspective of that tract is not reflected in the text of the second part. Rather, it gives voice to surprisingly radical claims of emerging feminist ideals.

Above all, the heroines do not pursue their spiritual salvation through their husbands, or the symbolic "heads" of their families, but on their own, supporting each other with sisterly friendship. When they depart for their journey, both of them are not *femmes coverts* but *femme soles*, free from patriarchal authority, whether of husband or father. Christiana is a widow who controls her husband's estate and Mercie is a single young woman, away from her father's authority. They make the life-altering decision to

²⁹⁰ Hill, *A Tinker and a Poor Man*, 296-303.

²⁹¹ Margaret Soenser Breen, "The Sexed Pilgrim's Progress," *Studies in English Literature* 32, no. 3 (1992): 443-60.

set off for a pilgrimage on their own, without consultation with any patriarchal figures. If Christian is a masterless man, they are masterless *women*, free from patriarchal authority as well as from that of “squire and pastor.” Moreover they act in disregard of conventional gender roles. Their “unwomanly” decision to go on pilgrimage goes against the accepted role of women, as pointed by their neighbor, Mrs. Timorous:

I hope not so, good Neighbour, pray for your poor Children’s sake, do not so unwomanly cast away your self. . . . For if he, tho’ a man, was so hard put to it, what canst thou being but a poor Woman do? Consider also that these four sweet Babes are thy children, thy Flesh and thy Bones. Wherefore, though thou shouldest be so rash as to cast away thy self, yet for the sake of the Fruit of thy Body, keep thou at home. (149-50)

Interestingly, the conventional patriarchal logic about the domestic space as the only proper place for women is voiced by a tempter, Mrs. Timorous, and hence is being condemned by the text. Unwomanly self-assertion is not only tolerated but encouraged for a good female pilgrim. Mercie’s “impatient” and violent knocking of the gate as if to take “the Kingdom by storm”(157) is viewed by the keeper of the gate as not only acceptable but desirable behavior, as Christiana reports to Mercie: “When he heard your lumbring noise, he gave a wonderful Innocent smile. I believe what you did pleas’d him well enough, for he shewed no sign to the contrary.”(158) At a time when women’s public voice was often identified with whoring and sexual promiscuity, Mercie and Christiana are encouraged to voice their own experience of conversion in front of others at the Interpreter’s House (160-70), as sectarian women practiced in nonconformist churches.

The narrative's progressive view of women extends to its portrayal of the marital relationship. When the issue of Mercie's marriage comes up, the narrative rejects the patriarchal conception of marriage, one that has been taught by Protestant reformers, which endows the husband with spiritual authority.²⁹² It is once again false professors like Mr. Brisk and Bountiful's husband that embody the patriarchal attitude. Mercie does not satisfy Mr. Brisk's wordly expectation of a good housewife who devotes all her time and industry to the domestic chores and material prosperity of the house. When Mr. Brisk finally gives up the idea of wooing her, Mercie stakes out her position on the issue of husband and wife that challenges the accepted dictum of patriarchal doctrine and demonstrates her independent spirit.

Well, said Mercie, if no body will have me, I will dye a Maid, or my Conditions shall be to me as a Husband. For I cannot change my Nature, and to have one that lies cross to me in this, that I purpose never to admit of, as long as I live. I had a Sister named Bountiful that was married to one of these Churles; but he and she could never agree; but because my Sister was resolved to do as she had began, that is, to show Kindness to the Poor, therefore her Husband first cried her down at the Cross, and then turned her out of his Doors.(189)

The narrative supports Bountiful's resolution "to do as she had began" in spite of her husband's opposition, and hence endorses her subversive challenge of the patriarchal hierarchy between husband and wife. In addition to legitimizing women's spiritual independence and hence their egalitarian relationship with their husbands, the narrative approves Bountiful's *public* act of charity, opening up women's sphere out of the domestic space. Limiting women to the narrow domestic sphere is what men like Mr. Brisk would like to do, and he is hence criticized by the narrative. Domestic duty doesn't have to be the only work proper for women, though that's what men like Mr. Brisk

²⁹² Hill, *Society and Puritanism*, 443-81.

expect of their wives. Indeed, the narrative even seems to argue for the need of a collective support system to relieve the domestic duties of women who would pursue their *public* Christian career. When pilgrims reach the Delectable Mountains, a sort of prototype “day care center” is provided for the young mothers of the group so that they can leave their babies and pursue their pilgrimage.

