This is to certify that the

thesis entitled

Mrs. E.D.E.N. Southworth
and Southern Mythic Society

presented by

Arthur Silverblatt

has been accepted towards fulfillment
of the requirements for

Ph.D. degree in English

Russell B. Nye

Major professor

Date July 23, 1980

MRS. E.D.E.N. SOUTHWORTH AND SOUTHERN MYTHIC SOCIETY

By

Arthur Martin Silverblatt

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Department of English

1980

ABSTRACT

Mrs. E.D.E.N. Southworth

and Southern Mythic Society

by

Arthur Silverblatt

This study examines the popular novels of Mrs. E.D.E.N. Southworth, in order to identify the mythic society of the South. Popular fiction is a viable reflection of cultural history. The reciprocity between a successful artist and the audience forms a delicate system of communication that serves to reflect and reinforce cultural values. The widespread success of Mrs. Southworth's novels indicates the degree to which her audience enjoyed and approved of her conception of Southern culture.

The South, as depicted in Mrs. Southworth's fiction, is an aristocratic society based on an absolute and external value system that serves as a microcosm of the moral structure of the universe; indeed, Southern society is regarded as the vehicle through which perfect earthly happiness can be attained. A definite system of societal precepts can be traced through Southworth's novels, which defines the values operating in the mythic Southern structure.

DEDICATION

To Babette Freund Silverblatt

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I would like to gratefully acknowledge Dr. Russell B. Nye, whose support and guidance has made this a truly educational experience. I also wish to thank Gussie Mae Silverblatt, Pat Garrison, and Gary A. Tobin for their help and encouragement.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

This study examines the novels of Mrs. E.D.E.N. Southworth as a means of identifying the popular conception of Southern society. Popular literature is a valuable resource for cultural historians, as the popularity of a work reflects the prevailing attitudes and beliefs of the public. Louis Rubin declares,

> Literature can instruct us about society in ways that nothing else can. . .Between the work of literature and the society there can be an intense and creative relationship. The writer's effort to perceive order and meaning in life through language, his attempt at representation of reality, takes its form and its meaning from the institutions, artifacts, attitudes, and concerns of the life that he has known, which means that to the extent that the writer is part of and a product of his society, the stories and poems that he writes will draw on the nature of that society for their human image.[1]

Chapter 1 investigates the life and career of Mrs. E.D.E.N. Southworth, an enormously prolific and influential Southern regional author during the latter half of the nineteenth century. As William Veeder observes,

> (Popular literature) mirrors and confirms the norms of society. That victorian popular fiction did indeed mirror its readers' attitudes is established convincingly by the sales of Mrs. E.D.E.N. Southworth.[2]

---

[1]Louis D. Rubin ed., Southern Literary Study: Problems and Possibilities (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1975), p. 4.

[2]William Veeder, Henry James--The Lessons of the Master: Popular Fiction and Personal Style in the Nineteenth Century (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1975) p. 7.

The chapter considers the emergence of the domestic novel, tracing the growth of the genre, its conventions, Mrs. Southworth's contemporaries and major influences.

Chapter 2 discusses the concept of cultural mythology, identifying the social functions of myth. This section traces the evolution of the Southern myth, its characteristics, and fallacies. This chapter also considers the fundamental attraction of the Southern myth and its effect on that region, as well as on the country as a whole. Finally, the prominent characters of the Southern myth are examined in terms of the universal Jungean archetypes.

Chapter 3 investigates the cultural heritage of the Southern myth, which is derived from the Classical and English cultural traditions. The Southerner regarded himself as a descendent of these established cultures, so that an examination of the Graeco-Roman and English cultures can provide insight into the framework and values of the mythic South.

Chapter 4 considers the values that operate in the mythic South, as depicted in the novels of Mrs. Southworth. An overview of axiology, or value theory, reveals that an absolute value system appears in the South reflecting the order of heaven. A morphological analysis of the plots of Mrs. Southworth's novels reveals the fundamental structure of Southern myth.

Finally, the various character types that appear in Mrs. Southworth's novels are identified in Chapter 5. These character types correspond with the strict social delineation in the mythic South: the male figures, the females, and the black slaves.

CHAPTER 1

Mrs. E.D.E.N. Southworth and the Tradition of the Domestic Novel

The novels of Mrs. Emma Dorothy Eliza Nevitte Southworth, though obscure today, were enormously influential during the nineteenth century. Her career, which formally began in 1849 with her first novel, Retribution, spanned nearly 40 years, so that her influence extended over a complete generation of readers. Mrs. Southworth maintained a rigorous writing schedule, producing 12 full-length novels from 1849 to 1856 alone. In addition to the traditional book form, these works were serialized in magazines, first in the National Era, and then in the Saturday Evening Post, which exposed a more diverse audience to Mrs. Southworth's novels.

The leading periodicals of the day promoted Mrs. Southworth as an important novelist who should be read by the public. The New York Mirror announced, "Mrs. Southworth is considered the finest authoress in the country. . .one of the very first female writers of the age."[1] The Saturday Visiter saluted her second novel, The Deserted Wife as "The very best story now in course of publication in this country written by the very best writer this country claims."[2] And finally, the Saturday Evening Post elevated Mrs. Southworth to literary immortality, declaring

---

[1]Helen Waite Papashvily, All the Happy Endings (N.Y.: Harper and Brothers, 1956), p. 114.

[2]Ibid., p. 113.

that their contributor was "Equal to Dickens and superior to Emily Bronte, reminded one of Shakespere."[3]

The public response to the novels of Mrs. Southworth raised her to a literary figure of the first magnitude. Imitators flattered Mrs. Southworth by copying her style and format. One particularly clever counterfeiter adopted the pen name E.D.E.M. Southworth in hopes of attracting some of Mrs. Southworth's nearsighted readers. Helen Waite Papashivily notes that the serialization of the Southworth novels in the Saturday Evening Post generated an increase in the magazine's circulation.[4] The popularity of her third novel, The Mother-in-Law, compelled the Saturday Evening Post to reprint earlier chapters with the current segment of the serial to satisfy new subscribers. The Curse of Clifton, written in 1852, joined such notables as Stowe's Uncle Tom's Cabin and Dickens' Bleak House on the best seller list.

