

**Amazonian Spinsters and Philanthropic Ladies: The Fantasy and
Reality of Female Communities in Elizabeth Gaskell's *Cranford* and
Sarah Scott's *Millenium Hall***

Heidi Kokko
University of Tampere
School of Language, Translation and Literary Studies
English Philology
Master's Thesis
April 2014

Tampereen yliopisto
Englantilainen filologia
Kieli-, käännös-, ja kirjallisuustieteiden yksikkö

KOKKO, HEIDI: *Amazonian Spinsters and Philanthropic Ladies: The Fantasy and Reality of Female Communities in Elizabeth Gaskell's Cranford and Sarah Scott's Millenium Hall*

Pro gradu -tutkielma, 88 sivua + lähdeluettelo 4 sivua
Huhtikuu 2014

Naisena oleminen aiheuttaa yhä päänvaivaa varsinkin tytöille, mutta myös aikuisille naisille. Media problematisoi luonnollisia naisen elämään liittyviä asioita ja tarjoaa ratkaisuja, mutta samaan aikaan julkisuudessa naisia kritisoidaan voimakkaasti heidän ulkonäkönsä, valintojensa tai käytöksensä vuoksi, jos ne poikkeavat liikaa tavallisesta – tavallisesta, jota missään ei määritellä tyhjentävästi. Tämä on ollut naisena olemisen vaikeus vuosisatojen ajan, vähintään siitä asti kun lukutaito lähti kasvuun kirjapainotaidon kehityksen myötä.

Sarah Scott ja Elizabeth Gaskell elivät ja kirjoittivat juuri silloin, kun naisiin kohdistuva kritiikki ja vaatimukset alkoivat näkyä kirjallisuudessa ja sen ajan lehdistössä. Sarah Scott julkaisi *Millenium Hall* -romaanin 1762, ja esittää siinä kuvan naisyhteisöstä, joka on päättänyt asua yhdessä Englannin maaseudulla sijaitsevassa kartanossa, missä he voivat keskittyä filantropiaan erilaisilla tavoilla. Kehyskertomus, jossa tutustutaan kartanon elämään, tapoihin ja sääntöihin, katkeaa aika ajoin takaumiin, joissa kerrotaan miten yhteisön perustajajäsenet päätyivät valintaansa olla menemättä naimisiin, liittyä yhteisöön ja harrastaa hyväntekeväisyyttä. Elizabeth Gaskellin *Cranford* taas julkaistiin jatkokertomuksena 1851–1853, ja myös se kuvaa naisyhteisöä. Nämä naimattomat naiset ehkä tuntuvat viettävän aikansa huvituksissa, joita Scottin yhteisön naiset pitäisivät liian kevytmielisinä, mutta yhteisön elämästä lukiessa käy selväksi, että pinnan alla vellovat suuret tunteet ilosta suruun ja epätoivoon. Vaikka romaanin vanhat piit vaikuttavat vähäpätöisiltä, lukijalle selviää pian, että he ovat kaukana siitä.

Tutkin näitä kahta romaania niiden naisyhteisöjen näkökulmasta, ja tulen siihen johtopäätökseen, että nämä yhteisöt muodostavat vahvan tukiverkoston naisille, joilla sitä ei muuten olisi lainkaan naimattomuuden vuoksi. 1700- ja 1800-lukujen Englannissa naisilla ei juuri ollut omistusoikeutta, vaan heidän myötäjäisensä siirtyi aina aviomiehen omistukseen. Vain naimattomuus ja leskeksi jääminen antoivat naisille mahdollisuuden hallita omaisuuttaan, minkä vuoksi tarkastelen juuri näitä kahta romaania, sillä niiden naisyhteisöt koostuvat naimattomista naisista. Aloitan yhteisöjen tutkimisen Michel Foucault:n heterotopia-käsitteestä, ja syvennän analyysiä yhteisöpsykologian peruskäsitteiden avulla. Nämä käsitteet ovat ekologia, ehkäisy ja edistäminen, yhteisö, valta, sekä mukaan ottaminen ja sitoutuminen. Yhteisöpsykologia toimii yleensä reaali maailman kontekstissa, mutta tutkielma osoittaa, että myös fiktiivisiä yhteisöjä voidaan tarkastella ja analysoida samoilla käsitteillä. Kirjallisuudentutkimuksessa ei yhteisöpsykologiaa ole yleisesti käytetty, joten tutkielma tuo uuden näkökulman Scottin ja Gaskellin romaaneihin.

Avainsanat: Sarah Scott, Elizabeth Gaskell, female communities, female friendship, heterotopia

Table of Contents

1. Introduction.....	1
2. The Historical Context and Ideas of (Female) Community.....	5
2.1 The Historical Context.....	7
2.1.1 Conduct book and the ideal femininity.....	8
2.1.2 Literary Salons and Bluestockings.....	10
2.1.3 The Victorian Woman.....	14
2.1.4 Female Friendships and an Idea of Community.....	18
2.2 Ideas of Community.....	21
2.2.1 Utopia and heterotopia.....	22
2.2.2 Female utopian tradition.....	25
2.2.3 Community Psychology.....	29
3. The Communities in <i>Cranford</i> and <i>Millenium Hall</i>	31
3.1 <i>Cranford</i> and <i>Millenium Hall</i> as Heterotopias.....	31
3.2 <i>Cranford</i> and <i>Millenium Hall</i> as Communities.....	42
3.2.1 Ecology.....	43
3.2.2 Prevention and promotion.....	48
3.2.3 Community.....	53
3.2.4 Power.....	58
3.2.5 Inclusion and commitment.....	63
3.3 Reality and fantasy in <i>Cranford</i> and <i>Millenium Hall</i>	68
3.3.1 Struggling for and against.....	69
3.3.2 The strong and weak points of the communities.....	74
3.3.3 Reality and fantasy.....	78
4. Conclusion.....	83
Works Cited.....	89

1. Introduction

Show a girl a pioneering hero – Sylvia Plath, Dorothy Parker, Frida Kahlo, Cleopatra, Boudicca, Joan of Arc – and you also, more often than not, show a girl a woman who was eventually crushed. Your hard-won triumphs can be wholly negated if you live in a climate where your victories are seen as threatening, incorrect, distasteful or [. . .] simply uncool. (Moran 2011, 11)

Sarah Robinson Scott's *A Description of Millenium Hall and the Country Adjacent* was published in 1762. It imagines a community of middle class and upper middle class women who live on an estate where women facing difficult situations or who wish to live a life of different kind than in fashionable society can come to join. The novel is narrated in the form of letters by a male narrator, who is surprised by a storm on his journey in the countryside and finds shelter on the main house of the estate. He and his young travel companion stay some days and are introduced to the workings of the estate and the various philanthropic works the community does in the surrounding area; in the course of the novel they are told the life stories of the five principal women who were instrumental in the establishment of the community. These women are Miss Mancel and Mrs Morgan (formerly Miss Melvyn), Lady Mary Jones, Miss Selvyn and Miss Trentham. Their stories are told by Mrs Maynard, a cousin of the narrator. The women are in favour of girls' education and have taken action to provide it; furthermore, they emphasise the poor status that women can have in the society even though she may be born into a good family: this is their motivation for establishing a female community in the countryside.

Elizabeth Gaskell's *Cranford*, published 90 years later serially in Charles Dickens' *Household Words* in 1851-3, also depicts a female community. The community consists of spinsters and widows who live in a small town and whose lives the novel follows for some years. The main characters are Miss Matty (Matilda Jenkyns), Miss Pole, Mrs Jamieson and Lady Glenmire, and for the first chapters also Miss Matty's sister Deborah Jenkyns. The narrator is Mary, at the beginning of the novel a young woman who has family ties to the Jenkyns family, and who narrates the happenings of Cranford during the times of her visits through letters to a friend of hers in London.

Mary herself is from Drumble, a big industrial town that is famously modelled after Manchester. The life in the female community in Cranford is revealed to be full of joy and sadness, moments of excitement when a conjuror comes to town, feelings of danger when there are rumours of breaking and entering and robberies, and expressions of solidarity when financial ruin changes the life of Miss Matty.

The authors of these novels lived in somewhat different situations, even though they faced similar issues. Sarah Scott lived at the time of the Enlightenment and was surrounded by the Bluestockings – a group of women interested in intellectual discussion, reading, writing and social issues – but did not head the movement as her sister Elizabeth Montagu did. Scott “had read widely in French and English fiction, history, and *belles-lettres*; she was on good terms with her grandmother’s husband, Conyers Middleton, ‘the leading voice of classical Republicanism’ as a program for improved citizenship” and she was acquainted with several of the best-educated bluestockings (Nardin 2011, 31). Betty Rizzo, analysing the letters from both Sarah Scott and Elizabeth Montagu, has come to the conclusion that the sisters had a profoundly different view of community: “Montagu presided over a Bluestocking assembly in London to which any person of importance came”, while Scott’s community in Bath “developed in opposition to her sister’s, which she heartily disliked, and can perhaps most fruitfully be viewed as an anti-salon” (2002, 194-5). The Bath community, gathering both formally and informally and consisting mainly of women, took a primary interest in their charitable cases and plans for an ideal community where the social evils of the time would be removed (Rizzo 2002, 195). According to Rizzo, “[i]n succeeding years Montagu was [. . .] indicted by everyone for her vanity, if not her selfishness, while Scott applied herself to serious, selfless matters” (2002, 196). Yet it is Sarah Scott who is lesser known today than her sister, perhaps because she was never a prominent society figure like Elizabeth Montagu (Brown 2001, 470).

Elizabeth Gaskell, on the other hand, is nowadays remembered as one of the authors of the Victorian period who wrote about the changes the society was facing and the social problems that came with this change, similarly to Charles Dickens, in whose paper she published some of her writings, including *Cranford* and *North and South* (Flint 1995, 31, 36). As described by Flint: “Whilst her settings are ones that she herself knew well, or researched meticulously, and whilst the bulk of her plots revolve around domestic dramas, wider social and intellectual issues continually intersect with her interest in individual human lives” (1995, 9–10). However, after her death her novels went out of fashion quickly and her achievements as a writer were often underrated because of her gender (Flint 1995, 60). Even after feminist critics started to rediscover forgotten women authors, Gaskell remained in the shadow: “neglected by some critics because of her conservative values, uneasily respected by others for achieving literary and financial success” (Davis 1992, 507). The uneasiness of recent feminist criticism may stem from the very reason Gaskell was able to become such a successful author in her own time: she could write as well as embody the ideal Victorian woman who took care of her home, husband and children. According to Davis: “The feminine nurturance on which she grounded her life and work has appeared to many feminist critics as unappealing at best and traitorous at worst” (1992, 507). Recent critics have recognised Gaskell for the empowerment of women and their voices, while acknowledging that Gaskell may have had difficulties in combining her role as a domestic Victorian wife and a professional writer venturing outside the private sphere (Flint 1995, 62).

My thesis will look at the female communities in *Cranford* and *Millenium Hall* (from now on, the reference is to the novels when italicized; when not, the communities in the novels) and analyse them in depth. First, I will examine how they fit Michel Foucault’s concept of heterotopia, and then go on to study them with the help of concepts borrowed from community psychology. Why are these communities needed, what do they offer to the women who live there, how do the communities work on a daily basis? How is an all-female society depicted, what are its strong and

weak points? How do these communities mirror the realities of their time and what kind of fantasy images do they form? Despite the contextual differences, I expect to arrive at a conclusion that both communities criticise the current state of women's rights and advocate girls' right for an education. I will argue that both novels can be seen as forerunners for feminist thought.

My approach to the novels is historicist in the sense that I am placing them firmly in their historical context. This is reflected in the theory, where I will expand upon relevant historical details and attitudes which were prevalent at the times when these novels were written. In the analysis chapters the secondary material will be mostly from feminist literary criticism, since that field has discussed and analysed both *Cranford* and *Millenium Hall* in detail before. To my knowledge, however, studies regarding the female communities themselves have not been published, and I hope that my work will thus be a worthy addition to the field.

My thesis will first introduce the historical context of the authors and the atmosphere in which they wrote the novels. The conduct book and the image of an ideal woman reflected the upper middle class values and their attitude towards women's role in society. In fact, James Cruise argues that *Millenium Hall* "reverses the polarity" of the conduct book by attempting to regulate men's behaviour (1995, 555). The literary salon tradition and the Bluestocking movement challenged that ideal, but it was not successful for long. In the Victorian period women's role was challenged by the women question and the rapid industrial development in Britain. Even the capability of women for friendships among their own sex was questioned. Then, I will move on to discuss the relationship between utopia and heterotopia, trace the main developments in female utopian tradition, and introduce the core concepts from community psychology that I will be using in this thesis as tools to discover how the female communities in the novels work.

My analysis will first concentrate on discovering the heterotopian features of the novels, and then continue to examine them with the community psychology approach. After that, I will draw the loose ends together and find out what public opinions and attitudes the authors were struggling for

and against when they wrote the novels; what are the strong and weak points of these communities, and what realities and fantasies the female communities work against and create. Lastly, I will conclude what my thesis has found out about *Cranford* and *Millenium Hall* and if there can be any wider deductions from the results of my thesis.

2. The Historical Context and Ideas of (Female) Community

History – the official version of it – is written by those in power, which has mainly meant wealthy men in the past. Nevertheless, women’s history has been around for a long time, as Natalie Zemon Davis points out: “In one form it goes back to Plutarch, who composed little biographies of virtuous women, intended to show that the female sex could and should profit by education” (1976, 83). Of course this form of historical record tends to be more anecdotal than actually telling anything about the lives of women in the past, generally speaking. The core of the problem is this: “Treating women in isolation from men, it ordinarily said little about the significance of sex roles in social life and historical change. And written with special goals for a special audience, it had little effect on the main body of historical writing or periodization” (Davis 1976, 83). While concentrating on individual women who had the resources and possibility to excel, official history writing was able to continue without taking a notice of the general situation of women, thus ignoring their part in social and historical changes.

According to Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, “[b]y the end of the eighteenth century women's literacy was substantially increasing, with a concomitant increase in women's writing for a distinctly female, as well as a mixed, public” (1987, 539). In addition, the publishing trade was in the middle of a change in the last decades of the eighteenth century from the earlier system of aristocratic patrons publishing books by their protégés which were then circulated privately to a more open literary market (Spencer 1987, 20). Spencer adds that “a simultaneous movement of certain kinds of writing especially associated with women – the familiar letter, the diary, the

domestic conduct book – out of the private and into the public arena” coincided with the change in the publishing trade (1987, 20). The novel grew out of these feminine modes of writing and thus meant that women could now make a vocation out of writing (Spencer 1987, 20). However, their life and their writing were linked so that these were often judged together: some critics agreed that good writing was the creation of a morally good writer, but female authors and their texts were also attacked if their personal life was not scrupulously clean, as happened to Eliza Haywood (Spencer 1987, 23).

It is no wonder that women writers felt the need to belittle and disparage their own writing, or published anonymously while hoping it would be taken to be a man’s work – it was the only way they could ‘save face’ in public (Spencer 1987, 29). Susan Gubar has an interesting theory about the psychological side of writing:

This model of the pen-penis writing on the virgin page participates in a long tradition identifying the author as a male who is primary and the female as his passive creation - a secondary object lacking autonomy, endowed with often contradictory meaning but denied intentionality. Clearly this tradition excludes woman from the creation of culture, even as it reifies her as an artifact within culture. It is therefore particularly problematic for those women who want to appropriate the pen by becoming writers. Especially in the nineteenth-century, women writers, who feared their attempts at the pen were presumptuous, castrating, or even monstrous, engaged in a variety of strategies to deal with their anxiety about authorship. (1981, 247)

Even though Gubar talks about nineteenth-century women writers, the same anxiety was not unknown to female authors in the earlier centuries. The early famous women writers were in danger of public ridicule because by publishing their writings they stepped outside of the domestic sphere and into the public, which was seen as belonging to men. To name a few, Margaret Cavendish, the Duchess of Newcastle (1623-1673) was flattered by many because of her high status and wealth, but even she was rumoured to be mad because of her eccentricity: her unusual dress, her habit of writing and because she had the unfeminine attribute of ambition, desiring fame (Spencer 1987, 24). Aphra Behn (1640-1689) was a successful playwright, but condemned for her bawdy writing and unchaste life (Spencer 1987, 24, 28–9). In the nineteenth century women writers wrote in a world

where critics divided them into two groups: to those who wrote “mere sentimental fiction” and to those, like Fanny Burney, who could “encompass life and manners, wit and satire, without losing the morality and modesty required of women” (Spencer 1986, 98). According to Deborah Gorham, “no middle-class girl or woman could raise her own status through effort in the world of work, because earning money, for a girl or woman, meant loss of caste” (1982, 8). This made life complicated for Victorian women writers, because they had to balance between the required modest femininity and the vulgarity of the act of earning money through writing.

2.1 The Historical Context

When women authors became more common, the act of writing came to be seen as acceptable, but only if their subject matter avoided “masculine” subjects such as politics (Spencer 1987, 99). This was the reason for criticism against Mary Wollstonecraft (1759-1797): her writing exposed the prejudice that women’s writing was only accepted when it remained within feminine space and did not intrude upon men’s “real world” (Spencer 1987, 100). When she criticized “mistaken notions of female excellence” and openly professed to talk to other women as intelligent beings, she was in fact attacking “the entire ideology of femininity that had been developed during the century, and on the basis of which women writers had been accorded acceptance and respectability” (Spencer 1987, 100). Women were only able to be successful writers if they embodied the image of ideal femininity of the time.

In this chapter, I will take a look at the historical context in which *Cranford* and *Millenium Hall* were written. At the end of this thesis I will have arrived to a conclusion about the fantasy images that these novels reveal, and thus it is important to know something about the reality of the time of their writing. I will start by exploring what the conduct book genre envisioned as an ideal woman, then go on to discuss how middle-class women were able to negotiate their roles when the literary salon practice gained popularity and how the Bluestockings challenged the norms of their

time. Next, I will follow the development of the conduct book genre ideal woman into the Victorian lady of the house, and lastly examine how friendships between women were seen and discussed in public around the time the novels were written. Of special interest in this subchapter is how both Sarah Scott and Elizabeth Gaskell engaged with the idea of female friendship and communality.

2.1.1 Conduct book and the ideal femininity

Following the rise in publishing and selling of all kinds of printed material in late 17th and early 18th centuries, women became a notable group which read and increasingly also produced them, and thus the need for material aimed at specifically women was born (Tague 2002, 18). One important form of these publications was the genre of conduct books – books which set the standards for and advised on the proper behaviour of women (Tague 2002, 18). They were aimed specifically to the gentlewomen, who were “essential in upholding the moral order” – quite a change from the earlier view of women as weak, dangerous and unstable beings (Tague 2002, 19, 26). The ideal that these books promoted was “an integral part of the bourgeois ideology that gradually displaced the older aristocratic model of society during the eighteenth century”, as Elliott notes (1995, 539).

Furthermore, girls’ education was frowned upon “because too much education might make a woman mad, stimulate her curiosity, and perhaps cause her to be unlucky in love” (Bodek 1976, 185). Although the new view was an improvement, the conduct book genre can be seen as the precursor to a trend that is still alive and well in the modern age: it set the standards of what an ideal woman was like, how she behaved and dressed, and what she did with her time.

Jane Spencer highlights the absurdity of the conduct book which is apparent to the reader in our time: “It seems that eighteenth-century women needed a good deal of educating into their ‘inborn’, ‘natural’ feminine qualities, for the ‘conduct-book’ or ‘courtesy-book’ for women proliferated” (1987, 15). Aimed at neither the aristocratic women nor the labouring women, since both classes placed value on the body instead of the mind, these books strove to cultivate the mental

processes which guaranteed domesticity (Armstrong 1987, 75–6). Dr James Fordyce wrote one of them, *Sermons To Young Women* (1765), where he defines a good woman: modest, obedient, gentle, and, of course, formed to be man’s companion, because for that reason women were created (Spencer 1987, 16). Her space is the home and her sole interest is her family, anything else is the man’s domain (Spencer 1987, 16). This meant that female labour was forbidden, for learning good reading habits and conversational skills were enough of an education to make possible the effective management of their home (Armstrong 1987, 91). Consequently, conduct books had to address the issue of how women’s idle hours should be occupied; thus, by freeing women from labouring to supervise the household, they ensured that she would have plenty of time for just the kind of habits the conduct book writers did not approve of (Armstrong 1987, 99).

What made the difference was apparently supervision: this way the leisure activities would not turn into “means of self-display”, but would “provide occasion for ‘mental’ or ‘moral culture’” (Armstrong 1987, 100). The reasoning was that by supervising the young woman’s education she would learn managing the household and thus be equipped for her married life; but in fact what she learned was mostly supervising her leisure time (Armstrong 1987, 100). Reading was supposed to give her all the external information she needed, provided that she read the right kinds of material: “at once the most useful and most dangerous way to take up a woman’s time”, as Armstrong puts it (1987, 100). Because the girls’ education was often under the control of their mother (as opposed to the boys, who usually had a tutor), conduct books needed to elaborate on what was good and bad reading, even going as far as to specify the categories, giving titles and explaining how they were to be used (Armstrong 1987, 102–3). For example, an extensive knowledge of the fine arts would breed vanity and selfish passions in women, which distanced them from men and their classical education (Armstrong 1987, 103). What was deemed beneficial for women were some British classics, especially Milton and Shakespeare, essays on beauty and imagination, excerpts from history, some French and Italian; later were added geography, mathematics, and natural history

(Armstrong 1987, 103). Of course, the realization would depend greatly on the family in question: some were able to offer all of this to their daughters, some only part of it.

