IN SEARCH OF CHLOE:
ENLIGHTENED VIEWS OF WOMEN

by

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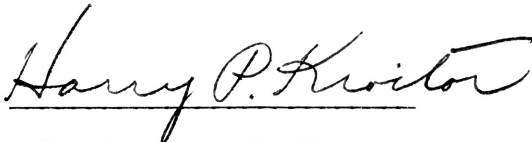
English

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements of the
University Undergraduate Fellows Program

1982-1983

Approved by:



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April 1983

ABSTRACT

In Search of Chloe:

Enlightened Views of Women (April 1983)

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Eighteenth-century histories, essays, criticism, and poetry suggest that certain basic attitudes toward women prevailed. I have categorized and described three of those attitudes:

1. Women are merely "fair nymphs" (the poetic idealization of women).
2. Women should not have educational or social equality with men.
3. Women function primarily as objects for the sexual gratification of men.

The poetry of Jonathan Swift suggests that he rejected these prevalent attitudes, insisting instead that men view women as human beings, with human qualities and human imperfections. Implicit in this view is Swift's plea for gender equality. Swift uses this attack in "Cadenus and Vanessa," "The Progress of Beauty," "The Furniture of a Woman's Mind," "Clad all in Brown," "The Lady's Dressing Room," "A Beautiful Young Nymph Going to Bed," "Strephon and Chloe," "Cassinus and Peter," and "The Hardship put upon Ladies." He first evokes, then destroys the pastoral image by portraying women realistically, often grossly, with bodily functions and imperfections.

He attacks female education because it produces women dependent on men and preoccupied with beauty and fashion. Swift saw that in law and marriage, women were unequal; men did not view women as equal human beings, but insisted on their subordination. Swift also attacked the vices of domestic and commercial prostitution, denying that women were created to be slaves to men.

Because they reject the traditional social and poetic attitudes of the eighteenth century, Swift's views are enlightened.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to express my sincere thanks to Dr. Harry P. Kroitor for his patience, omniscience, and friendship. Under his kind guidance, this project has been intellectually stimulating, challenging, and a growing experience for me. I will take with me to graduate school many valuable insights I have gained into myself and the art of scholarly research.

I would also like to thank David Koons for his patience and cooperation. The eighteenth-century facsimile title page included in this thesis is a product of his creative genius.

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In Search of CHLOE

OR

ENLIGHTENED VIEWS OF WOMEN

Written by a Lady *in Vindication of her* Sex.

CHAPTER I

IN SEARCH OF SWIFT'S CHLOE

The eighteenth century has been referred to as the Enlightenment. The age was characterized by a stress on reason, a questioning of traditional values, and an emphasis on the idea of universal human progress. The status of women, however, seems to contradict the lofty aspirations implied in those attributes of the period. Eighteenth-century literature (histories, poetry, and prose) suggests that some questionable basic attitudes prevailed.

Background

I intend to examine certain prevalent eighteenth-century attitudes toward women in England, including certain literary reactions to these views. Perhaps most obvious sources for the foundation of this examination are the histories and legal commentaries. Among the histories I examined, W. E. H. Lecky's *A History of England in the Eighteenth Century* (1920) offers the most comprehensive history of the age, but the least useful information regarding the status of women. Scattered throughout only two of the seven volumes are brief references to some of the laws regarding women, the education of girls, and literary females. William Alexander wrote *The History of Women: From the*

This thesis follows the style of *PMLA*.

Earliest Antiquity to the Present Time, which provides plenty of detailed information about the women of his age. He discusses female education, female employment, causes of the inequalities between men and women, feminine virtues and propriety. His work was designed to amuse and instruct "the generality of the Fair Sex, whose reading is more confined ... poring over novels and romances which greatly tend to mislead the understanding and corrupt the heart."[1] This study uses Alexander to establish the historical framework in which Swift wrote. Sir Walter Besant's London in the Eighteenth Century was written in 1903 and clearly has a twentieth-century bias. But the work still presents a useful chapter on the "position of women."

Moving from formal histories to works dealing with women's rights and the laws in force in the eighteenth century, I next consider The Laws Respecting Women(1777) by J. Johnson. This author offers his readers details concerning women's place as men's sexual plaything, abduction, and marriage. Observing that men were "domestic despots,"[2] Johnson describes many of the inequalities that existed between husband and wife. Commenting on the laws of the time, Sir William Blackstone in his Commentaries on the Laws of England views the eighteenth century from a later vantage point in 1899. Many of the observations he makes reveal that the laws had not changed much from the 1700's to the beginning of the twentieth century. Blackstone comments on divorce and marriage. He is noted for saying that the inequalities of the wife in marriage are for her protection, since "so great a favorite is the female sex of the laws of England."[3] It is noted, however, that

a Mr. Christian disagrees with this last statement, and space is given to his views of the inequities of marriage. Eugene Hecker's A Short History of Women's Rights is the final work that I examined in this category. He noted the inequalities that existed in the laws concerning men and women, observing the aspects of divorce, inheritance, and education. He notes that eighteenth-century novelists treated marriage flippantly when, in fact, there was "callous sexual morality."[4] He says that this suggests the need for readjusting one's view regarding the moral standards of the past. Hecker has pinpointed the difficulty in judging the attitudes of a period merely by its fiction and poetry. For this reason, I have tried to survey a number of secondary, as well as primary, sources. The histories, essays, criticisms, and literature of the age are all necessary for an evaluation of the attitudes of any period.

All of the above histories and analyses of the laws regarding women have been helpful. A paper that seeks to examine certain prevailing attitudes of any period needs to rely on some "constant"; the histories seem to fill this position. I consider next the essays.

Two very important essay series have been useful in the preparation of this thesis: the Augustan Reprint Society series and the Garland Publishing Company editions of "The Feminist Controversy in England 1788-1810." Titles in both of these series include reprinted essays by popular late eighteenth-century writers. In the Augustan reprints, authors and titles of particular interest here include: Bernard Mandeville's 1724 A Modest Defence of Publick Stews and Bathsua

Makin's An Essay to Revive the Antient Education of Gentlewomen(1673). These works, mostly from the late seventeenth century, give an indication of the attitudes toward women and women's rights that influenced eighteenth-century thought. For this reason, this series supplements my secondary sources.

The Garland Series offers a selection of forty-four reprinted works on the "Feminist Controversy." Each facsimile includes a very informative introduction by Gina Luria, highlighting each writer's career and the significance of the reprinted work. I will try to comment on each work in the series that I will include in the paper. The works can be divided into two broad categories: those dealing with female education and those dealing with women's rights in general. Hannah More, a popular feminist author, wrote Strictures on the Modern System of Female Education in 1799. She held that women should try to prepare themselves, through learning, for the practical things in life. For a list of the qualities necessary to make women the "estimable and agreeable Friends and Companion of Man,"[5] see William Duff's Letters on the Intellectual and Moral Character of Women(1807). Jane West in Letters to a Young Lady promotes the thorough digestion of one book instead of the cursory glances of many books just for appearances' sake. In her 1798 Reflections of the Present Condition of the Female Sex, Priscilla Bell Wakefield offers her reaction to female education and the problem of employment. Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin wrote two books in particular that I will be studying. The first, Thoughts on the Education of Daughters(1787), indicates her

dissatisfaction with women's status. She does not insist on women and men's equality until her 1792 A Vindication of the Rights of Woman.

Wollstonecraft's 1792 work falls in the second category of essays dealing with women's rights in general. Her effort was the launching point for many subsequent feminist authors who wanted society to see the inequalities that existed. Wollstonecraft obviously would not have felt so driven to publish this work if she did not feel that some very basic rights were being denied to women. This essay will receive further elaboration later. Where Wollstonecraft insisted that justice was the issue, Mary Ann Radcliffe in The Female Advocate(1799) argued for philanthropy to aid women. She believed that charitable instit-utions should be established for the poor women wandering the streets of London. Letters for Literary Ladies(1795) by Maria Edgeworth consists of a correspondence between two women, one of whom believes that a woman's purpose is to please men, the other holding that the purpose is much more complex than that. It is a dialogue between a traditional woman and a feminist who reflects the author's opinions. The last essay is Mary Hays' Appeal to the Men of Great Britain in Behalf of Women(1798). She was a friend of Mary Wollstonecraft and also argued against the subjection of women. She presents her first arguments in sections based on scripture and reason. She then continues with "What Men Would Have Women To Be," "What Women Are," and "What Women Ought To Be." These works all provide a fuller picture of the status of women in the eighteenth century. My study uses these works to examine the literary attitudes of those invloved in the "woman question."

I have limited my primary sources to eighteenth-century poetry, and in my examination, I looked for any poet who seemed to support feminist views, who seemed to counter certain prevalent views of women during the eighteenth century. I used Works of the English Poets from Chaucer to Cowper by A. Chalmers as my source for minor and major verse of the eighteenth century. As I surveyed the poems in Works and Gentleman's Magazine, the most popular magazine of the period, I began to realize that few poets had ideas contradicting the common views of women. In fact, of them, Jonathan Swift seems to be the only writer who consistently and intentionally attacks the inequalities in eighteenth-century society regarding women. I will use poems from writers such as John Gay, Matthew Prior, Ambrose Philips and others to exemplify poets with attitudes similar to or different from Swift's. I will focus primarily on Swift and his reactions to the "woman question."[6]

No critiques of eighteenth-century poetry address this subject as I do, though many have been written. I will use their information as a starting point in developing my thesis. Katharine Rogers has contributed Feminism in Eighteenth-Century England. Since she focuses primarily on the novel and its reflection/rejection of eighteenth-century attitudes, and my emphasis is on poetry, her book has only limited usefulness in my study. Her beginning chapters do offer some interesting observations on the essays of feminists, such as those in the Garland Series. Though beneficial for my paper regarding feminists, the book discusses Swift in the traditional manner.

Rogers' text, therefore, will be used almost exclusively for general background information about the century and its literature.

In Woman in the Eighteenth Century and Other Essays, Fritz and Morton include two essays of interest to me. The first is Miriam Benkovitz's "Some Observations on Woman's Concept of Self in the Eighteenth Century," and the second is "The Eighteenth-Century Englishwoman: According to the Gentleman's Magazine," by Jean E. Hunter. Benkovitz examines the lives of feminists Lady Mary W. Montagu, Mrs. Hester L. Thrale, and Frances Burney. Benkovitz concludes that feminist ideals were not firmly etched in their minds and hearts because the passion of love conquered reason while it yet intensified their "sense of self."[7] Her essay contains useful information of the lives of literary ladies in the eighteenth century. Hunter notes that in Gentleman's Magazine articles, only about one-fourth support the traditional views of women. She discusses what those views were and what the writers in the other articles asserted. Hunter is approaching my thesis from a slightly different angle. Though observations she makes in her essay will be very helpful to me, her thesis focuses on articles while mine is on poetry.

Jean H. Hagstrum's Sex and Sensibility: Ideal and Erotic Love from Milton to Mozart discusses Pope and Swift, and I assumed that I would find something useful for my paper. But his section on Swift's Vanessa and Stella includes this statement: "Whether Swift's poetry of sexual disgust is in any way moral or optimistic it is not my purpose to discover."[8] Unlike his work, mine is concerned with the moral

implications of Swift's verse.

Of the criticisms of Swift's verse, three have been of particular use to me. In the collection Contemporary Studies of Swift's Poetry, Peter J. Schakel wrote "Swift's Remedy for Love: The 'Scatological' Poems." Though this is the least helpful of the three, Schakel does provide support for some of the arguments in my thesis. Richard D. McClain in 1974 prepared his thesis on "Swift's Beautiful Young Nymphs: An Attack on the Pastoral Female Image." McClain explores one aspect of my subject, the poetic idealization of women. I use this work extensively as a guide and reference aid. McClain's conclusions are relevant to my thesis, but his overall presentation and purpose are different from mine. McClain examines how Swift's scatological poems attack the pastoral, idealized image of women found in seventeenth-century poetry and later imitated in eighteenth-century poetry. He surveys the history of the pastoral image and then discusses Swift's scatological poems in their relation to this idealized image of women. My thesis includes a chapter on Swift's attack on the poetic idealization of women in the eighteenth century. For this chapter, McClain's work is very useful. But my purpose is to go beyond his study and examine Swift's attack on other prevalent attitudes in eighteenth-century society.

One final study that approaches Swift's scatological poetry in a non-traditional way is Jae Num Lee's Swift and Scatological Satire. Lee does not interpret Swift to be a misogynist, as Rogers does, but instead, a poet with moral intent. Swift, Lee holds, used

scatology for moral didacticism and shock value, to elicit disgust in his readers at the pastoral image of women presented by other poets. Lee's conclusions are refreshing after the negative, traditional opinions espoused by other critics of Swift's verse.

The critics, essayists, and historians have, at some point, commented on the status of women in the eighteenth century and its literature. The histories, essays, and supporting poetry I have mentioned will provide the framework by which I will analyze the attitudes reflected in poetry. To my knowledge, no critic has addressed the central issues of this thesis as I will address them.

Reading this background material suggested that several general attitudes seemed common in eighteenth-century society and literature. I have categorized three prevalent attitudes:

1. Women are merely "fair nymphs" (the poetic idealization of women).
2. Women should not have educational or social equality with men.
3. Women function primarily as objects for the sexual gratification of men.

These three attitudes form the basis for my analysis of Swift's verse.