Capitola, or The Hidden Hand, not only was a commercial success, but transcended literary bounds to become part of the national consciousness. Papashvily observes, "Women wore Capitola hats and suits in honor of the heroine. Towns, boots and hotels appropriated her magic name."[5] Over 40 dramatic adaptations of the novel were produced, one or more of which played in almost every city in the United States. In fact, three London theatres presented versions of Capitola simultaneously. Thus, Mrs. Southworth was not only read in book and serial form, but was enjoyed internationally in dramatic presentations, further widening her sphere of

---

[3]Ibid., p. 114.

[4]Ibid., p. 113.

[5]Ibid., p. 126.

influence. The novel joined Dickens' A Tale of Two Cities, Eliot's Adam Bede, and Thackeray's The Virginians as one of 1859's four best-selling titles. And finally, one of Southworth's post-Civil War novels, Self-Raised, realized such a level of popularity that it became one of the ten best-selling novels of the nineteenth century.

As a writer of domestic fiction, Mrs. Southworth acquainted her audiences with her own experience, both personal and cultural. Mrs. Southworth was herself a part of the aristocratic tradition that figures so prominently in her novels. Dorothy Eliza Nevitte was born on December 26, 1819, a descendent of one of the old Cavalier families that settled in Maryland and Virginia. Her ancestors were among the number of Roman Catholics who traveled to the New World in 1632 and settled in St. Mary's, where the family remained for two hundred years. Emma could count among her forebearers prominent figures in provincial government, as well as military men who distinguished themselves during the American Revolution.

Emma was the eldest daughter of Captain Charles Le Compte Nevitte, whose progenitors were members of the French nobility. Emma's mother, who was Charles Nevitte's second wife, was a descendent of Sir Thomas Grenfeldt, a knight during the rein of James I. Charles was an importing merchant from Alexandria, Virginia, who suffered personal misfortune and loss during the War of 1812. As a prosperous owner of a rather large number of ships, Nevitte placed his entire fleet at the disposal of the government and lost them all. Further, serving as a captain of a military company, he suffered a disabling wound from which he never fully recovered.

Although critics soon dismissed Mrs. Southworth as a sentimental

author,[6] she asserts that the material for her novels is drawn from her own experience. She declares, "Everyone of my books was based on incidents in life that I saw, even the most improbable of them. I could tell you stories--true ones--that I never dared put in my books."[7] In an autobiographical sketch, Mrs. Southworth recounts the incidents of her early life which later became a fundamental source of material for her novels:

> Here (in Washington, D.C.) I was born, on the 26th of December, 1818, in the very chamber once tenanted by General Washington. I was a child of sorrow from the very first year of my life. Thin and dark, I had no beauty except a pair of large, wild eyes--but even this was destined to be tarnished. At twelve months I was attacked with an inflammation of the eyes, that ended in total, though happily temporary, blindness; thus my first view of life was through a dim mysterious cathedral light, in which every object in the world looked larger, vaguer, and more distant and imposing than it really was. Among the friends around me, the imposing form and benignant face of my dear grandmother made the deepest impression. At three years of age my sight began to clear. About this time my only own sister was born. She was a very beautiful child, with fair and rounded form, rosy complexion, soft-blue eyes, and golden hair, that in after years became of a bright chestnut. She was of a lively, social, loving nature, and, as she grew, won all hearts around her--parents, cousins, nurses, servants, and all who had been wearied to death with two years' attendance on such a weird little elf as myself--yes, and who made me feel it too.
>
> I was wildly, passionately attached to my father, and even his partiality in favor of my younger sister--his 'dove-eyed darling,' as he called her, did not affect my love for him. But he was often from home for months at a time, and all my life was then divided into two periods--when he was at home, and when he was gone; and every event dated from one of two epochs--joyfully, 'since father came home:' sadly, 'since father went away.' But at last my

---

[6] Montrose J. Moses declared, "Writers like Mrs. E.D.E.N. Southworth whose appeal did not rise above the level of the New York Ledger, exhibited no special trait; they were marked by inane purpose and misdirected sensation." Montrose J. Moses, The Literature of the South (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell and Company, 1910), p. 337.

[7] Regis Louise Boyle, Mrs. E.D.E.N. Southworth: Novelist (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1939), p. 26.

father, who had never recovered from the effects of his wound, got a cold, which fell upon his lungs. His health declined rapidly. My joys and sorrows now took these forms--'Father is able to walk about!', 'Father is sick in bed!'

My father was a Roman Cathloic, my mother an Episcopalian. This accounts for what occurred about this time. One day my sister and myself were dressed and taken into my father's room. We found all the family assembled, with several neighbors, around our father's bed. The priest was there in his sacred vestments. He had come to administer the last consolations of the church to our father, and was now about to christen myself and my sister by his dying bed. After these rites of baptism were over, we were taken from the room, but not before our father had laid his dying hands upon us and blessed us. I do not know how long it was after this, or where we were standing when someone--I know not who-- came and said, "Emma, your father is dead." I remember I felt as if I had received a sudden, stunning blow upon the brow. I reeled back from the blow an instant, unable to meet it, and then, with an impulse to escape from the calamity, turned and fled--fled with exhausted, insensible. That is all I remember, except the dark pageantry of the funeral, which seemed to me like a hideous dream. I was then about four years old, my sister about one year old. For months, and even years after, I ruminated on life, death, heaven, and hell, with a painful intensity of thought impossible to describe.

After my father's death, my grandmother and mother were in very straitened circumstances, and found it extremely difficult to keep up the style of living to which they had been accustomed. My grandmother had some property that brought her a modest income; they had besides the house leased, and for that day, very sumptuously furnished. My grandmother yielded to the advice of her friends, and received a few very select boarders. But she was a lady of the lofty old school, and never could bear to present a bill; so the end of it was she gave it up in a year.