This is where the conduct books agreed with those who held that women should be educated further than in ornamental activities (Tague 2002, 45). “Praise of female learning, as long as it did not result in ostentatious display or pedantry, was common” (Tague 2002, 45). In other words, as long as a woman still displayed her feminine modesty and did not draw too much attention to her learning, reading was considered a good way to fill her leisure time, as long as it was useful material. One of the most interesting facets about the conduct books was their stance against fiction: “Although they frequently declared that fiction would somehow prevent a woman from performing her domestic duties, these books also refused to say what exactly was so threatening about fiction that women had to shun it above all other reading” (Armstrong 1987, 109). While the conduct books themselves may have been silent on the matter, moralists and other commenters were not. According to Spencer, the dangers of reading novels were roughly the same that had been attributed to the romance: loss of female chastity and subordination (1987, 186). Readers’ sense of reality and especially women’s contentment in their real lives would be threatened, an indirect admission that women’s life at the time was monotonous (Spencer 1987, 186–87). Consequently, although novels were not recommended reading material, they did gain popularity, perhaps because women were able to challenge prevailing images of femininity in their writing. As Armstrong puts it, “the conduct-book ideal of womanhood provided the ideal against which novelistic representations of women asserted themselves as being more true to life” (1987, 252). In other words, authors turned to the novel to create female characters that did not need to fit the mould of an ideal woman.

2.1.2 Literary Salons and Bluestockings

From the 17th century, gentlewomen started to take actively part in discussions of literary material by hosting literary salons (Bodek 1976, 186). Originating in France, an aristocratic woman would

gather around her a group of intellectuals to discuss various topics in an informal manner; it was the only way women could take part in intellectual and educational discussion at the time (Bodek 1976, 186). In fact, Bodek calls the literary salon “an informal university for women” (1976, 185).

Women were the ones to select the attendees and make a decision what to include in a certain meeting (options were, for instance, singing, games, drama, conversations and readings), and whether the salon would be social, literary or political in nature (Bodek 1976, 186). Dena Goodman sheds light on why the literary salons were formed as they were:

The women who led the major Enlightenment salons [. . .] saw their needs as women coinciding with those of the expanding group of intellectuals who were now calling themselves "philosophes," rather than with those seeking entry into the nobility and the court. Thus, while men of letters had always been part of the social matrix of the salon, by the 1760s the salon itself, as the extension of individual salonnières, had changed to make their position central. It was thus a newly redefined social and intellectual space that was exploited by the men of the Enlightenment who saw themselves as engaged in a collective endeavor on the model of their Encyclopedia: a collective endeavor that needed a regular, institutional, social base. To understand their project of Enlightenment requires an understanding of how eighteenth-century salon women transformed a noble, leisure form of social gathering into a serious working space, and in so doing created the ground on which such a collective project could be carried out. [. . .] [T]he salonnières of the Enlightenment must be viewed as intelligent, self-educated, and educating women who reshaped the social forms of their day to their own social, intellectual, and educational needs. The initial and primary purpose behind salons was to satisfy the self-determined educational needs of the women who started them (1989, 332–33).

In other words, the literary salon became a widely practiced phenomenon because women recognised their own need and desire for education while the Enlightenment ideals made it possible that a group of male intellectuals was interested in participating in gatherings where intellectual conversations would be the main form of entertainment.

Since the English women were roughly in the same situation education-wise as their sisters in France, the literary salon found its way across the Channel in the eighteenth century (Bodek 1976, 187). The English salon practice ended up being short-lived, lasting from 1750s to 1790s, and became known as the Bluestockings – a word that meant “witty or learned” person of either sex, but one that evolved to mean a woman only and acquired a derogatory meaning (Bodek

1976, 187). As Susan Lanser points out, there was no official membership of the group: “the term was already applied retrospectively if not defensively, signifying a coalition of femininity, philanthropy, Anglican piety, English propriety, and intellectual pursuit, all integrated in to a public identity that could promote women's participation in literary culture as decorous, salutary, and safe” (2002, 258). The most prominent member of the first generation of the Bluestockings Elizabeth Montagu was named ‘the Queen of the Blues’, receiving praise for her wit and skills in conversation (Miegon 2002, 30). Montagu’s sister Sarah Scott was not as directly involved with the literary salon practice as her sister, but she, alongside Elizabeth Carter, was the most prolific writer of the group, greatly interested in politics and public issues (Miegon 2002, 33).

The Bluestockings’ reputation deteriorated fast. By the 1810s Jane Austen’s Mary Bennet in *Pride and Prejudice* is portrayed with an aspiration to bluestockingism that is “self-promoting and affected” enough to be ridiculous (Fay 1998, 154). Elizabeth Fay reasons that “[t]he demise of the Blues’ cultural importance during the Romantic period may well be a reaction to their significance as a ground or foundation for women’s rights” (1998, 154). She also offers another reason: the French Revolution had changed the cultural order so that the literary salon was seen as a symbol of the old; the leaders of the Bluestockings, being women, were easy targets for the ridicule (Fay 1998, 154). The view that women were not physically suited for education gained ground: “these beliefs placed a double burden of unnaturalness or illness, and sexual failure or deviance on women intellects” (Fay 1998, 157). Despite what their contemporaries and later generations made of them, Bluestockings were arguing for girls’ and women’s right for education about hundred years before the Women’s suffrage movement gained ground in England – they were the early mothers of feminist thought, even if they would not fit our definition of feminists today.

The Bluestocking agenda was as varied as there were members in the group: published materials include but are not limited to poetry, essays, translations, letters and literary reviews (Miegon 2002, 25–37). Some were primarily hostesses of their gatherings and published little,

while others wrote extensively on subjects such as politics, education and equality (Miegon 2002, 25–37). As Fay puts it: “Any discussion of women’s intellectuality during the Romantic period must be dominated by the two pillars of the Bluestocking circle’s legacy and Mary Wollstonecraft’s overwhelming radicalism” (1998, 160). Wollstonecraft published *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* in 1792, at the same time the English literary salon was going out of practice. It was seen as advocating women’s education, “a point that shows how closely women’s subjective position was defined by whether and how much they know about the politics outside their homes” (Fay 1998, 161). According to Fay, however, Wollstonecraft discussed the lack of education as a problem in creating citizens, not education as a tool for women to further themselves, which was how the Bluestockings saw the matter (1998, 161). Furthermore, Wollstonecraft argues that women are corrupted by the power men give them by supposing that women are weaker:

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, unable to stand alone. I earnestly wish to point out in what true dignity and human happiness consists—I wish to persuade women to endeavour to acquire strength, both of mind and body [. . .]. Dismissing then those pretty feminine phrases, which the men condescendingly use to soften our slavish dependence, and despising that weak elegance of mind, exquisite sensibility, and sweet docility of manners, supposed to be the sexual characteristics of the weaker vessel, I wish to show that elegance is inferior to virtue, that the first object of laudable ambition is to obtain a character as a human being, regardless of the distinction of sex [. . .]. (2002, 17)

Wollstonecraft sees women capable of having a more substantial role in how the society is formed, something the Bluestockings may not have even considered (Fay 1998, 164). Nevertheless, it is evident that there was much variety in the Bluestockings as a group, and they did not agree about everything. To give an example, Anna Laetitia Barbauld was a liberal, concerning herself with what women needed in context of their class and responsibilities, not a radical in the sense that women’s rights as such were not an issue for her (Fay 1998, 165–6). In contrast, Catherine Macauley (later Graham) was republican in her politics, outspoken on the equality between sexes in education and central to the formation of feminist politics in Britain (Miegon 2002, 29). Still, both Barbauld and Macauley, even though they disagree on the point that both sexes need equal education, agree that

there needs to be improvements in the field. For instance, the idea that children's textbooks needed to be printed in larger type and that there should be only a few words to a page originated from Barbault (Fay 1998, 166).

While there was no official Bluestocking agenda, it is safe to say that they were all interested in education and thought that there should be reformations in that field, although there was no consensus on what kind of changes were needed. Some of them were more politically minded than others, some engaged in philanthropy, some took part in the literary salon while others were counted among the group because of their views, not because they had any extensive contact with those who held the salons (Miegon 2002, 25–37).

2.1.3 The Victorian Woman

Victorian times saw no change in what came to the wide public's opinion on women and reading. As Setecka puts it: there was "much anxiety about women reading in the Victorian period. Although women, often deprived of formal classical education, were not expected to read the classics, light contemporary fiction was often presented as equally improper, since it was seen as frivolous and harmful to the morals" (2011, 58). Ideally, the stereotypic Victorian lady was "the angel in the house", superficially accomplished, leisured and in charge of the servants and her family's social life (Peterson 1984, 677). But as Peterson points out, this stereotype only applies to those who were wealthy enough to have the means to reach the ideal image, and even then, the ideal image of an angel was not perhaps mirroring reality (1984, 678). Elizabeth Langland discusses the function of the angel in the house as follows:

The prevailing ideology regarded the house as a haven, a private domain opposed to the public sphere of commerce, but the house and its mistress in fact served as a significant adjunct to a man's business endeavors. Whereas husbands earned the money, wives had the important task of administering the funds to acquire or maintain social and political status. (1992, 291)

In short, the ideal image of an angelic wife at home was a construct that existed in order to create and uphold the public appearance and rank of the husband. Yet the women, arguably, were not as passive as they have been thought of: Langland contends that as the conduct book genre gradually vanished in the 1820s, what happened was “the dramatic and sudden emergence in the 1830s and 1840s of the set of discursive practices [. . .]: rituals of Society and the Season, norms of etiquette, family prayer, house-to-house visiting, and architectural changes” (1992, 292). The change concerned the shift from individual standards of conduct to control of behaviour, the etiquette (Langland 1992, 293). Thus, by controlling their behaviour and dress, women were able to manipulate how the society perceived them. In addition, “[s]ocial status was marked not only on the woman's person and in her behavior but in her sanctum and sanctuary, the Victorian home. This haven became a setting for displaying social status, and nineteenth-century architecture changed in response”: rooms were divided into male and female spaces, and decorated accordingly (Langland 1992, 294–5).

Furthermore, the failure or success of a Victorian middle-class woman was first and foremost established by her management of servants (Langland 1992, 295). Since men increasingly found themselves working from somewhere else than their home, their interaction with their servants decreased and it was the lady of the house who found herself in the position where she needed to preserve the class distinction by regulating their behaviour (Langland 1992, 295–6). Two strategies developed in consequence: aided by the ideal image of the lady of the house, the practice of family prayer, which became popular during the 1830s; and philanthropy and house-to-house visiting (Langland 1992, 296). The family prayer meant that the whole household was summoned together for a prayer, which usually happened at the end of the day; this served to foster the idea of a community, but also made everyone accountable of being present when it was nearing the time to go to bed (Langland 1992, 296). The other strategy, house-to-house visiting, was an opportunity of advising and instructing the poor on subjects such as cleanliness, cookery, good management and

industry, but still a means of establishing control and class distance which men were unable to admit that women were successfully doing (Langland 1992, 296). The political dimensions of what women were actually achieving remained unrecognised.

In the early and mid-Victorian years, marriage was the only truly acceptable destiny for a middle-class girl, to the extent that those who failed in it were referred to as “redundant” (Gorham 1982, 53). The changes in society and laws that affected Victorian women had already begun decades earlier: although traditionally financially independent, widows lost much of their economic power in the eighteenth century (Spencer 1987, 12). Elliott says that

both the terms "old maid" and "spinster" acquired their pejorative connotations in the eighteenth century, when unmarried women, whose desires were not channeled into marriage and motherhood and who were not producers of population, posed a challenge to domestic ideology's ability to contain anxieties about changing social conditions (1995, 540).

According to Spencer, “spinster” originally referred to unmarried women because spinning was an important occupation for them, but during the eighteenth century commercial production took over it and many more forms of domestic employment, including weaving, brewing, baking and soap and candle-making (1987, 13). This meant that there was next to nothing to do for an unmarried daughter of a middle-class family: she, who used to be an important part of the household because of her domestic labour, was now left without genteel means of living if the family did not leave her enough money to sustain a life of idleness (Spencer 1987, 13). Labour outside the home would have meant a loss of her middle-class status; the only occupations open to her would have been a lady’s companion and a governess – both more or less a humiliation (Spencer 1987, 13).

At the same time that domestic employment was being replaced by commercial production, it was becoming increasingly evident that finding a suitable husband was also getting more difficult. “The 1801 census revealed a surplus of women over men, and this situation had probably prevailed during much of the preceding century” (Spencer 1987, 14). In the 1851 census this surplus was over half a million women more than men in Great Britain (Nestor 1985, 7). Unmarried women were

thus in a situation where they no longer had the opportunity for domestic work in their father's and brothers' homes, but neither did they have their own homes. According to Anna Lepine,

the Victorian spinster [. . .] stood in paradoxical relation to domestic space—at once alienated from the domestic home and cast as a born homemaker. Finding herself in a social and spatial limbo because she had failed to progress from her father's home to her husband's, she was seen as a perpetual visitor or lodger without a room of her own. (2010, 122)

This practical homelessness is the result of the infamous ideology of separate spheres: displaced because she does not have her own domestic space owned by her husband, uncannily at home wherever she goes because as a woman she is “innately domestic” (Lepine 2010, 122). Fox-Genovese, on the other hand, argues that the ideology of separate spheres cannot explain everything about women's experience in the industrial era, as it was already in practice in the medieval and early modern periods (1987, 542). She claims:

Confusion persists in great part because those societies in which separate spheres had the least justification insisted most firmly on their basis in biology and natural law. Societies in which women's competition for men's places was becoming a real possibility, if not yet a general practice, raised the doctrine of separate spheres to new ideological prominence. The more advanced the economy, the more likely the society was to advance an ideology of separate spheres to justify separate and unequal education for women and the exclusion of women from the emerging professions and political life. (Fox-Genovese 1987, 542)

Essentially a form of power, then, the ideology would ensure that there would be work for men when women were not educated enough to be able to compete for the places. In the end, the ideal Victorian woman was thus a construct that was supposed to fix one problem in the society – unemployment in men – but ended up creating a new one when not all women were able to find a husband who would provide them with a home. I will return to this theme of spinsters and domestic space later in my analysis of *Millenium Hall* and *Cranford*, as both novels have unmarried women defining a space for themselves.

2.1.4 Female Friendships and an Idea of Community

While it may sound weird and rather unfathomable to modern ear, in the eighteenth century a discussion about women's capability of forming friendships with their own sex found its way into periodicals and other public venues (Nestor 1985, 4). One side was of the opinion that women's relationships with each other could not be healthy, and female communities without male supervision were "dangerous"; these opinions were not exclusively men's, but some women, for example Eliza Lynn Linton, agreed with them (Nestor 1985, 4–5). According to their view, "female friendships were notoriously shallow, most often a 'rehearsal' for the 'serious business' of relationships with men" (Nestor 1985, 12). The other side refuted these arguments and argued that the potential and value of female friendships were far greater than what was being claimed in public:

We have been too silent, we women, in this matter, those among us at least who have experience in it, and on the bad side many men and women have been ready enough to cry together [. . .]. There is then, with even a small portion of such chivalrous spirit, a much greater capability in a woman of friendship with another woman than with a man. A friend is to her, if unmarried, in the place of what she would gain by marriage, indeed if each single woman could find, and be worthy of one true friend, we should have no need to pity that large class commonly called 'old maids'. (Article in *Victoria Magazine* in 1871, quoted in Nestor 1985, 13)

A woman who possesses a little "chivalrous spirit" is, then, able to form a friendship with another woman that is not unlike the companionship that marriage would bring.

Of course, women had been forming lasting friendships and female communities and writing about them long before this discussion took place. A fitting example is Sarah Scott herself: she was married in 1751, but the marriage ended in legal separation the following year (Miegon 2002, 33). Instead, she lived with her close friend Lady Barbara Montagu in Bath, where they, among a group of other women, engaged in philanthropic activities (Miegon 2002, 33). The most interesting piece of information in this instance is that after Lady Barbara's death she, her sister and some of their female friends established a community for women at Hitcham, which was to be similar to Scott's envisioned community in *Millenium Hall*; however, the community failed in mere months (Miegon

2002, 33). In 1768, six years after the publication of *Millenium Hall*, the women moved in at Hitcham, Buckinghamshire, to an estate which was in the possession of the family of Grace Freind, a newly-widowed friend of Scott's (Rizzo 2002, 206, 211). It was this family connection and the changing situation of their life that proved to be fatal to the community: when it became a family residence due to Grace Freind's daughter escaping a scandal, the female community could not function in the atmosphere of imbalance and divided loyalties (Rizzo 2002, 212). Even though the community was not successful, the attempt reveals that Scott and her friends recognised the need for it.

Elizabeth Gaskell may not have been involved in similar attempts, instead leading a more conventional way of life, but she felt the need for giving and receiving support from other female authors: "Gaskell's letters reveal a woman who identified herself as one of a community of women writers, linked by virtue of gender and endeavour" (Nestor 1985, 28). She read other women's manuscripts giving them advice and direction, and did the same with her own writings, for example sending outlines of *Ruth* to Charlotte Brontë; she was interested in hearing news about new publications by women, and apparently also used her influence to help women writers find a publisher (Nestor 1985, 28–9). Especially Gaskell's friendship with Charlotte Brontë deserves a mention here: it was a source of comfort and support for both of them, and Gaskell's almost motherly concern for Brontë's ailing health was met with "a gratitude that went beyond mere politeness" (Nestor 1985, 31–2). The friendship would culminate in the biography *The Life of Charlotte Brontë* (1857), which Gaskell wrote at the request of Brontë's father after Charlotte's death in 1855 (Nestor 1985, 31). Nestor points out that the biography "is a testimony to Gaskell's sense of communality" by being "simply an act of friendship" and "a celebration of sisterhood in which the bonds between Charlotte, Emily and Anne are treated with a kind of reverence" (1985, 32–3). Her stance in the debate concerning women's capability for friendship with each other is thus clear, even though she may not have publicly taken part in the discussion.

The fact that even the capability of women for friendships with their own gender was questioned becomes even more ludicrous when we consider that an “unprecedented publicity for female friendship [. . .] surfaced in seventeenth-century Europe and became institutionalized in eighteenth-century painting, poetry, fiction, and letters by women and men” (Lanser 1998–1999, 180). She connects that publicity with the increased access of women to areas other than their home, for example girls' boarding schools, urban migration and salons, which fostered non-kin relationships (Lanser 1998–1999, 181). Simultaneously with these forms of social interaction the idea of retirement from the society was gaining ground: “At least since [. . .] the writings of Mary Astell [. . .], women had been able to look to a model of female retirement as some form of learned feminist utopia that stressed at once the rejection of fashionable commercial society and the embrace of salutary meditation on worthier topics” (Bending 2006, 556). Of course not all of the cases of retirement were from the company of others, but from the city (Bending 2006, 558) – i.e. the site of the fashionable society and the public life where women were little more than commodities in the marriage market.

Lanser, still discussing the publicity of female friendship, ties the discourse to that role and states:

Like discourses by men, women's writings often stressed the superiority of friendship over marital ties. As men had based a homosocial exclusivity on the claim that women were unfit, now women held up men's poor treatment of them and the unequal system of marriage as evidence that in female intimacy lay women's best hope (1998–1999, 182).

Female friendship was thus talked about in the same terms as the defenders of it would refer to it in the late nineteenth century: “a friend is to her, if unmarried, in the place of what she would gain by marriage”. Furthermore, female friendship also functioned as a status symbol in the establishment of “a gendered gentry consciousness”: “[t]his meant that female friendship also served contradictory feminist and patriarchal purposes: women could establish their own value and a certain degree of psychic independence from men while at the same time helping to consolidate the privileges of their

class” (Lanser 1998–1999, 186). What turned the discourse on female friendship around from the earlier state to what it was in the late nineteenth century? According to Lanser:

My research suggests that by at least the 1740s, female friendship has ceased to be the property primarily of female pens and that keeping female bonds under control had become a hegemonic interest. All the more as open misogyny was becoming unacceptable in polite circles, eighteenth-century patriarchy could surely regulate female intimacy more effectively by shaping than by attacking it. (1998–1999, 187)

Various strategies were used to keep female intimacy in check and in its patriarchal place: “the recuperation of the befriended body within a heterosexual order, the practice of a ‘compensatory conservatism’ by potentially suspect women, and the adoption of idealizing tropes that attenuate the political and sexual threat of female relationships” (Lanser 1998–1999, 187). In short, the image of female friendship was regulated in writing, which can perhaps account for some of the conservatism that can be found in *Millenium Hall* and *Cranford*, as I will later discuss.

2.2 Ideas of Community

The history of women's education constitutes an important part of the history of women's intellectual life. But we know immeasurably more about the education of women following the rise of capitalism and the modern – especially the democratic – state than before, primarily because the systematic attempt to educate women emerged with them. In this perspective, Mary Astell's preoccupation with the education of elite women emerges as pivotal – however one judges her status as the “first feminist”. (Fox-Genovese 1987, 534)

Since women have had to struggle for their opportunities for learning because of their gender, it is not surprising that when they imagined better lives, they often imagined communities where education was more accessible for women as well as communities where female friendships played an important part. They were intent on “challenging the limits imposed on women” (Fox-Genovese 1987, 535).

Joan Kelly-Gadol claims in “Did Women Have a Renaissance” that “[t]o take the emancipation of women as a vantage point is to discover that events that further the historical development of men, liberating them from natural, social, or ideological constraints, have quite different, even opposite, effects upon women” (1977, 1). Similar notions about the effect of the

Scientific Revolution have been introduced in Carolyn Merchant's *The Death of Nature*, and the argument that these transformations meant further subordination and exclusion from political and economic power for women has been put forward (Park 2006, 488). Park discusses the ambivalent reception of Merchant's work among feminist critics, placing it in the context of feminist utopian writing of the 1970s, and concludes that "[i]nterest in utopian writing was a signal element in the feminist political and authorial culture of the 1970s, allowing feminists to work through what a nonpatriarchal, nonsexist, or nonheterosexist society might entail" (2006, 495).