Scope

I choose to examine these prevailing eighteenth-century attitudes only in Swift's work because he apparently is the only major poet of the time with an "enlightened" view of women's situation in society and verse. Much of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century verse

tends to idealize women, representing them as nymphs, beautiful goddesses, reposing in bower paradises, attended by shepherds. This pastoral image of women persisted in seventeenth-century verse. Names such as Chloe, Daphne, Corinna, and Caelia consistently appear in the poetry and usually refer to the superficial, passive, affected female. These names and attitudes carried over into eighteenth-century verse.

Poetry of the Enlightenment, a name broadly applied to the eighteenth century, also generally depicted women idealistically and stereotypically. Females were expected to be fashionable, compliant. chaste and unequal. These views were also common in eighteenth-century society, generally. Inequalities existed in the laws and minds of the people in eighteenth-century England.

Any challenge to these stereotypical views in the eighteenth century I will refer to as "enlightened." This judgment is based on the standards of that time, not our own. An "enlightened" view in this thesis, therefore, is any view which seeks to correct the inequality that existed in the laws or the attitudes of the people.

Jonathan Swift adopted the nymphs' names -- Chloe, Corinna, Caelia -- partly to parody the pastoral image. Swift portrayed women as equal to men and as human beings. He rejected the poetic pastoral image and certain prevalent social views of the "soft sex." I believe that Swift's views were enlightened for his time because of the way in which he develops Chloe and similar female characters in his verse. He wanted to make his audience aware of the falseness of

the popular poetic picture. Swift felt that the illusion of believing women to be merely "fair nymphs" was dangerous. He wanted his readers to realize the imperfections in all human beings.

In searching for the significance of a name like Chloe, all readers must decide whether Chloe is an idealized portrait they are to accept, or an idealization they are to reject, or a parody implying more than simple acceptance or rejection. This, then, is my search for Chloe among the enlightened views of women in eighteenth-century poetry , particularly in the poetry of Swift.

I have limited my paper to the verse of Swift primarily because he seems to be the most "enlightened" of his fellow poets. A comprehensive study of other "enlightened" poets, major and minor, is beyond the scope of this thesis.

Purpose

I intend, therefore, to show that Jonathan Swift rejected three basic, perhaps representative, views of the eighteenth century. He insisted that poets draw real-life portraits of women, not idealized images of nymphs. But his moral satire attacks more than poetic attitudes; it identifies broad social attitudes that he hoped to correct. He argued further that men and women are equal in some very basic ways, and that women should not be considered merely as objects used for sexual gratification.

In order to show that Swift's views are enlightened, I will show what the prevailing attitudes were (education, society, sex -- both

gender-specific roles and prostitution), show that Swift attacks these views, and show that Swift's attacks are corrective. The basic question I am trying to answer, then, is: "To what extent is Swift's satiric verse more than a mere attack on poetic cliches about women?"

NOTES

[1] William Alexander, M.D., The History of Women: From the Earliest Antiquity to the Present Time (1796; rpt. New York: AMS Press, 1976), I, v. Hereafter cited as Alexander.

[2] J. Johnson, The Laws Respecting Women (1777; rpt. New York: Oceana Pub. Inc., 1973), p. vi.

[3] Sir William Blackstone, Commentaries on the Laws of England (Chicago: Callaghan and Co., 1899), I, p. 445.

[4] Eugene A. Hecker, A Short History of Women's Rights (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, Publ., 1971), p. 285.

[5] William Duff, Letters on the Intellectual and Moral Character of Women (1807; rpt. New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1974), p. 134.

[6] I will use Herbert Davis' anthology Swift: Poetical Works (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967) as the source for my references to Swift's poetry. References will be to PW.

[7] Miriam J. Benkovitz, "Some Observations on Woman's Concept of Self in the Eighteenth Century," Woman in the Eighteenth Century and Other Essays (1976), p. 49.

[8] Jean H. Hagstrum, Sex and Sensibility: Ideal and Erotic Love From Milton to Mozart (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1980), p. 149.

CHAPTER II

THE POETIC IDEALIZATION OF WOMEN

The pastoral image of women that Swift attacks has an interesting history, perhaps dating back many centuries. The idealized image could have begun when French troubadors misread Ovid's poems, associating courtly love with the image of the idealized woman. The tradition of courtly love included characteristics such as courtesy, humility, and adultery. The idea of married love soon replaced the notion of adultery, and portraits of pure, beautiful, and honest women repeatedly appeared in seventeenth-century verse.[1] Many poets in the eighteenth century imitated the seventeenth-century idealized poetic image of women. Swift attacks these idealized portraits in his satiric verse, representing women as human beings and not as "perfect goddesses."

As Dryden suggests in the introduction to his translation of Juvenal's Sixth Satire, Juvenal's influence was widespread. Some poetic conventions such as the attack on female artifice are traceable to Juvenal in his Sixth Satire.

> This satire . . . is a bitter invective against the fair sex . . . How they had offended him I know not; but upon the whole matter he is not to be excus'd for imputing to all the vices of some few amongst them. Neither was it generously done of him, to attack the weakest as well as the fairest part of the creation; neither do I know what moral he could reasonably draw from it. It could not be to avoid the whole sex, if all had been true which he alleges against them; for that had been to put an end to humankind. And to bid us beware of their artifices, is a kind of silent acknowledgement, that they have more wit than men: which turns the satire upon us and particularly upon the poet.[2]

Dryden's attitude toward the "fair sex" seems to be the traditional one. But is Swift's scatological verse an attempt to be Juvenalian? Perhaps Juvenal's satire is a key to understanding Swift's scatology. Jae Num Lee observes that Juvenal's scatology is moral and corrective, employing the coarseness against vices that demand censure.[3] In some ways Swift seems to be following Juvenal's example.

Many of the poets of the seventeenth century were influenced by the idealized image of women in courtly love. John Dryden, Robert Herrick, and Abraham Cowley are representative poets of the time who perpetuated the pastoral image of women in verse (McClain, p. 27). Their poetry portrays beautiful nymphs in garden paradises. For example, Cowley's pastoral style and attitude toward women can be illustrated by the first two stanzas from his "Clad all in White:"

> Fairest thing that shines below,
> Why in this robe dost thou appear?
> Wouldst thou a white most perfect show,
> Thou must at all no garment wear:
> Thou wilt seem much whiter so,
> Than Winter when 'tis clad with Snow.
>
> 'Tis not the Linnen shews so faire:
> Her skinne shines through, and makes it bright:
> So Clouds themselves like Suns appear,
> When the Sun pierces them with Light:
> So Lillies in a glass inclose,
> The Glasse will seem as white as those.[4]

The poem concludes with the poet's further comparison of the nymph's soul to a "starre plac'd i' th' Milky way" (l. 18). Women in pastoral

poetry were often compared to the sun, the moon, and the stars. Cowley's white-robed female is depicted as chaste, clean, and perfect.

Jonathan Swift reacted against not only Cowley's diction but also the idea of creating the illusion of a perfect woman, a "fair nymph." Swift countered Cowley's poem with his own "Clad all in Brown." The first two stanzas of Swift's parody read:

> Foulest Brute that stinks below,
> Why in this Brown dost thou appear?
> For, would'st thou make a fouler Show,
> Thou must go naked all the Year.
> Fresh from the Mud a wallowing Sow
> Would then be not so brown as thou.
>
> 'Tis not the Coat that looks so dun,
> His Hide emits a Foulness out,
> Not one Jot better looks the Sun
> Seen from behind a dirty Clout:
> So T---rds within a Glass inclose,
> The Glass will seem as brown as those.
> (*PW*, 349-50, ll. 1-12)

Swift in his parody negates Cowley's poem. For instance, Cowley's "fairest" becomes Swift's "foulest;" "white" becomes "brown" and so on. By appealing to the shock value of the scatology, Swift was attempting to tear down the pastoral image of women built up in the seventeenth-century verse.

The "nymph-like" qualities in seventeenth-century poetic idealizations of women became the norms for the "fair sex" in much of eighteenth-century verse. Poetry still depicted women traditionally. The "soft sex" was expected to be fashionable, subordinate to men, and unequal. Very few of the poets of the period seem to take issue with their contemporaries' stereotypical views of women.

The verse of most major and minor poets of the eighteenth century suggests that the poets did not condemn the pastoral image prevalent in eighteenth-century verse. Despite many of the satires concerning women, few of the writers offer enlightened views of the "fair sex." Major poets of the period include Charles Churchill, Edward Young, the Earl of Rochester, Alexander Pope, and of course, Swift. Churchill and Young seem to accept the representation of women as subordinate and unequal to men while the Earl of Rochester and Alexander Pope fall short of addressing the pastoral issue at all. Minor poets such as George Granville, Matthew Prior, Ambrose Philips, and Lord Lyttleton tend to accept the pastoral image also.

Charles Churchill looks at the pastoral image issue in "The Prophecy of Famine" and comments on women in general in _The Times_. According to Raymond Smith, a critic of Churchill's poems, Churchill condemns women rather than satirizes them. He apparently shares many of the traditional attitudes of his time. Smith interprets Churchill as believing that "women are not valued in themselves but only in their relationship to men."[5] Since Churchill condemns women instead of satirizing them with a corrective intent, his views must be considered traditional rather than enlightened.

Edward Young addresses women in _The Satires_, particularly Satires V and VI. In "Satire V" the poet reveals the condescension toward women so characteristic of his age. Although he is against silliness, excessive make-up and fashion, and affectation, he commends women who are aware of and accept their inferior intellectual status.

Any exaggerated display of helplessness or masculine activities he condemns as an unacceptable extreme in feminine behavior. "'A gentle nymph' with 'peace in her air, persuasion in her eye' is a joy to her husband," wrote Isabel St. John Bliss, a critic, who sums up Young's attitude.[6] She quotes the fifth satire which ends with some advice for the ladies:

> Your sex's glory 'tis to shine unknown;
> Of all applause, be fondest of your own.
> Beware the fever of the mind. that thirst
> With which the age is eminently curst. (Bliss, p. 68)

The sixth satire further emphasizes the same unenlightened attitudes: "Women were made to give our eyes delight" (Bliss, p. 68).

Neither the Earl of Rochester nor Alexander Pope addresses the pastoral image directly. Rochester's satire is often merely titillating; he frequently plays with sexual connotations of impotence or lust. But his poetry does not show an enlightened attitude toward women. Pope, on the other hand, does seem to make a limited statement about the nymph image in his development of Belinda in "Rape of the Lock." He appears to be taking issue with the artificial, empty-headed qualities of females of the upper class. Pope's main attack, though, is on a poetic form; he wants to parody the epic poem with his mock epic. The Earl of Rochester and Pope, in effect, address other matters than the pastoral image of women. Rochester attempts to use scatology for its titillating effects while Pope's main concern is poetic parody and social comment rather than pastoral stereotypes.

Perhaps prevailing attitudes of eighteenth-century poetry can best be seen by examining both major and minor poets of the age. These

minor poets seem to accept the idealized picture of women and, in fact, perpetuate it in their verse. Their verse abounds with stereotypical Corinnas, Chloes, Delias, and Celias. For instance, George Granville's "Corinna" is typically pastoral. The second stanza informs the reader that

> Mankind was hers, all at her feet
> Lay prostrate and adoring
> The witty, handsome, rich, and great,
> In vain alike imploring.[7]

Though the theme of the poem is carpe diem (telling Corinna that "Youth is the proper time for love,/ And age is virtue's season" (ll. 19-20)), the central image of youth is that of a beautiful woman with the world at her feet, literally.

Similar to Granville's Corinna, Matthew Prior's Cloe in "To Cloe Weeping" has "The world in sympathy" with her while she weeps:

> See, whilst thou weep'st, fair Cloe, see
> The world in sympathy with thee.
> The cheerful birds no longer sing;
> Each drops his head, and hangs his wing.
> The clouds have bent their bosom lower,
> And shed their sorrows in a shower.
> The brooks beyond their limits flow;
> And louder murmurs speak their woe.
> The nymphs and swains adopt thy cares;
> They heave thy sighs, and weep thy tears.
> Fantastic nymph! that grief should move
> Thy heart obdurate against love.
> Strange tears! whose power can soften all,
> But that dear breast on which they fall.[8]

Prior accepts the pastoral images: the name Cloe, the idealized setting, the words nymph and swain. In "Cloe Jealous," Prior again introduces his nymph Cloe. She speaks of her "two poor straggling

sheep" to "her shepherd" (Chalmers, X, p. 152, ll. 2-3). The pastoral imagery is repeated, and Prior's attitude seems apparent; he accepts the idealized portrait of women.

Just as Cowley and other seventeenth-century poets compared their nymphs to the stars, so does Ambrose Philips, another minor eighteenth-century poet. In "The Stray Nymph," a shepherd addresses his friends:

> Cease your music, gentle swains:
> Saw ye Delia cross the plains?
> Every thicket, every grove,
> Have I rang'd to find my love:
> A kid, a lamb, my flock, I give,
> Tell me only, doth she live?
> White her skin as mountain-snow;
> In her cheek the roses blow;
> And her eye is brighter far
> Than the beamy morning star. (French, IV, p. 106, ll. 1-10)

Philips has used the pastoral aspects of music, swains, sheep, purity, and comparison to the sun. Clearly, Philips, not a satirist, asserts his credence in the stereotypical view of women.