At the age of six, I was a little thin, dark, wild-eyed elf, shy, awkward, and unattractive, and in consequence, very much--let alone. I spent much time in solitude, revery, or mischief; took to attics, cellars, and cocklofts, consorting with cats and pigeons, or with the old negroes in the kitchen, listening with open ears and mind to ghost stories, old legends, and tales of the times when 'ole mist'ress was rich and say lots of grand company-- very happy when I could get my little sister to share my queer pleasures; but 'Lotty' was a parlor favorite, and was better pleased with the happy faces of our young country cousins, some of whom were always with us on long visits. The brightest lights of those days were the frequent visits we would make down into St. Mary's County, sometimes sailing

> down the majestic Potomac as far as St. Clement's Isle and Bay, where we generally landed, and sometimes going in the old family carriage through the grand old forest between the District of Columbia and the shores of the Chesapeake. We often received visits also from our country kinfolk--visits of months' and even of years' duration.
>
> At this time of my life, rejoicing in the light and liberty of nature, I should have been very happy also in the love of my friends and relations, if they had permitted it; but no matter! Year after year, from my eighth to my sixteenth year, I grew more lonely, retired more into myself, until notwithstanding a strong, ardent, demonstrative temperament, I became cold, reserved, and abstracted, even to absence of mind--even to apparent insensibility.[8]

Thus, many of the improbable events that appear in Mrs. Southworth's fiction were actually a part of her past, including hysterical blindness, abandonment, poverty, melancholia, brain fever, and death.

Emma's father, whom she idolized, served as the model for the paternal male figure who appears throughout her fiction. Despite her strong attachment to Captain Nevitte, young Emma was rejected in favor of her more beautiful sister. Emma was rather plain in appearance, as witnessed by the absence of those photographs of the author which customarily accompanied popular novels. This rather tenuous relationship with her father is reflected throughout Southworth's fiction; the father, an ideal figure, rejects a daughter whose love for him is pure and absolute. At times the heroine is physically cast out of the home, as in The Discarded Daughter. At other times, she is merely unable to convey her deep commitment to her father. In this sense, the reader of Mrs. Southworth's novels functions as a surrogate father-figure who ultimately becomes aware of the devoted daughter's love and accepts her. The differences between father and daughter are reconciled at the

---

[8]Mary Forrest, Women of the South Distinguished in Literature (New York: Charles B. Richardson, 1866), pp. 217-219.

conclusion of each novel, thus working out Mrs. Southworth's unfulfilled desire for a resolution with her father.

According to her autobiographical sketch, Mrs. Southworth adapted to being the neglected daughter; her role in the family was not unlike the subordinate slave position depicted in her novels. That she subsequently suffered what would be classified in modern parlance as two nervous breakdowns would indicate that she was never fully able to adjust to this family caste structure. The heroines featured in her novels are all derived from her memories of her sister, "the dove-eyed darling", with whom young Emma experienced a love-hate relationship. According to Regis Boyle, Mrs. Southworth was admittedly jealous of her sister who was her father's favorite because of her beauty.[9] Although all of her heroines are beautiful and virtuous like her sister, Mrs. Southworth also includes a category of evil women, like Juliette in Retribution, who use their physical appearance to gain social acceptance. Mrs. Southworth is merciless with these villainesses, and they are all ultimately punished for exploiting their divine gifts of beauty.

According to Mrs. Southworth, she was always a withdrawn child, isolated from her father, her other relatives, and life itself. During her temporary blindness, Emma was removed from the family as an active participant and from the visual world as well. She admits that this experience altered her perception of reality, as the world appeared larger and more imposing when she finally regained her sight. After receiving the news of her father's death, Emma fled, unable to

---

[9]Boyle, Mrs. E.D.E.N. Southworth: Novelist, p. 4.

confront this devastating news and yet continually haunted by its presence. The romantic tales told by the old Negroes in the kitchen served as a comfort and shelter against the harsh world which seemed to exclude her. Significantly, included in these stories were tales of her ancestors who, according to the kitchen servants, lived in much the grand manner of the aristocrats who later appeards in Mrs. Southworth's novels. Thus, Mrs. Southworth's assertion that all her material derived from her experience has some validity. While some of the fiction is a direct translation of her own life, other elements stem from a different kind of experience--her imagination. Romanticizing a life different and grander than her own was a part of Emma's daily existence as a means of survival. She too was a product of the Southern romantic tradition, which she learned as a child and enjoyed as an attractive vision of the world.

In 1840 Emma married Frederick Hamilton Southworth, an inventor from Utica, New York. The couple moved to Prairie du Chein, Wisconsin, where Emma helped to support her husband and two children as a teacher. At this point, accounts of Emma's marital life begin to differ. Boyle declares that Mr. Southworth deserted his wife, migrating to California.[10] Fred Lewis Pattee states, however, that Mrs. Southworth was twice married; she was subsequently divorced by her first husband and then deserted by her second.[11] In any event, her married life was unquestionably tragic. As Mrs. Southworth's own married life was a

---

[10] Ibid., p. 5.

[11] Fred Lewis Pattee, The Feminine Fifties (New York: London: D. Appleton-Century Company, 1940), p. 121.

failure, her books are filled with women who are subjected to the same pressures that she faced. Papashvily declares,

> Most important for many of these women (writers), somewhere, sometime, someplace, in her past some man--a father, a brother, a husband, a guardian--had proved unworthy of the trust and confidence that she placed in him.[12]

In light of her personal experience, Southworth's depiction of marriage as a fixed union that ultimately survives all trials can be regarded as a romanticized version of that institution which satisfies the author's (and reader's) longing for harmony and stability in a rapidly changing society.