Since the utopian elements both in *Cranford* and *Millenium Hall* have been widely discussed, it is necessary to go into further detail about the developments in the utopian genre in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and the principles of heterotopia. Next, I will explore the female utopian tradition and what issues have been traditionally of interest when women authors have written works classified into the genre. Last, I will introduce the main concepts from community psychology, which will be my main tools in my analysis later.

2.2.1 Utopia and heterotopia

Utopia is, of course, a word first coined by Sir Thomas More in the 16th century from "Greek *ou* ('not') + *topos* ('place'): 'Noplace'; perhaps with a pun on *eu* + *topos*, 'Happy' or 'Fortunate' Place" (Greenblatt & Abrams 2006, 521). In the early modern period, the word was used as a geographical metaphor; the transition from the title of a book and a metaphor to the abstract meaning occurred from the mid-seventeenth century onwards (Pohl 2008, 686). Enlightenment utopias, further on, moved the genre in new directions: "On the one hand, we have the significant paradigm shift from *eu/utopia* to *eu/uchronia*, from the geographical to the temporal utopia. . . . On the other, we have the introduction of novel narrative forms that expands the typological model of the classical utopia significantly" (Pohl 2008, 688). One specific type of utopia in the eighteenth century is "the micro-utopia or 'petite société' – utopias placed within non-utopian texts"; other

specific concerns were restraining luxury, waste, self-indulgence and degeneracy in order to obtain “a proper and just public welfare” (Pohl 2008, 688).

Roemer points out that at the end of the eighteenth century there were two “history-altering” revolutions in the American colonies and France that celebrated democracy and equality in an almost utopian way (2010, 81). These revolutions had a profound effect on the nineteenth century developments in utopian fiction together with the industrial revolution and urbanization – “Finally it seemed as if the basic goals of traditional utopias could be met: science, technology, mass production and improved distribution systems ensured that all humanity could be fed, clothed and sheltered” (Roemer 2010, 82). Utopias written after the revolutions were diverse: “good times” utopias vs “history as a progress” utopias; utopias set in faraway places as opposed to those which saw the new developments as the beginning of a realisation of a bright future (Roemer 2010, 82). Roemer points out that it would be easy to over-emphasise the late nineteenth century utopias of cooperation and socialism and ignore the earlier works, which included for example religious visions of utopia (2010, 86).

Heterotopia, on the other hand, is a concept created by Michel Foucault. It is closely associated with utopias, but the difference between them is that utopias do not exist in reality, that is, as real places, while heterotopias do (Foucault 1986, 24). Heterotopia is “a kind of effectively enacted utopia in which the real sites, all the other real sites that can be found within the culture, are simultaneously represented, contested, and inverted” (Foucault 1986, 24). In other words, heterotopia is essentially a eutopia. He states that there are six principles that define heterotopic spaces: first, there are always societies which give birth to heterotopias, even though the nature of those will differ; crisis heterotopias are being replaced by heterotopias of deviation (Foucault 1986, 24–5). Crisis heterotopias are places for individuals in a state of crisis, often found in primitive societies: for example young adults, menstruating and pregnant women and the elderly have been and are groups for which spaces away from home have been designed so that the crisis can be dealt

with elsewhere (Foucault 1986, 24). Heterotopias of deviation, in contrast, are for people who deviate from the norm in their behaviour, including a range of people from those with criminal backgrounds to those who have mental illnesses (Foucault 1986, 25). Secondly, heterotopias always have a determined and precise function in the society, which may change as time goes on and the society around it evolves (Foucault 1986, 25).

Thirdly, heterotopias juxtapose several different spaces in one real place; they are microcosms reflecting the aspects of outside world while remaining separate from the larger whole (Foucault 1986, 25). A microcosm is defined as “a small place, society or situation which has the same characteristics as something much larger” (Woodford 2003, 783). Fourthly, heterotopias are linked with notions of time; there are those with “indefinitely accumulating time” such as museums and libraries, and those which are temporal, such as fairgrounds and vacation villages (Foucault 1986, 26). Fifthly, they have a system regarding entering and exiting the space, which may be compulsory or voluntary, but admittance is always regulated in some way, and it can involve rituals or gestures of some kind (Foucault 1986, 26). Finally, heterotopias function in relation to the space outside, i.e. the society, either creating a space of illusion which exposes every real space as still more illusory, or creating a space of compensation which is another real space but perfect and well arranged (Foucault 1986, 27).

While the utopian qualities of *Cranford* and *Millenium Hall* have been recognised, no one has addressed them as heterotopias comprehensively. Chapter 3.1 will concentrate on looking at the communities in the novels and discussing their heterotopic features. Before that, though, I will explore what kind of utopias women wrote before and at the time Scott and Gaskell wrote theirs, and introduce the basic concepts of community psychology.

2.2.2 Female utopian tradition

The well-known utopias are all written by men, but especially in England in the 17th and 18th centuries several women were publishing texts which could be called utopias: *The Female Academy* (1662), a novel *The Description of a New World, Called The Blazing World* (1666) and *The Convent of Pleasure* (1668) by Margaret Cavendish, an essay *A Serious Proposal to the Ladies* (1694) by Mary Astell and *New Atalantis* (1709) by Delarivier Manley were published before *Millenium Hall*, while Clara Reeve's *Plans of Education* (1792) and Mary Ann Radcliffe's *The Female Advocate* (1799) followed (Brown 2001, 470–71). Common themes emerged in the areas of life where women were disappointed in reality: “The writers imagine worlds where women have wealth, independence, and, above all, access to learning - a combination of things unattainable for most members of their sex at the time” (Brown 2001, 471). Especially Mary Astell’s essay was read widely, gaining approval from some of the highest powers in the country and inspiring other writers (Johns 1996, 60).

Astell proposes a foundation of a monastery for women, which would serve as a college (Johns 1996, 62). They would form a community where “women achieve subjectivity and independence in the context of an ideal society in which they do not assert identity but model themselves after each other, imitating the copies of heavenly originals they experience around them. In the process, metaphysical and physical realms are joined” (Johns 1996, 60). Astell’s community, then, would be a kind of Protestant nunnery combined with educational pursuits. Activities for the women include works of charity, shared devotional events, education and learning, and personal reflection (Devereaux 2009, 56). Furthermore, Devereaux points out that “[i]f Astell’s own education is intended to be a pattern for the women of the monastery, the reading list is formidable: Descartes, Locke, Plato, Malebranche, John Norris and many other theological and philosophical writers” (2009, 56). In Astell’s view reason makes us human but also divine; the development of rational faculties, especially women’s, “will make of women the absolute selves imagined and

created by God” (Johns 1996, 63). In order to do so the monastery will have to be founded because “Astell holds that women cannot improve their minds in a society where the custom is to mock and degrade them. [. . .] When women remove themselves from the force of these customs, though their vice will not immediately be reformed, at least their wills can be released from the manacle of custom” (Sowaal 2007, 232).

In addition to the advanced reading material, Astell is a great advocate of female friendship and communality. Her love of women reaches such heights that it has often been seen as the reason and inspiration for her feminism and utopian writings (Johns 1996, 62). However, Astell’s view of female friendship constitutes of two souls resembling one another so that they are meant to be mingled and united; one’s interest giving way to that of the friend; watching over each other for God; help each other by advising, encouraging and directing each other; and consequently making each other better and more perfect for God’s glory (Johns 1996, 71). This is Astell’s model of perfect friendship, one that has romantic undertones but which has no rivalry other than for the favour of God (Johns 1996, 71). This model of friendship is the basis for the functioning of the monastery:

[their time] shall be employ’d in innocent, charitable, and useful Business; either in study (in learning themselves or instructing others; for it is design’d that part of the Employment be the Education of those of their own Sex) or else in spiritual and corporal Works of Mercy, relieving the Poor, healing the Sick, mingling Charity to the Soul with that they express to the Body, instructing the Ignorant, counselling the Doubtful, comforting the Afflicted, and correcting those that err and do amiss. (Astell, quoted in Devereaux 2009, 60)

Advising, encouraging and directing each other to the betterment of themselves and their friends is thus how Astell envisions the psychological and emotional side of the community to work.

The value of friendship was also important in an earlier feminist utopia, Margaret Cavendish’s *The Blazing World*. The main character, a young lady who, after having travelled beyond this world to another, becomes “an all-powerful and magnificently accoutered Empress who, not unlike Apollo, traverses her kingdom in a ‘very Glorious’ chariot, fashioned from green,

blue, and white diamonds and ‘drawn by Twelve Unicorns, whose Trappings are all Chains of Pearl’” (Trubowitz 1992, 231). As an empress she takes on the traditionally male roles of a warrior and a scientific leader but also abolishes the spiritual isolation of women by giving them more visible and public means of religious engagement (Trubowitz 1992, 234–35). After a while, however, the empress feels a need to converse again with her friend whom she left behind; they manage this with a kind of meeting of spirits, and the friend ends up being the fictionalized version of Cavendish herself (Trubowitz 1992, 238). In Trubowitz’s view, “[i]f for Cavendish the female subject is absolute monarch over its inward kingdom, female friendship is the intimate pairing of two such singular, self-governing, incorporeal subjectivities” (1992, 239). True community for Cavendish thus means an intimate bond between two female beings (Trubowitz 1992, 240). While not as clearly religious in nature as Astell’s model of perfect female friendship, Cavendish’s view of female community is correspondingly spiritually motivated despite the fact that the empress remains the ultimate ruler of her new world. As Trubowitz notes: “An inviolable and unitary locus of knowledge and power, Cavendish’s female subject is completely autonomous, yet capable of equitable female friendship and community; as such, it challenges the gendered relations between independence and dependence, power and weakness, public and private” (1992, 241).

Donawerth and Kolmarten state that one of the reasons why there is a continuous literary tradition consisting of utopias, fantasy and science fiction by women from the 17th century onwards is that gender roles can be more easily rewritten when there is no connection to the reality (1994, 1–2). In the eighteenth century, the utopias written by women proposed diverse models of friendship, heterosexual sociability and marriage; the romantic female friendship remained a truly utopian concept as a “no place” (Pohl 2008, 696). The early women’s utopias are concerned with “the feminist models of women’s education: the cloister, the salon, the country house with a large library”, state Donawerth and Kolmarten, citing Scott’s *Millenium Hall* as an example (1994, 6). “Alessa Johns divides women’s utopias of the ‘long’ eighteenth century into the subgenres of

intimate utopia, educational utopia, anti-utopian satire and invented societies” (Pohl 2008, 696). In the nineteenth century, scientific solutions of social problems were incorporated, mirroring the goals of feminism at the time: securing property rights, divorce, suffrage and careers for women (Donawerth & Kolmarten 1994, 6–7). “British writers emphasize suffrage, socialist solutions to public problems, and women in public roles”; they also add the scientific romance – a form of gothic romance – to the utopian women’s writing (Donawerth & Kolmarten 1994, 7–8). This form of writing, originating of course from Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein*, would become the groundwork text for the twentieth century women authors who wrote utopic fiction (Donawerth & Kolmarten 1994, 8–9).

The writers of feminist utopias visualise a more active and public role for women in the society, imagining a transformation for the status of women as citizens of the state and criticizing the sex-gender roles that define their position (Silbergleid 1997, 161). Alessa Johns recognises “a process-oriented feminist utopian impulse” since the Middle Ages, and identifies the five salient features in feminist utopias: centrality of education; adaptable and social human nature; gradualist change, cumulative history, shared power; dynamic view of the environment; and pragmatism (2010, 178–93). In the same line of thought, Sally Gearhart highlights the political function of the feminist utopia; according to her definition it:

- a. contrasts the present world with an envisioned idealized society (separated from the present by time or space),
- b. offers a comprehensive critique of present values/conditions,
- c. sees men or male institutions as a major cause of present social ills,
- and d. presents women not only as at least the equals of men but also as the sole arbiters of their reproductive functions. (Gearhart 1984, quoted in Silbergleid 1997, 161)

As a matter of fact, some of these features are present in *Millenium Hall* and *Cranford*, even though feminism as a political movement was not in existence at the time of their writing. The idealized society in *Millenium Hall* is set to critique the present conditions more overtly than *Cranford*, which uses gentle irony to draw attention to the social ills affecting the life of women. Both of the novels, however, perceive men and their world as the main problem, wanting to create a space

where that problem can be left behind. Yet perhaps these novels are not fully utopias, an issue which will be expanded on later.

2.2.3 Community Psychology

In my analysis of the female communities in *Cranford* and *Millenium Hall* later in this thesis I will be delving deep into the structures of the kind of societies they form. My framework for the analysis borrows concepts from community psychology, which need to be introduced here. As this framework has been developed in order to study real communities, it cannot be used to the fullest in my analysis – it is too extensive for that. Rather, I use this framework as a starting point for my discussion and a tool for structuring my analysis.

According to Prilleltensky and Nelson (2005, 33), there are six key principles of community psychology: ecology, prevention and promotion, community, power, inclusion and commitment and depowerment. All of these can be analysed on three different levels, the personal, the relational and the collective (Prilleltensky and Nelson 2005, 33). The principle of ecology is used to mean “the interaction between individuals and the multiple social systems in which they are embedded”: how they are interdependent on each other, how the resources between the social systems are cycled, how the individuals cope with changes in the social system, and succession of the social system in the long term i.e. the historical conditions and the reason for the birth of the particular social system (Prilleltensky and Nelson 2005, 71–2). Prevention and promotion is related to health and well-being in societies: by population-wide prevention of a disorder and ongoing promotion of healthiness the problems in both physical and mental health the society faces are kept at a minimum (Prilleltensky and Nelson 2005, 79–81).

The community principle can be divided into two central concepts: sense of community and social capital (Prilleltensky and Nelson 2005, 94). Sense of community, in turn, is divided into four domains of membership, influence, integration and fulfilment of needs, and shared emotional

connection, while social capital denotes “collective resources consisting of civic participation, networks, norms of reciprocity and organizations that foster (a) trust among citizens and (b) actions to improve the common good” (Prilleltensky and Nelson 2005, 94–5). Power and empowerment are intertwined concepts: empowerment refers to the ways in which the individual, group and society obtain, produce and enable power, while power itself is a multi-faceted concept which is not easy to define concisely (Prilleltensky and Nelson 2005, 97–9). Mainly, however, power can be seen as “the capacity and opportunity to fulfil or obstruct personal, relational or collective needs” (Prilleltensky and Nelson 2005, 99). It consists of individual agency and external determinants, which combine to form the situation where change is possible (Prilleltensky and Nelson 2005, 99).

Inclusion and commitment bring up the ways in which the individual is committed to and accountable for values, self, others, community and profession and inclusion of people with disabilities and other groups that have been socially excluded (Prilleltensky and Nelson 2005, 116, 126). Due to my focus, my interest lies in the commitment to and accountability for self, others and community, and the inclusion of the disadvantaged on the levels of gender, ability and wealth. Commitment to and accountability for self refers to personal goals, to and for others refers to caring and compassion for those who are closest to us, and to and for community refers to caring and compassion for those who are not physically or emotionally close to us (Prilleltensky and Nelson 2005, 117–19). Inclusion of the disadvantaged groups refers to the way they are represented and how their perspectives are taken into account in the wider community (Prilleltensky and Nelson 2005, 127). This is also a question of power: voluntary depowering of the advantaged group(s) helps the disadvantaged groups empower themselves, which is the basis for collective well-being in communities (Prilleltensky and Nelson 2005, 38–9).

3. The Communities in *Cranford* and *Millenium Hall*

In this chapter, I will analyse the female communities in *Cranford* and *Millenium Hall*. I will start by examining how these communities have been labelled utopias almost unquestionably, then contest that and consider how they fit the principles of heterotopia. After that comes the main body of my thesis: I will explore the concepts of community psychology in regards to the communities in the novels, and reveal how they work as communities. Finally, I will discuss the play between fantasy and reality in the communities, how these novels negotiate the role of women in society and challenge the image of an ideal woman.

3.1 *Cranford* and *Millenium Hall* as Heterotopias

It is easy to recognise the utopian style of *Millenium Hall*: the framework of two travellers getting lost, stumbling upon a different kind of society, and becoming convinced of its superiority, with the Biblical allusions and the references to a paradise-like lifestyle spell out the intention clearly (Brown 2001, 471). Johanna Devereaux challenges this assumption regarding both Mary Astell and Sarah Scott, arguing that both women share a dystopian outlook, not a utopian one, “expressing a shared anger at women’s lack of agency in heterosexual society and offering similar suggestions of possible feminist correctives” (2009, 54). She sees both imagined communities as heterotopias:

[T]he common assumption that Scott’s debt to Astell inheres in her project for a utopian feminine, educational retreat is erroneous: not only do both of these texts sit uncomfortably with the label ‘utopian’ but Astell’s rigorous theological and philosophical learning is also very different from the traditionally feminine activities of the community at Millenium Hall. Scott and Astell posit feminocentric *heterotopias*, alternative spaces in which women can be removed from a masculine social economy that limits their roles to virgin, wife or ‘fallen woman’ (Devereaux 2009, 66).

For some reason, Devereaux only identifies Millenium Hall as a heterotopia, and does not go into further detail of how the society fits the principles of heterotopia. Her view is that *Millenium Hall* has to be a heterotopia since it cannot be a utopia because it does not fit “into the Classical or Renaissance tradition of utopian writing” (Devereaux 2009, 56). There is clearly a need for a closer

examination of the principles of heterotopia when it comes to *Millenium Hall*, because as was established in the previous chapter, utopia as a genre developed during the centuries, so using “not fitting into the tradition” as a reason is not sufficient.

Cranford has often been difficult for feminist critics: described as “too charming for its own good”, it has been ignored and dismissed when critics have discussed feminist aspects of Elizabeth Gaskell’s writing (Auerbach 1977, 276). Auerbach notes the apparent paradox of the “rural idyll of a village inhabited by widows and aging spinsters whose fussy gentility has somehow tucked itself away from the harsh industrial world of her other novels” and the fact that these women are described as Amazons in the first line of the novel (1978, 79). Fowler credits Coral Lansbury for first suggesting that *Cranford* could be seen as utopia exploring the chance of contentment and companionship for old unmarried women, and concludes from these notions that “[t]he second half of the book certainly has a Utopian quality: but *Cranford* is a specifically female Utopia, offering a softening and blurring of categories and hierarchies in place of More’s and Plato’s clearly-ordered systems” (1984, 718). Byrne, talking about the 2007 TV adaptation of *Cranford*, points out that the significance of the story as a utopia is dependent on its placement of older women in the position of central rather than minor importance (2009, 49). However, no one seems to have written about the heterotopic qualities of the *Cranford* society, which is why that point of view needs to be explored next.

As both of these novels and the communities in them have been mainly referred to as utopias, and because I will consider their heterotopic qualities later in this chapter, it needs to be asked if both of these interpretations can coexist. In my opinion, this issue is dependent on the point of view with which the reader approaches the texts: when they are considered as fiction, they can be said to be utopias because in the historical context these communities never existed. However, it is important to note that with the Hitham community there was an attempt to make *Millenium Hall* into reality, and Gaskell herself called the writing of *Cranford* “an effort of historical preservation”

(Croskery 1997, 202). Thus, the world in *Cranford* and *Millenium Hall* can be treated as having a direct relationship with the reality – as in, they mirrored the society of the time – and this means that there is a movement towards heterotopia. Indeed, it seems that the Hitcham attempt and the rather direct references to our world in *Cranford* push forward the implication that it might be more fruitful to see the texts as heterotopias. The texts will work as fiction and as utopias if the reader approaches them as such, but this thesis will discuss the novels from the point of view of reality and heterotopias. The rest of this chapter will concentrate on the principles of heterotopia and how they fit the communities in *Cranford* and *Millenium Hall*.

According to Foucault's first principle, heterotopias are either crisis heterotopias or heterotopias of deviation. Curiously enough, the female communities at Millenium Hall and Cranford can be seen as both: depending on the point of view, these women are in a state of crisis because they are unmarried, or they deviate from the social norms by not wanting to marry. In other words, the difference is between volition and occasion: choosing not to marry and remaining unmarried because there has not been a suitable suitor. This does not only apply to outsiders, as there can be seen differences in how the women themselves view their situation. Even though many of the ladies at Millenium Hall definitely wanted to marry or did marry – Miss Mancel's suitors died before anything could happen on two different occasions (Scott 2008, 38, 82), Mrs Morgan was forced to marry a much older man after her stepmother's schemes (Scott 2008, 57), Lady Mary Jones agrees to elope with her suitor but has a riding accident the day before the fixed day which prevents her from going through with the plan and when she recovers, she finds out that her suitor had already been married (Scott 2008, 101) – they all have come to the conclusion that they would rather not be anyone's wife. In contrast, when Miss Matty's old suitor is reacquainted with her after decades but dies soon after, Miss Matty sees herself almost as a widow:

She did not think I heard her when she asked the little milliner of Cranford to make her caps something like the Honourable Mrs Jamieson's, or that I noticed the reply—
“But she wears widows' caps, ma'am?”

“Oh! I only meant something in that style; not widows’, of course, but rather like Mrs Jamieson’s.”

This effort at concealment was the beginning of the tremulous motion of head and hands which I have seen ever since in Miss Matty. (Gaskell 1904, 63)

In her thoughts Miss Matty, despite her being intimidated by most men, considers herself and her former suitor united by an invisible tie which makes it appropriate for her to wear a symbol of widowhood. She had been forbidden to marry since her suitor was not “enough of a gentleman” for her family (Gaskell 1904, 45); but decades later, she still considers him almost as her husband. Miss Matty’s spinsterhood is thus the result of her family loyalty, and the unmarried state a personal crisis for her even though she lives comfortably enough without a husband.