By this River side in the Meadow, there were Cotes and Folds for Sheep, an House built for the *nourishing* and bringing up of those Lambs, the Babes of those Women that go on Pilgrimage. Also there was here one that was intrusted with them, who could have compassion, and that could gather these Lambs with his Arm, and carry them in his Bosom, and that could gently lead those that were with young. Now to the Care of *this Man, Christiana* admonished her four Daughters to commit their little ones; that by these Waters they might be housed, harbored, suckered and nourished, and that none of them might *be lacking in time to come*.... So they were content to commit their little Ones to him; and that which was also an Incouragement to them so to do, was, for that all this was to be at the Charge of the King, and so was an Hospital to young Children, and *Orphans*. (234)²⁹³

This episode suggests that the utopian family imagined in this book critically differs from the increasingly dominant conception of the family, that is, the nuclear conjugal family that gains ascendancy in tandem with the modern notion of exclusive property ownership and the division of labor between men and women, and is characterized by its closedness and exclusivity, as Lawrence Stone has illustrated.²⁹⁴ Instead, it imagines an extended form of family that is not based on the strict division of labor between men and women. It harks back to the older economic frame of domestic, or household economy and to older forms of family, though, again, the traditional model

²⁹³ I need to acknowledge that the ontological status of this “day care center” is problematic. On the allegorical level, this is an orphanage rather than a daycare center. But, again, all the young mothers (Christiana’s daughters-in-laws) are still alive at the end of the story and their “Children,” presumably the same babies, now reside with them (261), complicating the issue further.

²⁹⁴ Stone, *The Family, Sex and Marriage*, 149-80.

is modified to incorporate the newly emerging claims of women for spiritual, if not, economic independence and their desire for activities outside the narrowly defined domestic sphere.

The traditional model of family is also revised to open up this family to strangers that they meet on the road and make friends with. Against the increasing cultural emphasis on the closed, private domestic space, Christiana's family is characterized by its communitarian openness. The family grows by adding not only the strong and healthy but the old and weak, the marginalized members of society. Therefore, while the sororal friendship between Christiana and Mercie provides the keystone for this family, and while the narrative suggests a radical incorporation of proto-feminist ideals of marriage and of women's position in marriage and society, these concerns are ultimately subsumed within the central concern of building an open communitarian family. The narrative imagines not a nuclear family, a familial counterpart of exclusive private property, but a communitarian family that not only incorporates the radical ideals of proto-feminists but also radically reimagines the way that its members share material resources as well as the responsibilities of bringing up the next generation and taking care of the old and the weak.

Critics have argued that the female characters of the second part of TPP get subordinated to patriarchal authority once Great-heart becomes a central character. Margaret Olofson Thickstun has written that the attempted rape scene (160-61) provides an excuse to introduce patriarchal guidance over women, subsuming the feminine into male heroism.²⁹⁵ While appreciating the feminist aspect of the beginning scenes, Keeble also deems the two heroines to be more or less silenced and effaced following the

²⁹⁵ Margaret Olofson Thickstun, "From Christiana to Stand-fast: Subsuming the Feminine in *The Pilgrim's Progress*," *Studies in English Literature* 26, no.3 (1986): 439-53.

introduction of Great-heart.²⁹⁶ But it seems pertinent here to recall that the pilgrimage in the second part makes better sense when read as a literal journey, as has been discussed earlier. If we see Christiana and Mercie's pilgrimage as a real journey along the highway, they indeed need a strong protector in order to reach their destination safely. Travel along the highway, haunted with highwaymen, was considered full of danger even more than fifty years later, even for men, as memorably captured in the opening scenes of *Joseph Andrews*. In fact, we get the impression that not only women but also men are advised to get a guide. We are told Great-heart previously guided Mr. Fearing to salvation (207). As Great-heart puts it, "yet men are so foolishly venturous, as to set out lightly on Pilgrimage, and to come without a Guide" (202). "Feeble-mind is captured not as punishment for straying onto forbidden ground but because he is without protection," as Schellenberg has pointed out. "Whereas Christian must abandon all and is essentially alone in his fight for salvation, solitude and lack of leadership become in the sequel disadvantages to be avoided if possible."²⁹⁷ In fact, this view is already intimated in the first part, in the story of Little Faith and the three robbers. Relating Little Faith's story, Christian comments on the lack of "great-heart" in pilgrims like Little Faith and argues that most pilgrims need to "desire of the King a Convoy" to guide them through this dangerous journey (102-108). This "Convoy" from the King who will guide pilgrims that don't have enough "great-heart" gets embodied as a real guide in the character of Great-Heart in the second part.²⁹⁸

²⁹⁶ N.H. Keeble, "The Feminine in the Thought and Work of John Bunyan," in Laurence, Owens and Sim eds.