In 1844, Mrs. Southworth and her children returned to Washington, D.C., where she found employment as an assistant teacher, earning only two hundred and fifty dollars per year. Though she eventually rose to the position of principal, her struggle to support her family provided the motivation to submit stories to magazines. Mrs. Southworth recalls,

> Let me pass over in silence the stormy and disastrous days of my wretched girlhood and womanhood--days that stamped upon my brow of youth the furrows of fifty years--let me come at once to the time when I found myself broken in spirit, health, and purse--a widow in fate, but not in fact--with my babes looking up to me for a support I could not give them. It was in these dearest days of my woman's life that my author's life commenced. I wrote and published "Retribution", my first novel, under the following circumstances:
>
> In January, 1849, I had been appointed teacher of the Fourth District Primary School. The school was kept in the two largest rooms of my house, those upon the ground floor. I had eighty pupils. A few months previous to this, I had written a few short tales and

---

[12]Papashvily, All The Happy Endings, p. xvi.

sketches for the "National Era."[13] It was while I was organizing my new school, that Dr. Bailey applied to me for another story. I promised one that should go through two papers. I called up several subjects of a profoundly moral and philosophical nature, upon which the very trials and sufferings of my own life had led me to reflect and from among them selected moral retribution, as I understood it. I designed to illustrate the idea by a short tale. I commenced, and somehow or other, my head and heart were teeming with thought and emotion, and the idea that had at first but glimmered faintly upon my perceptions, blazed into a perfect glory of light, but which I fear I have not been able to transmit to others with the brightness with which it shows upon myself. No, it was dimmed by the dullness of the medium. My story grew into a volume. Every week I would supply a portion to the paper, until weeks grew into months, and months into quarters, before it was finished.

The circumstances under which this, my first novel, was written, and the success which afterward attended its publication, is a remarkable instance of 'sowing in tears and reaping in joy;' for in addition to that bittersweet sorrow with which I may not make you acquainted--that great life sorrow--I had many minor troubles. My small salary was inadequate for our comfortable support. My school numbered eighty pupils, boys and girls, and I had the whole charge of them. Added to this, my little boy fell dangerously ill, and was confined to his bed in perfect helplessness until June. He would suffer no one to move him but myself; in fact no one else could do so without putting him in pain. Thus my time was passed between my housekeeping, my schoolkeeping, my child's sick-bed, and my literary labors. The time devoted to writing was the hours that should have been given to sleep or to fresh air. It was too much for me. It was too much for any human being. My health broke down. I was attacked with frequent hemmorhage of the lungs. Still I persevered. I did my best by my house, my school, my sick child, and my publisher. Yet neither child, nor school, nor publisher received justice. The child suffered and complained, the patrons of the school grew dissatisfied, annoying, and sometimes insulting me, and as for the publisher, he would reject whole pages of that manuscript, which was written amid grief, and pain, and toil that he knew nothing of--pages, by the way, that were

---

[13]Ganaliel Bailey's National Era was an important and influential literary magazine during the nineteenth century. John Greenleaf Whittier served as corresponding editor for a period, and such works as Uncle Tom's Cabin were serialized in the periodical.

restored in the republication.

This was indeed the very melee of the 'Battle of Life.' I was forced to keep up, struggling, when I only wished for death and for rest.

But look you how it terminated. That night of storm and darkness came to an end, and morning broke on me at last--a bright, glad morning, pioneering a new happy day of life. First of all, it was in this very tempest of trouble that my 'life sorrow' was, as it were, carried away, or I was carried away from brooding over it. Next my child, contrary to my own opinion and doctor's, got well. Then, my book, written in so much pain, published beside in a newspaper, and withal, being the first work of an obscure and penniless author, was, contrary to all probabilities, accepted by the first publishing house in America, was published, and subsequently notices with high favor, even by the cautious English reviews. Friends crowded around me, offers for contributions poured in upon me. And I, who six months before had been poor, ill, forsaken, slandered, killed by sorrow, privation, toil, and friendlessness, found myself born, as it were, into a new life; found independence, sympathy, friendship, and honor, and an occupation in which I could delight. All this came very suddenly, as after a terrible storm, a sun-burst.[14]

Mrs. Southworth worked under conditions that obviously influenced the type and quality of writing that she was able to produce. Emma composed Retribution before and after school hours and at her sick child's bedside, so that her time to write was severly restricted. As Emma points out, she was compelled to write out of economic necessity rather than from an abstract, artistic inspiration.

Writing from her personal experience, Mrs. Southworth was able to reach a popular audience which was forced to contend with the same ordeals in their lives, though generally to a less intense and dramatic degree. Mrs. Southworth's philosophy of life, which extends into her novels, may be termed the Doctrine of Suffering. She notes, "I am almost tempted to believe that the evil destinies had received permission to test the full

---

[14]Forrest, Women of the South, pp. 219-221.

strength of my human heart."[15] However, through faith and submission to God's will, her own destiny took its course, leading to a happy and prosperous conclusion. Thus, Mrs. Southworth's own personal salvation--which was realized through the popularity of her stories--in turn provided hope for those who were themselves immersed in similar tribulations.

The fiction of Mrs. Southworth was first published in serial form in some extremely prominent and influential popular weekly periodicals. The New York Ledger, Saturday Evening Post, the National Era, and Baltimore Saturday Visiter carried Mrs. Southworth, and the London Journal featured fourteen of her stories. Mrs. Southworth was so in demand that in 1847, 1849, 1850, 1859, and 1860, three of her novels were serialized per year. Some of Mrs. Southworth's more popular works were republished; for example, Self-Made was re-issued eleven years after its first appearance in the Ledger. While most of the stories were converted into novels immediately after their publication in the weeklies, this was not always the case; for instance, The Hidden Hand was published in the Ledger three times (1858, 1868, and 1883) before being introduced to the public in novel form.

The format of the popular periodical also affected the structure and style of Mrs. Southworth's fiction. The stories were serialized, so that, for instance, The Missing Bride was broken into thirty five installments. Although Retribution required "only" fourteen issues for completion, the story still spanned a four month period, from January 3, 1849 to April 12, 1849. Because of the fragmented nature of the format, the stories contained a good deal of repetition in order to remind the established

---

[15]Boyle, Mrs. E.D.E.N. Southworth: Novelist, p. 23.

audience of past events and to acquaint the new reader with what had transpired to that point. The stories appear as a series of incidents that build to a dramatic climax at the conclusion of each episode and then fall to a low ebb at the beginning of the next installment. This dramatic structure is, then, rather uneven when considered as a complete novel. This structural flaw is characteristic of serialized works of the time, including the fiction of Dickens and Thackery. Mrs. Southworth was also compelled to use stylistic devices designed to capture the attention of the mass audience. A Southworth novel features a series of dramatic turns of events that suddenly (and often for no apparent reason) alter the course of the plot. In Southworth's fiction, external forces characteristically test the internal fortitude and moral strength of the protagonists. It might be argued, indeed, that these external events reflect internal states of consciousness; for instance, in the initial scene of The Doom of Deville, the confused and beaten young hero is forced to contend with a chaotic and destructive storm of vast proportions. In any event, the mass audience responded to those stories in which dramatic action predominated over ponderous, psychological narratives.