The female communities have a similar function in *Cranford* and *Millenium Hall*: to give companionship to unmarried women who have no claim to a place in the society outside. However, there are certain differences: the ladies at *Millenium Hall* provide shelter and access to education to women who would not have the opportunity for intellectual endeavours otherwise. In a way, *Millenium Hall* functions as a school or, indeed, a university for women – which is not surprising considering the connection to Mary Astell’s *Proposal* mentioned earlier. The narrator describes the scene in the room on his arrival to the house, and it is difficult to miss the school-like elements in the following passage: it “was about forty-five feet long, of a proportionable breadth, with three windows on one side, which looked into a garden, and a large bow at the upper end. Over against the windows were three large bookcases, upon the top of the middle one stood an orrery, and a globe on each of the others” (Scott 2008, 5). Perhaps unlike a school, though, is how many different activities there seems to be practised in one room:

In the bow sat two ladies reading, with pen, ink and paper on a table before them at which was a young girl translating out of French. At the lower end of the room was a lady painting, with exquisite art indeed, a beautiful Madonna; near her another, drawing a landscape out of her own imagination; a third, carving a picture-frame in wood, in the finest manner, a fourth, engraving; and a young girl reading aloud to them; the distance from the ladies in the bow window being such, that they could receive no disturbance from her. At the next window were placed a group of girls, from the age of ten years old to fourteen. Of these, one was drawing figures, another a landscape, a third a perspective view, a fourth engraving, a fifth carving, a sixth turning in wood, a seventh

writing, an eighth cutting out linen, another making a gown, and by them an empty chair and a tent, with embroidery, finely fancied, before it, which we afterwards found had been left by a young girl who was gone to practise on the harpsichord (Scott 2008, 5).

As I will discuss later, the women of Millenium Hall are encouraged to find what they are good at and what they enjoy doing, cultivating those skills. Thus it seems that the women might be given the time and the means to advance their skills, something for which they might not have the possibility in the society outside the community.

Cranford community, on the other hand, is less concerned with education but valuable in giving peer support when it is needed. This is evident when Miss Matty loses all her money: Miss Pole arranges it so that the other women, although none of them are rich, all contribute to giving what they are able to Miss Matty (Gaskell 1904, 218). They cannot offer the money straight to Miss Matty, who would be offended – money and poverty is not talked about in Cranford, it would be vulgar. That is why the women find a round-about way of giving the money to Miss Matty while not wanting her to know where the money comes from. The show of solidarity and support extends thus beyond mere wishing each other well to monetary matters and concrete help, expressing the strength of community.

It is easy to see how there is a microcosm in Millenium Hall: it is a home, a school, a kind of church and a help centre for the non-privileged. The ladies who established the community have set some regulations which each woman has to agree to follow when they join the community. Nine of the eleven regulations illuminate the different aspects of the community:

Secondly, each person to have a bed-chamber to herself, but the eating-parlour and drawing-room in common.

Thirdly, all things for rational amusement shall be provided for the society; musical instruments, of whatever sort they shall choose, books, tents for work, and in short conveniences for every kind of employment.

Fourthly, they must conform to very regular hours.

Fifthly, a housekeeper will be appointed to manage the household affairs, and a sufficient number of servants provided.

Sixthly, each person shall alternately, a week at a time, preside at the table, and give what family orders may be requisite.

Seventhly, twenty-five pounds a year shall be allowed to each person for her clothes and pocket expenses.

Eighthly, their dress shall be quite plain and neat, but not particular nor uniform.

Ninthly, the expenses of sickness shall be discharged by the patronesses of this society.

[. . .]

Eleventhly, a good table and every thing suitable to the convenience of a gentlewoman, shall be provided. (Scott 2008, 50–1)

The gentlewomen who wish to join the community at Millenium Hall are provided a private room and comfortable living with enough servants, but they also have some duties and need to conform to the rhythm of life in the community. Third regulation specifies how days are spent in “rational amusement” which means some kind of employment, not idleness: especially books and musical instruments are mentioned. There are obligatory occasions in a day: “The whole society indeed must assemble at morning and evening prayers, and at meals, if sickness does not prevent, but every other ceremonious dependence is banished” (Scott 2008, 53). When someone falls sick, she is taken care of, and does not need to worry about the expenses of the sickness. Every woman is given the same amount of money for her dress, which is supposed to be “plain and neat” but need not be an exact copy of what the others wear.

These regulations are only applicable to the women of the (upper) middle class, which is evident from the fifth regulation with its promise of enough servants. The community is not advocating any alternative social order: the class hierarchy is not allowed to be questioned at any point, which will be discussed later in detail. The heterotopic qualities of the community at Millenium Hall only relate to the state of genteel women: their daily activities are expanded and specialised, they are given responsibilities (fourth and sixth regulation), and their appearance and behaviour are controlled in a way that advances humbleness, not showiness. The society outside the Hall is a world full of triviality and irrelevancy, especially when it comes to women: this is what is being remedied.

Cranford’s microcosm comprises of fashionable society, with rules on visiting and behaviour, and hours suitable for those events:

[T]here were rules and regulations for visiting and calls; and they were announced to any young people who might be staying in the town, with all the solemnity with which the old Manx laws were read once a year on the Tinwald Mount.

“Our friends have sent to inquire how you are after your journey to-night, my dear” [. . .]; “they will give you some rest to-morrow, but the next day, I have no doubt, they will call; so be at liberty after twelve—from twelve to three are our calling hours.”

Then, after they had called—

“It is the third day; I dare say your mamma has told you, my dear, never to let more than three days elapse between receiving a call and returning it; and also, that you are never to stay longer than a quarter of an hour.” (Gaskell 1904, 3–4)

Even though it seems as though the days are spent in what the ladies at Millenium Hall would call “idle amusement”, the lives of the Cranford women are not entirely dissimilar to theirs: there are references to going to church, taking care of household business, and helping those who are in need:

I had often occasion to notice the use that was made of fragments and small opportunities in Cranford; the rose-leaves that were gathered ere they fell to make into a potpourri for someone who had no garden; the little bundles of lavender flowers sent to strew the drawers of some town-dweller, or to burn in the chamber of some invalid. Things that many would despise, and actions which it seemed scarcely worth while to perform, were all attended to in Cranford. (Gaskell 1904, 24)

In fact, Croskery calls the daily activities of the Cranford ladies “markedly maternal” (1997, 207). They are that in the sense that the women seem to be quietly taking care of the people of Cranford. However, as the novel focuses on the spinsters and widows who are all middle-class women, the reader does not find out much about the life of the working class. The only glimpse to their world is offered by the ladies’ maids and cooks and the occasional mention of a tradesman, but Cranford can be still called a microcosm because the focus does not erase the fact that it is supposed to be one. To make this more obvious, the 2007 TV adaptation of *Cranford* expanded the role of the working class people, for example the part played by Miss Matty’s maid Martha’s suitor Jem (Byrne 2009, 50).

Both Cranford and Millenium Hall are undeniably linked to the time of which they are the products. When Mr Lamont, the narrator’s companion, wonders about the decision of the ladies to

shut themselves from the world when he hears how they speak for society, he receives the following answer:

'Do you then,' replied Miss Mancel, 'mistake a crowd for society? I know not two things more opposite. How little society is there to be found in what you call the world? It might more properly be compared to that state of war, which Hobbes supposes the first condition of mankind. The same vanities, the same passions, the same ambition, reign in almost every breast; a constant desire to supplant, and a continual fear of being supplanted, keep the minds of those who have any views at all in a state of unremitting tumult and envy; and those who have no aim in their actions are too irrational to have a notion of social comforts. The love, as well as the pleasures, of society, is founded in reason, and cannot exist in those minds which are filled with irrational pursuits. [. . .] What I understand by society is a state of mutual confidence, reciprocal services, and correspondent affections; where numbers are thus united, there will be a free communication of sentiments, and we shall then find speech, that peculiar blessing given to man, a valuable gift indeed; but when we see it restrained by suspicion, or contaminated by detraction, we rather wonder that so dangerous a power was trusted with a race of beings who seldom make a proper use of it. (Scott 2008, 47–8)

The view of the world according to the ladies is that there is a kind of war going on: everyone has to fight for their place in society, which leads to those in power constantly displaying their power and wealth in order to keep others in a state of envy and feeling powerless. This state of affairs prevents reason from becoming the basis for society, which is exactly what the ladies are trying to achieve at Millenium Hall. If reason ruled the society, learning and education would be available to most people and those in power would use it to help others, as the ladies are doing.

Cranford's link is similarly related to women's position in the larger society and the fact that they are spinsters. Their attitude towards clothing themselves reveals – in addition to their meagre means – how they see themselves and the society:

Their dress is very independent of fashion; as they observe, "What does it signify how we dress here at Cranford, where everybody knows us?" And if they go from home, their reason is equally cogent, "What does it signify how we dress here, where nobody knows us?" The materials of their clothes are, in general, good and plain, and most of them are nearly as scrupulous as Miss Tyler, of cleanly memory; but I will answer for it, the last gigot, the last tight and scanty petticoat in wear in England, was seen in Cranford—and seen without a smile. (Gaskell 1904, 1–2)

The women of Cranford seem to be aware that everybody who knows them well, i.e. most of Cranford, will not care that their dress is not following the latest fashion trends because they

understand the financial situation they all are in. Moreover, the people who do not know them well will not understand and thus their opinion does not matter. Even though their view of the larger society is not as explicitly stated as that of the ladies of *Millenium Hall*, it is clear that these women know that since they are past a certain age the larger society does not care about them anymore. They have failed to move through the appropriate roles of a woman the society has deemed preferable and skipped marriage and motherhood, due to no fault of their own – but that does not matter to the society. Cranford ladies are aware of this, which is mirrored in their attitude towards fashion: why try to be fashionable when nobody is going to care about what they are wearing anyway?

Foucault's fifth principle states that there is a system of opening and closing i.e. the entrance and exit to and from the heterotopia are regulated. In *Millenium Hall*, the first regulation illustrates the requirements a woman needs to fill in order to become part of the society, and the tenth the way someone can be expelled:

The first rule [. . .] was that whoever chose to take the benefit of this asylum [. . .] should deposit in the hands of a person appointed for that purpose, whatever fortune she was mistress of, the security being approved by her and her friends, and remaining in her possession. Whenever she leaves the society, her fortune should be repaid her, the interest in the mean time being appropriated to the use of the community. The great design of this was to preserve an exact equality between them [. . .]. If any appeared to have secreted part of her fortune she should be expelled from the society. [. . .] Tenthly, if any one of the ladies behaves with imprudence she shall be dismissed, and her fortune returned; likewise if any should by turbulence or pettishness of temper disturb the society, it shall be in the power of the rest of them to expel her; a majority of three parts of the community being for the expulsion, and this to be performed by balloting. (Scott 2008, 50–1)

These rules will ensure that the community will be able to run profitably. Even though it sounds as if the woman must have some money before she is eligible to join the community, the ladies apparently also take in women who do not have such means, as they have other ways to make money: “they [. . .] established in the parish a manufacture of carpets and rugs which has succeeded so well as to enrich all the country round about” (Scott 2008, 155). Exiting the community can be done if the woman wishes it or if others vote for her to be expelled – so if the situation changes, the

woman can voluntarily depart, but of course the possibility for expulsion serves as a way to keep the women on their best behaviour towards each other.

Cranford's system for entering and exiting the community are not as explicit as the regulations in *Millenium Hall*. Miss Matty, after losing her money, has to find something genteel enough to make ends meet. She starts selling tea, which prompts a discussion on her status in the community:

Even Mrs Jamieson's approval of her selling tea had been gained. That oracle had taken a few days to consider whether by so doing Miss Matty would forfeit her right to the privileges of society in Cranford. I think she had some little idea of mortifying Lady Glenmire by the decision she gave at last; which was to this effect: that whereas a married woman takes her husband's rank by the strict laws of precedence, an unmarried woman retains the station her father occupied. (Gaskell 1904, 228)

Miss Matty's station does not change because she, a spinster, cannot lose the rank to which she was born – unlike Lady Glenmire, who remarries below her rank and is shunned by Mrs Jamieson, the head of Cranford society in station. There is much discussion about whether or not Lady Glenmire is to be visited after her new marriage, showing that the community is able to exclude someone who they see as not rightfully belonging to the society.

Whether she would drop her title? And how Martha and the other correct servants in Cranford would ever be brought to announce a married couple as Lady Glenmire and Mr Hoggins? But would they be visited? Would Mrs Jamieson let us? Or must we choose between the Honourable Mrs Jamieson and the degraded Lady Glenmire? (Gaskell 1904, 184)

Being included in the Cranford society depends upon the standing of the woman's father, if she is not married, or her husband.

The function of Millenium Hall in relation to the rest of the world is to create a space of compensation. The reference of the name given to the estate by the narrator is religious, referring to the thousand-year reign of Christ (Brown 2001, 471), and there is direct imagery relating to the paradise-like space of the estate:

Curiosity [. . .] still prompted us to proceed, not unsatisfied with what we had seen, but desirous to see still more of this earthly paradise. We approached the house, wherein, as it was the only human habitation in view, we imagined must reside the Primum Mobile

of all we had yet beheld. We were admiring the magnificence of the ancient structure, and inclined to believe it the abode of the genius which presided over this fairy land [. . .]. (Scott 2008, 4)

It is explicit, indeed, that this place is supposed to be like God would want human society to be ordered. The ladies profess they are doing God's work in helping the people in the surrounding villages, the poor and the disabled; the narrator and his male companion are convinced of their first impression of the estate as an "earthly paradise" after they learn how the society works and what the ladies do for other people. They seem to live in harmony together with nature, enjoying the benefits it gives but not taking more than they need:

That hill on your right-hand is a warren, prodigiously stocked with rabbits; this canal, and these other pieces of water, as well as the river you saw this morning, furnish our table with a great profusion of fish. You will easily believe from the great number of deer you see around us, that we have as much venison as we can use, either in presents to our friends, or our own family. Hares and all sorts of game likewise abound here; so that with the help of a good dairy, perhaps no situation ever more amply afforded all the necessaries of life. These are indeed our riches [. . .]. (Scott 2008, 46)

Invoking the genre of English country-house poems such as Ben Jonson's "To Penshurst", which also places a great importance on religion and morally good behaviour (Greenblatt 2006, 1436), the women seem to want to show that while the paradise-like space might exist, it needs a human being with a good sense of morals to make it into an Eden.

Cranford, on the contrary, creates a space of illusion. This is fashionable society – except it is only an image of it, since it consists mainly of spinsters. They hold parties and visit each other like their class outside Cranford, but here there is no element of finding a daughter a suitable suitor, a function for the amusement that is not applicable here: instead, the ladies of Cranford are free to indulge in what they want to spend their time in doing.

We had often rejoiced, in former days, that there was no gentleman to be attended to, and to find conversation for, at the card-parties. We had congratulated ourselves upon the snugness of the evenings; and, in our love for gentility, and distaste of mankind, we had almost persuaded ourselves that to be a man was to be "vulgar" [. . .]. Parties in Cranford were solemn festivities, making the ladies feel gravely elated as they sat together in their best dresses. (Gaskell 1904, 10)

This reveals the fact that when there are no men at the parties, the women do not have to spend time thinking about their amusement – they can concentrate on their own. Their rejoicing exposes that the parties outside of Cranford, in their view, are mainly for the men, not for the women, who have to attend to the men. Thus, even though there is an illusion of fashionable society in Cranford, it only serves to illumine and contrast the role of women in the larger society and the role of the Cranford ladies in their societies; the reality and the alternate reality.

3.2 *Cranford* and *Millenium Hall* as Communities

Nina Auerbach claims that “[a]s a literary idea, a community of women feeds dreams of a world beyond the normal” because they are “emblems of female self-sufficiency which create their own corporate reality, evoking both wishes and fears” (1978, 5). Furthermore, Macey states that *Millenium Hall* was imagined “in order to fill a psychological and social void” (1997, 174). Nestor puts it in different words when she identifies Miss Matty and Miss Deborah as one of Gaskell’s “pairs of sisters who function together in a way that offers an emotional and psychological substitute to heterosexual unions” (1985, 50) and continues that the novel “suggests an alternative way of life by portraying [. . .] a largely self-sufficient community of unmarried women” (1985, 51). In effect, the underlying idea is the same: these communities for women depicted in the novels offer their members something they would be unable to receive from anywhere else.

In this chapter I will study both communities in depth with the help of the concepts borrowed from community psychology introduced in chapter 3. First, I will take a look at ecology, meaning the levels of the community; move on to prevention and promotion, which will cover health-related themes; and thirdly cover the concept of community, which is divided into the sense of community and social capital. In the fourth subchapter I will discuss power, empowerment and agency in the communities and finally explore inclusion and commitment, which concentrate on how and what kind of different members of the community are accepted, and the motivation for acting for the

good of the community. The purpose for this analysis is to reveal how relationships between the women themselves and their neighbours further their well-being and the community itself. I expect to find out that friendships and solidarity affect greatly the women's lives.

3.2.1 Ecology

First, I will discuss the ecology in the communities in *Cranford* and *Millenium Hall*. The concept in this thesis means looking at the woman on the levels of her immediate circle of close friends and family, the wider circle of the village or town where she lives, and finally the widest circle of the country and its social norms. How are these women treated by the society at large, by the villagers who they help but who are not part of their class, and by each other, those with whom they have agreed to spend their time?

The five women who form the core of Millenium Hall have all had experiences which opened their eyes on the treatment of women by the outside world. For example, Miss Mancel, who is essentially orphaned at the age of 10 and taken under the wing of a man called Mr Hintman, is years later courted by the same man whose character, as her friend Miss Melvyn (later Mrs Morgan) finds out, is less than desirable: "Mr Hintman had a very great fortune, which he spent entirely in the gratification of his favourite vice, the love of women; on whom his profuseness was boundless. That as he was easily captivated, so he was soon tired; and seldom kept a woman long after he had obtained the free possession of her" (Scott 2008, 36). As Mr Hintman has provided schooling for Miss Mancel in the intervening years, she feels great gratitude for him:

Louisa was in great difficulty how to act, between gratitude and affection on the one side, and necessary caution and reserve on the other. She was almost as much afraid of appearing ungrateful, as of being imprudent. She found little assistance from the advice of her friends, who declared them selves incapable of directing her, therefore she was obliged to lay aside all dependence on her own care, and to trust in that of heaven, convinced that her innocence would be guarded by that power who knew the integrity and purity of her heart (Scott 2008, 36).

Illustrating essentially how the society at a large treats even those women who have been born into the upper classes, Miss Mancel is completely on her own and has to trust in God for protection – the society or even her friends will not help her. In a way her trust is rewarded: Mr Hintman dies three days before the appointed day on which he was to take Miss Mancel, who had just completed her schooling, to the countryside (Scott 2008, 37–8). Her narrow escape serves to illustrate how women are essentially alone in the world: even Miss Melvyn, who is able to warn her friend that she should be on her guard in regards to him, is not able to do anything more (Scott 2008, 36).

The women are unable to escape the male expectations of an ideal womanhood when the narrator and his companion arrive. As Rabb points out, there is a strong wish on their part “to experience and believe in a world of complete (female) innocence”, while both of them have been stained by the world (1988, 13). But the ladies at Millenium Hall, by telling their stories and showing what they do on the estate and its surroundings, try to reject the men’s imagined ideals. “They are not utterly innocent; they have knowledge and experience”, as Rabb (1988, 13) puts it, and the women try to show their visitors just that. It remains doubtful if the men grasp the whole meaning of what the ladies are trying to make them understand: in order to create Millenium Hall, they have faced disappointments, been at the mercy of people who have had not their best interests at heart, decided to abandon the society that could have ruined them, and set up the community not because they want a paradise-like estate to live on, but because there is a need for an asylum for people who are – in the eyes of the society – not worthy of the same treatment as these men. The narrator and his companion have been privileged all their lives, and it is uncertain if they can see beyond the Eden: this community wants to argue that they, too, have the right to live in conditions which at the time are only available to men of certain wealth and status. As the historical conditions of the birth of the social system and its succession are included in the concept of ecology, the community essentially reveals how and why it was born.

However, the community does not advocate a complete overhaul of the current social system. Instead, the women seem to speak for a change in attitudes towards different classes: the picture is completely different than the one with the society when we look at how the ladies of Millenium Hall are regarded by those who live near the estate. Just behind the garden and a little wood live some old women who are now better off because of the ladies. One of them tells the narrator what the ladies have done for them:

[I]t is all owing to them. I was almost starved when they put me into this house, and no shame of mine, for so were my neighbours too; perhaps we were not so painstaking as we might have been; but that was not our fault, you know, as we had not things to work with, nor any body to set us to work, poor folks cannot know every thing as these good ladies do; we were half dead for want of victuals, and then people have not courage to set about any thing. Nay, all the parish were so when they came into it' (Scott 2008, 10).

Now, she says: "God bless the good ladies! I and my neighbours are as happy as princesses, we have every thing we want and wish" (Scott 2008, 10). If this old woman can be seen as a representative of how the villagers think about the ladies of Millenium Hall, they are indeed almost saviours for them. Kindness begets kindness: the ladies treat others with respect, helping those who do not have the same means as they do, and those who receive their help only have praise for them. It seems as though there is no place for jealousy or talking behind their backs on the estate and its surroundings – and in this way, *Millenium Hall* seems to be a straightforward utopia.

In the smallest circle of the ecology concept, I look at the friendships between the women themselves. As was already mentioned, Miss Mancel and Miss Melvyn (at the time of the narrative Mrs Morgan) were great friends from their childhood, and very close – Millenium Hall was started because they decided to "retire into the country" together, and their fortunes allowed them to expand the community (Scott 2008, 85–6). Since the novel is narrated to us by a male visitor, whose relative Mrs Maynard is, the narrator and the reader are not privy to anything else than what is told to them or what they see with their own eyes. It is Mrs Maynard who tells the narrator and his friend that "[i]n this place, and in this way of life, the three ladies already mentioned have lived upwards of twenty years; for Lady Mary Jones joined her fortune to those of the two friends, never

choosing to quit them, and is too agreeable not to be very desirable in the society” (Scott 2008, 87). Even though we do not see how these ladies behave towards each other when there are no visitors around, it is evident that at least some of them stay because of the company.