Lord Lyttleton's "Advice To a Lady" is addressed to Belinda, a lady who, like all women, he believes, has few friends. He intends to be that true friend who can give honest counsel. He asks, rhetorically,

> What is your sex's earliest, latest care,
> Your heart's supreme ambition? -- To be fair.
> For this, the toilet every thought employs,
> Hence all the toils of dress, and all the joys.
> (French, VI, pp. 203-4, ll. 17-20)

He advises Belinda to avoid wit and concentrate on "modest sense" since wit "intoxicates the brain/ Too strong for feeble woman to

sustain" (ll. 32-3). Other tidbits of friendly honest advice include:

> Seek to be good, but aim not to be great:
> A woman's noblest station is retreat. (ll. 51-2)
>
> The household sceptre if he bids you bear,
> Make it your pride his servant to appear. (ll. 119-20)
>
> Let Reason teach what Passion fain would hide,
> That Hymen's bands by Prudence should be tied. (ll. 87-88)

The stereotype is clear: women should be inferior, submissive, domestic slaves and, above all, chaste.

These examples illustrate that the idealized pastoral image of women was alive in eighteenth-century verse. Throughout the seventeenth and into the eighteenth century, poets typically idealized women in verse. In his thesis McClain cites a passage from *A Full Enquiry Into the True Nature of Pastoral*(1717) by Thomas Purney, an eighteenth-century critic of pastoral idealization, that is appropriately noted here. Purney provides a good idea of the image Swift attacked in his scatological poetry:

> Of the three sorts of Beautiful Images, the first, and least delightful is, where only a simple Image is exibited to the Reader's Mind. As of a *Fair Shepherdess*.
>
> The second Sort is, where there is the Addition of the Scene; as suppose we give the Picture of the *fair Shepherdess*, *sitting on the Banks of a Pleasant Streamlet*.
>
> The third, and finest kind of Beautiful Image is, where the Picture contain's a still further Addition of Action. As, the Image of a Fair Shepherdess, on the Banks of a pleasant Stream asleep, and her innocent Lover harmlessly smoothing her Cloaths as flutter'd by the Wind. And the most beautiful Image in Phillips, or I think any Pastoral-Writer, is of this Nature.

> _Once Delia lay, on easy Moss reclin'd:_
> _Her lovely Limbs half bare, and rude the Wind._
> _I smooth'd her Coats, and stole a silent Kiss;_
> _Condemn me, Shepherds, if I did amiss._
>
> The last Line contains a Pastoral Thought, of the best Sort; as the three first a Pastoral Image. (McClain, p. 37)

These stereotypical aspects of pastoral poetry are applicable also to eighteenth-century pastoral verse.

Swift rebels against this poetic idealization with parodies ("Clad all in Brown") and scatological verse peopled with Chloes, Corinnas, Delias, Caelias, Strephons and other stereotypes familiar to his readers. Swift insisted on a much more realistic, human portrait of women and men. His scatological poetry attacks the popular pastoral images. Because he attacks the stereotypical views of his contemporaries and his satiric purpose is to correct certain poetic and social shortcomings, Swift can be considered enlightened for his time.

Whether we expect a satiric attack on this pastoral image from Swift or not, his "A Pastoral Dialogue" soon raises our suspicions. The poem is a conversation between a nymph and a swain, Sheelah and Dermot. Swift seems to present the "fair shepherdess" of Purney's first sort. We soon realize that they are not in a beautiful pastoral setting but in a garden, weeding potatoes. Dermot and Sheelah profess their love for each other not with typical endearing pastoral words, such as comparing love to the stars, but with allusions to their weeding. Dermot says:

> My Love to Sheelah is more firmly fixt
> Than strongest Weeds that grow these Stones betwixt:
> My Spud these Nettles from the Stones can part,
> No Knife so keen to weed thee from my Heart. (p. 394, ll. 9-12)

Sheelah claims that "Love rooted out, again will never grow" (l. 16).

Dermot offers Sheelah a mat to sit on so she will not bruise her "Bum" in the briars. Sheelah then notices that Dermot's pants are torn, and she offers him her petticoat which is wet -- from sweat, she claims. Dermot reveals his jealousy at Sheelah spending time with another man, picking lice from his hair. The nymph's accusation, in turn, is clearly not in the pastoral tradition:

> When you with Oonah stood behind a Ditch,
> I peept, and saw you kiss the dirty Bitch.
> Dermot, how could you touch those nasty Sluts!
> I almost wisht this Spud were in your Guts. (p. 395, ll. 37-40)

After they finish their accusations, they swear their love for each other again and leave to rest their "weary Bums" (l. 52).

Swift clearly attacks the pastoral image of women (and men) in poetry. He refers to Dermot and Sheelah as a swain and a nymph and proceeds to destroy all vestiges of an idealized relationship between them. Their love is professed using weeding allusions. They are placed in the indelicate situation of providing protection for each other's backsides. They viciously accuse each other of inconstancy, but they make up, still comparing their love using weeding imagery. Dermot swears: "But, if I ever touch her Lips again,/ May I be doom'd for Life to weed in Rain" (ll. 43-44). It is noteworthy that the "weeding-knife" is foremost in Sheelah's thoughts, then, is she worried about

losing Dermot; her man comes second. Sheelah is really nothing like her pastoral counterparts, nor is Chloe in "Strephon and Chloe."

Our introduction to Chloe reveals a wondrous nymph personifying perfection. We can note a progression in Swift's poetic diction from:

> Of Chloe all the Town has rung;
> By ev'ry size of Poets sung:
> So beautiful a Nymph appears
> But once in Twenty Thousand Years.
> By Nature form'd with nicest Care,
> And, faultless to a single Hair.
> Her graceful Mein, her Shape, and Face,
> Confest her of no mortal Race:
> And then, so nice, and so genteel;
> Such Cleanliness from Head to Heel. (p. 519, ll. 1-10)

to:

> No Humours gross, or frowzy Steams,
> No noisom Whiffs, or sweaty Streams,
> Before, behind, above, below,
> Could from her taintless Body flow.
> Would so discreetly Things dispose,
> None ever saw her pluck a Rose.
> Her dearest Comrades never caught her
> Squat on her Hams, to make Maid's Water.
> You'd swear, that so divine a Creature
> Felt no Necessities of Nature. (pp. 519-20, ll. 11-20)

First Chloe is "So beautiful a Nymph" and clean. Then Swift adds aspects of grossness that she supposedly could never possess. He continues to say that her "Arm-pits would not stain her Gown" (p. 520, l. 22), her feet would never smell, nor her "Milk-white Hands" (l. 25) be rough. Every image is of purity, cleanliness, and beauty. Our first impressions of her, presented from Strephon's point of view, are unrealistic, the idealized, pastoral images that Swift will destroy.

Strephon and Chloe are wed, with Hymen and other goddesses

attending, and the action proceeds to the wedding night when they must "crown their Joys" (p. 521, l. 70). But Strephon is perplexed:

> BUT, still the hardest Part remains.
> Strephon had long perplex'd his Brains,
> How with so high a Nymph he might
> Demean himself the Wedding-Night. (ll. 71-76)

Any overexertion might cause him to sweat, and Chloe might smell him then, for "she a Goddess dy'd in Grain/ Was unsusceptible of Stain" (ll. 85-6). Though he himself is human, he sees Chloe as a stereotype, the image of purity and perfection. Swift asks: "Can such a Deity endure/ A mortal human Touch impure?" (ll. 89-90). Strephon can only hope that his goddess will visit a mortal man as goddesses are sometimes likely to do. He then fears losing his life from making Chloe angry enough to shoot lightning from her eyes, which is another goddess-like quality Strephon endows her with.

Swift then addresses parents, warning them not to allow their daughters to drink too many liquids, such as beer or tea, or eat foods that would cause them to break wind. Since

> Love such Nicety requires,
> One Blast will put out all his Fires.
> Since Husbands get behind the Scene,
> The Wife should study to be clean;
> Nor give the smallest Room to guess
> The Time when Wants of Nature press. (p. 523, ll. 135-40)

Even after marriage, Swift ironically suggests that the wife "practice more/ Decorum than she did before;/ To keep her Spouse deluded still" (ll. 141-43).

Thus far, Swift has concluded that it is silly to consider that women do not have "Necessities of Nature" as men do. But Swift

suggests that perhaps since the husband is allowed "behind the Scene," the wife needs to continue to delude him by not being too revealing. Swift argues against the notion that women are goddesses and insists on a realistic treatment of them, but he also believes that there are times when we must hold on to our illusions, as in marriage, to protect ourselves -- from ourselves. Marriage, then would last longer and be happier if the husband could maintain some illusions about his wife.

The poem continues as Strephon makes an attempt to get closer to Chloe, and she resists his move, for how could such a nymph allow a "brutish Man to touch her?" (l. 153). We then learn that twelve cups of tea are to take their toll on dear Chloe, and she must "void or burst" (l. 166). She reaches for the chamber pot and draws it into bed. In an ironic comparison, Swift describes the "Fair Utensil, as smooth and white/ As Chloe's Skin, almost as bright" (p. 524, ll. 173-4). Then comes the revelation for poor Strephon:

> STREPHON who heard the fuming Rill
> As from a mossy Cliff distill;
> Cry'd out, ye Gods, what Sound is this?
> Can Chloe, heav'nly Chloe piss? (ll. 175-78)

Strephon finds Chloe "mortal as himself at least" (l. 186). Gathering up his courage, he also reaches for the chamber pot to fulfill his "necessity" and then to "Let fly a Rouzer in her Face" (l. 192).

Now that they have "revealed" themselves to each other, Swift bids adieu to the pastoral image:

> ADIEU to ravishing Delights,
> High Raptures, and romantick Flights;
> To Goddesses so heav'nly sweet,
> Expiring Shepherds at their Feet;
> To silver Meads, and shady Bow'rs,
> Drest up with Amaranthine Flow'rs.
> How great a Change! how quickly made!
> They learn to call a Spade, a Spade. (11. 197-204)

Strephon and Chloe are more at ease with each other, all illusions gone, and they are no longer ashamed of their humanness together.

But Swift does not allow the poem to end before commenting more on the realistic aspect of marriage. Initially the wife's beauty will bring about desire in the husband, but with time and age, the wife needs to depend on something more -- cleanliness. Only Decency can accentuate beauty and leave a lasting good impression on the man. After the honeymoon,

> Consider well what may come after;
> For fine Ideas vanish fast,
> While all the gross and filthy last. (p. 525, 11. 232-4)

With time Strephon has seen his goddess fall from "divine" stature to that of a "filthy Mate" (1. 244). The first twenty lines of the poem have come full circle.

Swift continues to argue that we need some of our illusions but not the pastoral idealization of women. Women use their beauty to catch a man but with the years, they allow themselves to be careless about their looks and cleanliness:

> They take Possession of the Crown,
> And then throw all their Weapons down;
> Though by the Politicians Scheme
> Whoe'er arrives at Pow'r supreme,
> Those Arts by which at first they gain it,
> They still must practise to maintain it. (p. 526, 11. 261-66)

Women should, Swift suggests, conceal just enough from men to guarantee that the eternal flame of desire continues to burn, but not conceal so much that their image is false.

Swift concludes by comparing a husband to a "Prudent Builder" (p. 527, l. 293). He insists that the man should realistically consider how his choice for a wife might appear after a few years of marriage; it seems to be a matter of evaluating one's investment. If a builder ascertains that the foundation for his house is stable, so must a husband-to-be consider how his intended will hold up over the years. Swift concludes:

> On Sense and Wit your Passion found,
> By Decency cemented round;
> Let Prudence with Good Nature strive,
> To keep Esteem and Love alive.
> Then come old Age whene'er it will,
> Your Friendship shall continue still:
> And thus a mutual gentle Fire,
> Shall never but with Life expire. (ll. 307-14)

The pastoral image, Swift suggests, is too superficial, and love should be based on more -- a realistic view of women as humans and not nymphs. If viewed in that light, women can be considered more equal and the men will endure less disappointment than from falling from high expectations. Moreover, by showing that Strephon's attitude is unrealistic, Swift makes Strephon as important a satiric target as the idealized poetic image. In the final analysis, then, the poem is also a social comment.

"The Lady's Dressing Room" is another of Swift's classic attempts to destroy the pastoral image with his enlightened views. Again, Strephon is the disillusioned youth whose nymph, Celia, is more, or

less, than she appears. Strephon gets an enlightening peek at Celia's dressing room before she emerges as a made-up beauty after five hours of preparation. Swift gives us an inventory of all that Strephon finds. Again, Strephon's unrealistic expectations provide the norm on which the poem's shock technique builds.

First, he spies a sweat-smeared smock that causes him to observe "how damnably the Men lie,/ In calling Celia sweet and cleanly" (p. 477, ll. 17-18). He next sees dirty combs, oily cloths used for smoothing wrinkles, vials, paints, and ointments. The imagery is explicit as Swift describes the disgusting articles of preparation Chloe apparently needs to make herself beautiful. Strephon continues to survey the room:

> But oh! it turn'd poor Strephon's Bowels,
> When he beheld and smelt the Towels,
> Begumm'd, bematter'd, and beslim'd
> With Dirt, and Sweat, and Ear-Wax grim'd. (ll. 43-46)

He observes her petticoats, handkerchiefs, stained stockings, and tweezers. When he looks in Chloe's mirror he sees her perhaps more closely than he ever imagined:

> A Glass that can to Sight disclose,
> The smallest Worm in Celia's Nose,
> And faithfully direct her Nail
> To squeeze it out from Head to Tail;
> For catch it nicely by the Head,
> It must come out alive or dead. (p. 478, ll. 63-68)

The reality of Chloe's boudoir has destroyed Strephon's image of Chloe as an ideal nymph. The ultimate item in her room that elicits the most disgust from Strephon is a chest that was designed with counterfeit handles and hinges "To make it seem in this Disguise,/

A Cabinet to vulgar Eyes" (ll. 17-18). Swift plays with the Pandora's box allusion as Strephon opens the lid and is struck by the offensive odors of her toilet:

> The Vapours flew from out the Vent,
> But Strephon cautious never meant
> The Bottom of the Pan to grope,
> And fowl his Hands in Search of Hope.
> O ne'er may such a vile Machine
> Be once in Celia's Chamber seen!
> O may she better learn to keep
> "Those Secrets of the Hoary deep!" (p. 479, ll. 91-98)

Swift then compares the smell to the odor that is emitted when fat burns in grease. "Thus finishing his grand Survey,/ The Swain disgusted slunk away" (ll. 115-16).