Mrs. Southworth also rather skillfully manipulated the plot in order to maintain the interest of her following. At the beginning of the tale she frequently concocted a mystery which would unfold as the weeks slipped by. This is an old convention, characteristic of melodrama as well as the novel. Many of her stories involved the issue of identity; in Capitola, for example, a young woman is mysteriously kidnapped as a child and struggles throughout the story to discover her heritage, to the consternation and delight of the audience. Another convention which appears throughout

fiction, including Shakespeare, features several seemingly unrelated subplots which slowly but surely intertwine, resolving the dilemmas that beset each subplot. This technique reinforces Mrs. Southworth's theme of a Grand Design which ultimately transcends man's shortsighted, daily trials and can lead to a perfect state of harmony in heaven. The author characteristically plants a clue at the beginning of the tale so that the reader can take advantage of the interval between installments to solve the mystery.

The language employed by Mrs. Southworth is likewise most dramatic; the narrator often addressed the reader personally, putting the events of the story into perspective:

> And, Lione! no, I cannot! accustomed as I have been to see and describe suffering, my mind now shrinks from detailing the particulars of that wild, wild woe! (The Doom of Deville, p. 155)

The dialogue is similarly histrionic, with the characters frequently invoking the heavens and inflating their situations to universal dimensions:

> 'Oh, Heaven! oh, Heaven! Would to the Lord I had never been born!', cried Herman Brudenell, in a voice of such utter woe that Ishmael raised his head and struggled hard to subdue the storm of passion that was raging in his bosom. 'Or would that I had died the day I met Nora, and before I had entailed all this anguish on you!' continued Herman Brudenell, amid groans and sighs. (Self-Raised, p. 15)

The author's use of punctuation, liberally sprinkling exclamation marks throughout the narrative, is yet another method intended to excite the imaginations of her readers. Again, this is a convention that appears frequently in the novel and drama. Indeed, Mrs. Southworth's theatrical approach to her fiction, which was necessitated by the demands of the popular art form, made her work easily converted into drama, so that

adaptions of her novels ran quite successfully--not only in the United States, but in England as well.

Mrs. Southworth was also restricted by the rigorous publishing schedule of the periodicals, which compelled the author to meet a deadline, even if the quality of her work suffered as a result. During the writing of Shannondale, in 1851, she began experiencing renewed difficulties with her vision; nevertheless, she succeeded in submitting her installments to the editors on schedule, even though this effort resulted in irreparable damage to her eyes. Because of these considerations, Mrs. Southworth had minimal time for revision and was compelled to rely upon old formulas and conventions such as stereotypical characterization and repetition of theme and plot in order to fulfill her weekly obligations. Those stories that were republished in the periodicals were often revised by the author, reflecting her dissatisfaction with the constraints which the popular format imposed on her work.

Weekly periodicals also afforded the opportunity for the author to cultivate a uniquely intimate relationship with her audience. Boyle declares, "(Southworth's) contemporaries did not seem to share such a close relationship with their readers."[16] Mrs. Southworth occasionally took her readers into her confidence, printing personal messages which were included in her stories. One entry, published on November 3, 1855 in the Saturday Evening Post, contained an apology and explanation for her tardiness in the beginning of her latest novel, Vivia:

> The dark season drew to a close--the sick got well--
> and time reconciled us to those bitter separations by
> death and by absence. God gave us more patience under

---

[16]Boyle, Mrs. E.D.E.N. Southworth: Novelist, p. 12.

> wrongs, and more faith in His final justice. My long task also approached its end. The last chapter was written, and certain 'promissory note' appended--and then--utterly gave way--beneath the burden. I could not have believed that the spirit which had done and borne so much could suffer such a total defeat... But Providence is a perfect Father--and nature is a wise and good mother. Even this coerced submission to their laws was fraught with incalcuable benefit to their exhausted child. In this enforced idleness of several months (the first rest I have had in several years) health and inspiration have tided back to heart and brain, and, Providence permitting, the best life of both shall go forth to my friends and readers in the beginning of the New Year.[17]

The periodicals for which Mrs. Southworth wrote included sections devoted to letters from readers, which often contained comments concerning specific stories. The author thus received immediate feedback which was useful in preparing her next work. Several of her stories, notably The Hidden Hand and Capitola's Plight, were written as sequels to her more popular efforts in response to popular demand.

In 1853, Mrs. Southworth moved her family to Prospect Cottage, which overlooks the Potomac River. As Mary Forrest describes the setting, Mrs. Southworth appears quite as a character from one of her own novels:

> Having thus, by her indefeatable efforts, achieved fame and competence, Mrs. Southworth removed, in 1853, to a charming villa on the Potomac Heights, at the west end of Georgetown. Here, for six years, she resided with her children; her home, especially during the sessions of Congress, being the resort of distinguished people from all parts of the Union. With these social privileges, the culture of her children, and her literary labors, in which she has ever found her true vocation--with rides, drives, and rambles through the romantic country which surrounded her, and occasional excursions to the seashore, the mountains, and our larger northern cities, the years

---

[17] Ibid., p. 12.

> glided by in strong contrast with the dark days that preceded them.[18]

Thus, the life that Mrs. Southworth retired to was one of Southern aristocratic splendor, not unlike the plantation utopias depicted in her novels.