Their reasons for joining in the first place reveal much: Lady Mary Jones is fascinated by Miss Mancel’s and Mrs Morgan’s plans for retiring and wants to join them for the duration of six months to see if the way of life agrees with her (Scott 2008, 86); Miss Selvyn forms a friendship with Lady Mary Jones, whose advice helps Miss Selvyn escape a rake and whose accounts of life with Miss Mancel and Mrs Morgan have charmed her so that she asks to join them, wishing to “increase her acquaintance” with Lady Mary (Scott 2008, 135); Miss Trentham was introduced to the community at Millenium Hall when she was visiting “a lady in this neighbourhood” and was then invited to join them: she, in her turn, asked Mrs Maynard to spend time in the community after she was widowed (Scott 2008, 154). All the named ladies of the community are bound by ties of friendship which have been instrumental in their entering into Millenium Hall: this seems to indicate that friendships between the ladies are held in high respect. They give advice and support when they can, and want to spend time with each other, inviting their friends to join the community if they think the friend would be suited to the life.

There is an obvious difference when looking at the Cranford and Millenium Hall communities: the ladies of Cranford have not voluntarily and rationally decided to form it, but rather it has formed itself when the ladies have not married or they have been widowed childless. This is one of the reasons why the Cranford ladies are seen as quaintly eccentric: they can be gently ridiculed because they represent the old order, which is exactly what Mary’s father, representing the new industrial way of life does: “But my father says ‘such simplicity might be very well in Cranford, but would never do in the world’” (Gaskell 1904, 231). Knezevic discusses the difference between the provincial town and the industrial modernization, pointing out that the “implicit map of the national space” consists of Cranford’s local culture, Drumble’s northern industrialist culture and

London's southern metropolitan culture (1998, 408). "In this triangular political geography, Cranford features as an outpost of the state culture of the south, which accounts for its tenacity in resisting the style of modernization taking place in the north" (Knezevic 1998, 408). Thus the social norms respected in Cranford are the norms of the south, not the new ones of the north, which Mary's father embodies.

Other Cranfordians, i.e. the lower middle class and the working class are mostly represented in the novel by the ladies' servants. Their view of the ladies ranges from being practically in charge of the lady in question to being their good friend. For instance Mrs Jamieson is "very much at the mercy of her old servants. If they chose that she should give a party, they reminded her of the necessity for so doing: if not, she let it alone" (Gaskell 1904, 37). At the other end of the spectrum there is Martha, Miss Matty's maidservant, who is married when she is so that she and her husband can provide housing for the impoverished Miss Matty (Gaskell 1904, 213). Indeed, Lepine makes a point that could account for the fact that there are not many mentions of working class people: the Cranford ladies have redefined the whole town as their domestic space, "and they wander about it as freely as they would in their own homes, much of the novel's comedy and power deriving from their ability to rewrite their rules of visibility as the need arises" (2010, 122). This issue of visibility also applies to the working class people, who are not visible to the ladies when they "wander about" the town: indeed, it seems as though it applies to every character:

[Miss Matty] once or twice exchanged congratulations with me on our private and leisurely view of the bonnets and shawls; but I was, all the time, not so sure that our examination was so utterly private, for I caught glimpses of a figure dodging behind the cloaks and mantles; and, by a dexterous move, I came face to face with Miss Pole, also in morning costume (the principal feature of which was her being without teeth, and wearing a veil to conceal the deficiency), come on the same errand as ourselves (Gaskell 1904, 199).

Here, Miss Pole is in her invisibility mode and does not wish to be seen by anyone, which she signals to everyone by wearing a veil. Miss Matty, if she is aware of her, respects the unwritten rules but Mary does not, confronting Miss Pole. What little the novel tells the reader about the

townspeople's opinions of the ladies, their rewriting of the visibility rules seems to be accepted and not wondered at; the class distinction is probably a factor in the townspeople's decision not to call attention to the ladies' behaviour.

The Cranford ladies, even though they have their differences in opinion, generally get on well with each other. As Mary puts it:

Although the ladies of Cranford know all each other's proceedings, they are exceedingly indifferent to each other's opinions. Indeed, as each has her own individuality, not to say eccentricity, pretty strongly developed, nothing is so easy as verbal retaliation; but, somehow, good-will reigns among them to a considerable degree. (Gaskell 1904, 1)

This can be interpreted to mean that at least in Mary's opinion, these women rely on each other to such degree that there is no real danger of the community being torn apart by quarrels. In fact, the squabbles are treated as something that only adds colour to their lives: "[t]he Cranford ladies have only an occasional little quarrel, spirited out in a few peppery words and angry jerks of the head; just enough to prevent the even tenor of their lives from becoming too flat" (Gaskell 1904, 2). The strength of the friendship between these women is demonstrated in numerous ways: the concreteness of what the ladies are prepared to do to save Miss Matty from financial ruin is only one example. I will discuss the issue of friendship in detail later in this chapter.

3.2.2 Prevention and promotion

The concepts of prevention and promotion concentrate on health matters. In this section I will look at the treatment of cases of sickness in the communities, the promotion of health and essential daily activities: are these activities advancing the mental, emotional and physical health of the members of the community? If they are, it would mean that the community is based on a solid foundation, because it ensures that the continuity of the community is secure. When the women are shown that their well-being is important, they are more likely to stay and make sure that the community succeeds.

In *Millenium Hall*, the narrator is told by Mrs Maynard that the expenses of the sickness are taken care of by the patronesses of the community (Scott 2008, 51). Other than that, there is no mention of sickness when it comes to the ladies who inhabit the estate. The narrator is told by the housekeeper, however, how the ladies take care of those who are disabled or crippled by sickness or accident and cannot find work elsewhere:

I was very much shocked at my recovery from a fever to find myself deprived of the use of a hand, but still tried if I could get myself received into service; as I was sensible I could, notwithstanding my infirmity, perform the business of a housekeeper; but no one would take me in this maimed condition. At last I was advised to apply to these ladies and found what had hitherto been an impediment was a stronger recommendation than the good character I had from my last place; and I am sure I have reason to value these distorted fingers, more than ever any one did the handsomest hands that ever nature made. (Scott 2008, 94)

It seems that the ladies not only take care of the sick when they are ill, but also make sure that if there are any lasting effects, these people are not left alone. Her own case is not the only one: the cook is only able to walk with crutches, the kitchen maid has just one eye, the dairy maid is deaf and the housemaid has only one hand (Scott 2008, 94). Yet, she says, “there is no family where the business is better done; for gratitude, and a conviction that this is the only house into which we can be received, makes us exert ourselves to the utmost; and most people fail not from a deficiency of power, but of inclination” (Scott 2008, 94). According to the housekeeper’s words, the ladies’ willingness to help seems to promote a good work ethic in the servants and give them motivation to do their work well. This is directly related to the mental health of the whole community: when those in power use their wealth to advance the well-being of others who are not so fortunate, it creates an atmosphere of gratitude, which in turn makes those who receive the ladies’ help inclined to do what they can to the well-being of the ladies. The creation of positive feelings and experiences in the community is thus enabled not only in the circle of the ladies themselves, but also on the level of their servants, and villagers who live nearby.

In the ladies’ daily activities are included, as was mentioned in the previous chapter, the morning and evening prayers and meals, which are the only obligatory events during the day. The

narrator mentions that “the ladies had some daily business on their hands which they never neglect” (Scott 2008, 14), but there is no indication of what kind of business he is referring to in this instance. Lake states that the ladies’ occupations exemplify “the idealized domestic arts of the eighteenth-century woman, whose learning and taste, especially in drawing, languages, and textiles, were signs of both the ideal woman's good breeding and her domestic economy” (2009, 668). I find this view somewhat patronising, since the ladies do so much more than concentrate on those “domestic arts”. The most revealing passage relating to both the daily activities and the mental and emotional well-being of the members of the community is what Mrs Maynard tells to the narrator:

For the first year of this establishment my friends dedicated most of their time and attention to this new community, who were every day either at the hall, or these ladies with them, endeavouring to cultivate in this sisterhood that sort of disposition which is most productive of peace. By their example and suggestions [. . .] they led them to industry, and shewed it to be necessary to all stations, as the basis of almost every virtue. An idle mind, like fallow ground, is the soil for every weed to grow in; in it vice strengthens, the seed of every vanity flourishes unmolested and luxuriant; discontent, malignity, ill humour, spread far and wide, and the mind becomes a chaos which it is beyond human power to call into order and beauty. This therefore my good friends laboured to expel from their infant establishment. (Scott 2008, 52)

Illustrating the life at the Millenium Hall community, it is clear that some kind of occupation is necessary for everyone, whether they belong to the working class or the upper middle class.

Idleness is what is seen as the source of discontentment, working on something the basis of almost every virtue. For example, they have established a rug manufacture in one of the nearby villages which employs “several hundreds of people of all ages” and enables them to prosper – at least the narrator describes them “all busy, singing and whistling, with the appearance of general cheerfulness, and their neat dress shewed them in a condition of proper plenty” (Scott 2008, 155). Furthermore, the ladies seem to have encouraged the middle-class women to find something for which they have a passion, or according to their abilities and interests, to try different occupations and ways to make them do something for the good of the community:

They got this sisterhood to join with them in working for the poor people, in visiting, in admonishing, in teaching them wherever their situations required these services. Where they found that any of these ladies had a taste for gardening, drawing, music, reading, or

any manual or mental art, they cultivated it, assisted them in the pleasantest means, and by various little schemes have kept up these inclinations with all the spirit of pursuit which is requisite to preserve most minds from that state of languidness and inactivity whereby life is rendered wearisome to those who have never found it unfortunate. (Scott 2008, 52–3)

The ladies have apparently made philanthropic work an essential part for every well-to-do woman who joins the community: visiting, teaching and advising the poor seems to be something that is expected of every one of them in their turn. I will talk more about the philanthropy in the next section; here it is enough to note that this work seems to be the basis of promoting health and well-being inside and outside the estate, reaching even the nearby villages.

In *Cranford*, there are two instances when sickness is at the forefront of the story: Miss Brown's long suffering at the beginning of the novel and Samuel Brown's illness sometime later. Since Samuel Brown is only a visitor to the village and does not actually belong to the community, I will concentrate on the case of Miss Brown. She is the daughter of Captain Brown, who, against all convention, comes to Cranford to stay despite the Amazonian neighbourhood. He has two daughters, one of whom has an illness from which she will never recover; usually she is taken care of by her father and her sister Jessie, but when Captain Brown dies in an accident, Miss Jenkyns accompanies Miss Jessie to the funeral while the other ladies take care of Miss Brown, who is kept in the dark about her father's fate: "Miss Pole, Miss Matty, and I, meanwhile attended to Miss Brown: and hard work we found it to relieve her querulous and never-ending complaints" (Gaskell 1904, 29). What is notable here is that most of the ladies have their own role: Miss Matty's sister Deborah takes on the masculine role and attends the funeral with Miss Brown, while Miss Matty, Miss Pole and Mary are in charge of taking care of Miss Brown. As some critics have noted, the Jenkyns sisters seem to embody a kind of division into qualities which have traditionally been seen as either masculine or feminine (Auerbach 1978, 82; Fowler 1984, 718).

About the daily activities of the Cranford community there is only some mention: since the novel is episodic, there is an emphasis on storylines spanning weeks or even months. Mary gives

some kind of idea of what the ladies habitually do or do not do: “As we did not read much, and as all the ladies were pretty well suited with servants, there was a dearth of subjects for conversation” (Gaskell 1904, 16). And one that gives some insight into the habits of Miss Pole: “There was all the more time for me to hear old-world stories from Miss Pole, while she sat knitting, and I making my father’s shirts. I always took a quantity of plain sewing to Cranford; for, as we did not read much, or walk much, I found it a capital time to get through my work (Gaskell 1904, 38). It seems as though Mary is used to spending her time reading and walking when she is at home in Drumble, but for the ladies of Cranford that is not the case. Visiting at proper times, discussion amounting to old stories and memories or current news or gossip when there was something new to discuss, the occasional shopping during the day or party in the evening, and handicrafts seem to form the everyday life in Cranford.

Despite what Mary claims, though, the literary world of Cranford is not as bleak and empty of reading. In the beginning of the novel there is a fight about the merits of Dr Johnson and Charles Dickens between Deborah Jenkyns and Captain Brown, the former being convinced of Dr Johnson’s superiority, modelling even her own letters after Johnson’s style (Schor 1989, 289). The other women may not publicly disagree with her, as they read Dickens’s novels “but make sure they keep quiet about it” (Knezevic 1998, 423). There is a deeper implication here about Deborah Jenkyns that Schor points out: the idea of “the writer as a literary daughter, still struggling with the language her father gave her for—specifically—domestic writing” (1989, 294). Miss Matty embodies a more feminine style of letter-writing: her letters are “rather circuitous and very humble” (Gaskell 1904, 36). According to Schor, however, there is a new level of reading in *Cranford*:

[T]hrough the narrator's education as she learns to "read" Miss Matty's secret heartbreak readers of Cranford are in turn instructed in varieties of readings, specifically in decoding what the novel terms the "effort at concealment." The novel gives a voice to what cannot otherwise be expressed: to the silent sufferings of women like Miss Matty; to the enforced silence of the letters of dead loved ones, which live only in the continued affection of the living; to the deliberate silence of male texts like "Locksley Hall" about women's experience. (1989, 297)

In other words, the most important activity in the novel is “reading” others, especially those whose voices are silenced in ways they may not even realise themselves. Deborah Jenkyns “would have despised the modern idea of women being equal to men. Equal, indeed! she knew they were superior” (Gaskell 1904, 20), “but this superiority is a fiction, as *Cranford* makes increasingly clear. The female world of action is limited, as is what the women can imagine doing” (Schor 1989, 290). Deborah Jenkyns, the upholder of the severe patriarchal code of behaviour she inherits from her father, is incapable of seeing the world in another light; Miss Matty, the younger sister who embodies a softer and kind to a fault woman, is actually more successful in creating an atmosphere where the society can flourish.

I believe that Croskery is talking about the same issue of being able to “read” others when she states that Gaskell “understands that the transformative power of sympathy is crucial to reform on both the personal and social level” (1997, 220). According to her, sympathy is Gaskell’s way to further her “feminist agenda” by “assuming equity with the paternal and the patriarchal rather than attempting to compel it” (Croskery 1997, 219). Whether it is better to call it sympathy or the ability to read others, this attitude Mary learns reveals that there is nothing insignificant about the way the *Cranford* ladies lead their lives. Their actions may be bound by the social norms, but their minds need something with which to occupy them and their emotions are far from trivial. The support of the community of women who are in the same situation in life is an essential way to promote the ladies’ mental health. Even if they do not talk about their “silent sufferings”, they understand and are there for each other when needed.

3.2.3 Community

As was mentioned earlier in this thesis, community is divided into two concepts: sense of community and social capital. I will discuss the membership, influence, integration, and the fulfilment of needs of an individual woman and how she might experience being part of the

community. Secondly, I will examine what makes the women trust each other and what do they do for the common good. Some of these issues have been touched upon in the earlier chapters, but here they will be expanded upon. What this chapter will achieve is at the core of this thesis: sense of community reveals the personal engagement of belonging to the community, social capital the communal side.

As was stated in the discussion about the rules of entering and exiting the community, the membership of the society in Millenium Hall is inclusive of women in different stages of life, but there are some requirements. The narrator is told by Mrs Maynard:

The number of this society is now increased to thirty, four ladies board there, one of whom has two children, and there are five young ladies, the eldest not above twelve years old, whose mothers being dead, and their families related to some of the society, their kinswomen have undertaken their education; these likewise pay a hundred pounds a year each. It has frequently happened, that widow ladies have come into this society, till their year of deep mourning was expired (Scott 2008, 52).

The problem, at the time of the narrator's visit, is that there are more women who wish to join the community than there is space for all of them. This is why the ladies have recently purchased another mansion: they intend to repair the old house "fallen to decay" so that they are able to house more women (Scott 2008, 136). The most defining feature of the membership of this community is thus the desire and will of an individual woman to belong to it. O'Driscoll calls the community "an elaborate class-based hierarchy", and elaborates: "the original group of women, who are well born and have money of their own, supervise a group of gentle but impoverished women who live separately but share some of the founding group's activities; finally, the poor rural women from the neighborhood receive the instruction and bounty" of the original group (2003, 66). Thus, class is a factor that decides what membership status an individual woman may take at the community.

On a daily basis, it seems that the women can choose their occupation freely, and indeed they are encouraged to do what they feel drawn to or what they have a talent for – as long as they are doing something, since idleness is disapproved of. However, there also seems to be an emphasis on philanthropic work, which is implied to be expected of every lady who joins the community.

Integration, on the other hand, is apparently dependant on the woman's own activity and participation: "As no one is obliged to stay a minute longer in company than she chooses, she naturally retires as soon as it grows displeasing to her, and does not return till she is prompted by inclination" (Scott 2008, 53). This is a community where everyone is expected to take part in different activities, whether it is reading, playing music, doing handicrafts, or just walking in the gardens of the estate – activities which the modern reader would connect with their leisure time, not work. But it is clear that if the activity allows it, they are to take part in the educative ventures of the girls who also inhabit the estate:

My friends always insisted when they waited on the community, that not one of the sisterhood should discontinue whatever they found her engaged in; this gave them the hint to do the same by us, and it is a rule that no book is thrown aside, no pen laid down at their entrance. There are always some of us manually employed, who are at leisure to converse, and if the visit is not very short, part of it is generally spent in hearing one of the girls read aloud, who take it by turns through a great part of the day (Scott 2008, 53).

It is evident that there is an expectation that no one who joins the society will be left on their own – in other words, this is not a place for solitary retirement. That is not to say that the women cannot be alone if they choose to, just that there is clearly an expectation that they will participate in the joint activities of the community according to what their occupation will allow.

When talking about the social capital of these communities I take a look at the networks fostering trust and improving common good. In *Millenium Hall* there is a clear emphasis on philanthropy; Elliott states that the novel "offers a feminized version of [. . .] male-run philanthropic institutions as a solution to the 'problem' of unmarried and sexualized women" (1995, 536). Mrs Maynard recounts the establishment of this practice soon after the community had been founded:

The condition of the poor soon drew their attention, and they instituted schools for the young and almshouses for the old. [. . .] The next expense they undertook [. . .] was that of furnishing a house for every young couple that married in their neighbourhood, and providing them with some sort of stock, which by industry would prove very conducive towards their living in a comfortable degree of plenty. They have always paid nurses for the sick, sent them every proper refreshment, and allow the same sum weekly which the sick person could have gained, that the rest of the family may not lose any part of their support by the incapacity of one. (Scott 2008, 86)

As previously noted, they have also established a manufacture of rugs in the nearby village, a shelter for people with uncommon features which were previously exhibits in “freak shows”, and employed working class people who are disabled or maimed in accidents so that they cannot find work elsewhere. The narrator speaks with one of the old poor women, who tells him that:

You must know these good ladies, heaven preserve them! take every child after the fifth of every poor person, as soon as it can walk, till when they pay the mother for nursing it; these children they send to us to keep out of harm [. . .]. They are pretty company for us, and make us mothers again, as it were, in our old age; then the children's relations are all so fond of us for our care of them, that it makes us a power of friends, which you know is very pleasant, though we want nothing from them but their good wills. (Scott 2008, 11)

What is notable about this passage is the old woman’s gratitude. As I mentioned in the previous section, the housekeeper’s gratitude seemed to imply that there was a circle of positive attitudes being generated: the ladies who can afford it help the poor and those who have fallen to rough times, and these people in turn respond with kindness and gratitude, wanting to do what they can for the ladies. That same implication seems to be in place here: the old woman mentions that the ladies were the ones who taught her and her neighbours to live in a way that they would help others and the others would help them, all according to their abilities (Scott 2008, 11). In essence, the ladies have created a network where everybody does what they can to help others, trusting that they too will be helped. It was started from the top and with the ladies’ money, but at the time of the narrator’s visit everything seems to run almost on their own – and the impression left by the narrator is that this is because everyone feels like they benefit from this way of doing things.

As the Cranford community is formed by chance as opposed to the community at Millenium Hall, which is formed by volition, the sense of community and social capital differ in the communities. Membership of the Cranford community is determined by social status – if a woman was born or married into the right kind of family, she can be included in the genteel society of the ladies. This is a class issue: being included in the society means that the woman is part of the rentier class “that can afford to live off previously accumulated capital [. . .] which enables its dissociation

from the realms of both labor and enterprise” (Knezevic 1998, 414). As already mentioned in the cases of Miss Matty’s financial ruin and Lady Glenmire’s second marriage, the inclusion or exclusion is negotiated by the ladies when situations change. Another example of the fluidness of the membership is Mrs Fitz-Adam:

I remember the convocation of ladies who assembled to decide whether or not Mrs Fitz-Adam should be called upon by the old blue-blooded inhabitants of Cranford. She had taken a large rambling house, which had been usually considered to confer a patent of gentility upon its tenant, because, once upon a time, seventy or eighty years before, the spinster daughter of an earl had resided in it. [. . .] Still, it was not at all a settled thing that Mrs Fitz-Adam was to be visited, when dear Miss Jenkyns died; and, with her, something of the clear knowledge of the strict code of gentility went out too. As Miss Pole observed, “As most of the ladies of good family in Cranford were elderly spinsters, or widows without children, if we did not relax a little, and become less exclusive, by-and-by we should have no society at all.” (Gaskell 1904, 101–2)

Deborah Jenkyns’ death is the factor that changes some of the rules of the genteel society in Cranford. When it comes to the influence of the ladies, they do not have any outside the community, but within the society they are able to influence their daily occupation to some degree. In addition, they have influence over each other: “You see, one would not like Mrs Jamieson to think that anything she could do, or say, was of consequence enough to give offence; it would be a kind of letting down of ourselves, that I, for one, should not like” (Gaskell 1904, 116). Here Miss Pole changes Miss Matty and Mary’s minds about going to Mrs Jamieson’s party after Mrs Jamieson had prohibited the other ladies from visiting her while her newly-widowed relative Lady Glenmire comes to stay.