Strephon pays the price for his peeping in much the same way the Strephon of "Strephon and Chloe" does. They can no longer live deluded, believing in a pastoral image of their females. Strephon, in "The Lady's Dressing Room," can not look at another woman without the realistic assessment of what she must go through to become the image he sees. The poet suggests that if Strephon would hold his nose,

> He soon would learn to think like me,
> And bless his ravisht Eyes to see
> Such Order from Confusion sprung,
> Such gaudy Tulips rais'd from Dung. (p. 480, ll. 139-42)

Thus Swift moves his attack from satiric parody to social commentary. He warns his readers to watch for the inherent hypocrisy in any idealized image of women, whether in poetry or real life. He sees for men a danger in not realizing that women are human beings as men are. The two Strephons learn the hard way, and Swift hopes

to illustrate that their disappointment regarding women could be avoided through some kind of realistic approach to equality between the sexes.

A final example of the moral intent of Swift's scatology is "Cassinus and Peter: A Tragical Elegy." Two college students meet to chat. Cassinus, the Swain as satiric victim, is utterly despondent, and his friend, Peter, attempts to discover the source of his grief. Peter asks, "Is Caelia dead?" (p. 529, l. 42) "Has she play'd the Whore?" (l. 45) Cassinus sighs, "Wou'd it were no more!" (l. 46) "Has the small or greater Pox/ Sunk down her Nose?" (ll. 48-9) Cassinus answers that beauty is "but a Varnish,/ Which Time and Accidents will tarnish" (ll. 51-2). But Caelia has apparently done a most vile deed, "the most invenom'd Dart,/ To pierce an injur'd Lover's Heart" (ll. 59-60). Cassinus then asks if Caelia has been seeing another lover. To this Cassinus answers:

> Friend Peter, this I could excuse;
> For, ev'ry Nymph has Leave to chuse;
> Nor, have I Reason to complain:
> She loves a more deserving Swain.
> But, oh! how ill hast thou divin'd
> A Crime that shocks all human Kind;
> A Deed unknown to Female Race,
> At which the Sun should hide his Face. (ll. 63-70)

Swift then has Cassinus launch into a grand farewell to the world, alluding to mythical figures; his grief will surely be the death of him. He decides to reveal his secret to Peter, imploring that Peter not tell anyone, including his lover ("(How would her Virgin Soul bemoan/ A Crime to all her Sex unknown!)") (ll. 103-4).

> And yet, I dare confide in you;
> So, take my Secret, and adieu.

> NOR wonder how I lost my Wits;
> Oh! Caelia, Caelia, Caelia shits. (p. 531, ll. 115-18)

Cassinus serves Swift in double satiric function. His name and attitude at once suggest satiric parody of certain pastoral verse, and his role as disillusioned male lover suggests, at least at one level, a plea for gender equality.

Swift forthrightly attacks the false pastoral idealized image built up in eighteenth-century poetry. Women do not warrant the typical male idealization, he maintains. "Strephon and Chloe," "The Lady's Dressing Room," and "Cassinus and Peter" provide examples of men who are victims of their own illusions, believing their lovers to be idealized and totally pure. Chloe, Celia, and Caelia exemplify Swift's enlightened attacks on the idealized poetic pastoral image of women. Strephon and Cassinus exemplify this attack also. But when we look beyond these pastoral stereotypes, another dimension of Swift's satiric attack becomes evident. Women appear ridiculous when they let the stereotypes shape their attitudes and actions; the men are admonished to be realistic in their attitudes toward women and accord to them a measure of equality.

In _Swift and Scatological Satire_, Jae Num Lee analyzes the above three poems also. He sees Swift's purpose as moral. He believes that:

> the climax in each of these poems is the heroes' discovery of their nymphs' humanity through the fact that these young ladies, _like the heroes themselves_, are subject to the necessity of evacuating. This discovery constitutes a moment of truth for these young men, to be shocked and disillusioned, and in the case of "Strephon and Chloe," to become cynical. (Lee, p. 82; emphasis added)

Lee points out, rightly, that the young ladies, "like the heroes themselves," are human; he sees the poems, at least in part, as an assertion of equality between men and women. The ladies' images (i.e., how they are perceived by men) need not be ruined simply by the discovery of the truth; their blemishes are not unique but universal in all human beings. Lee observes that Strephon, in "The Lady's Dressing Room," magnifies Celia's one defect and thereby ruins her image and that of all other maidens (Lee, p. 85). According to Lee, Swift attacks affectation, uncleanliness, and excessive fashion. Regarding marriage, Swift does not approve of marriage without passion, but he also sees a marriage of unrestrained passion as unreasonable. He insists on a balance of the body and the mind.

Swift uses scatology for shock value to disgust for moral, didactic purposes. According to Lee, Swift's basic purpose in his scatology seems to be "to emphasize his point, to provoke maximum shock, disgust, nausea, or disillusionment" (Lee, p. 90-91). Lee is, I believe, correct in drawing this conclusion; Swift's satire has a double thrust. He used his scatology to destroy the pastoral idealized poetic image of women. And he wants his readers to be realistic, to realize the equal limitations of all human beings.

Few poets of the eighteenth century take issue with the pastoral image as Swift does. Poets such as John Gay, the Earl of Dorset, Dr. Joseph Warton, and Edward Moore do indeed deal with some aspects of the fashionable, beautiful nymph image. No one, though, observes and comments on idealization as Swift does; nor is the scatology

present.

For example, John Gay attacks, in a near-Swiftian vein, affectation and artificiality. In "The Toilette," Gay attacks the practice of older women attempting to use cosmetics and other artifices to make them appear younger. This was a typical eighteenth-century criticism of women -- their preoccupation with trying to remain young. Lydia, thirty-five, spends hours at the "dumb devotion of her glass" (French, III, p. 170, l. 16) and "fancies youthful dress gives youthful airs" (l. 18). She thinks of the personification of youth and beauty -- Chloe. Ah, "Chloe's now what Lydia was before!" (l. 32). Lydia grieves her lost youth and sighs in her jealousy toward Chloe. But soon, her maid enters her room to cheer her up and flatter her with praise of pretty trifles:

> "How well this ribband's gloss becomes your face!"
> She cries, in raptures; "then, so sweet a lace!
> How charmingly you look! so bright! so fair!
> 'Tis to your eyes the head-dress owes its air."
> Straight Lydia smil'd; the comb adjusts her locks
> And at the play-house Harry keeps her box. (p. 171, ll. 101-6)

Gay also takes a stab at the empty-headedness of females, observing Lydia's quick acquiescence to her maid's obsequiousness. But he does not follow through with an illustration of women's humanity, a view essential to the purpose of Swift's scatological verse.

Gay further attacks the "nymph-like" female in "The Tea Table." Doris and Melanthe are sitting around a table, chatting. They gossip incessantly about Laura and Sylvia, and others. They are sarcastic and biting in their gossip. Doris says of Sylvia:

At marriage Sylvia rails; "who men would trust?"
Yet husbands' jealousies are sometimes just.
Her favours Sylvia shares among mankind:
Such generous love should never be confin'd.
(French, III, p. 172, ll. 89-92)

Then we realize that Doris and Melanthe were waiting for Laura and Sylvia to arrive for a game of cards. Laura and Sylvia do arrive, and:

the nymphs arise;
"This unexpected visit," Doris cries,
"Is doubly kind!" Melanthe Laura led:
"Since I was last so blest, my dear," she said,
"Sure 'tis an age!" They sate; the hour was set;
And all again that night at ombre met. (ll. 95-100)

What women say and think is apparently not what is reflected in their actions. The blatant hypocrisy of the women shown in this situation is under attack. Though Swift would agree that this hypocrisy and empty-headed fawning, as illustrated in both the poems, are undesirable, he would carry the issue much further. Why are women too often preoccupied with trivial, non-intellectual pursuits? What social attitudes insist on Lydia's preoccupation with appearing youthful? Swift's poetry is more than merely an attack on the pastoral image; it is also a social comment.

Also commenting similarly on the futility of cosmetics and fashion with age are the Earl of Dorset and Mr. C. B---R. The Earl addresses Dorinda in "On the Countess of Dorchester":

Tell me, Dorinda, why so gay,
Why such embroidery, fringe, and lace?
Can any dresses find a way,
To stop th' approaches of decay,
And mend a ruin'd face? (Chalmers, VIII, p. 343, ll. 1-5)

The Earl claims that no cosmetics or adornments could make her a "fine young thing" (l. 70). The Earl here takes issue, as other poets do, with a common attitude at least found in poetry of the eighteenth century.

In the Gentleman's Magazine, a poet identified only as Mr. C. B---R offers the "Modern Fine Lady" (1746). He, too, addresses the issues of fashion and cosmetics. The introductory note says that the poem is "a counterpart of the modern fine gentleman." This poet does not seem, as Swift did with Cowley's poem, to satirize the diction of "Modern Fine Gentleman," another poem written before 1746, but merely to record female nature as he observed it. "The fair (for that's their gen'ral name)/ Burns with the thirst of publick fame."[9] He supports this by surveying women in the morning:

> With care and cost herself adorning,
> Learn in the glass how to behave her,
> And spoil the face that nature gave her. ("MFL," ll. 8-10)

Woman is "smit with ev'ry vice in fashion" (l. 19) and careless of her reputation. The typical woman apparently marries a fool and then deserts home and husband by whiling her hours away frivolously at cards. Then the "years quick-rolling hold their pace,/ And spoil the beauties of her face" (l. 27-8). Her husband now has no desire for her, and she turns to prostitution for affection, feigned or real. She uses make-up excessively, turns into an alcoholic and dies. This poet associates the use of cosmetics and artifice with prostitution, especially in a woman's later years. His poetry appears

to be satiric, to bring to the readers' attention the plight of too many females. Although superficial attacks on affectation and artifice are common in eighteenth-century poetry, this poet seems to approach the subject not with merely a condescending, critical attitude toward women, but a corrective intent.

Dr. Joseph Warton offers "Fashion: A Satire." He approaches the subject by initially observing:

> Yes, yes, my friend, disguise it as you will,
> To right or wrong 'tis Fashion guides us still;
> A few perhaps rise singularly good,
> Defy and stem the fool-o'erwhelming flood;
> The rest to wander from their brethren fear,
> As social herrings in large shoals appear.
> (Chalmers, XVIII, pp. 161-62, ll. 1-6)

He notes that too often we unthinkingly follow courses of action because it is the fashion. He describes a common attitude among the fashionable women: "Think not she prays, or is grown penitent --/ She went to church -- because the parish went" (p. 162, ll. 27-28). Warton observes that many scrooges who otherwise would not give to charities do so because it is the thing to do. He describes a woman who will not be a slut though "Not aw'd by virtue -- but "The world would talk" (l. 38). He addresses fashion and scorns it for being so fickle, one day insisting on one design, the next day another:

> What art, O Fashion, pow'r supreme below:
> You make us virtue, nature, sense, forego;
> You sanctify knave, atheist, whore, and fool,
> And shield from justice, shame, and ridicule. (ll. 101-104)

Warton concludes by again addressing his friend who is a virtuous and fair maid. He praises her for wanting to spend her time with

In the Preface to Edward Moore's "Fables for the Ladies," he states: "As they (the fables) are the writings of an idle hour, so they are intended for the reading of those, whose only business is amusement" (Chalmers, XIV, p. 261). But though this attitude is not very flattering, most upper-class women in the eighteenth century had nothing to do but amuse themselves. Moore thinks that he has something of value to say to these ladies. Fable V, "The Poet and His Patron," almost has a Swiftian ring to it. Moore observes that married women often stop attempting to be desirable to their husbands; their dress and appearance go unattended.

> Beauty can only point the dart,
> 'Tis neatness guides it to the heart;
> Let neatness then, and beauty strive
> To keep a wav'ring flame alive. (p. 263, ll. 25-28)

As with Swift, Moore grants that when women "Admit us once behind the screen,/ What is there further to be seen?" (ll. 31-32). Moore suggests that women reevaluate their lives and attempt to improve "the charm that fix'd your husband's love" (l. 36). Moore wants to see "Chloe" continue to be clean and beautiful to her husband. "Unthinking fools alone despise/ The arts, that taught them first to rise" (ll. 81-2). The poet insists that women continue to be fair, yet clean, by being artificial. Moore seems to accept Chloe; she would be desirable if she stayed clean. Swift, on the other hand, rejects the Chloe image completely. While agreeing with Moore that women should be clean and attractive, he takes it further. In "The Lady's Dressing Room," Swift suggests that women should be

natural, not artificial. But as with Corinna in "A Beautiful Young Nymph Going to Bed," women should be clean, also.

In Fable VII, "The Goose and the Swans," Moore speaks out against affectation.

> Nature may under-do her part,
> But seldom wants the help of Art;
> Trust her; she is your surest friend,
> Nor made your form for you to mend. (p. 265, ll. 39-42)
>
> Learn hence, to study wisdom's rules;
> Know, foppery's the pride of fools;
> And striving Nature to conceal,
> You only her defects reveal. (ll. 87-90)

Moore insists that women not destroy what nature has done, but he still wants her to be a natural "fair nymph," not a human being. His fables are an attack against affectation and unkemptness, but he condones the idealized Chloe image where Swift never would.