In 1859, Mrs. Southworth and her children traveled to England, where they remained until 1862. During this period, Emma wrote The Doom of Deville, Love's Labour Won, Rose Elmer, Eudora, or The False Princess, Captain Rock's Pet, and Astrea, or The Bridal Day. Mrs. Southworth took the trip in the interest of her personal health and in order to promote her sales in England. She apparently was quite comfortable in English society, making the acquaintance of, among others, Lady Byron. Mrs. Southworth felt a particular closeness with England due to her ancestral roots. In addition, she sensed a cultural kinship between English society and the South, a topic which will be further examined later. This was a most productive period in Emma's writing career and, judging from the titles alone, these stories were particularly influenced by her exposure to English culture.

During the Civil War, Mrs. Southworth worked actively for the Northern cause. Boyle states:

> (Mrs. Southworth) nailed the stars and stripes over her front gate, saying: 'Whoever comes to my door must pass under that.' With patriotic zeal she nursed the sick and wounded in camp and hospital until she herself became a victim to the small-pox. With true philosophy she said: 'I cannot prevent the soldiers from taking the disease, but I can suffer with them; there is some comfort in that.'[19]

---

[18]Forrest, Women of the South, p. 223.

[19]Boyle, Mrs. E.D.E.N. Southworth: Novelist, p. 15.

Boyle notes that one of Mrs. Southworth's most cherished possessions was a heavy walnut bed that President Lincoln occupied for three nights during the course of the war. Mrs. Southworth provided food and shelter for Union soldiers who passed through Washington on their way home. Public reaction to Mrs. Southworth's political stance was unfavorable in the South. Boyle cites one vehement account, which he contends is an exaggeration of the true public sentiment:

> (Confederate sympathizers) never forgave her loyalty and probably never will, and while Mrs. Southworth has lived a life of perfect chastity, yet her fate is that of every other woman who rises above the common place or above her first station in life--more or less slander, and envy at her heels.[20]

It is perhaps significant that this criticism is directed not only at Southworth's political position, but also at Emma, a woman, overstepping her social role and taking any social stand at all.

Emma's support of the Union cause is in part a reaction against any form of revolution. Like the slaves in her novels, her work reflects her faith in God's will, with hope for an eternal peace in heaven. In addition, Mrs. Southworth was opposed to slavery, although, as we shall see, she subscribed to many of the social and racial myths that lay behind the institution. In Retribution, which was published in 1849, the heroine, Hester Grey, discloses a plan by which her father had emancipated his slaves. The black people were given their freedom and were provided with a fair wage in exchange for their labor. While this project is indeed progressive, the assumptions that insure the success of the plan are not. Hester's father reassured her that there would be no shortage of laborers in this new economic system:

> ...Your people will not leave the farm, unless you drive them off. The animal affections are all stronger in the

> African than in us; and among the strongest is their attachment to the soil upon which they were born and have been brought. (Retribution, p. 25.)

Even in her post-Civil War novels, in which the slaves have been freed, the social system of the South remains intact. The black people remain on the plantation, presumably receiving a small salary, and maintain their old loyalties and sense of duty to the family. Indeed, in Mrs. Southworth's novels, the slaves themselves angrily deny that the war has in any way altered their loyalties. In Ruth, The Faithful Bride, published in 1869, the devoted slave Aunt Adah declares,

> 'Yes, honey, fai'ful! assented the old creature. 'Dat's me, fai'ful--fai'ful froo fick and fin, froo good 'port and ebil 'port, fai'ful fer ninety-nine years las' Can'lemas Day. I didn' 'mancipate de plantashun to go off to Cong'ess like so many ob dem riff-raff, low-life brack niggers did! No, sah! Aunt Adah Mungummery hab too much 'spect for herse'f, let alone 'spect fer de ole famberly ob de Tudors, to 'grace hers'f dat way! 'Sides w'ich, young marster, to tell the bressed trufe, I wouldn' a lef' my log house in de piney woods 'cross de crik, wid my good pine-know fire in de winter time, an' my cool spring ob water outside de do', no not fer all de Cong'ess in de whole worl'! 'Deed, 'fo de law, it's de trufe!

The narrator then explains,

> At no age would (Aunt Adah) have left the home and the family to whom she was so strongly attached. Her bondage was that of LOVE, from which no act of Congress could emancipate her. (Ruth, The Faithful Bride, pp. 8-9.)

Mrs. Southworth died on June 30, 1899. The Ledger's obituary notice refers to the author's intimate relationship with her readers, declaring that the public "(has) lost a friend whose place can never be filled."[21]

---

[21]Boyle, Mrs. E.D.E.N. Southworth: Novelist, pp. 20-21.

Mrs. Southworth was part of a tradition of women writers who dominated the American literary market from approximately 1830-1865. The industrial revolution in America gave rise to a series of social changes that produced a considerably larger, heterogeneous reading audience. Technological advances in printing made books less expensive and more readily available to the masses. Public education became more widespread, creating a relatively literate society which for the first time included women. The industrial revolution also altered the work pattern, shifting the center of production from the home to the factory; this change removed the male as the center of the household, and women assumed a more active role in domestic decision making. Yet another manifestation of the industrial revolution was what Papashvily refers to as a leisured middle class. She states,

> When wealth no longer took the form of castles and granaries, sweeping fields and wide timberlands, flocks and herds, men needed other symbols to indicate their prosperity. The first and most important sign of success became the idle woman in the household.[22]

These women, who suddenly had the time and education, held specific expectations about what they wanted to read. Papashvily declares,

> ...Once they conquered the mystery of the printed page, (women) demanded that it reflect and extend experience--disclose and resolve the contradictions of the outer and inner worlds--clarify, inform, and most important, amuse. These tasks, traditionally performed by the folk tale, fiction now assumed.[23]

This new genre of fiction was labeled "domestic", focusing on the everyday experience of the audience, who were most notably women. These novels were directed expressly at women, reflecting their concerns and preoccupations. The plots generally center around the plight of a heroine who is confronted with seemingly endless hardships. The home

---

[22]Papashvily, All The Happy Endings, p. 18.

[23]Ibid., pp. 38-39.

plays a vital role in these novels, and the male characters appear in each work only insofar as they are involved in the household. Thus, while the professions of the male characters are mentioned in the novels, the domestic tale is primarily concerned with the male in relation to the lives of the women. And, because this role was most often confined to romantic interaction and that of the family during the nineteenth century, the male figure is rather limited within the scope of the domestic novel.