Integration, on the other hand, seems to be an issue that is not divorced from membership. If a woman has the status which allows her to be included in the society, she is visited and thus integrated. This is seen in the cases of Lady Glenmire and the narrator, who has the dual role of being included in the society but also being a visitor and thus always remaining somewhat of an outsider: “I thought that probably my connection with Cranford would cease after Miss Jenkyns’s death” (Gaskell 1904, 36). However, Mary’s connection does not cease: she is invited to visit Miss Pole, after which she goes on to stay with Miss Matty (Gaskell 1904, 36). Her integration in the

society of Cranford does not depend on a single person; her previous visits have been long enough for her to be regarded as one of them, and thus she has an enduring connection to the ladies of Cranford, especially Miss Matty and Miss Pole. However, as Schor points out, she will always be detached from them: “Mary seems slightly allied with the ladies against her father, but her ironic gaze, loving as it is, is too penetrating of the ladies' foolishness” (1989, 299).

Social capital in Cranford does not extend to the same lengths as it does in *Millenium Hall*, but as the quotation in the previous chapter showed, there is kindness, help and small deeds done for those who have less. Most of the genteel folk in Cranford are not exactly wealthy themselves, but as Mary puts it: “We none of us spoke of money, because that subject savoured of commerce and trade, and though some might be poor, we were all aristocratic” (Gaskell 1904, 3). Despite the general poverty – or perhaps because of it – kindness defines the ladies’ actions. For example, Miss Matty feels responsible when one of the working class men is affected by the failing bank, for which she is one of the shareholders:

“But I don’t pretend to understand business; I only know that if it is going to fail, and if honest people are to lose their money because they have taken our notes—I can’t explain myself,” said she, suddenly becoming aware that she had got into a long sentence with four people for audience; “only I would rather exchange my gold for the note, if you please,” turning to the farmer, “and then you can take your wife the shawl.” (Gaskell 1904, 198)

It is clear that even though the ladies in Cranford are not as organised in their good deeds for the villagers, they are sympathetic to them and help when they feel it is needed, their responsibility, and in their power to do so.

3.2.4 Power

The concept of power is an interesting notion, since both of these novels, in their own ways, are intended to subvert the male power structures in place at the time of their writing. Who are the powerful characters in these narratives? What kind of power do they have and how do they use their power? Who are empowered, who have agency? Are there people who lose power in consequence

of others gaining it? Does the redistribution of power extend over the different classes, or does it only reach the wealthy? This chapter discusses the power structures in the novels.

It is obvious that in *Millenium Hall*, those who have and use power are the ladies who founded the community. They are explicitly the ones who have money; in fact, Mrs Morgan actually gives an account of their use of money to the narrator:

We keep a very regular account, and at an average, for every year will not be exactly the same, the total stands thus. The girls' school four hundred pounds a year, the boys' a hundred and fifty, apprenticing some and equipping others for service one hundred. The clothing of the girls in the house forty. The almshouses two hundred. The maintenance of the monsters a hundred and twenty. Fortunes and furniture for such young persons as marry in this and the adjoining parishes, two hundred. All this together amounts only to twelve hundred and ten pounds a year, and yet affords all reasonable comforts. The expenses of ourselves and household, in our advantageous situation, come within eight hundred a year. (Scott 2008, 158)

The above makes it clear that the ladies are doing much for the common good with their money, but there is an obvious use of a word that reveals the power imbalance: “the monsters” referring to the people with deformities and unusual features who have found an asylum on the estate. However kind the act of the ladies to have saved them from being the exhibits on “the freak shows”, they are still far from being treated as human beings, even by the ladies themselves, as Mrs Morgan’s choice of a word reveals. Curiously, though, the choice of that particular word may reveal more than would seem: Elliott points out that “monster” originally meant “to be shown” (1995, 548). There is also a parallel between one of the women and the people with deformities: Miss Mancel, before the establishment of the community, has to stop going to church because she is so beautiful that everyone stares at her “as if she were a monster” (Elliott 1995, 549). The implication here can be seen as a commentary on the role of women in the society at the time – they are exhibitory items meant to be looked at and chosen from, similar to the people with deformities who can be purchased. There is also something uncomfortable in the fact that these people are being kept in “an inclosure”, although the narrator and his friend are told that this is by the request of those who are enclosed (Scott 2008, 15). The narrator is told by Miss Mancel that the inclosure is “an asylum for

those poor creatures who are rendered miserable from some natural deficiency or redundancy” (Scott 2008, 16), but here again one of the ladies is using a word which makes it clear that power is used over these people, and while it is a benevolent power, it does not excuse the fact that those in power do not see a person, but “a creature”.

It does seem as though the empowerment in the novel is reserved for the ladies and the women of their class. The ladies’ help for the poor people ensures that they have better living conditions and security for the times of illness, but there is no implication that they could advance in their life beyond the class position they have born into. O’Driscoll goes as far as to call the ladies “concerned with power” and describes them as “tyrannical in their panopticon-like surveillance of their dominions” (2003, 74). Her claims can be justified easily:

They kindly, but strongly, reprehend the first error, and guard them by the most prudent admonitions against a repetition of their fault. By little presents they shew their approbation of those who behave well, always proportioning their gifts to the merits of the person; which are therefore looked upon as the most honourable testimony of their conduct, and are treasured up as valuable marks of distinction. This encouragement has great influence, and makes them vie with each other in endeavours to excel in sobriety, cleanliness, meekness and industry. (Scott 2008, 93)

It is strongly suggested that by a certain kind of encouragement the ladies make sure that the working class girls will learn to behave properly. The ladies educate them, but only to make them good wives:

[T]he young women bred up at the schools these ladies support are so much esteemed for many miles round that it is not uncommon for young farmers, who want sober, good wives, to obtain them from thence, and prefer them to girls of much better fortunes, educated in a different manner, as there have been various instances wherein their industry and quickness of understanding, which in a great measure arises from the manner of their education, has proved more profitable to their husbands than a more ample dower. (Scott 2008, 93)

There is no doubt that their education makes these women more knowledgeable of many things that will benefit them in their lives – “cleanliness” and “industry” at least – but it is also clear that they are taught to obey those who have more power, hence their “meekness”. The class structure is not allowed to be questioned at any point: it remains an unchallenged fact of life determining what each

person is allowed to strive for. The community may be radical when it comes to the role of women in society, but it is “wholly conservative in its championing of those with landed wealth as the appropriate leaders of society’s institutions” (Bending 2006, 576).

The first sentence of *Cranford* evokes the mythic Amazons and makes a direct comparison between them and their spinster counterparts. It is a powerful image, situating the government of the village wholly on the ladies – these unmarried and widowed women who do not have any kind of power in the society at large. Unquestionably, the reader is asked to think about the power these spinsters have and how they use it. Their use of power can be seen ranging from the way they make decisions on who is to be included in or excluded from their society to Miss Matty’s feeling of responsibility when the bank of which she is a shareholder fails. There are also instances when the strict code of behaviour alive in Deborah Jenkyns’ times fails to be regarded as the norm, for instance when the ladies are offended by something Captain Brown does, as they feel he has forgotten his rank:

This was thought very eccentric; and it was rather expected that he would pay a round of calls, on the Monday morning, to explain and apologise to the Cranford sense of propriety: but he did no such thing: and then it was decided that he was ashamed, and was keeping out of sight. In a kindly pity for him, we began to say, “After all, the Sunday morning’s occurrence showed great goodness of heart,” and it was resolved that he should be comforted on his next appearance amongst us; but, lo! he came down upon us, untouched by any sense of shame, speaking loud and bass as ever, his head thrown back, his wig as jaunty and well-curled as usual, and we were obliged to conclude he had forgotten all about Sunday. (Gaskell 1904, 16–7)

They expect him to apologise and explain, but as he does not do so, they conclude that he is ashamed of his behaviour; but when they meet him, he does not seem to even remember the incident. What is in fact going on here is a question of power: the ladies who form the society at Cranford have a strict code of behaviour that determines how people from different classes should interact. When Captain Brown breaks that code, the ladies expect him to act accordingly – but it is probable that he does not even realise that he has offended the code, as that would mean that he recognises the ladies as the most powerful inhabitants of the village. The ladies do not take into

account the fact that Captain Brown does not think like they do – he is very much a man of the larger society, while the Cranford ladies have got used to their village and the fact that they are in power there.

While the power generated by gentility is unquestionably situated in the women in *Cranford*, there is an interestingly similar structure to the treatment of the lower classes in both of the novels. As we saw above, kindness by those who are in power seems to generate kindness in their servants, which seems to hold true for Cranford as well:

“And please, ma’am, he wants to marry me off-hand. And please, ma’am, we want to take a lodger—just one quiet lodger, to make our two ends meet; and we’d take any house conformable; and, oh dear Miss Matty, if I may be so bold, would you have any objections to lodging with us? Jem wants it as much as I do.” (Gaskell 1904, 213)

When Miss Matty’s financial ruin is certain and she has informed her maid Martha of it, Martha comes up with a plan that would essentially mean that Miss Matty could live comfortably with her and her husband. Martha’s plan is accepted and Miss Matty’s tea shop is set up at the front of the house. What is curious about this is the fact that it seems as though Martha is the one here who has the most power: she does not want to leave Miss Matty and makes a plan so that she does not have to, and she has apparently told Jem to wait when he has asked to marry her but now makes a decision that it is the right time for marrying without consulting Jem. At the same time their class positions do not change: those who have the means to help will do so, and like the servants at Millenium Hall, Martha’s experience of good treatment by Miss Matty generates feelings of gratitude so that a good work ethic is created and she is willing to help however she can.

Agency is an issue of which there have already been some examples: the Cranford ladies giving money to the financially ruined Miss Matty; Martha’s decision to marry and set up a house in order to help Miss Matty; and of course Miss Matty exchanging her cash for the bank notes so that the farmer can buy a shawl for his wife. Miss Matty is so often described as indecisive by Mary that her action may be seen as surprising. Her comment about the matter illustrates the state of her mind:

“My dear, I never feel as if my mind was what people call very strong; and it’s often hard enough work for me to settle what I ought to do with the case right before me. I was very thankful to—I was very thankful, that I saw my duty this morning, with the poor man standing by me; but its rather a strain upon me to keep thinking and thinking what I should do if such and such a thing happened; and, I believe, I had rather wait and see what really does come; and I don’t doubt I shall be helped then if I don’t fidget myself, and get too anxious beforehand.” (Gaskell 1904, 201)

Cranford, with its narrator gently making fun of the spinsters and widows forming the society, makes nevertheless a point that however ridiculous they seem to the outsiders, they have their own kind of power and are able to use it. “[T]hrough Miss Matty's unexpected strengths [. . .] comes a possible reversal of power”, argues Schor (1989, 299–300), referring to the novel’s division between men’s financial and industrial world and women’s domestic world. The Cranford women will participate in the affairs of the larger society if it affects them, and they will use their power in a way they see is right. In this way, they are situated in direct opposition of the commercial world of Drumble and the capitalism, defending the values of solidarity and caring for others in concrete ways. Auerbach comes to the same conclusion, and even declares the Cranford ladies as winners: “In the verbal and commercial battle of nineteenth-century England, the cooperative female community defeats the warrior world that proclaims itself the real one” (1977, 284). Furthermore, it is interesting that Miss Matty talks about her “duty” – her choice of words links her with the ladies of Millenium Hall and perhaps reveals the common background for the women, as will be discussed in the next section.

3.2.5 Inclusion and commitment

The concept of inclusion assesses how people with different genders, abilities and wealth are included in the society. Are some of them prioritised over others? How does this compare to the inclusion in the context of the whole society and country? The concept of commitment, on the other hand, is used to describe the accountability of the members of the community. How can their commitment be assessed on the levels of self, others, and community: do they have personal goals

that they try to achieve; how are they accountable for the other women and the larger community including the villagers? The purpose of this chapter is to discover how well the community holds together on the different levels of its membership and what is the incentive that makes it hold.

In the earlier sections I have already touched upon the inclusive aspect of the community at Millenium Hall: the ladies are not just interested in helping the women of their own class who are in financial trouble or otherwise in need of protection, they have created a network that covers the nearby villages surrounding the estate and are instrumental in bringing prosperity, mutual trust and friendliness to the people who live there. They have also employed people who have otherwise difficulties in finding work because of accidents that have led to disabilities. Although there is a focus on the five women who form the core of the community and a clear hierarchy, the stories of the women are shared in a way that makes Macey call them “the community's ‘sacred history’”, which both “explain why Millenium Hall exists” and “establish the paradigms of hetero- and homosociability that define the women's world-view” (1997, 172). In other words, the stories are used as a way to foster trust in a community where women can feel like they belong because they are not alone in their life experiences.

Because of the nature of the community and the personal histories of the core group of women, an emphasis is placed on women and girls who are in need of help, counteracting the rest of the society which treats men as the subjects and women as inferior to them. The ladies recognise the fact that this attitude affects their lives and have taken action to help women of their class, but seem to not be concerned that the same attitude has its effect on the working class women as well, as was pointed out in the previous section. They are inclusive in their attitude towards education – it belongs to everyone regardless of their gender or class, but there are differences in what is beneficial to learners of different classes – but are naturally inclined to emphasise girls’ rights and opportunities for it.

Commitment and accountability in *Millenium Hall* is dependent on the faith of the ladies. Mr Lamont and the narrator are told by Miss Mancel that the ladies see their work on the estate as their duty:

[W]e are told by him who cannot err that our time, our money and our understandings are entrusted with us as so many talents for the use of which we must give a strict account. How we ought to use them he has likewise told us; as to our fortunes in the most express terms, when he commands us to feed the hungry, to clothe the naked, to relieve the prisoner, and to take care of the sick. Those who have not an inheritance that enables them to do this are commanded to labour in order to obtain means to relieve those who are incapable of gaining the necessaries of life. Can we then imagine that every one is not required to assist others to the utmost of his power, since we are commanded even to work for the means of doing so? (Scott 2008, 156)

The above excerpt not only sheds light on the ladies' views about their reasons of why they are doing philanthropic work and what motivates them; it also makes clearer their stance on the class issues I have already mentioned. Their world view is based on Christianity and its principles, and in their opinion the problems affecting the lives of the women and the poor are the result of the society – in other words, the society which does not follow the principles of Christianity enough is the cause that results in the problems they can see and have taken action against.

Each state has its trials; the poverty of the lower rank of people exercises their industry and patience; the riches of the great are trials of their temperance, humility and humanity. Theirs is perhaps the more difficult part, but their present reward is also greater if they acquit themselves well; as for the future, there may probably be no inequality. (Scott 2008, 156–57)

It is curious that there is that expression of probability – “as for the future, there may probably be no inequality” – because while the ladies are indeed aiding the poor and the working class, they are not in any way advocating erasing the class boundaries. The power is explicitly in their hands. Miss Mancel's words seem to be more of a hope for the far distant future than something the ladies are trying to achieve in their lifetime.

There is no denying, though, that the religious motivation is effective for their commitment to their duty. It works because it allows the setting of goals on the levels of self, others and the larger community: personal goals can be instrumental in keeping each woman motivated for their work;

the women on the estate can form small groups working together and thus strive for something together; and goals for the whole community including the villagers are a way to knit together all the people who live in the area. While there are no examples of the setting of personal and small group goals due to the fact that everything we know comes through the male narrator, the rug manufacture serves as an instance of a goal for the larger community. Accountability can also be seen as a feature supported by their faith: in the end, all of them are accountable to God for the work they do. On the earth all of them are responsible for the continuity and the success of the community in their small way, which is probably one of the greatest motivators for the women who would not have a place to go if the community did not exist. Of course, this is applicable to the servants and the poor women as well, at least if we take the housekeeper and one of the old women the narrator talks with as representatives: they would probably not have work or indeed means to live if the community had not been established. It seems as though the ladies have created an atmosphere of positivity in the larger community where success and gratitude play a large part in keeping people content and more willing to do what they can for each other and the good of the whole community.

Inclusion in the genteel society of Cranford is strictly regulated, as has been pointed out earlier in this thesis, but they have also relaxed the rules somewhat. There is, however, a clear division between the society of the ladies and the lower classes, as is seen when Signor Brunoni, a conjuror, comes to visit Cranford and everyone is gathered to see his performance:

We stopped short at the second front row; I could hardly understand why, until I heard Miss Pole ask a stray waiter if any of the county families were expected; and when he shook his head, and believed not, Mrs Forrester and Miss Matty moved forwards, and our party represented a conversational square. The front row was soon augmented and enriched by Lady Glenmire and Mrs Jamieson. We six occupied the two front rows, and our aristocratic seclusion was respected by the groups of shop-keepers who strayed in from time to time and huddled together on the back benches. At least I conjectured so, from the noise they made, and the sonorous bumps they gave in sitting down. (Gaskell 1904, 136–37)

The last line makes it clear that the ladies are not even turning around to watch the lower classes to enter; Mary explains that

I would fain have looked round at the merry chattering people behind me, Miss Pole clutched my arm, and begged me not to turn, for “it was not the thing.” [. . .] [W]e all sat eyes right, square front, gazing at the tantalising curtain, and hardly speaking intelligibly, we were so afraid of being caught in the vulgarity of making any noise in a place of public amusement. (Gaskell 1904, 137)

The pressure that the middle-class women feel to keep up an appearance of gentility affects the inclusion. The Cranford ladies do perhaps allow some people in their society who they would not have allowed when Deborah Jenkyns was alive, but it is clear that these people will have to have some claim on gentility.

Commitment to the community in the case of Cranford cannot be measured in the same way than in the case of Millenium Hall because there are fundamental differences in what they set out to do. The Cranford society does not have a mission: they are living their lives but do not strive for bettering themselves or others. That said, their commitment to the community comes from the fact that Cranford is their home: a place not touched by the industrial revolution, but a village where the inhabitants still live the rural way of life. They see their way of life as superior:

There were one or two consequences arising from this general but unacknowledged poverty, and this very much acknowledged gentility, which were not amiss, and *which might be introduced into many circles of society to their great improvement*. For instance, the inhabitants of Cranford kept early hours, and clattered home in their pattens, under the guidance of a lantern-bearer, about nine o’clock at night; and the whole town was abed and asleep by half-past ten. (Gaskell 1904, 5, emphasis mine)

Since they are the gentility of the town, it is their responsibility to set a good example for the lower classes. They keep each other accountable – for example, Miss Pole is instrumental in changing the minds of Miss Matty and Mary regarding Mrs Jamieson’s invitation, as was discussed earlier. Miss Pole justifies her opinion that they should attend the party because they should not make it known that they still bear a grudge for Mrs Jamieson implying that they are not high class enough to visit Lady Glenmire, though Mary does point out that Miss Pole has an additional motive, a new cap she wants to show off (Gaskell 1904, 116–17). Nevertheless, at least on the surface it seems that the

accountability is deeply entrenched in their behaviour, as they regulate and negotiate the proper ways of acting in the situations they face.

There are no mentions of personal goals other than Mary's interest in finding out what happened to Miss Matty and Deborah's brother Peter; the result of which is Peter's return from India when he receives the letter sent by Mary after Miss Matty's financial troubles. As Croskery points out, however, Mary's first impulse, to gather information about Peter and present her findings to her father, is not carried out: instead, she takes action all by herself by writing and posting the letter, thus not yielding to male authority but establishing female one (1997, 211). Of course, with Peter's arrival the town can somewhat recede back under the protection of a male authority – as Peter “is one of the few males allowed to reside in Cranford” (Croskery 1997, 213). Peter's “Otherness” may well be a factor in the acceptance he receives: he is unlike the men of business and industry that Mary's father embodies and who are feared by Miss Matty because they are so incomprehensible. According to Fowler, “[b]y banishing men to the margins of her Utopia, Gaskell makes fun of male claims to centrality” (1984, 719); this seems to apply especially to Mary's father, who cannot understand the Cranford society and its ways, but excludes Peter, who gave up on the role his father had been planning for him, instead deciding to run away and “decentralise” himself by settling in India, in an important but peripheral area of the British Empire. In the end, there is a movement towards allowing men back into the Cranford society (Croskery 1997, 220), but these men are still not those men of business that Mary's father represents.

3.3 Reality and fantasy in *Cranford* and *Millenium Hall*

In this chapter, I will discuss what was revealed in the analysis in previous chapters and draw conclusions based on the historical background of the role of women in society at the time of the writing of *Cranford* and *Millenium Hall*. First, I will study what the novels are struggling for and

against; secondly, what are the strong and weak points of the female communities depicted in the novels; and thirdly, what kinds of realities and fantasies these novels expose and create.

3.3.1 Struggling for and against

In the theory section, I discussed the genre of conduct books and the image of the ideal woman whose attributes were modesty, obedience and gentleness and whose purpose in life was to be her husband's companion. It is easy to see how the ladies in both novels are struggling against this ideal: by not marrying – by their own will or not – they will never be seen as fulfilling their role as women by the society at large. The ladies at Millenium Hall are perhaps compensating by being virtuous when it comes to the other attributes: their obedience belongs to God, the highest power there is according to them; their gentle minds notice and are set to do what they can to right some of the wrongs that exist in the society; however much they do philanthropic work, they do not appear to be growing proud or want too much recognition, as is evident in the conversation between the narrator and Mrs Maynard: “I observed to Mrs Maynard that by the account she had given me of their income, their expenses fell far short of it. She whispered me that their accidental charities were innumerable, all the rest being employed in that way” (Scott 2008, 159). They are ready to show visitors what happens on the estate and its surroundings if they are interested, and discuss their reasons for doing what they do, but they also keep some of their good works in the shadow from the visitors. The ladies have founded a community where they do not need to conform to all societal expectations while still keeping their respectability. They have created a useful role for themselves, abandoning the expectation of spinsterhood as the unproductive state. Their biggest transgression is what they struggle for, not what they struggle against.