While some major and minor poets address the pastoral idealized nymph image and others attack affectation and artifice, none do so as thoroughly and bluntly as Swift. The views in Swift's scatology appear to be unique and enlightened for their time. He attacks the artificial, eternally beautiful nymph image with his Chloes, Corinnas, and Caelias. Swift attacks more than the pastoral stereotype. He insists that men realistically view women and treat them not as "fair nymphs," but as human beings like themselves. Clearly, Swift's attack is two-pronged: poets should draw flesh and blood not idealized pictures of women, and men should change their attitudes toward women to enable them to see women as human beings.

NOTES

[1] Richard D. McClain, "Swift's Beautiful Young Nymphs: An Attack on the Pastoral Female Image," Thesis Texas A&M Univ., 1974, pp. iii-iv.

[2] John Dryden, trans., The Sixth Satire, by Juvenal, in The Works of the English Poets, from Chaucer to Cowper, ed. A. Chalmers (New York: Greenwood Press, Publ., 1969), XIX, p. 503. Any further references to this work will be by Chalmers, volume number, page number, and line numbers.

[3] Jae Num Lee, Swift and Scatological Satire (Albuquerque: Univ. of New Mexico Press, 1971), p. 16.

[4] Abraham Cowley, The Complete Works in Verse and Prose of Abraham Cowley, ed. Alexander B. Grosart (New York: AMS Press, Inc., 1967), p. 107.

[5] Raymond J. Smith, Charles Churchill (Boston: Twayne Publishers, Inc., 1977), p. 109.

[6] Isabel St. John Bliss, Edward Young (New York: Twayne Publishers, Inc., 1969), p. 67.

[7] George Granville, "Corinna," in Minor English Poets 1660-1780, ed. A. Chalmers and D. P. French (New York: Benjamin Blom, Publisher, 1967), III, p. 285, lines 15-18. Hereafter cited as French.

[8] Chalmers, X, p. 147, lines 1-14.

[9] C. B---R, "Modern Fine Lady," in Gentleman's Magazine, ed. Edward Cave (London: at St. John's Gate, 1746), XVI, p. 321, lines 5-6. Any further reference to this poem will be by "MFL" and line numbers.

CHAPTER III

EDUCATIONAL AND SOCIAL EQUALITY FOR WOMEN

To show that Swift's satiric attacks on the education of women were enlightened and corrective, we need to understand what the prevailing attitudes were in eighteenth-century society. The general attitudes prevailing then, especially among the men, seem to have supported the existing inequalities in the females' education, marriage, and status in society. Though a number of histories and legal commentaries are used in this chapter, only general conclusions can be drawn regarding women in eighteenth-century society, due to the subjectivity of each writer's interpretation of history. The histories, criticisms, essays of the Garland Series and Augustan Reprint Society, and supplemental poetry will form the basis by which I evaluate Swift's work.

Educational Equality

The educational system for females was a very controversial issue during the eighteenth century. Almost every history makes some comment on the issue, and most feminists held that the way to improve women's situation in society was through an improvement in their education.

A young girl's education usually began with a little reading, writing, and sewing, and a lot of religion. She was taught correct

posture and polite manners. Many young ladies were sent to boarding schools to become "modern fine ladies" (Alexander, p. 56). Education, especially in boarding schools, Alexander laments, was "calculated to cultivate the personal graces while the care of the head, and of the heart, is little, if at all" (Alexander, p. 57). As a "modern fine lady," a young woman's main goal was to attract a man through beauty and charm.

At the boarding schools, the women were taught needlework ("flimsy and useless," not practical sewing, according to Alexander, p. 56), reading, the language of the "neighboring kingdom" (Alexander, p. 56), drawing, music, dancing, fashionable dressing, manners, and, "we are sorry to say" (Alexander, p. 56), cards. Writing and math were considered "auxiliary accomplishments which are not to be carried into life" (Alexander, p. 56). Reading was primarily confined to romances which "greatly tend to mislead the understanding and corrupt the heart" (Alexander, p. v). Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin criticized that too many subjects were learned superficially, and too few were learned thoroughly.[1]

Alexander mentions that some parents, even though sending their daughters to school, gave them a practical education at home. He says that some women forgot the "frippery" they learned and cultivated "such knowledge, and such virtues, as were ornamental to society, and useful to themselves" (Alexander, p. 57). Priscilla Bell Wakefield, in her <u>Reflections</u> (1798), wishes that more middle class families would consider that bringing up girls above their

social rank and expectations produces "unhappy women with high hopes of elegance."[2] She holds that respectable schools for the middle class should be established so the women at that rank can acquire useful knowledge. Girls should not receive an education disproportionate to their social position (PBW, p. 59). Mary W. Godwin also supports mothers educating their own daughters, if they have time, good sense, and more than one daughter.[3]

Women were offered an "elementary education" beyond which they were not to aspire.[4] Sir Walter Besant quotes an advertisement by a mistress of a boarding school in London in the eighteenth century. The first few sentences reveal the curriculum:

> Young ladies are compleatly finished in every polite, as well as useful branch of education: viz., French, Music, Dancing, Writing, Fine Work, Plain Work, Child-bed Linen, etc. There is great care taken of their health, a strict regard paid to the improvement of their morals, a very proper method used to make them good housewives.[5]

This type of education promotes the idea of women being primarily companions and housewives for men.

Mary Hays discusses the education issue primarily in three sections: What Men Would Have Women to Be, What Women Are, and what women cannot do. She observes men's attitudes toward female education and draws some conclusions. They would want women to be wise but not act learned. They expect that women be insignificant, set aside passions for prudence, and humor their vices and follies.[6] She cites and refutes three basic objections that men have against educating women more equitably:

1. "Knowledge and learning render women presuming and conceited." (p. 62)

2. A pursuit of knowledge forces women to neglect their families and domestic duties. (p. 66)

3. "Knowledge renders women masculine, and consequently disgusting in their manners." (p. 172)

Hays argues against these objections insisting that if men would consider women as rational and more equal human beings, women would be happier, better-natured, and what a wife may and ought to be (p. 293).

While the above objections were common in the minds of many during the eighteenth century, a more prevalent variation on the theme was proposed. Those who believed the common objections disapproved of improving female education in fear that studies would lead women from feminine endeavors and household duties. But others believed that a better education would enable a woman to be a better wife, friend, and mother. This latter attitude seems to be the most popular -- education not for knowledge's sake, but education, to whatever degree, to make females better companions to men.

Hunter's analysis of articles in Gentleman's Magazine reveals that only 25% supported the traditional ideas that women should be unaffected, polite, happy, calm, and only concerned with men's pleasures.[7] Some held that while women may not be inferior, so to speak, they still should not flaunt their learning. Others, though, did contend that women were subordinate (p. 79). Hunter observes that most of the articles were sympathetic to women's problems regarding education, careers, marriage and basic equality. It was commonly

thought that present female education did not "prepare a woman to be the wife of a man of sense," to carry on intelligent conversation (p. 81).

Reformers gave four basic reasons supporting an improvement in female education:

1. Women would be better companion to their husbands.
2. Women would be trained to handle money and, therefore, be better household managers.
3. Nature and society gave women control over morals and manners; they must be ready to set good examples in language usage and social behavior for their children.
4. Women would need to be independent to support themselves if ever necessary. (Hunter, p. 83)

Hunter concludes that the "woman question" was a very real issue, and sympathy did exist for non-traditional views of women.

Alexander complains of women's general lack of a proper education. He insists that women often have a biased nature due to the "frippery and folly, under the name of education." Alexander must have seen some hope in improving education because he observes that due to lack of a good education, women are to some extent, slaves. "It is well-known, that slavery throws a damp on the genius" (p. 43). He hoped that a good education would build a "foundation of reason and sense" which would enable friendship to exist between men and women. When beauty is gone, the void in the man's heart could be filled by friendship (p. 57).

Besant explains the origin of the Bluestockings led by Lady

Montague. The term was applied to women who feigned learning; this may explain the contempt often felt toward female education. Lady Montague's Letters, though, "encouraged other women to brave ridicule and to take up studies seriously" (Besant, p. 281). She paved the way for female writers such as Mary Wollstonecraft, Jane Austen, and Hannah More to prove that women's ignorance is due not to a lack of intelligence, but to their education and men's attitudes (p. 281). W. E. H. Lecky notes that the increase of female authors reflects the slow, but steady improvement of female education. They exerted their influence:

> in banishing coarseness from English literature, in stimulating those branches of it which are most in harmony with female tastes, and in destroying the foolish prejudice of treating serious studies as unbecoming a woman.[8]

As early as 1673, Bathsua Makin, in her Essay to Revive the Antient Education of Gentlewomen, espoused educational improvements for women. She argued against the increase of boarding schools in the seventeenth century where girls would learn useless arts to attract husbands, and virtue was ignored. She presented a plan, in anticipation of Wakefield's more outspoken views, in which each girl would learn according to her needs and abilities. Makin grants that men are heads of the household but that women still should attempt to improve their education.[9]

Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin wrote on the education of daughters. She insisted on an early strict adherence to truth and virtue, holding that the girls should be taught "submission to superiors" and

"condescension to inferiors."[10] She wanted to see more than the customary trifles taught in the schools; attention to elegance and manners is fine, if not over-emphasized in the curriculum, she maintained. Affectation, not ignorance, should be ridiculed. "Simplicity of Dress and unaffected manners, should go together" (p. 41); she says: "Let the manners arise from the mind and let there be no disguise for the genuine emotions of the heart" (p. 34). Concerning reading, Godwin insists that girls should read not "merely to remember words," but to "enlarge the mind and improve the heart" (p. 49).

In Wollstonecraft's more popular Vindication of the Rights of Woman (1792), she condemns the present educational system. She addresses the middle class because she believes them to be more natural and unaffected than upper class females who "only live to amuse themselves" (p. 21). She introduces her intentions to her audience:

> My own sex, I hope, will excuse me, if I treat them like rational creatures, instead of flattering their fascinating graces, and viewing them as if they were in a state of perpetual childhood. (pp. 21-22)

She observes that men frequently complain about women's follies but do not allow them an education which promotes reason. Men criticized women for saying things they learned by rote and not being natural, but they denied them the use of reason in education (p. 207). If a woman could receive a good education, Wollstonecraft contends, she would be less dependent on her husband, more rational, and a better companion. Wollstonecraft proposes a system of national schools, combining public and private education in which boys and girls would be educated together. She emphasizes understanding and not mindless

memorizing. All children should be treated equally, she believes, and they could, therefore, develop respect more easily. Girls would then be taught with the boys, and not just frivolous accomplishments. "I speak of the improvement and emancipation of the whole sex," (p. 307), and if that emancipation occurs, she believes that women will be better wives, friends, and mothers:

> Would men but generously snap our chains, and be content with rational fellowship instead of slavish obedience, they would find us more observant daughters, more affectionate sisters, more faithful wives, more reasonable mothers -- in a word, better citizens. We should then love them with true affection, because we should learn to respect ourselves; and the peace of mind of worthy man would not be interrupted by the idle vanity of his wife. (p. 262)

Maria Edgeworth in her Letters (1795) argues against the common reasons for not educating young women:

1. "Women are intrinsically inferior."
2. Failure to emphasize some prejudices "renders their chastity vulnerable."
3. Appearing in print might "jeopardize their weak fortitude and delicate reputations."
4. Literary ladies are not desirable for marriage because they do not display that "certain degree of weakness both of mind and body" most desired by men.[11]

Priscilla Wakefield insists on the "necessity of Women being educated for the exercise of lucrative employment" (PBW, p. 6). She also spotted defects in the educational system and suggested improvements. Women should possess virtues that insure their happiness. "A girl should be impressed from the first dawnings of reason, that she lives, not for herself, but to contribute to the happiness of others" (p. 35).

Wakefield saw three barriers against women's being educated for employment:

1. False notions -- the idea that only a few jobs were available to women, such as prostitution.

2. Exclusion from society -- a career would isolate women from social, neighborly functions.

3. Diminished chance of advantageous marriage -- due to the prejudices of both sexes toward employment. (p. 73)

The author hopes that

> among the numbers of the female world, who appear to be satisfied with inferiority, many require only to be awakened to a true sense of their own real consequence, to be induced to support it by a rational improvement of those hours, which they have hitherto wasted in the most frivolous occupations. (p. 10)

Wakefield would expand women's occupational opportunities by suggesting less traditional businesses. "She saw no reason why they could not serve in apothecaries' shops, make toys, run inns, or farm" (Rogers, p. 20). She understands that not until society, men and women, accept education will it be successful.

Mary Hays was a friend of Wollstonecraft and agreed with her demands for equality, educational opportunity, and personal independence. She asserts that women have potential to do "everything useful and agreeable, or great and good," regardless of men's opinions (p. 44). Any misconduct of women is due to improper education, ungenerous opinions of women, and abuses in marriage where men are tyrants, which is incompatible with justice and humanity (p. 274).