²⁹⁷ Betty A. Schellenberg, "Sociability and the Sequel: Rewriting Hero and Journey in *The Pilgrim's Progress*, Part II," *Studies in the Novel* 23, no. 3 (1991): 319-20.

²⁹⁸ Introduction of this guide also enhances the realist feel of the second part, eliminating the need for *dues-ex-machina* style help from supernatural characters for Christian in his calamities. For example, when Christian is trapped by Flatterer's net in Part One, it is a "shining One" that saves him (109). Great-Heart's

The gradual development of the community in the latter episodes of part two provides a better explanation for the relative silence of female characters than does their subordination to the male authority of Mr. Great-heart that some critics have argued. Great-heart first appears on the scene when Mercie and Christiana leave the House of the Interpreter. When the group reaches House Beautiful, he goes back to the Interpreter's House to get permission to continue guiding Christiana's company and he rejoins them later. While the group is traveling from the Interpreter's to House Beautiful, female characters are neither silenced nor forgotten in the narrative. Christiana demonstrates her bravery against the threat of Grim the Bloody man (181), and Mercie beats away the approaches of a worldly professor Mr. Brisk, a critical challenge for a young woman, on her own, without any *patriarchal* involvement. It is true that after Great-heart rejoins them and they leave House Beautiful, it becomes hard to hear the voices of the heroines. Thus, between the point at which Old Honest joins the group (205) and when Mercie gets some attention from the narrator (239), Christiana is given voice only five times, and Mercie only once. However, with the introduction of Mr. Honest, the long process of adding new members to Christiana's family has started, in the order of Feeble-mind, Ready-to-halt, Dispondencie, Much-afraid, Valiant-for-Truth, and Stand-fast. It is only natural, therefore, that the narrative focuses on these new characters, and the talk goes on mainly between each of them and the guide-pastor figure Great-heart. In the latter part of

presence in the second part prevents the need for such supernatural intervention, contributing to the realism of the narrative.

the narrative, the focus is squarely on extending Christiana's family, making friends with strangers and building a utopian community family.²⁹⁹

As guide and pastor, moreover, Great-heart does not strike a typically patriarchal figure. Above all, he is not the patriarch of this family: he is neither Christiana's husband nor the father of any younger members, nor does he assume the role of the pseudo-patriarch for this family. He is not the one, for instance, who dictates the terms of the marriages of Christiana's sons and Mercie. In fact, despite his obvious physical prowess, Great-heart is given almost maternal traits, as evidenced by his tenderness and sympathy towards weak-spirited pilgrims like Mr. Fearing and Mr. Ready-to-Halt.³⁰⁰ His loving and lenient attitude towards young children also differentiates him from the conventional image of puritan patriarchs who were noted for their advocacy of severe discipline in the education of children.³⁰¹ He is certainly the family guide, leading them safe through their journey and fending off the threat of the Giants: but his relation with the members of the family remains egalitarian. While under his protection and guidance, the group decides on crucial issues along participatory principles. When they attack Giant Despair's castle, the decision is reached through a group consultation in which all the members are able to voice their opinions (234).³⁰² The radicalism of this procedure is obvious when we recall that even the Levellers excluded women and the propertyless from their plan of the electoral franchise, since their notion of "the free people" did not include them.³⁰³

²⁹⁹ Schellenberg has argued that "critical divergence as to whether the hero of Part II is Christiana or Great-heart overlooks a third alternative, that of the group as hero." Schellenberg, "Sociability and the Sequel," 319.

³⁰⁰ Schellenberg, "Sociability and the Sequel," 318.

³⁰¹ Stone, *The Family, Sex and Marriage*, 174-76.

³⁰² Schellenberg, "Sociability and the Sequel," 320.

³⁰³ Christopher Hill, *The Century of Revolution 1603-1714* (New York: Norton, 1961), 151.