The ladies at Millenium Hall advocate girls' education: the narrator mentions many times girls reading or translating some text, and some of the reading is done aloud to a group of women. It is interesting that this should be the case: there is an element of supervision clearly included in the

idea, the woman doing handicrafts listening to and keeping an eye on the progress of the girl reading to her. This mode of supervision, however, is not to prepare the girl to be able to supervise her future servants, but to help her advance in her studies. The critical difference between the educational ideal for girls depicted in the conduct books and that in *Millenium Hall* is that the conduct books seem to draw strict lines between good and bad education for girls, while the ladies at Millenium Hall wish every woman and girl to find their natural inclination for something and cultivate it. They do agree at least on one point, though: the purpose of learning is not the display of it later in society, but rather it is for the mental development of the girl.

Rabb notes the frequency with which collections of books and scenes of reading are mentioned, but points out that the “value placed upon them is inconsistent and highly qualified” (1988, 10). There is a marked difference in reading as learning, of which Miss Mancel and Miss Melvyn are examples (Scott 2008, 45), and “a pretended love of reading” as exemplified by Miss Melvyn’s stepmother (Scott 2008, 30). Rabb analyses what she calls “acceptable” reading:

Scott's use of allusion gives further insight into “acceptable” texts. The women quote primarily from Shakespeare, Milton, and the Bible. Satirical allusions [. . .] are rare. Greek and Latin never are used, despite claims of "ancient" learning by several of the female characters. The men incorporate classical allusion into their discourse much more frequently, such as the allusion to Theocritus that accompanies the first sight of Millenium Hall. The women seem aware of diverse texts, as Miss Trentham's mocking references to the Alcoran, the writings of Confucious, and books of law suggest, but they do not seem eager to use them. The older women have been educated broadly in canonical texts; not one was bred on romances. Yet, if romances have not harmed them, classical writings have not helped them. In the schools they have established, they do not perpetuate such knowledge. (1988, 11)

Their view of “romances”, as in fiction, seems to be in agreement with the conduct book genre, which did not think much of fiction. Reading fiction is not explicitly denied at any point, although there is some indication that the ladies feel like they do not need it:

You will pity us perhaps because we have no cards, no assemblies, no plays, no masquerades, in this solitary place. The first we might have if we chose it, nor are they totally disclaimed by us; but while we can with safety speak our own thoughts, and with pleasure read those of wiser persons, we are not likely to be often reduced to them. We wish not for large assemblies, because we do not desire to drown conversation in noise; the amusing fictions of dramatic writers are not necessary where nature affords us so

many real delights; and as we are not afraid of shewing our hearts, we have no occasion to conceal our persons, in order to obtain either liberty of speech or action. (Scott 2008, 48)

The ladies' aversion to the fashionable society stems from their personal histories. There is a "scarcity of examples of female excellence that women of sense could emulate as they attempt to anchor their identities in the world at large" (Cruise 1995, 562). These examples would ideally be found in the mother figures, but the mothers in the novel are either dead or alienated from their daughters by the mothers' foolishness or their personal integrity (Cruise 1995, 562). By deciding not to marry these women also choose not to become mothers, which leaves them essentially without a respectable role in the society. Elliott argues that in *Millenium Hall*, Sarah Scott's project was "to show that a woman who was not married could define herself as something other than an 'old maid' or a 'fallen woman'" (1995, 537).

Philanthropy is the answer to that need for a respectable role: rewriting the philanthropic discourse centring on prostitutes that male philanthropes were concerned about, Scott de-emphasizes female sexuality (Elliott 1995, 542). The male narrator fails to understand that the philanthropic endeavours so central to the community's existence would not be possible to them outside the community, since married women could not possess property in their own names: "Only by cutting themselves off from the world can the women draw together economic justice and socially ameliorative deeds" (Cruise 1995, 568). O'Driscoll criticises the feminist criticism of *Millenium Hall* that has stressed the women's victimization, claiming that "[w]hat these women have in common is an original indifference to men" instead of their disappointment in them (2003, 69). "The feminist readings assume that sexuality in women is a problem that must be repressed. In that, they are remarkably close philosophically to the eighteenth-century conduct book writers and sentimental novelists who argued that passionlessness was woman's essential nature" (O'Driscoll 2003, 73). In fact, what must be questioned is the assumption of coherence between sex, gender and sexual identity: transgression in one area does not include or exclude a transgression in another area

(O'Driscoll 2003, 73). What the ladies explicitly struggle against in the novel is their gender role, and there might be an argument for the transgressive aspects of sexual identity in the strong friendship between Miss Mancel and Mrs Morgan, but what they struggle for is the expansion of women's roles in the society by education.

The Cranford women seem to fulfil the Victorian female ideal in all other respects than the one that they are not married. They are only superficially accomplished, which is pointed out by Mary in Miss Matty's case:

I ran over her accomplishments. Once upon a time I had heard her say she could play "Ah! vous dirai-je, maman?" on the piano, but that was long, long ago; that faint shadow of musical acquirement had died out years before. She had also once been able to trace out patterns very nicely for muslin embroidery [. . .]. But that was her nearest approach to the accomplishment of drawing, and I did not think it would go very far. Then again, as to the branches of a solid English education—fancy work and the use of the globes—such as the mistress of the Ladies' Seminary [. . .] professed to teach. Miss Matty's eyes were failing her, and I doubted if she could discover the number of threads in a worsted-work pattern, or rightly appreciate the different shades required for Queen Adelaide's face in the loyal wool-work now fashionable in Cranford. As for the use of the globes [. . .] it struck me that equators and tropics, and such mystical circles, were very imaginary lines indeed to her, and that she looked upon the signs of the Zodiac as so many remnants of the Black Art. (Gaskell 1904, 208–9)

This long list makes it clear that the "accomplishments" Miss Matty had at one point are woefully inadequate for anything that could help her in her new financial situation. Of course old age affects her abilities somewhat, but the list does give a bleak image of the state of female education nonetheless. Playing piano, drawing, embroidery and the rudiments of geography will not aid Miss Matty when she needs to earn her living, as Mary concludes. In making Mary think about this in detail Gaskell may be pointing out how woefully inadequate this kind of education is, as it does not include any valuable skills or information that could be used in case there is financial trouble. Obviously, Victorian women were expected to be under the care of their husbands, and they did not need to have any skills that were transferable to making money – an approach that led to the infamous Woman Question. Miss Matty is able to find a way because the whole town seems to support her; otherwise her fate could have been completely opposite.

Another aspect of a Victorian woman's life was to be in charge of the servants, which is what all of the Cranford ladies do, even if they only have their maid servants to consider, as only Mrs Jamieson has more than one servant. However, there seems to be more than enough work in keeping their maids in order:

This subject of servants was a standing grievance, and I could not wonder much at it; for if gentlemen were scarce, and almost unheard of in the "genteel society" of Cranford, they or their counterparts—handsome young men—abounded in the lower classes. The pretty neat servant-maids had their choice of desirable "followers"; and their mistresses, without having the sort of mysterious dread of men and matrimony that Miss Matilda had, might well feel a little anxious lest the heads of their comely maids should be turned by the joiner, or the butcher, or the gardener, who were obliged, by their callings, to come to the house [. . .]. (Gaskell 1904, 38–9)

There is then a kind of façade which allows the Cranford women to act their part as ladies of the house. As was discussed in the theory chapter, the function of the lady of the house was to uphold the public appearance of her husband. When the woman does not have a husband, there is no official role for her in the mind of the society. Cranford ladies, however, seem to recognise the fact that for example the norms of etiquette and house-to-house visiting are a means to project an image of themselves to the public consciousness. They act their roles as the lady of the house but omit the husband from the picture, thus silently revealing the point that they do not need men to uphold their class status. Their conclusion in Miss Matty's case is that unmarried women will not lose the status which they were born into, while by marrying Mr Hoggins Lady Glenmire will indeed be losing her aristocratic rank.

Similarly to the ladies at Millenium Hall, Cranford women have given up biological motherhood. In Davis's view, they instead take part in social mothering: the "distinction between biological and social mothering is given its strongest expression in Cranford, Gaskell's vision of a community of social mothers who do not become depleted because their lack of family and marital obligations allows them to mother each other" (1992, 528). This social mothering seems to entail their reliance on each other and their mutual caring (Davis 1992, 528), examples of which have already been discussed in this thesis. Byrne comments on this when talking about the 2007 TV

adaptation: “*Cranford*’s idealised matriarchal society [. . .] is a self-contained world with its own support networks, based on compassion and altruism, which seeks independence from men” (2009, 57).

In effect, *Cranford* women are actually renegotiating the terms of being the lady of the house. Their struggle against that ideal is not much of a struggle: they seem to be quite skilfully living their lives as the ideal Victorian women who happen to not include a husband. But while the ladies at *Millenium Hall* are strongly advocating female education, the *Cranford* community does not have a similar approach. Instead, what they seem to be advocating are the strong bonds between women. As was mentioned in the theory chapter, there was a public discussion about the capability of women for friendships between their own sex. In *Cranford*, one of the strongest expressions of friendship is the offering of money for Miss Matty by the other women, who thus demonstrate that not only are female friendships possible, but also that they can be a great source for different kinds of support in women’s lives.

3.3.2 The strong and weak points of the communities

The communities depicted in *Cranford* and *Millenium Hall* seem to have one common feature which is the strongest point of the communities: the friendships the women have with each other play a great part in their daily lives and extend from the motivation to join the community in *Millenium Hall* to concrete financial help in *Cranford*. As was mentioned in chapter 2.1.4, there was still a public discussion going on about women’s capability for friendship with each other in the 1870s, over hundred years after the publication of *Millenium Hall*, but still both these novels advocate female friendship and place it above the married state. It is remarkable that there is such a strong claim over this issue, as it places two or more women in a companionship that works essentially like a marriage in terms of support and caring. Moreover, they do not need to worry

about anything else than themselves and their servant in their homes, as the humorous but revealing statement “A man [. . .] is so in the way in the house!” (Gaskell 1904, 1) aptly makes clear.

In the case of *Millenium Hall*, there has been some discussion about the issue of sexuality among critics. Points of view have varied, as mentioned: especially early feminist criticism tended not to question the women’s sexualities as exemplified by Elliott:

Because victimization is built into domestic ideology's prescription for women, the only safe alternative turns out to be same-sex love, emptied of all sexual content. This desexing of women works to strip domesticity of its definitive characteristic. The "family" that resides at Millenium Hall is not only all “women,” but it is without any traces of sexualization. Although there is strong affection and attachment at Millenium Hall (Miss Mancel and Mrs. Morgan's relationship is even described as a marriage), the narrator carefully avoids describing such attachments in erotic terms. While such “romantic friendships” might historically have included sexual relations, in Millenium Hall there are compelling reasons to exclude sexuality from such female friendships. (1995, 549–50)

However, there are contrasting readings that O’Driscoll calls lesbian or multiperspective readings (2003, 71). One of these compares Miss Mancel and Mrs Morgan to Adam and Eve: “While society at large takes the "Paradisaal" marriage of Adam and Eve as a model of domestic organization, the women of Millenium Hall pattern their social relationships on the intimate bond between their "first parents," Miss Mancel and Mrs Morgan” (Macey 1997, 171). The lack of erotic language in the novel is explained by the structure of the narrative:

Lanser discusses the tensions in the narrative produced by Scott's delicate balancing act: Scott presents a description of a women's commune that not only does not need men but actually functions better than the male-run world, yet she must also refrain from terrifying her audience. She achieves this balance by a manipulation of the narrative voice and perspective, which, because it does not allow the ladies to speak unabashedly for themselves, leaves areas of silence. (O’Driscoll 2003, 72)

I believe there can be no definite conclusion on whether or not the friendships in *Millenium Hall* include the aspect of eroticism. That is not the focus of this thesis, so it is sufficient to note that strong friendships, whether they are completely platonic, somewhat romantic or have evolved into a full partnership, form the core of the community at Millenium Hall and are an important factor in the success of the community.

The working of these communities thus relies on the fact that the women have a good, steady relationship with each other. Van Sant points out that “Scott’s sense of the instability of women’s living arrangements” leads her to create “a solution that is a development of the co-residence element of the household family”: a family not tied by blood but by friendship (2005, 382). Of course, relationships can also be the weak point of families, which is recognised by the fact that the ladies at Millenium Hall took the time to cultivate a similar approach to working when they established the community. They knew disagreeable attitudes brought on by idleness would create a fertile ground for arguing. As Lady Mary puts it:

Reason wishes for communication and improvement; benevolence longs for objects on which to exert itself; the social comforts of friendship are so necessary to our happiness that it would be impossible not to endeavour to enjoy them. In sickness the languor of our minds makes us wish for the amusements of conversation; in health the vivacity of our spirits leads us to desire it. (Scott 2008, 47)

From the inside of the community, there can be no other force as great as the contentment that keeps the community working or the discomfort that can cause arguing and ultimately the breaking up of the community. The outside forces, however, are unreliable, though there is no indication that there could be anything to threaten the community at Millenium Hall. In *Cranford*, the return of Miss Matty’s long-lost brother Peter does break up the community somewhat, as he becomes the first man with a middle-class status living in the town after Captain Brown. Conversely, Peter is a curious character: he can be seen as not entirely masculine, as there was an incident in the past when he dressed as Deborah as a joke (Gaskell 1904, 84), but mostly because he has lived in India for decades (Gaskell 1904, 240), thus being twice “Othered”. His transvestism serves in “abdicating his manhood and aligning himself with the tender femininity of Matty and their frail mother” (Auerbach 1978, 88). Therefore Peter, while biologically a man, does not interrupt the female community too much, nor does he threaten the friendships between the ladies. His role is to restore Miss Matty into financial security so that she can return to her genteel way of life and stop selling tea.

The greatest threat and the weakest point to the Cranford society is thus the commercial outside forces. As Knezevic argues, “the novel persuasively acknowledges that the Cranford matriarchy is affected by the male business world, and that the matriarchy owes its very existence to patriarchal custom” (1998, 410). Even though the ladies refuse to talk about money as it is vulgar, they cannot escape financial concerns. The strength of the community is tested by Miss Matty’s financial ruin, and it stands due to the fact that the other ladies are not too far away from the situation: none of them are exactly rich. While the Cranford society may “owe its very existence” to patriarchy, they are also very much at the mercy of that same custom. Since investing in the bank which ends up going bankrupt was Deborah’s decision – in Mary’s father’s opinion “the only unwise step that clever woman had ever taken, to his knowledge (the only time she ever acted against his advice, I knew)” (Gaskell 1904, 191) – there is a shade of ridicule thrown on the male sense of business and women who buy into the patriarchal social order, seeing it clearly superior. The solution of tea-selling is Mary’s idea, and the success of the enterprise is credited to Miss Matty herself, who goes to inform a shopkeeper who already sells tea in Cranford of her plans and inquires “if it was likely to injure his business” (Gaskell 1904, 230). The kind gesture ends up furthering her business, as “not only did Mr Johnson kindly put at rest all Miss Matty’s scruples and fear of injuring his business, but I have reason to know he repeatedly sent customers to her, saying that the teas he kept were of a common kind, but that Miss Jenkyns had all the choice sorts” (Gaskell 1904, 230–31). Thus, the solution to the problem created by the male business world is distinctly feminine.

The same has been pointed out by Croskery: “Although she defers to her father's advice, it is Mary who invents a job for Miss Matty, and before Mary's father even arrives the Cranfordian ladies band together in order to plan for Miss Matty's financial future” (1997, 207-8). Without the community of women around her, Miss Matty’s future could have been distinctly different. It seems as though Mary’s father arrives just to make the practical arrangements for Miss Matty, as the most

important ideas have already been thought of, the show of communality has already been expressed, and Miss Matty's personality has already established some of the kind attitudes she encounters as a shopkeeper. The groundwork for her success has been laid long before her financial ruin, and it is a testament to her distinctly feminine qualities of peace-keeping, kindness and gentleness.

Cranford ends in a picture of happiness: "Ever since that day there has been the old friendly sociability in Cranford society; which I am thankful for, because of my dear Miss Matty's love of peace and kindness. We all love Miss Matty, and I somehow think we are all of us better when she is near us" (Gaskell 1904, 255). Fowler comments on the picture the reader is left with:

One of the perennial problems of fiction is that of portraying women who are strong but are still women; of imagining a particularly female kind of strength and power which is not just an imitation of male competitiveness, aggression or egomania. *Cranford* begins with a joke about Amazons: "Amazons" possess the town but, ironically, are at once shown not to be Amazons at all but funny old ladies. In the end, though, the joke is on the reader, for these old ladies turn out to be the winners, the survivors, the heroines. (1984, 728)

The Cranford ladies turn out to have the kind of strength that sustains their community and allows it to prosper. Even though there are differences in opinion, the ladies seem quite capable of negotiating an outcome that fosters communality, as is evident when Miss Pole changes Miss Matty and Mary's minds about attending Mrs Jamieson's party. The rift between Mrs Jamieson and Mr and Mrs Hoggins (formerly Lady Glenmire) is the only long-standing feud in the novel, and even that is resolved with Peter's help, ending the novel in a picture of harmony.

3.3.3 Reality and fantasy

Both *Cranford* and *Millenium Hall* expose the reality that was unmarried women's prospects in the society at the times of their writing. *Millenium Hall* notes the extravagance of the life that upper-middle class people are supposed to lead and criticises the educational aims for girls. Miss Mancel comments on the changes she would want to make:

I wish to make only these alterations, to change noise for real mirth, flutter for settled cheerfulness, affected wit for rational conversation; and would but have that degree of

dissipation banished which deprives people of time for reflection on the motives for, and consequences of, their actions, that their pleasures may be real and permanent, and followed neither by repentance nor punishment. I would wish them to have leisure to consider by whom they were sent into the world, and for what purpose, and to learn that their happiness consists in fulfilling the design of their Maker [. . .]. (Scott 2008, 48)

The reality that is presented here is the leisured life of the upper classes, which can fill their time with unproductive and idle existing. The ladies object to that life since it leads to discontentment and is thus the reason for the problems in the society. Their answer is realised as the community, where the victims of the society (i.e. mostly women, but also including poor, injured and disabled people) can come to find shelter. This fantasy image sets middle and upper-middle class women in the centre of power, giving them the responsibility of advising the lower classes. The paradise-like society would be benevolently governed but there would still be a clear class division: everyone would have their own role in the society, which would be to the benefit of the whole community, as the better living conditions and the atmosphere of kindness and gratitude would ensure that people remained content. All ambition would be concentrated on fulfilling God's will, not on any pursuit of personal gain. It is difficult to assess what kind of role the ladies see for women if the whole society would be modelled after the Millenium Hall estate, but presumably there would be similar opportunities for learning and education as they have created on the estate, and similar duties regarding the poor and the unprivileged that would not change.

The play between reality and fantasy is perhaps best realised in the novel's depiction of nature. In addition to the voice of the male narrator and the women who introduce their community to him, Macey suggests that there is another voice in the novel: the landscape "'speaks' to the narrator with a voice of its own and initiates the deconstruction of patriarchal mythology" (1997, 169). Since a garden with a house in its centre is a common metaphor for female sexuality (Rabb 1988, 12), it is interesting to note how differently the narrator and the women at the Hall see nature and its worth. As Rabb points out, the narrator starts to fantasize about and idealize it: "It becomes, in contrast to a real and particular garden, the occasion for literary allusion and for impossible

dreams of perfection” (1988, 12–3). In contrast, for the women of the Hall the garden is a product of the landscaping work done by labourers: it is not a pastoral idyll but a scene of hard work and real effort, the kind that cannot be summed up in referencing the great works of literature (Rabb 1988, 13–4). Thus, the women essentially argue that the image of the ideal woman, similarly to the paradise-like garden, is not realistic because neither nature nor women are born into that state of perfection. It takes work to cultivate an aesthetically pleasing garden; likewise the society creates the illusion of an ideal woman that real women may try to reach, but they cannot control all the factors contributing to the realisation of that goal, as the garden is at the mercy of the weather. The symbolism related to the garden could also hint to other themes: “The story of the Garden of Eden plays an important role in naturalizing heterosexual monogamy in the Judeo-Christian tradition, but in the Greco-Roman tradition the pastoral world is also the locus of homosexual desire” (Macey 1997, 171). Real women and their sexualities can never be as simple as an idealised image presents them.

In the case of *Cranford*, the image of reality presented reflects the changing nature of the society much more than *Millenium Hall*, as there were profound new developments emerging. There is an interesting glimpse in the scene where Mary and her father discuss Miss Matty’s future prospects:

I then alluded to my idea that she might add to her small income by selling tea; and [. . .] my father grasped at it with all the energy of a tradesman. I think he reckoned his chickens before they were hatched, for he immediately ran up the profits of the sales that she could effect in Cranford to more than twenty pounds a year. The small dining-parlour was to be converted into a shop, without any of its degrading characteristics; a table was to be the counter; one window was to be retained unaltered, and the other changed into a glass door. I evidently rose in his estimation for having made this bright suggestion. I only hoped we should not both fall in Miss Matty’s. (Gaskell 1904, 226)

This presents a stark contrast between the Cranford way of life and Mary’s father’s way of life. Cranford is still a somewhat rural and old-fashioned town, while Mary’s father comes from Drumble, a bigger, already industrialised town. The commercial world of Drumble is evidently far removed from Cranford not by distance, but in the way of seeing life. Mary’s last remark about

possibly losing Miss Matty's good opinion highlights the fact that she is aware of this. The reality that thus crashes in Miss Matty's life is the reality of commerce, money and the fact that even middle-class women could find themselves having to work – something that used to be unthinkable, because women were taken care of by their fathers, brothers and husbands. In the end, Miss Matty ends up being taken care of by her brother, ensuring that her way of life does not disappear completely, but before that she has to live in and get used to the new reality.