In 1799 Hannah More announced her criticisms of the "modern system

of Female education." She believes that a woman should prepare herself for life with a practical education which could "enable her to regulate her own mind, and to be useful to others."[12]

> To woman therefore, whatever be her rank, I would recommend a predominance of those more sober studies, which, not having display for their object, may make her wise without vanity, happy without witnesses, and content without panegyrists; the exercise of which will not bring celebrity, but improve usefulness. She should pursue every kind of study which will teach her to elicit truth; which will lead her to be intent upon realities; will give precision to her ideas; will make an exact mind; every study which, instead of stimulating her sensibility, will chastize it; which will give her definite notions; will bring the imagination under dominion; will lead her to think, to compare, to combine, to methodise: which will confer such a power of discrimination that her judgment shall learn to reject what is dazzling if it be not solid; and to prefer, not what is striking, or bright, or new, but what is just. (More, pp. 2-3)

Women should not plead ignorance or discuss frivolous and superficial things but should carry on intelligent conversations:

> It is therefore to be regretted, that many men, even of distinguished sense and learning, are too apt to consider the society of ladies, rather as a scene in which to rest their understandings, than to exercise them; and ladies, in return, are too much addicted to make their court by lending themsleves to this spirit of trifling; they often avoid to make use of what abilities they have; and affect to talk below their natural and acquired powers of mind; considering it as a tacit welcome flattery to the understanding of men, to renounce the exercise of their own. (More, pp. 42-3)

More views a bad education as time spent wasted in society. She says that "fashion" dictates that "everybody must go everywhere every night" (p. 134). Women should stay at home and pursue intellectual activities, improving their minds, and not pass idle hours in social company, she maintains.

Jane West in 1806 wrote Letters to a Young Lady. She espoused

the same attitudes about reading as Mary W. Godwin did in her 1787 Thoughts on the Education of Daughters. West holds that:

> one well-digested book will improve the mind and the heart more than many volumes hastily devoured for the purpose of saying that we have read them.[13]

William Duff's Letters supports the idea that a woman should be a friend and companion to man. Women have a superiority of moral character and virtues such as benevolence, sympathy, and self denial (Duff, p. 43). Duff regrets that:

> until we shall see a system of female education judiciously concerted, generally adopted, and steadily prosecuted, we can never hope for that advantageous display of the female character [good judgment]. (p. 34)

Some general conclusions can be surmised from the above sources. It seems to be widely accepted in the eighteenth century that if women were to raise their positions in society, they would need to improve their education. Many believed that the existing educational system did not prepare girls for useful housework or intelligent, rational conversations. Some, though did support the system, as reflected in Mary Hays' objections.

Few poets of the eighteenth century dealt with the education issue directly. Most of their views are implied in their treatment of women as coquettish and inferior intellectually. Thomas Chatterton, in "To a Friend" (Chalmers, XV, pp. 475-6), counsels a friend before his marriage. He recommends that his friend not marry a "religionist" (l. 17) or a wealthy woman only for her money. He also advises that he "Marry no letter'd damsel, whose wise head/ May prove it just to graft the horns on thine" (ll. 25-6). These lines imply that an intellectual

woman would cuckold her husband. Women were supposed to be mere companions and not reveal their education if they had any.

Dr. Joseph Warton has Sappho advise fair Semanthe in "Sappho's Advice." She laments:

> -- It grieves me much, alas! to find
> The fair neglect t' improve her mind!
> The toys that your attention claim,
> A Grecian maid would blush to name.
> While you're adjusting your commode,
> Lesbia, or I, could make an ode!
> (Chalmers, XVIII, p. 159, ll. 19-24)

Sappho criticizes Semanthe's idleness and attention to dress, saying that in the time that she wastes primping, someone else could create a work of art that is beautiful and contributive to society. Sappho insists that when old age comes, beauty will no longer aid women while intellect will:

> Then sense and merit shall supply
> The blushing cheek, the sparkling eye;
> For nymphs, regardless of their faces,
> Should add Minerva to the Graces. (ll. 37-40)

While Chatterton espouses traditional views, Warton at least seems to appreciate the value of women's education. Swift, though, offers enlightened views unequaled by any of the century's poets.

Swift addresses the education issue also. He attacks those who are supposedly educated in the boarding schools but do not acquire reason or anything useful. "The Furniture of a Woman's Mind" attacks this lack of a practical education:

A Set of Phrases learn't by Rote;
A Passion for a Scarlet-Coat;
When at a Play to laugh, or cry,
Yet cannot tell the reason why:
Never to hold her Tongue a Minute;
While all she prates has nothing in it.
Whole Hours can with a Coxcomb sit,
And take his Nonsense all for Wit:
Her Learning mounts to read a Song,
But, half the Words pronouncing wrong;
Has ev'ry Repartee in Store,
She spoke ten Thousand Times before.
Can ready Compliments supply
On all Occasions, cut and dry. (p. 328, ll. 1-14)

Swift criticizes her rote learning, her appreciation for foolish conversation, her poor pronunciation of languages, and quick compliments and retorts, all of which she "acquired" in boarding school. He continues to attack her gossiping, her dancing, her attention to trivial details in fashion, her feigned helplessness and illnesses, and her poor ability to carry on rational, intelligent conversations ("Her Arguments directly tend/ Against the Side she would defend" (p. 330, ll. 51-52)). Swift takes a stab at a supposedly learned woman, at least so by society's standards. But that is just the issue. Swift's satiric attack on the woman is an indirect attack on the whole education system that would produce women so poorly educated, despite society's opinions that it is a quality learning experience. Swift's poem suggests that he was calling for a better education for women, one, perhaps, more equal to men's. Women apparently were learning useless social frivolities and paying quite a bit for their poor education, both financially and intellectually. Mary Hays states: "Any class so held in a state of subjection and dependence, will degenerate both

in body and mind" (Hays, p. 69).

In "Strephon and Chloe" Swift again attacks female education. Near the end of the poem, Swift comments on how quickly the glitter of the honeymoon is over after marriage:

> WHAT various Ways our Females take,
> To pass for Wits before a Rake!
> And in the fruitless Search pursue
> All other Methods but the true.
> SOME try to learn polite Behavior,
> By reading Books against their Savior;
> Some call it witty to reflect
> On ev'ry natural Defect;
> Some shew they never want explaining,
> To comprehend a double Meaning.
> But, sure a Tell-tale out of School
> Is of all Wits the greatest Fool;
> Whose rank Imagination fills,
> Her heart, and from her Lips distills;
> You'd think she utter'd from behind,
> Or at her Mouth was breaking Wind. (p. 526, ll. 271-282)

"Cadenus and Vanessa" presents a trial at which Man and Woman accuse each other of ruining "modern Love" (l. 27). The women claim that marriage has grown a "Money-League" (p. 114, l. 14), and love has "dwindled to Intrigue" (l. 13), all at the fault of Man. The men present their case against women, saying that females' corrupt taste, folly, fashion, and lack of virtue and with are the causes of a want of love in marriages. Venus, the judge, decides to endow an infant girl with every virtue that men claim women lack. The goddess of wisdom, Minerva, mistakes the baby girl for a boy and:

> Sows within her tender Mind
> Seeds long unknown to Womankind,
> For many Bosoms chiefly fit,
> The Seeds of Knowledge, Judgment, Wit.

> Her Soul was suddenly endu'd
> With Justice, Truth and Fortitude;
> With Honour, which no Breath can Stain,
> Which Malice must attack in vain. (p. 119, ll. 202-209)

Swift here comments on men's attitudes toward females. They viewed women as frivolous, without intellect but denied them an improved education. This is the argument and complaint of eighteenth-century feminists. Swift has baby Vanessa endowed with qualities not considered to have been found in women. He suggests indirectly that the present education of females is lacking because it does not develop those virtues.

In these three poems, as in most of his scatology, Swift seems to favor an improvement in the education system and attack the notion that women were subordinate to men. He views women not only as companions to men, but as human beings on an equal footing with men as can be seen in his scatological verse. As Wollstonecraft and most of her followers placed women as human beings first, women second, Swift seems to do so also. Considering the attitudes of the majority toward female education and the "fair sex," their views were indeed enlightened for their time.

Social Equality

Inequalities existed in the laws and attitudes of the eighteenth century toward women and marriage as well as in education. The histories and legal commentaries offer the most "objective" information we have concerning the laws in eighteenth-century England.

The legal age for marriage was fourteen for the man and twelve for the woman. If two underage people marry and one later decides to break off the relationship, no divorce is necessary (Blackstone, p. 437). Wollstonecraft Godwin believes that an early marriage demands domestic responsibilities too soon; and education should be completed first.

Jean Hunter's recent article, "The Eighteenth-Century Englishwoman: According to the *Gentleman's Magazine*," establishes general attitudes prevalent at the time. She notes changes that had occurred in attitudes toward education, women writers, and marriage. She traces the argument for the "trivialization of women" to the seventeenth century. Then, women were needed in the home and businesses of their husbands. But in the late seventeenth century, more luxuries allowed women to stay at home. Hunter says that this "homebody" attitude resulted in "men's expectations of female capabilities" diminishing; females then became known as the "fair," "soft," "gentle," and "weaker" sex (Hunter, p. 76).

Alexander explains that when a woman is married "her political existence is annihilated, or incorporated, into that of her husband" (p. 325). Once married, they were as one, namely, the man. Blackstone elaborated on the letter of the law. A woman's condition during her marriage when she is under the protection of her husband is her *coverture*. The man is referred to as the *baron* and the woman the *feme*. These terms imply superiority and inferiority (Blackstone, p. 446). These attitudes were built into the legal system of the eighteenth

century.

In criminal cases, Johnson observes that if a man killed his wife, he was guilty of murder. If a woman killed a man, she was guilty of treason against the crown (Hecker, p. 126). Any time a woman was taken from her husband, it was assumed to be by force, hence abduction, since "the wife is not supposed to possess a power of consent" (Johnson, p. 53).

Alexander notes that one of the disadvantages of being a woman is that they do not inherit any property until all the male heirs have been considered. Hecker further says that any movable property the woman has when she marries automatically becomes her husband's (p. 129). Johnson and Alexander illustrate the inequalities that existed in the laws toward women. It is this inequality, to whatever degree, that Swift attacks.

Gender-specific roles for women were well-established in the eighteenth century. Women were "excused from serving all kinds of public offices" (Alexander, p. 322), including jury duty, due to the inherent weakness of their sex. Alexander enumerates the occupations that women were not allowed to pursue. A woman could be queen but could not hold any other public offices; she could not officiate in church, debate in councils, sit in the Senate, go to war or practice any learned professions. She was not to concern herself with men's trades.

Besant spends a good deal of time discussing employment opportunities for women in the eighteenth century. Their work depended

on their rank and position in life. Many working women were involved in industries connected with dress and fashion. Housewives made their family's clothes, washed, mended broken items, cooked, and were responsible for everything to do with the home (Besant, p. 278).

> The middle-class woman was a housewife, a mother, and a nurse. She never thought of any work except household work -- to make her own livelihood seemed disgraceful; she looked on marriage and maternity and housewifery as the whole end of womanhood; she regarded the single woman as an imperfect creature; and she felt herself inferior to man only in those fields of work by which he made his money. (p. 279)

Alexander's view of "women of middling fortune" coincides with Besant's, but he considers the upper middle class also. Of women in that class, Alexander claims that they were concerned only with following the examples of the upper class women. They tended to copy the follies and do nothing useful (Alexander, pp. 97-99).

Of the upper class women, Besant says their attention was to cards and fashion. A woman's "constant habit of playing cards made her insipid and stupid" (Besant, p. 280). The ladies' lives were so dull and idle that some excitement was sought and found in cards. Few women read or knew enough about literature to carry on discussions with men. Alexander claims that a woman's desire to care for her children decreases as the mother's social status increases. Those in high society would be more inclined to pass their time in follies and fashions (pp. 100-101).

Regarding the lower class women, Besant states that little is known because no one was interested in them. Their employment was

only the roughest work, such as "market-gardening" (p. 284). They led lives surrounded by filth and disease and often ended up in prisons.

Alexander (1796) offers this reason for the inequalities between men and women:

> We [men] have not oppressed, because we hated, but because we loved them [women].
>
> We have not . . . assumed almost the sole management of affairs, because we were afraid . . . but only to save them the trouble of thought and of labor, and to enable them to live in ease and elegance. (Alexander, p. 110)

He believes that it would be ludicrous to try to compare men and women because they possess such different qualities. Men are given courage by their Creator, and women are not. "Our genius often leads us to the great and arduous; theirs to the soft and the pleasing" (p. 45). "Are we superior to them in what belongs to the male character?" (p. 45). The female character was to emphasize virtues such as sensibility, good-nature, delicacy, chastity, modesty, and beauty (pp. 225-6). She was to avoid scandal, wit, vanity, extravagance, fashion, folly, and neglect of family and domestic responsibilities (pp. 317-18). Alexander granted that women could reason as long as no personal interest interfered. He argues against the notion that women are inconstant, perhaps in fashions and folly, he says, but not concerning men and love. Where women have been said to be lacking courage and decisiveness, Alexander claims that those are qualities God attributed only to men (pp. 75-76).

Most of the feminists of the eighteenth century argued strongly in favor of an improved female education, and they also took issue with

the social attitude that women were subordinate to men.

Mary Hays speaks out strongly against this subordination. She feels that the notion that "men are superior beings, when compared with women; and that consequently, nature and reason, invest them with authority over the weaker sex" is "the essence, nay the very quintessence, of prepossession, of arrogance, and of absurdity" (Hays, pp. 95-6). She believes that the laws of her time were based on those notions and should be revised.

She comments on women's occupations saying that though "there are no attainments at which human nature can arrive, to which women are not equal" (Hays, p. 203), some employment is not desirable for women. Due to physical limitations, women should not go to war or do heavy manual labor. Common sense, she claims, excludes females from pursuing professions in law and theology (p. 194). She does not doubt that women's talents would make them successful at those occupations. But a "matter of delicacy" and prejudices prevent women from pursuing careers in medicine, law, or theology (pp. 195-96). Wollstonecraft believes that women could be doctors or nurses; she encourages women to read politics and history, not romances. She hopes that women will try to go into business and not prostitition (Wollstonecraft, p. 258).