The extended family built around Christiana recalls the description of what Stone names “the open lineage family” of pre/early modern England, where the authority of the male head of each household was limited by the claims of kinship and of the local community, which was much more inclusive in its membership, defining its members loosely and counting retainers and distant relatives as its members, and where the women in the family had a stronger voice as an active labor force under the pre-capitalistic *domestic economy*, or household economy.³⁰⁴ Christiana’s large family seems to be a synthesis of the premodern and the proleptically modern. Or I should say, more accurately perhaps, a radical utopian family is imagined by synthesizing the idealized vision of the past, or what Raymond Williams calls *the residual*, with the radical elements of emerging modern perspectives. While modeled on the extended family of traditional society, this family radically deviates in its conception of membership and organizing principle. It is not organized by birth and kinship but by friendship and voluntary membership. Egalitarian affiliation between members replaces vertical filiation between parents and children. As mentioned earlier, Christiana’s affinitive friendship with Mercie, which eventually becomes a kinship when Mercie marries her son, provides a template for the subsequent friendships that Christiana forms with strangers whom she meets on the road, and demonstrates the organizing principle of this new utopian family.

We have earlier seen that the first part captures the historical juncture where the face-to-face and exclusivistic bonds of pre-modern society starts to lose its hold over individuals’ souls in the face of fundamental socio-economic transformation, particularly,

³⁰⁴ Stone, *The Family, Sex and Marriage*, 69-148; Bridget Hill, *Women, Work and Sexual Politics in Eighteenth-Century England* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989), 9-46.

the disintegration of traditional communities and the concomitant mobility of the producer population. As we have examined in our reading of Christian's dispute with Apollyon, Christian's argument evokes, although in the framework of popular monarchy, the emergent logic of individual freedom and sociability. While this new sociability of mobility was only adumbrated in the first part, we see it developed in the second part and embodied in Christiana's family. Christiana's journey is a progress towards this new sort of blessed family, a process of forming family by the logic of affective affiliation.

The emergence of this new sociability parallels the change of the family form that family historians locate in the early modern period.³⁰⁵ Many historians have pointed to a shift in the emotional connection between spouses and between parent and child. Stone sees the emergence of the nuclear family based on companionate marriage in the eighteenth century, when increasingly "husbands and wives personally selected each other rather than obeying parental wishes." Christiana's extended family incorporates this emergent logic of family formation. Their human bond is based on egalitarian friendships rather than on the exclusive bonds of kinship. Strangers that Christiana makes friends with and forms alliances with have as much claim on her as her kinsmen or village neighbors. Not restricted by the boundaries of kinship, this family by its nature has a potential to extend itself indefinitely by continuing to encompass new members. In that sense, Christiana's family exemplifies the logical utopian extension of the new sociability and its fundamental openness. Unlike the historical conjugal family that remains exclusive and self-centered and only partially embraces the logic of new sociability and the new cultural emphasis on personal choice, Christiana's community

³⁰⁵ Historians differ in their timing of this shift, but most of them seem to locate it somewhere in the rather large historical window of 1550-1750.

family is characterized by its ongoing inclusiveness.³⁰⁶ Indeed it is this openness, especially towards the marginalized members of society, that critically defines the utopian nature of this family. Repeating the exemplum of Christiana's friendship with Mercie, this family continues to open up to new members, many of whom are the poor, the old, and the weak. Mr. Feeble-mind does not even see the need to make a will since he has "nothing to bequeath to any"(258). These may also be the marginalized, those who were left behind in the historical reorganization of society in nuclear familial units, those who were often not welcomed even by the nonconformist churches. Demonstrating the modern spirit of affinitive sociability that replaces the corporate exclusivity of traditional human bonds, Christiana's family practices this sociability in the most radical fashion, opening up to the downtrodden of society and incorporating them into this ever growing family. In fact, the utopian family constructed in the story gets opened up even further to the outside of the text, to the larger community of readership that exists outside (but also inside) the text. Mr. Sagacity informs us that "all our Countrey rings of [Christian], there are but few Houses that have heard of him and his doings, but have sought after and got the Records of his Pilgrimage"(144). This widespread readership, we are told, results in active membership into this utopian family. Valiant-for-Truth, for example, has converted after reading the story of Christian (244). The text imagines a virtual community of readership that shares the legend of Christian, together with Christiana's group inside the text. Christian's story provides a pivot not only for the community inside the text, but also for outside – for us. As much as the pilgrims know

³⁰⁶ Charles Taylor thinks the family is one of areas which have taken longer to be transformed by the modern social order. Taylor, *Modern Social Imaginaries*, 143-54.

and share the knowledge of Christian's pilgrimage, we as readers are expected to share that knowledge and to experience that sense of community.