The new reality, however, is not perhaps too stark of a contrast, as Lepine points out: “the categories of public and private are reconsidered and redefined as the need arises, so that the genteel Miss Matty Jenkyns may sell tea out of her dining parlour, free from any degrading associations with the shop” (2010, 127). Transforming what used to be a domestic space into a commercial one somewhat hides the vulgarity of having to work for her living, although in the end it is Miss Matty's status at birth that decides her inclusion in the Cranford society despite her financial situation. The fluidness of boundaries and the capability of transforming private, domestic spaces into public and vice versa constitutes the essential fantasy of the novel for women. According to Lepine, “[w]hat is radical about the ladies' continual reappraisal of the private is that they control the boundaries of their own existence” (2010, 127).

In a way, there are two different fantasy images in *Cranford*: the old order as opposed to the new order of things, where the old order is contrasted with the coldness of the world of commerce; or the old order where some new ideas are allowed in because change is inevitable and even beneficial in some respects. For instance, the world of commerce does not have to be cold or calculating:

I was happy to find she had made more than twenty pounds during the last year by her sales of tea; and, moreover, that now she was accustomed to it, she did not dislike the employment, which brought her into kindly intercourse with many of the people round about. If she gave them good weight, they, in their turn, brought many a little country present to the “old rector's daughter”; a cream cheese, a few new-laid eggs, a little fresh ripe fruit, a bunch of flowers. The counter was quite loaded with these offerings sometimes, as she told me. (Gaskell 1904, 237)

Miss Matty extends her kind nature to all her customers, who pay her in the same way and bring her gifts as a mark of respect and good will. This image of almost perfect harmony (there is still a feud raging between Mrs Jamieson and Mr and Mrs Hoggins, so the town is not entirely at peace) is perhaps the most interesting as well as groundbreaking fantasy there can be found in the novel: a middle class woman, a spinster, who essentially works to earn her living but still keeps her status intact. As mentioned in the previous section, this fantasy is somewhat broken by Peter's return to the town, but as it serves as the ultimate happy ending for Miss Matty, there can be no question on whether or not she is successful.

As Auerbach has noted, the narrative seems to punish men who dare to question the female governance of the town (1977, 279), but there can be no similar argument for the success of the women. Miss Matty's happy ending is only possible because of her suffering financially, as it makes Mary write the letter that summons Peter to return. But of course her enterprise works as more than a temporary occupation for her: it gives the town an opportunity to show their respect for her, and more importantly, it gives an opportunity for Martha and Jem to marry and have children. As Miss Matty has always been very fond of children, this constitutes a further source of happiness in her life:

As long as Martha would remain with Miss Matty, Miss Matty was only too thankful to have her about her; yes, and Jem too, who was a very pleasant man to have in the house, for she never saw him from week's end to week's end. And as for the probable children, if they would all turn out such little darlings as her god-daughter, Matilda, she should not mind the number, if Martha didn't. Besides, the next was to be called Deborah—a point which Miss Matty had reluctantly yielded to Martha's stubborn determination that her first-born was to be Matilda. (Gaskell 1904, 249)

Naming the children after the Jenkyns sisters in a reversed order symbolises more than just the continuation of life in the town (Fowler 1984, 726). The implication that can be referred from this is that the example of Miss Matty's kind nature and the humane approach to life will continue even after all the current spinsters are no more. The community may not consist completely of women anymore, but traditionally feminine qualities are still seen as important and even more desirable

than the coldness of the industrial thinking. In the end, *Cranford* has shown that even a community which has to live in circumstances not under their control can and will emerge victorious if the community holds together. Community solidarity and willingness to help others may have seemed a fantasy in the society which is in the process of industrialization, but as *Cranford* concludes, one person who is able to inspire others with their example is enough.

4. Conclusion

I want CHOICE. I want VARIETY. I want MORE. I want WOMEN. I want women to have more of the world, not just because it would be fairer, but because it would be better. More exciting. Reordered. Reinvented. (Moran 2011, 309)

In this thesis, I have studied the female communities in *Millenium Hall* by Sarah Scott and *Cranford* by Elizabeth Gaskell. Both of them fit Michel Foucault's concept of heterotopia: they are heterotopias of deviation because the women have decided not to marry, thus not fulfilling the societal expectations for women; the communities function as safe and respectable spaces for unmarried women; they juxtapose several different spaces, namely homes, schools and fashionable societies in one place. Furthermore, these communities are the creations of eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, when feminist thought was in its infancy and there was not much variety in women's role in society; the communities have rules about belonging, and thus about including and excluding people; and they create spaces of compensation and illusion, where the women can create a role for themselves that would not be available for them outside the community.

I analysed the communities even further with the aid of central concepts from community psychology: ecology, prevention and promotion, community, power, inclusion and commitment. When studying the ecology of the communities, I found out that in *Millenium Hall*, the ladies are disappointed with the society because they feel that it treats women unfairly: looks, inheritance and superficial learning are prized over better education and understanding of others. They have founded a community where they offer and teach these things, and people of the nearby village and

the countryside feel gratitude because of the ladies' philanthropic work. On the smallest circle of ecology, the ladies also seem to have friendships with each other that are influential in their decision to enter the community and choosing to stay. In *Cranford's* case there is a clear parallel: the society does not much care for the Cranford ladies because they are all widows or spinsters, as is clear from the dismissive way narrator Mary's father comments upon them. The town itself seems to respect the ladies: when Miss Matty is financially ruined, her teashop's counter seems to be constantly loaded with little gifts from the town-dwellers. Most of all, though, the great friendship the Cranford ladies are capable of towards each other is demonstrated in their decision to give money to Miss Matty – what they can spare, since none of them are well-off.

Prevention and promotion refer to the instances of sickness and how health care is taken care of in the communities. As I found out, in *Millenium Hall* there was almost an institutional care for the women and the people who work in the neighbourhood. The patronesses of the community take care of the expenses of sickness, and if a worker is sick, his or her share is paid anyway to not to strain the finances of the working class family. In addition, the ladies give advice to the families about cleanliness and other household business in order to increase their wellbeing. Emotional and psychological health, on the other hand, seems to be generated by a positive cycle of feelings: the ladies give help in different ways, which increases the motivation of the servants and the villagers to do their work with the best of their abilities. *Cranford* does not have the same kind of structured health care than *Millenium Hall* has, but they also participate in taking care of the sick, as Miss Brown's case demonstrates. The psychological and emotional side of health care seems to be dependent on the relationships between the ladies themselves and those between them and their maids: Miss Matty is essentially taken care of by her maid Martha.

The concept of community was divided into the sense of community and the social capital. Even though the Millenium Hall community is formed because of conscious decision to settle together and the Cranford one because the ladies happened to be born into that town and then never

married, there are more similarities between them than differences. The membership is decided by the core members of the communities: in *Cranford*, the woman's status at birth (if a spinster) or marriage determines her eligibility, but there are a couple of instances where even these rules are somewhat relaxed. In *Millenium Hall*, a middle-class woman will be eligible for joining if she has some income and the will to become part of the society, but it seems as though the ladies consider also the need and the suitability of the mind when they decide whether or not a woman is allowed to enter. The women's integration to the community is kept up by letters in the case of *Cranford*, but in *Millenium Hall* there seems to be no option for living outside the community but still belonging to it.

The women in both communities are able to influence their occupation and use of time rather freely, even though there are restrictions: in *Millenium Hall* idleness will not be tolerated and everyone must engage themselves in some kind of work; in *Cranford*, the ladies have the rules of the society to consider, for example the visiting hours – although even those are disregarded if there is a good reason to do so. In both communities, nevertheless, the women do not have any influence outside their town or neighbourhood. The influence the ladies of *Millenium Hall* have in the neighbourhood, however, is tremendous: they have created a network of philanthropy where everyone helps and is helped, all according to their abilities. Thus the social capital of the community generates positivity and well-being – not entirely dissimilar to what happens in *Cranford*, even though the good deeds are less organised there.

Examining the communities from the point of view of power revealed that *Millenium Hall*, radical as it may be when it comes to the educational prospects of women, is deeply conservative when it comes to class. The ladies do provide education to working class girls as well as middle class girls, but there are differences in the content according to what is deemed suitable for each class. They also regulate the behaviour of these girls by giving little presents to those who please them, but it seems that in the end the working class girls will mostly end up as the neighbourhood

farmers' wives. In Cranford, the power is located in the women, although men of their class, when coming into the town, fail to recognise that fact, as evidenced by Captain Brown. Perhaps because of the later writing date, though, it seems that *Cranford* is more radical about class: while the focus is certainly on the middle class ladies, the few working class people in the novel possess at least some power. For instance, Martha is shown making a crucial proposal which allows Miss Matty to essentially keep her maid even though she can no longer afford one. The strict division between classes is ironized in the feud between Mrs Jamieson and the Hogginses: the other Cranford ladies decide to include former Lady Glenmire into their visiting because they like her, while Mrs Jamieson cannot forget her sense of class.

Both the communities are inclusive when it comes to middle class and aristocratic women, and *Millenium Hall* especially takes an interest in the poor and the disabled who would not otherwise be left without any means to survive. Their inclusiveness is defined by the society's treatment of people: the wealthy and middle class men who are in power outside the community are excluded here; the same is true in regards to Cranford. Miss Matty's brother joins the Cranford community, but even he is Othered due to his transvestism and his long stay in India. The Cranford ladies are also exacting about the appearance of gentility, which makes their behaviour controlled in public events and illuminates the class boundary that is more relaxed when they are at home with their maids.

Commitment is an issue which has a religious motivation for the ladies at Millenium Hall. The philanthropic work is a duty to them, something that makes them able to serve God in the way God should be served. This also makes them accountable to each other, the people of the neighbourhood and to a higher power, serving as an incentive to the women. The commitment aspect illuminates the main difference between the communities in *Cranford* and *Millenium Hall*: since the Cranford ladies have not set out to form their community according to a clearly-defined vision, their motivation to commit to it derive from the reason that the town is – and has been for

decades – their home. They are accountable to each other and the town-dwellers for setting a good example, and they negotiate and regulate each other's behaviour to make sure that their example shows good judgment (even though they may also have more superficial reasons). Furthermore, Miss Matty considers it her duty to be accountable for the failing bank, thus showing a sense of responsibility over the town-dwellers and farmers from the surrounding area.

In the end, however, what emerges as the most important fact about these communities is how friendships keep them together. Finding the outside world at best indifferent to them, these unmarried women are able to turn to each other and find the support they need. As this thesis has shown, they recognise that both inside and outside forces could be a threat to the community and have found ways to prevent problems (Millenium Hall's careful control of leisure) and deal with them (Cranford ladies' show of solidarity). The realities these novels present are of women's inadequate means to be in control of their lives including education and livelihood. The women in both novels are only able to inherit what their fathers and husbands have left them because they have not (re)married. While the unmarried state leaves them open to the ridicule of the society, the women show that they can endure and even prosper – an image that must have been encouraging to the early suffragettes and other feminists who wanted to challenge the patriarchal order. Thus, the fantasies that the novels create are of self-sufficient women who are in control of their lives – that control being made possible by the existence of the community. The Cranford ladies are able to make the whole town their domestic space because they have their class status and their number on their side, while the Millenium Hall ladies maintain the community by careful supervision of all activities and people, including each other and their neighbours. Both fantasy images advocate greater bonds between women: although they are essentially at the mercy of the patriarchal system, their message is clearly that of female solidarity conquering all obstacles. Around 200 years later, Caitlin Moran comes to the same conclusion in *How to be a Woman*; clearly, there is still a need for changes in how the society treats women.

This thesis has contributed to the study of the roots of the feminist thought, although I think more will be needed in order to place women writers as equals of their male counterparts in literary canon. *Cranford* and *Millenium Hall* have been examined from various points of view by now, but they have not been exhausted. For example, *Cranford*'s different leader types and *Millenium Hall*'s regulations resembling the Ten Commandments could be fruitful lines of study. Especially of interest, in my opinion, would be to study the development of female communities in literary history, and how they mirrored the developments of the changing role of women in the society. I have only been able to scratch the surface of this fascinating field in this thesis, but hopefully there will be more to come.

Works Cited

Primary sources:

Gaskell, Elizabeth. *Cranford*. 1904. J.M. Dent &C.: London. Project Gutenberg E-book.

Scott, Sarah. *A Description of Millenium Hall And the Country Adjacent Together with the Characters of the Inhabitants and Such Historical Anecdotes and Reflections As May Excite in the Reader Proper Sentiments of Humanity, and Lead the Mind to the Love of Virtue*. 2008. Project Gutenberg E-book.

Secondary sources:

Armstrong, Nancy. *Desire and Domestic Fiction : A Political History of the Novel*. Paperback ed. New York: Oxford University Press, 1989. Print.

Auerbach, Nina. *Communities of Women : An Idea in Fiction*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, cop. 1978. Print.

---. "Elizabeth Gaskell's "Sly Javelins": Governing Women in Cranford and Haworth." *Modern Language Quarterly* 38.3 (1977): 276–91. Print.

Bending, Stephen. "Mrs. Montagu's Contemplative Bench: Bluestocking Gardens and Female Retirement." *Huntington Library Quarterly* 69.4 (2006): 555–80. Print.

Bodek, Evelyn Gordon. "Salonières and Bluestockings: Educated Obsolescence and Germinating Feminism." *Feminist Studies* 3.3/4 (1976): 185–99. Print.

Brown, Hilary. "Sarah Scott, Sophie Van La Roche, and the Female Utopian Tradition." *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 100.4 (2001): 469–81. Print.

Byrne, Katherine. "'Such a Fine, Close Weave': Gender, Community and the Body in Cranford (2007)." *Neo-Victorian Studies* 2.2 (2009): 43–64. Print.

Claeys, Gregory. *The Cambridge Companion to Utopian Literature*. Cambridge University Press, 2010. Print.

Croskery, Margaret Case. "Mothers without Children, Unity without Plot: Cranford's Radical Charm." *Nineteenth-Century Literature* 52.2 (1997): 198–220. Print.

Cruise, James. "A House Divided: Sarah Scott's Millenium Hall." *Studies in English Literature 1500-1900* 35.3 (1995): 555–73. Print.

Davis, Deanna L. "Feminist Critics and Literary Mothers: Daughters Reading Elizabeth Gaskell." *Signs* 17.3 (1992): 507–32. Print.

Davis, Natalie Zemon. "'Women's History' in Transition: The European Case." *Feminist Studies* 3.3/4 (1976): 83–103. Print.

- Devereaux, Johanna. "A Paradise within? Mary Astell, Sarah Scott and the Limits of Utopia." *Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies* (2009): 53–67. Print.
- Donawerth, Jane L. *Utopian and Science Fiction by Women: Worlds of Difference. Foreword by Susan Gubar*. Ed. Carol A. Kolmerten., 1994. Print.
- Elliott, Dorice Williams. "Sarah Scott's Millenium Hall and Female Philanthropy." *Studies in English Literature 1500-1900* 35.3 (1995): 535–53. Print.
- Fay, Elizabeth A. *A Feminist Introduction to Romanticism*. Malden (Mass.): Blackwell, 1998. Print.
- Flint, Kate. *Elizabeth Gaskell*. Plymouth: Northcote House, 1995. Print. *Writers and their Work*.
- Foucault, Michel, and Jay Miskowiec. "Of Other Spaces." *Diacritics* 16.1 (1986): 22–7. Print.
- Fowler, Rowena. "Cranford: Cow in Grey Flannel Or Lion Couchant?" *Studies in English Literature (Rice)* 24.4 (1984): 717–29. Print.
- Fox-Genovese, Elizabeth. "Culture and Consciousness in the Intellectual History of European Women." *Signs* 12.3 (1987): 529–47. Print.
- Goodman, Dena. "Enlightenment Salons: The Convergence of Female and Philosophic Ambitions." *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 22.3, Special Issue: The French Revolution in Culture (1989): 329–50. Print.
- Gorham, Deborah. *The Victorian Girl and the Feminine Ideal*. London: Croom Helm, cop. 1982. Print.
- Greenblatt, Stephen, and Meyer Howard Abrams. *The Norton Anthology of English Literature. Volume 1*. 8th ed. ed. New York (NY): W. W. Norton, cop. 2006. Print.
- Gubar, Susan. "'The Blank Page' and the Issues of Female Creativity." *Critical Inquiry* 8.2, Writing and Sexual Difference (1981): 243–63. Print.
- Johns, Alessa. "Feminism and Utopianism." *The Cambridge Companion to Utopian Literature* (2010): 174–99. Print.
- . "Mary Astell's 'Excited Needles': Theorizing Feminist Utopia in Seventeenth-Century England." *Utopian Studies* 7.1 (1996): 60–74. Print.
- Kelly-Gadol, Joan. *Did Women have a Renaissance?* Houghton Mifflin, 1977. Print.
- Knezevic, Borislav. "An Ethnography of the Provincial: The Social Geography of Gentility in Elizabeth Gaskell's 'Cranford.'" *Victorian Studies* 41 (1998): 405–26. Print.
- Lake, Crystal B. "Redecorating the Ruin: Women and Antiquarianism in Sarah Scott's Millenium Hall." *ELH* (2009): 661–86. Print.
- Langland, Elizabeth. "Nobody's Angels: Domestic Ideology and Middle-Class Women in the Victorian Novel." *PMLA* 107.2 (1992): 290–304. Print.

- Lanser, Susan S. "Befriending the Body: Female Intimacies as Class Acts." *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 32.2, Politics of Friendship (1998): 179–98. Print.
- . "Bluestocking Sapphism and the Economies of Desire." *Huntington Library Quarterly* 65.1 (2002): 257–75. Print.
- Lepine, Anna. "'Strange and Rare Visitants': Spinsters and Domestic Space in Elizabeth Gaskell's Cranford." *Nineteenth-Century Contexts* 32.2 (2010): 121–37. Print.
- Macey Jr, J. David. "Eden Revisited: Re-Visions of the Garden in Astell's Serious Proposal, Scott's Millenium Hall, and Graffigny's Lettres d'Une Péruvienne." *Eighteenth-Century Fiction* 9.2 (1997): 161–82. Print.
- Miegon, Anna. "Biographical Sketches of Principal Bluestocking Women." *Huntington Library Quarterly* 65.1/2, Reconsidering the Bluestockings (2002): 25–37. Print.
- Moran, Caitlin. *How to be a Woman*. London: Ebury Press, 2011. Print.
- Nardin, Jane. "Utopian Logic in Sarah Scott's Millenium Hall and Anthony Trollope's the Fixed Period." *AUMLA* (2011): 29–44. Print.
- Nestor, Pauline. *Female Friendships and Communities : Charlotte Bronte; George Eliot, Elizabeth Gaskell*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985. Print.
- O'Driscoll, Sally. "Lesbian Criticism and Feminist Criticism: Readings of "Millenium Hall"." *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature* 22.1 (2003): 57–80. Print.
- Park, Katharine. "Women, Gender, and Utopia: The Death of Nature and the Historiography of Early Modern Science." *Isis* 97.3 (2006): 487–95. Print.
- Peterson, M. Jeanne. "No Angels in the House: The Victorian Myth and the Paget Women." *The American Historical Review* 89.3 (1984): 677–708. Print.
- Pohl, Nicole. "The Quest for Utopia in the Eighteenth Century." *Literature Compass* 5.4 (2008): 685–706. Print.
- Prilleltensky, Isaac, and Geoffrey Nelson. *Community Psychology : In Pursuit of Liberation and Well-being*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005. Print.
- Rabb, Melinda Alliker. "Making and Rethinking the Canon: General Introduction and the Case of "Millenium Hall"." *Modern Language Studies* 18.1, Making and Rethinking the Canon: The Eighteenth Century (1988): 3–16. Print.
- Rizzo, Betty. "Two Versions of Community: Montagu and Scott." *Huntington Library Quarterly* 65.1 (2002): 193–214. Print.
- Roemer, Kenneth M. "Nineteenth-Century Utopias." *The Cambridge Companion to Utopian Literature* (2010): 79–106. Print.

- Sant, Ann Van. "Historicizing Domestic Relations: Sarah Scott's use of the 'Household Family'." *Eighteenth-Century Fiction* 17.3 (2005): 373–90. Print.
- Schor, Hilary M. "Affairs of the Alphabet: Reading, Writing and Narrating in "Cranford"." *NOVEL: A Forum on Fiction* 22.3 (1989): 288–304. Print.
- Setecka, Agnieszka. "Needles, China Cups, Books, and the Construction of the Victorian Feminine Ideal in Rhoda Broughton's *Not Wisely, but Too Well* and Elizabeth Gaskell's *North and South*." *Studia Anglica Posnaniensia: international review of English Studies* 47 (2011): 47–60. Print.
- Silbergleid, Robin. "Women, Utopia, and Narrative: Toward a Postmodern Feminist Citizenship." *Hypatia* 12.4, *Citizenship in Feminism: Identity, Action, and Locale* (1997): 156–77. Print.
- Sowaal, Alice. "Mary Astell's Serious Proposal: Mind, Method, and Custom." *Philosophy Compass* 2.2 (2007): 227–43. Print.
- Spencer, Jane. *The Rise of the Woman Novelist : From Aphra Behn to Jane Austen*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1986 (1987). Print.
- Tague, Ingrid H. *Women of Quality*. Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2002. Print.
- Trubowitz, Rachel. "The Reenchantment of Utopia and the Female Monarchical Self: Margaret Cavendish's *Blazing World*." *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature* 11.2 (1992): 229–45. Print.
- Wollstonecraft, Mary. *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman, with Strictures on Political and Moral Subjects*. 2002. Project Gutenberg E-book.
- Woodford, Kate. *Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary*. New ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, cop. 2003. Print.