William Duff in his Letters insists that women should accept the sexual status quo, a "God-given hierarchy" of subordination to men (p. 6) He holds that women's station in society is a "private and domestic one" (p. 100), that women have their "natural and proper sphere" (p. 99).

They should avoid adultery, gossip, vanity, a desire for admiration, and a desire for power. Women should attempt to be "estimable and agreeable Friends and Companions of Man" (p. 134). Qualities necessary for this include affection, fidelity, good sense and judgment, benevolence, sympathy, temperance and self-denial. Duff accepted the subordination of the "soft sex" to men both mentally and physically.

Jonathan Swift did not. His poetic satire can be seen as a limited statement for gender equality. With the prevailing attitudes toward women in eighteenth-century society in mind, Swift's "The Hardship put upon LADIES" suggests a progressive attitude:

> POOR Ladies! Though their Bus'ness be to play,
> 'Tis hard they must be busy Night and Day:
> Why should they want the Privelege of Men,
> And take some small Diversions now and then?
> Had Women been the Makers of our Laws:
> (And why they were not, I can see no Cause;)
> The Men should slave at Cards from Morn to Night;
> And Female Pleasures be to read and write. (p. 586)

Here Swift attacks the stereotypical role assigned to women. He realizes that women idly spent hours playing cards and seems to support women's involvement in politics and intellectual endeavors.

In "Strephon and Chloe" Swift comment~ that Chloe's marriage is fixed by her parents. She concedes to marry Strephon "Because her dear Papa commands" (p. 520, l. 44). Marriages in the upper classes were arranged by the two families with each other's own interests in mind. Middle and lower class women usually had more freedom of choice (Alexander, p. 181). Strephon had a "Coach and Six, and House in Town" (p. 520, l. 42) and, therefore, was approved by Chloe's father as a

match for his daughter.

"The Lady's Dressing Room," "Strephon and Chloe," and "Cassinus and Peter" reveal that Swift attacks not only the pastoral image of women but also men who idealize their women as "fair nymphs." In "The Lady's Dressing Room," Strephon is punished for peeping into Celia's boudoir: he can no longer illude himself into believing that women are pure, clean nymphs. He must face the reality that women, like men, can have "unsav'ry Odours" (p. 479, l. 121) and be uncleanly. He goes to extremes, though, and overgeneralizes Celia's defects to all women:

> All Women his Description fits,
> And both Idea's jump like Wits:
> By vicious Fancy coupled fast,
> And still appearing in Contrast. (pp. 479-80, ll. 123-126)

Swift attacks the needlessly extreme fashions that occupied women's time. Celia's pastes, oils, creams, and powders all have specific uses, and she seems to be virtually composed of all the artificial articles about her boudoir. Swift seems to suggest that more cleanliness and less artificiality would be more desirable. Strephon now suffers needlessly, according to Swift, because he had an unrealistic view of women. Swift attacks the traditional male attitude that placed women on pedestals as well as society's views of women. The laws and attitudes of the time reveal inequalities where women were concerned. Swift insists implicitly on equality in the laws and attitudes of eighteenth-century society.

The Strephon of "Strephon and Chloe" is equally under illusions. He could not believe that Chloe had "Necessities of Nature" (l. 20) like himself. When the discovery is made, Strephon realizes that she is "As <u>mortal</u> as himself at least" (p. 524, l. 186). Swift attacks Strephon for his idealization of women. This Strephon also suffers from his loss of illusion because he fails to "reconcile reality with decency" (Lee, p. 83). Marriage for Strephon has lost all hope of idealized love and romance. But their human relationship has improved. Though the "mystery" and "illusion" have faded, they are able to start anew, aware of each other's humanness. Swift insists that while women should maintain some sense of decency and illusion, men should see them realistically and not stereotypically.

Cassinus, the third of the deluded lovers, denies Caelia's physical necessities to himself, but comes to a harsh realization of the truth: "Caelia shits" (l. 118). Swift draws a Cassinus who believes that bodily functions are unknown to women though known to men. Swift suggests that this attitude is ludicrous and harmful. Indeed, Cassinus is thrown into deep fits of depression, unnecessary extremes, according to Swift. What Swift does suggest is necessary is the substitution of the idealized views of women with realistic views. He attacks the attitudes traditionally espoused by men: their women are "perfect goddesses," subordinate to themselves. The laws of the eighteenth century concerning women were unequal, also subordinating women to men. Swift views the inequalities as unnecessary and undesirable. If men would simply realize that their women are human, the suffering from the pain of lost illusions would disappear. Swift employs scatology

to try to shock his readers into that realization.

Speaking to the women of the eighteenth century, Swift recommends that they adopt better hygiene practices. Offensive defects should not be ignored by the men but should be hidden by the women:

> Women should, then, keep men "deluded" ("Strephon and Chloe," line 143), not "By help of Pencil, Paint and Brush" ("The Progress of Beauty," line 46), but through the "utmost Cleanlyness" . . . and the greatest decency.[14]

Swift's poetry is not unlike his prose. In Gulliver's Travels he points out that we sometimes fail to look at ourselves realistically and see our universal coarseness and imperfections. When Gulliver describes England to the King of Brobdingnag, the King observes that the people must be "the most pernicious race of little odious vermin that nature ever suffered to crawl upon the surface of the earth."[15] Swift illustrates that the women of Brobdingnag are coarse, possessing imperfections in their bodies and manners just as men do. Swift's scatology, by implication, suggests the need to look at all humans realistically and equally, not placing one sex in a subordinate position to the other. If these ideas can be found in early works as well as later poetry, clearly the attitudes expressed in the poetry are not the attitudes of a misogynist. Believing in a realistic and more equal view of women and men, Swift could not espouse misogynist views.

The laws of the eighteenth century indicate that women were not treated on equal footing with men. Feminists of the time argued against the prevailing attitude that women were subordinate to men.

Swift too, in his scatological satire, attacks the idea of men and women as unequal, insisting that women be considered human beings. In attacking the idealization of women and eighteenth-century female education, and by demanding equality, Swift in his enlightened views is, in effect, asking for an improvement in their educational and social status.

NOTES

[1] Mary Wollstonecraft, A Vindication of the Rights of Woman (1792; rpt. New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1974), p. 57.

[2] Priscilla Bell Wakefield, Reflections on the Present Condition of the Female Sex (1798; rpt. New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1974), p. 61. Hereafter cited as PBW, page numbers included.

[3] Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin, Thoughts on the Education of Daughters (1787; rpt. Clifton, N.J.: Augustus M. Kelly, Publisher, 1972), p. 57.

[4] Eugene A. Hecker, A Short History of Women's Rights (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, Publishers, 1971), p. 139.

[5] Sir Walter Besant, London in the Eighteenth Century (New York: The MacMillan Co., 1903), p. 279.

[6] Mary Hays, Appeal to the Men of Great Britain in Behalf of Women (1798; rpt. New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1974), pp. 47-52.

[7] Jean E. Hunter, "The Eighteenth-Century Englishwoman: According to the Gentleman's Magazine," in Woman in the Eighteenth Century and Other Essays, ed. Paul Fritz and Richard Morton (Toronto: Samuel Stevens Hakkert and Co., 1976), pp. 77-78.

[8] W. E. H. Lecky, A History of England in the Eighteenth Century (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1920), 7, p. 214.

[9] Bathsua Makin, An Essay to Revive the Antient Education of Gentlewomen (1673; rpt. UCLA: The Augustan Reprint Society, 1980).

[10] Godwin, p. 21.

[11] Katharine M. Rogers, Feminism in Eighteenth-Century England (Urbana, Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 1980), p. 221.

[12] Hannah More, Strictures (1799; rpt. New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1974), pp. 2-3.

[13] Jane West, Letters to a Young Lady (1806; rpt. New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1974), p. 513.

[14] Peter J. Schakel, "Swift's Remedy for Love: The 'Scatological' Poems," in Contemporary Studies of Swift's Poetry, ed. John Irwin Fischer and Donald C. Mell, Jr. (New Jersey: Associated Univ. Presses, Inc., 1981), pp. 146-7.

[15] Jonathan Swift, Gulliver's Travels (New York: The Modern Library, 1950), p. 149.

CHAPTER IV

DOMESTIC AND COMMERCIAL PROSTITUTION

A common belief in eighteenth-century England was that women were created for men, were dependent on men, and therefore, were slaves (Wollstonecraft, p. 51). This idea led men to expect obedience and fidelity from their wives while they could do as they pleased. In the homes, women were subject to use and abuse as the slaves and sex objects of their husbands. In society, many women turned to prostitution; it was too often the only employment option available to women. Swift condemns the artificiality of prostitutes and the fact that society, men especially, perpetuates the vice. Though sexual equality is an issue properly included with social equality, I deal with it separately, primarily for emphasis. It _is_ necessary to establish the prevailing sexual attitudes of the time in order to show that Swift attacks them.

Domestic Prostitution

In his _Laws Respecting Women_ (1777), Johnson notes that men were "domestic despots" (p. vi), allowed to enjoy a "wanton gratification of their passions" while expecting fidelity from their wives (p. vii). Men did not necessarily use violence to keep their women subservient; they abused their minds, insisting on male superiority and female obedience. It is appropriate to return to Mary Hays' statement: "Any

class so held in a state of subjection and dependence will degenerate both in body and mind" (Hays, p. 69). Johnson observes that marriage

> supplies the honourable and delicate means of gratifying the passion of love, by an unbridled indulgence of foul lust; by which that decorum and propriety of manners, which is the ornament and basis of civil society, is openly subverted. (p. 23)

Alexander (1796) posits one of the reasons for the ill treatment of women as the insensibility of men, which prompts them to exhibit animal appetites and not love (p. 220). He contrasts women who try to attract men's attentions with "women who are educated only to become slaves, and ministers of pleasure, to the tyrant man" (p. 143). Regarding the sexual subjection of woman to man, he believes that

> the great Author of Nature, throughout the wide extent of his animated works, appears to have placed the privelege of asking in the male, and that of refusing in the female. (p. 145)

Women were very dependent on public opinion. Their chastity was exposed to whatever lies or rumors were promulgated about them by men. They had to strive to be seen only in the best circumstances since they were so dependent on others' views of them. Men insisted that women be chaste, and women's dependence on public opinion and their husbands subjected them to the whims of others.

Women, expected to be chaste, were not to be adulterous. The men expected complete fidelity from their wives, while they could have affairs as they pleased. According to Blackstone, adultery was not allowed as a reason for divorce because it was too frequent; occasionally, parliament granted divorces for adultery (Blackstone, p. 441). Women

could get alimony in a divorce unless they ran away with their adulterer. Rogers (1980) refers to women's plight as a "sexual double standard." They had to humor men's follies, such as adultery, drunkenness, and quick tempers. They could not show anger or dissatisfaction with their husbands except with "Tears, expostulations and intreaties" (Duff, p. 278). If a woman took a man to court to sue him for bigamy, and he was deemed guilty, she still had to live with the stigma of having lived with an adulterer and having given birth to illegitimate children (Johnson, p. 37).

Wollstonecraft felt strongly about women's status as domestic playthings. She laments that their education has left them merely as "insignificant objects of desire" (p. 24). She recommends that women should bow only to reason, not men; then, the prejudices against females will not be promoted but fall subordinated (p. 26). She wonders why women should be kept in ignorance under the name of innocence (p. 39). The men may hold to their stereotypes, but the women are also deluded, for men try

> merely to render us alluring objects for a moment; and women, intoxicated by the adoration which men . . . pay them, do not seek to obtain a durable interest in their hearts. (p. 19)

Swift's overall insistence on equality extends to domestic as well as commercial prostitution. Since he argues that men should not consider women subordinate, he is indirectly attacking domestic prostitution, women used as slaves and sex objects. In several poems we shall see, Swift directly attacks the vice of prostitution while

eliciting the readers' sympathy for the plight of the prostitute herself, a victim of society.

Commercial Prostitution

Besant, in his chapter on the position of women in the eighteenth century, spends considerable time discussing the courtesan. He notes the severe laws enforced against a whore if caught. She was taken to a place of detention and eventually to Bridewell to be whipped and imprisoned (Besant, p. 284). Besant insists that reform of the institution will only be possible if all men are willing to accept and initiate a change. He questions whether

> the man ought not to be punished for this offence as much as the woman; whether the man ought not to be held up to shame as much as the woman; whether, at all events, men innocent or guilty should not do all in their power to reform and to restore the unhappy victim of man's ungoverned lust. (Besant, p. 286)

Bernard Mandeville offers a tongue-in-cheek solution to the problem of commercial sex: the government should staff and support brothels. He suggests that honest women would be safer if society could rid the streets of lustful men by offering them an alternative place to go -- the stews. He attacks the unrealistic attitudes of his society toward sex and prostitution -- that it is possible to rid the country of vice.[1]

While Wollstonecraft hopes that women will go into business instead of prostitution, Mary Ann Radcliffe argues that women have no choice. In The Female Advocate (1799), she argues that ladies often have no

way to support themselves except by prostitution. She personally wanted a job, but found that, realistically, women were not allowed into many professions, and whoredom was often the only option available to many.