The central image in the prefatory letter, "The Author's Way of Sending Forth His Second Part of The Pilgrim," recapitulates the opening-up process of the main narrative. The second part is compared to Christiana's family, knocking on the doors of each household that shares Christian's story, asking to be accepted and embraced "with heart and hand"(136). In the way that Gaius's and Mneson's households, which welcome Christiana's family, join this ever-expanding community family, readers outside the text will participate in this community by reading and appreciating the story. So a utopian community is being constructed both inside and outside the narrative. Benedict Anderson has theorized that print culture provided a critical material condition for the emergence of imagined communities of nation states, communities that were conjured up through the readership of shared texts written in the national language.³⁰⁷ The community imagined in the second part of *The Pilgrims Progress* bears a close relation to Anderson's model. It is an imagined community constructed around the shared readership of Christian's and Christiana's stories, underpinned both within and beyond the text by the emergence of print culture. Building on the new affinitive friendship of individuals freed from the traditional, face-to-face and exclusive corporate sociability of kinship, of traditional family and manorial bonds, Bunyan's preface gestures toward opening this community further, continuing to building on the community imagined in this book, utilizing to the full the communicative potential opened up by the new medium of mass printing.

³⁰⁷ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 9-36.

But while providing a good example of Anderson's model--and exemplifying the awareness that contemporaries had of this process-- Bunyan's book also challenges Anderson's exclusive association of such imagined communities with the individual nation state. Bunyan's community is not constrained by the boundaries of nation states. His is a transnational community, underpinned by translations of his blockbuster book into multiple national languages, generating an immense international readership. As Bunyan puts it, his "Pilgrims Book has travel'd Sea and Land" and was received and welcomed as friend in "France," "Flanders," "Holland," and in "New-England" as well as by "Highlanders" and "Wild-Irish" (137). In that sense, writing at the critical juncture of European history that witnessed the emergence of, and the transition to, the modern world system of nation states, Bunyan once again charts out a unique path of utopian modernity that separates his vision of transnational fraternal community from the actual trajectory of European history.

The land of Beulah, the pilgrims' last destination in this world, feels almost like a utopia situated in this world. It is a country "common for Pilgrims, and because the Orchards and Vineyards that were here, belonged to the King of the Celestial Country; therefore they were licensed to make bold with any of his things" (254). In a practical sense, this is a dream come true of the Diggers' communitarian dream. Here the pilgrims settle down and enjoy their daily lives without any hurry, waiting for the summons from their king. In the second part of *The Pilgrim's Progress*, incorporating a secular dimension in both the form and content of the narrative while holding onto the heritage and ideals of radical puritanism, Bunyan is imagining a utopian family *here and now*, and inviting the reader to become part of it.

Conclusion

At the historical juncture examined in this study, utopias seem to have been imagined by synthesizing the historically residual and emergent elements, that is, by reconciling residual models with emergent perspectives. In the works of the three writers that I have provided readings of, traditional forms of sociability are revised into utopian families distinguished by their spirit of situatedness, of actual presence. In “Upon Appleton House,” Marvell appropriates the genre of the country house poem and questions its monolithic utopian vision of a seignorial community formed around the idealized center of a manor house. As a result of his empirical yet poetic experimentation, he produces a poetic map of divided England, where multiple visions vie to provide blueprints for her open future. Cavendish, in her plays, secularizes the Catholic tradition of the monastic community as a utopian familial space for her female figures, who voice surprisingly modern views of sociability and individual autonomy, anticipating the later development of the familial relationship. In *The Pilgrim’s Progress*, Bunyan works with a model of the customary village community, but reimagines it as a utopian family organized according to newly emerging principles of sociability.

The innovative energies of these works lie mainly in their seemingly contradictory efforts to situate utopia in the real world. The most exciting aspect of Lady Happy’s revisionary convent is its outspoken legitimation of worldly “pleasure” and material comfort. The critical novelty of Marvell’s poem is its daring subjection of the traditional genre and customary ideals to an empirical and historical analysis. These innovations reflect “secularization” of society across the spectrum that occurred in early

modern period. I use the term, secularization, more broadly than its normal use, not just referring to Christianity's demise as an overarching influence over all the facets of human life, but rather to "de-idealization," the process that marginalized the plane of higher time and organized society in a different principle, a bottom-up organization, rather than one based on a higher ideal. As Bunyan's shift of focus from the first to the second part of *The Pilgrim's Progress* exemplifies, the process of situation also entails an "affirmation of ordinary life,"³⁰⁸ an emergent ambition to cultivate utopia here and now by reforming this given world. This endorsement of the profane realm and the appreciation of day-to-day commercial activity and familial life were justified partly because the seventeenth century, "under the aegis of reformed religion and the new philosophy of empiricism," saw "the investment of history and nature with unprecedented spiritual authority."³⁰⁹