These novels were intended not only as entertainment, but also as instruction in matters of morality and proper conduct in the everyday world. The domestic novel may be considered as a forerunner of the modern soap opera. These works were sensational, relying upon drama of an external nature to maintain the interest of the reader. Thus, the experience depicted by the domestic novel is by no means commonplace. Reality is intensified for dramatic purposes. The problems confronting the main characters are severe and inexorable, so that the faith and endurance of the heroine (and the reader as well) are severely tested before relief finally arrives at the conclusion of the novel. The characters are stereotypical, which provides immediate cues for the audience regarding how and where to direct their sympathies; this device is particularly important in this genre, which depends upon an emotional participation and involvement on the part of the audience.

The growth of domestic fiction resulted in an increase in the number of women authors; as Papashvily observes, "Reading, it seemed, incited writing."[24] Women writers were seemingly more sensitive to the unique

---

[24]Ibid., p. 40.

problems and pressures confronting members of their sex than were their male counterparts, and were thus better able to reach their audience. Writing proved to be a profitable profession for the successful author, so that many women, like Mrs. Southworth, were motivated to pursue literary careers for economic reasons. In addition, writing was one of the few acceptable vocations for women, whereas a career in the arts was generally considered an effeminate occupation for a man.

Mrs. Southworth was part of a literary tradition that originated in England. The literary format employed by the author, as well as the presentation of Southern society, was influenced by the English domestic novel. This genre can be traced to Fanny Burney, whose first work, Evelina, was published in 1778.

The parallel between the lives of Mrs. Southworth and Fanny Burney is striking. The Burney family possessed a considerable estate but was reduced to relative poverty and obscurity two generations before Fanny's birth. Annie Raine Ellis explains,

> James Macburney was born about 1653. He had an estate in Great Hanwood, in Shropshire, and a house in Whitehall...When nineteen he married Rebecca Ellis, a girl of sixteen, who is said to have acted at Goodman's Fields Theatre. Thereupon, his father disinherited him, and himself married his own cook, whose son, Joseph, ran through the property.[25]

Although Fanny was left without significant material advantage, she clung to the Macburney heritage as an essential part of her identity. She was particularly attached to Chesington Hall in Surrey, the estate inhabited by Samuel Crisp, author and lifelong friend of the Burney family. She refers to this manor in her journal as "a place of peace, ease, freedom,

---

[25]Raine Ellis ed., The Early Diary of Frances Burney, 1768-1778 (London: George Bell and Sons, 1907), xvi.

and cheerfulness."[26]

Like Mrs. Southworth, Fanny was shy and withdrawn as a child. In her Memoirs of Dr. Burney, Fanny wryly describes herself as others had perceived her:

> Frances, the second daughter of Dr. Burney, was during her childhood the most backward of all his family in the faculty of receiving instructions. At eight years of age she was ignorant of the letters of the alphabet; though, at ten she began scribbling almost incessantly, little works of invention, but always in private; and in scrawling characters illegible, save to herself.[27]

Thus Fanny, a romantic girl, saw writing as an opportunity to voice her feelings, which were ignored by those around her. This avenue of expression became central to her career as a writer and indeed provides insight into the fiction that she later produced. Fanny's role as observer had its impact on her literary style, as she essentially recorded behavior without examining the motivation which prompted it. MacCarthy observes,

> (Fanny's) shyness in company left her the freer to look on, and caused the people and incidents before her to imprint themselves vividly upon...her brain. She never tried to imagine what went on in the minds of those by whom she was surrounded. Like a child, her interest was caught and held by what the senses could percieve. She never looked beyond externals...and because she has no key to human character, she saw life always as a pageant or a masquerade.[28]

---

[26] Ibid., p. lviii.

[27] Antoinette Arnold Overman, An Investigation into the Character of Fanny Burney (Amsterdam: H.J. Paris, 1933), pp. 11-12.

[28] MacCarthy, B.G., The Female Pen: Later Women Novelists (Oxford: B.H. Blackwell, Ltd., 1947), pp. 94-95.

In her preface to Evelina, Fanny declares that her intention is to "Draw characters from nature, though not from life."[29] This distinction, which is also an essential element in the work of Mrs. Southworth, has several implications. Both authors find their inspiration in the imagination as opposed to the reality of life that seemed to exclude them in childhood. They are both concerned with the world of society and manners as opposed to the depiction of primal nature. And, both derive character and plot from art and the established conventions of literature, rather than from the unique figures and situations that appear in the course of life's experiences.

The journal of Fanny Burney also reveals an obsession with order which extends into her everyday conduct. Her entry of July 17, 1768 records her schedule as follows:

> Breakfast always at 10 (Rise as much before as we please)
> Dine precisely at 2
> Drink tea about 6
> Sup exactly at 9[30]

Fanny's concern with self-control extends to a rigid denial of pleasure:

> I make a kind of rule, never to indulge myself in my two most favorite pursuits, reading and writing, in the morning--no, like a very good girl I give that up wholly, accidental occasions and preventions excepted, to needlework, by which means my reading and writing in the afternoon is a pleasure I cannot be blamed for by my mother.[31]

---

[29]Frances Burney, Evelina or The History of a Young Lady's Entrance Into the World (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1930), p. ix. By distinguishing between nature and life, Burney is presumably referring to a neo-classic, external concept of nature, associated with order, regularity, and universality, as opposed to the romantic, irregular notion of nature.

[30]Ellis, Early Diary of Fanny Burney, p. 15.

[31]Ibid., p. 15.