Rogers notes that "ladies were prevented from supporting themselves by their lack of access to professional training and by the stigma attached to women who worked for money" (p. 17). Radcliffe attacks the system of female education, insisting that training women only for dependence leaves them helpless if left destitute. These unprotected women often fall into prostitution. She advocates improvements in education and attitudes toward female employment. If granted work, women could feel more independent and, therefore, be more than the "dull wits" men complain of.[2]

Wollstonecraft and Radcliffe address prostitution directly while other feminists allude to it by implication. Radcliffe favors establishing charitable institutions for the poor streetwalkers of London. Wollstonecraft insists that justice and changed opinions must prevail, not only philanthropy. Both ladies wanted to see better economic opportunities arise for women because more equitable social attitudes toward women would accompany those opportunities.

Jonathan Swift addresses commercial prostitution especially in his poems, "A Beautiful Young Nymph Going to Bed" and "The Progress of Beauty."

In the first poem, Swift attacks the vice of prostitution, elicits our sympathy for the prostitute, and strips away the illusions of

superficial beauty. The whore is given a pastoral name, Corinna, which signals a satiric attack by Swift.

After spending the night "on the town," Corinna returns to her "Bow'r" (p. 517, l. 8) and begins to undress. Swift then gives the reader an inventory of what constitutes her artificeal beauty. After she removes her artificial hair, crystal eye, false eyebrows, and false teeth, she

> Pulls out the Rags contriv'd to prop
> Her flabby Dugs and down they drop.
> Proceeding on, the lovely Goddess
> Unlaces next her Steel-Rib'd Bodice;
> Which by the Operator's Skill,
> Press down the Lumps, the Hollows fill,
> Up goes her Hand, and off she slips
> The Bolsters that supply her Hips.
> With gentlest Touch, she next explores
> Her Shankers, Issues, running Sores,
> Effects of many a sad Disaster;
> And then to each applies a Plaister.
> But must, before she goes to Bed,
> Rub off the Dawbs of White and Red;
> And smooth the Furrows in her Front
> With greasy Paper stuck upon't. (p. 518, ll. 21-36)

After Corinna takes a sleeping pill which is probably the only way she can fall asleep, she dreams of all the consequences that could occur if she were caught. She could be lashed at Bridewell prison, transported to Jamaica, or discovered by

> . . . Watchmen, Constables and Duns,
> From whom she meets with frequent rubs;
> But, never from Religious Clubs;
> Whose Favour she is sure to find,
> Because she pays them all in Kind. (ll. 52-56)

During the night, a rat has stolen her "Plaister," the crystal eye has disappeared, and her dog has infested her wig with fleas.

> The Nymph, tho' in this mangled Plight,
> Must ev'ry Morn her Limbs unite.
> But how shall I describe her Arts
> To recollect the scatter'd Parts?
> Or shew the Anguish, Toil, and Pain,
> Of gath'ring up herself again?
> The bashful Muse will never bear
> In such a Scene to interfere.
> Corinna in the Morning dizen'd,
> Who sees, will spew; who smells, be poison'd.
> (p. 519, ll. 65-74)

Swift's poetic diction is an indicator of his satiric attack. Corinna is a "Nymph," but Swift destroys the pastoral image when he portrays her as a whore. He links the nymph and shepherd image again when he tells us that no shepherd sighs in vain for Corinna (l. 2). In lines 3 and 4, the poet seems ironically to juxtapose Covent Garden ("covent" is an adaptation of "convent") with Corinna. Further, this nymph must manually apply her "beauty"; hers is not an inward glow.

The portrayal of Corinna elicits our sympathy. We realize that she is a victim, and we pity her. She is a "batter'd, strolling Toast" (l. 4), with "No drunken Rake to pick her up" (l. 5). Driven to prostitution, she lives in fear for her life but must gather herself together each day to earn a living.

Swift seems disgusted and outraged at the vice of prostitution, at the prostitute's diseased, physical plight, and at the treatment she would get were she discovered. He seems to insist on gender equality for women in several ways. By destroying the pastoral idealization of women, he demands that men see women realistically as human beings and as equals. In eliciting our sympathy for Corinna, Swift leads us to conclude that prostitution is a damaging institution

for all involved. He condemns the artificiality of the prostitute's beauty as something imposed on the woman by the institution. If a woman wants to be successful, she has to play by the rules, which include appropriate dress and make-up.

In "The Progress of Beauty" Swift again elicits sympathy for the prostitute. In his poems attacking prostitution, Swift does not lead in with many pastoral allusions. Rather, he lets a pastoral name (Chloe, Corinna, Celia) establish the pastoral norm he is to explode, proceeding at once to the gross description that replaces this idealized norm. In "The Progress of Beauty" the idealized norms are repeated and obvious: Diana, Celia, Strephon, Venus, nymph, the comparison with the moon's waning. But Swift shatters them immediately as the poem opens. When Diana first wakens in the morning,

> Vapors and Steams her Look disgrace,
> A frouzy dirty colour'd red
> Sits on her cloudy wrinkled Face. (p. 172, ll. 2-4)

Swift carries this juxtaposition of traditional poetic diction and realism throughout the poem. He continues by explaining that if Celia were to appear too soon before "putting her face on," the illusions of her beauty would vanish:

> 'Twixt earthly Femals and the Moon
> All Parallells exactly run;
> If Celia should appear too soon
> Alas, the Nymph would be undone. (ll. 9-12)

Interestingly, Swift chooses "earthly Females" as opposed to "whore" or "nymph." He suggests that this artificiality is not particular to

some women but generally universal to all.

> To see her from her Pillow rise
> All reeking in a cloudy Steam,
> Crackt Lips, foul Teeth, and gummy Eyes,
> Poor Strephon, how would he blaspheme! (ll. 13-16)

Swift uses the name Strephon which has been given to the deluded young men in "Strephon and Chloe" and "The Lady's Dressing Room." Those Strephons suffer when they are robbed of their illusions of their beautiful nymphs; this Strephon would suffer the same fate if he saw Celia when she awoke.

Swift describes Celia's going to bed with make-up still perfectly applied and waking to find it smeared. He marvels at how the cosmetics when in their proper places can create a beauty, but when smeared can create a "frightful hideous Face" (l. 20).

> But Celia can with ease reduce
> By help of Pencil, Paint and Brush
> Each colour to it's Place and Use,
> And teach her Cheeks again to blush. (ll. 33-36)

Celia "knows her Early self no more" (l. 37). After she has put on a new face, she steps back to admire her handiwork, for after four hours, she has become "the wonder of her Sex" (l. 42).

Swift seems to suggest that perhaps love would not reign if men were able to see all the imperfections hidden beneath the cosmetics:

> Love with White lead cements his Wings,
> White lead was sent us to repair
> Two brightest, brittlest earthly Things
> A Lady's Face, and China ware. (ll. 49-52)

Swift warns the nymph to keep men at a distance and to stay in her

"proper Sphear," (l. 54), the window, to be viewed from afar:

> Take Pattern by your Sister Star,
> Delude at once and Bless our Sight,
> When you are see, be seen from far,
> And chiefly chose to shine by Night. (ll. 57-60)

Swift continues with the thrust of his attack -- women's preoccupation with appearing youthful in old age. Gay and the Earl of Dorset also condemn the superficiality and futility of attempting to be unnaturally young and beautiful.

> But, Art no longer can prevayl
> When the Materials all are gone,
> The best Mechanick Hand must fayl
> Where Nothing's left to work upon. (ll. 61-64)

Though Celia has to this point been described as any "earthly Femal," the rest of the poem suggests that she is a prostitute. She apparently has a disease, cancer or venereal disease, and is wasting away.

> Yet as she wasts, she grows discreet,
> Till Midnight never shows her Head;
> So rotting Celia stroles the Street
> When sober Folks are all a-bed. (ll. 85-88)

She hides herself in the darkness of the night, ashamed of her decaying condition. That she uses excessive make-up, has venereal disease (implied in line 95: "No painting can restore a Nose"), and "stroles" the streets at night seems to suggest that Celia is a prostitute. Swift's attack on prostitution is, among other things, an attack on men's idealization of women:

> Ye Pow'rs who over Love preside,
> Since mortal Beautyes drop so soon,
> If you would have us well supply'd
> Send us new Nymphs with each new Moon. (11. 97-100)

"The Progress of Beauty" can be used to illustrate Swift's attacks on the prevalent attitudes in the eighteenth century. By depicting Celia as human, with all her gross imperfections hidden by cosmetics, Swift attacks the poetic idealization of women. He uses the names Celia and Nymph first to evoke and then to destroy the pastoral image of females, insisting that men view women realistically and not traditionally. Swift also rejects society's perpetuation of the vice of prostitution. He denies that women should be used merely as objects for men's sexual gratification and satirizes the superficiality that the job demands. Swift's treatment of the prostitute appeals more to the readers' emotions than other poetry of his age that dealt with courtesans. Using scatology, Swift is able to evoke disgust at his graphic images of fallen women. The images do double duty: they destroy at once the norms of poetic idealization and focus attention on a human situation. The reader is ultimately moved to pity with sympathy for the degraded condition of the women. Other satiric poets that deal with prostitution merely seem to point to a harlot and say, "See how reprehensible she is? Isn't her state deplorable?" Not only do they not involve the sentiments of their readers, but they seem merely to condemn the prostitute to well-known and well-deserved punishment. Swift's work is more effective: it is both sympathetic and corrective.

Besant says that until men are willing to accept reform, none will occur; as long as prostitution exists, its victims will be ruined. Swift, in much of his work dealing with women, insists that men purge themselves of idealized pictures of women and see them as equal human beings.

NOTES

[1] Bernard Mandeville, A Modest Defence of Publick Stews (1724; rpt. UCLA: The Augustan Reprint Society, 1973).

[2] Mary Ann Radcliffe, The Female Advocate, Or An Attempt to Recover the Rights of Women from Male Usurpation (1799; rpt. New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1974), p. 4.

CHAPTER V

SWIFT'S ENLIGHTENED VIEW OF WOMEN: CONCLUSION

To show that Swift's views of women are indeed enlightened, it has been necessary to establish the attitudes prevalent in eighteenth-century society toward women. I was then able to show how Swift attacked them in his poetry. Swift uses scatology to elicit disgust, and often sympathy, from his readers. In this way he can impress upon them the importance of a more enlightened view toward women.

Swift's poetic satire shows that he rejected three prevalent attitudes in eighteenth-century society:

1. Women are merely "fair nymphs" (the poetic idealization of women).
2. Women should not have educational or social equality with men.
3. Women function primarily as sexual objects for men.

These attitudes were common during the Enlightenment, and because Swift challenges these traditional ideas, I have termed his views "enlightened." Clearly, his satiric verse is more than a mere attack on poetic cliches about women.

Swift rejects seventeenth- and eighteenth-century poets' traditional idealization of women. Attacking pastoral poetic diction, he offers "Clad all in Brown." By using scatology, he is also able

to depict men and women realistically, as equals possessing "Necessities of Nature." But the scatology is a means to other ends. Like Strephon and Cassinus, the readers are shocked. However, the readers are expected, in addition, to recognize and reject the poetic cliches these characters represent. Equally important, the readers are expected to recognize and reject certain stereotypical views of women in real life. They are expected to see Swift's Chloes, Caelias, and Corinnas not merely as reactions against the "fair nymphs" of poetry, but as statements of fundamental gender equality.

Such a statement of gender equality requires Swift to reject some basic eighteenth-century attitudes. For example, a few of Swift's poems directly deal with the issue of female education. He attacks the flimsy boarding school education that made women favor dependence and affectation. Further commenting on this dependence, he attacks society's view that women, because of their dependence, are slaves to men. Swift's poetry suggests his insistence on more equal views of women in the laws and minds of the society.

In addition, he condemns domestic and commercial prostitution by attacking the vice and those that perpetuate it. He evokes sympathy by his descriptions of the prostitutes' degeneration and anguish, but he condemns their artifice and, incidentally, the art and artifice all women are encouraged to use. Swift is calling for men to accept women as human beings equal to themselves. The need for gender equality was clear:

> Men who could see women as human beings like themselves were as exceptional as women who attained freedom and fulfillment. Social institutions remained thoroughly oppressive (Rogers, p. 39).

In her analysis of feminism in the eighteenth century, Rogers comes to the above conclusion.

Feminists of the eighteenth century fought to prompt society into accepting women on a more equal footing. Most of them argued for improvements in female education, while some insisted that women not be treated as slaves and sex objects. Clearly, reform for women's position in society had begun. Whether or not it is considered part of the feminist movement, Swift's satiric verse can be seen as a plea for the reform of certain poetic and social attitudes.

That Swift's realistic approach to these attitudes is still needed can be seen in a contemporary book that still contains echoes of the empty-headed "fair nymph" attitude. The picture of women presented in Helen B. Andelin's Fascinating Womanhood (1980) coincides with most eighteenth-century men's views that women are created merely for the enjoyment and fulfillment of men. Her table of contents includes titles such as: "'The Ideal Woman' from a Man's Point of View,' "Make Him No. 1," "The Domestic Goddess," and "Feminine Dependency." Her goals include teaching:

> What men find fascinating in women.
>
> How to obtain those things in life which mean so much -- things you are justified in having and for which you are dependent upon your husband.
>
> How to understand the masculine role, the respect due this divine calling, and the importance of such respect in the happiness of both husband and wife.

How to be attractive, even adorable, when you are angry.

How to gain true happiness in marriage, while placing your husband's happiness as a primary goal.[1]

These stereotypical, traditional attitudes still exist today, two hundred years after Swift attempted to enlighten his readers.

NOTES

[1] Helen B. Andelin, Fascinating Womanhood (New York: Bantam Publishers, 1980, p. 5.

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