Bunyan's affirmation of the worldly present, however, has inherent risks of falling into an absorption in the material world, as Bunyan warns with the figure of a "man that could look no way but down wards, with a Muckrake in his hand," words that render "a Figure of a man of this World"(164). Interpreter explains to Christiana, "Heaven is but as a Fable to some, and that things here are counted the only things substantial" (165). As Bunyan was acutely aware, his "situating" allegory, because of its powerfully compelling plot, that is, due to the self-sufficiency of its material narrative, carries the inherent risk of failing its spiritualizing purpose. Bunyan's warning against confinement in the human world, in profane time, persists in his narrative, striking a delicate balance with its endorsement of the communitarian life of Christiana's family in this world. The second part of *The Pilgrim's Progress*, like the first, concludes with the

³⁰⁸ The phrase is Charles Taylor's. See *Modern Social Imaginaries*, 102.

³⁰⁹ McKeon, "The Rise of Aesthetic," 41.

exalting scenes of the pilgrims' final journey into the next world, exemplifying a profound sense of connectedness to the sacred plane of higher time and spiritual salvation. Bunyan's critique of human sufficiency is an expression of residual historical tendencies grounded in the culture that Bunyan belongs to: namely, a profound sense of the higher order of reality that suffuses the everyday, profane, world with sacred meaning.

Written almost half a century later than *The Pilgrim's Progress*, Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* (1719) bursts with the exuberant energy of building a new world on a new principle of sociability, one based on affiliation rather than filiation.³¹⁰ The excitement of Robinson's achieving autonomy apart from the authorities of traditional sociability, whether in the form of a biological, political, or godly father, and becoming himself "both a founder and father," a creator of his own narrative, is palpable throughout the book. As Richard Braverman has shown, this energy is grounded on Defoe's passionate engagement with the sociopolitical struggles of late seventeenth-century England and his attempts to rewrite English history from the Restoration to the Revolution of 1688. But while Robinson's flight from authoritarian tradition extends the strategies of situation that we see in the earlier works I've studied, it also extends the secularizing movement toward human sufficiency that Defoe would agree is an illusion. The fundamental sense of communitarian connectedness is diminishing. In that regard, F. R. Leavis' assessment seems to the point: "[Defoe] is Robinson Crusoe, *terre-à-terre*, commonsensical, infinitely resourceful – an invincibly sane man of *this* world, an adventurer, but not conceivably a pilgrim." He continues: "[W]e cannot pass from

³¹⁰ For opposed concepts of "filiation" and "affiliation," see Braverman, *Plots and Counterplots*, 248-71. My discussion of *Robinson Crusoe* in this paragraph is highly reliant on Braverman's reading.

Bunyan to Defoe without a sense of loss.”³¹¹ Secular materialism has become such a powerful force that the delicate balance between utopian and worldly tendencies that defines the moment of the situated utopia seems to have begun to break. The utopian imagination is in danger of becoming not only situated but domesticated, and thereby of losing its anticipatory utopian character.

I will close by reflecting briefly on and offering an apology for my methodology of reading these literary texts. In the preceding chapters I have examined the way utopias are situated by resorting to historical analysis, that is, by looking into some of the socioeconomic and cultural contexts of these literary works. I have found such an exercise necessary in order to gain access to these works that are separated by several centuries from the world that we live in. Although recourse to a literary work’s extra-literary contexts is an accepted method in literary historical study and needs no special justification, it is important to observe that more often than not, my contextual research was triggered by the texts themselves. My reading of Marvell’s poem, for example, began as an attempt to answer concrete local questions: Why is there a sudden artificial flooding at the center of the poem? Why does Marvell end his poem with those strange-looking salmon fishers? In this sense my interpretive exercise feels somewhat similar to that of an anthropologist who tries to understand a different culture from the outside. As an ethnographer sorts through “piled-up structures of inference and implication,” I have tried to “thickly describe” “the imaginative universe” within which these highly special samples of culture were produced. I hope this venture at “thick description” may have

³¹¹ F. R. Leavis, “Bunyan’s Resoluteness” (1969), *The Pilgrim’s Progress: a Casebook*, ed. Roger Sharrock (London: Macmillan, 1976), 216-17.

helped, in some small measure, “to converse with” these literary works and to interpret them so as to bring them, alive, into our own time.³¹²

³¹² Clifford Geertz, “Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture,” in *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), 3-30.

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Curriculum Vitae

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Publications

Article:

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