In her entry of July 17, 1768, Fanny responds to Dr. Johnson's Rasselas, providing further insight into the fundamental structure of the domestic novel:

> O, how dreadful, how terrible it is to be told by a man of (Dr. Johnson's) genius and knowledge in so affectingly probable a manner, that true, real, happiness is ever unattainable in this world! Thro' all the scenes, public or private, domestic or solitary...real felicity eludes their pursuit and mocks their solitude. In high life, superiority, envy and haughtiness baffle the power of preferment, favour and greatness--and, with or without them, all is animosity, suspicion, apprehension, and misery! in private families, disagreement, jealousy and partiality, destroy all domestic felicities and all social cheerfulness, and all is peevishness, contradiction, ill-will, and wretchedness.[32]

Fanny is distressed by Dr. Johnson's depiction of chaos in the world, which to some extent reinforces her own personal experience. For Miss Burney, the means by which she was able to draw the disparities of her life into a state of harmony was her imagination. This approach typifies the domestic novel, as these stories present characters who are immersed in seemingly irreconcilable circumstances. The domestic novel serves as an arena in which the travails of the characters are resolved; through the author's imagination, the forces of virtue operate to restore order to the world of the novel. The conclusion is critical to the reader's experience; they identify with the plight of the characters, experiencing a catharsis of sorts at the satisfying resolution of the novel.

Miss Burney's first novel, Evelina, was an immediate sensation in England, even drawing the praise of the eminent Dr. Johnson. The plot is a dramatic, loosely autobiographical tale that reflects the author's own ambiguous feelings for a social system that, though attractive, has

---

[32] Ibid., p. 16.

rejected her:

> As the obscure ward of a country parson, (Evelina) was safe and happy enough, although her life was shadowed by the slur of illegitimacy. But, if she were ever to make her entrance into the outer world, it seems inevitable that she should suffer for the social inequity of her ancestors. She stood between two worlds--the exclusive society in which, as her father's daughter, she had a right to move; and the lower world of petty tradesmen, in which she had relations through her vulgar grandmother, Madame Duval. But society, unsupported by her father, and her indeterminate background and her isolation caused her to be ignored and slighted.[33]

In Burney's novel, manners provide necessary order, separate the classes, and differentiate between the heroes and the villans within the upper class. Evelina remarks,

> Lordship---how extraordinary! that a nobelman, accustomed, in all probability, to the first rank of company in the kingdom, from his earliest infancy, can possibly be deficient in good manners, however faulty in morals and principles!!![34]

Proper deportment can thus regulate man's impulses and distinguish good from evil. This emphasis on restraint and decorum represents another innovation in the genre of the novel. Muriel Masefield declares,

> Fanny Burney brought about a literary revolution: the novel was freed from the reproach of courseness (hitherto considered a practically necessary ingredient of humor) and the natural story of life and manners came into its kingdom.[35]

Evelina contains considerable moral instruction, as the felicity and success of the characters is measured against the standards of behavior that were established in the courtesy literature of the period. Hemlow notes that

---

[33]MacCarthy, The Female Pen, p. 38.

[34]Burney, Evelina, p. 133.

[35]Muriel Masefield, Woman Novelists: From Fanny Burney to George Eliot (Freeport, New York: Books for Libraries Press, Inc., 1934), p. 23.

Fanny was familiar with Edward Moore's Fables for the Female Sex, which was published in 1741 and included lessons of conduct and sentiments. The framework of manners and morality for the genteel(and in the novel, heroic) member of society is well defined:

> Spirits... The spirits should be ever under the domain of the understanding.
> Unenviousness...
> Honesty...
> Visiting... To be well timed and of proper length should be chiefly considered. When discourse flags, before it fails, company should separate.
> Good Manners... Should be uninterruptedly cultivated. They chiefly consist of softness and attention. Their influence is universal--dispelling or banishing mauvaise honte, grosseness, personal reflections, absence of mind and all observance; humility; and the art of pleasing.
> Delicacy...
> Instruction... To hear Good Council, to read Moral Lessons...[36]

The plot of Evelina is to a large degree a materialization of the abstract principles of the courtesy literature, as the fate of the individual characters is determined by the particular values they epitomize. Hemlow states,

> The forwarding action was felicitious behavior on the part of the heroine--modesty, delicacy, sensibility, charity, prudence, fortitude, and all coquetry, affectation, singularity, artifice, levity, imprudence, and other courtesy-book sins.[37]

Evelina is concerned with the life of the English aristocracy; major characters include Lady Howard, the Reverend Mr. Villars, and Captain Mirvan. The only vocations that appear in this novel at all are positions in the military and the church; otherwise, the chief pursuit of the characters is leisure. The plot features the heroine's search for identity

---

[36] Joyce Hemlow, The History of Fanny Burney (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1958), p. 21.

[37] Ibid., p. 225

a theme which recurs throughout the genre of the domestic novel. Evelina is removed from her past, her family heritage, and even her family name; she gradually discovers her identity, both as a woman and as a person in relation to her world. Though her identity remains concealed through much of the novel, Evelina displays the natural beauty and gentility that is her birthright. Burney's novel reinforces the societal belief in a correspondence between class and heredity, which holds that the upper class, unless corrupted, possesses moral superiority which is demonstrated in their ability to govern--not only others, but their own passions as well. The estate plays a large role in the novel, even in its absence. Evelina regards Howard Grove as a slice of heaven: "This house seems to be the house of joy; every face wears a smile, and a laugh is at everybody's service."[38] However, Evelina immediately leaves the order and sanctity of the estate to travel to London, where the pace and excitement of the city throws her world into chaos. The trip to London serves as an allegory for the uncertain moral journey in which Evelina's moral order is threatened. Maesfield notes, "We are forced to the conclusion that London was a dangerous and unpleasant place for the woman who was not carefully protected..."[39] In urban life, the pace and excitement are seemingly out of the control and certainly beyond the understanding of the heroine. The fixed order of morality breaks down in London, as members of the aristocracy behave in an unexpectedly rude and destructive fashion, much to the consternation of Evelina's concerned parental figure, the Reverend Mr. Villars.

---

[38]Burney, Evelina, p. 28.

[39]Masefield, Woman Novelists, p. 28.

Miss Burney's second novel, Cecelia, also offers insight into the domestic life of the aristocracy, which offered satisfaction to those readers who were not of the privileged class. Again, Burney is concerned with the theme of dissipation, as characters are consumed by the parties and excitement of the social life in London. Overman notes,

> Shocked by the behavior of Mr. Harrel and tired of the never ceasing parties, Cecelia tries to find happiness in solitude, and satisfaction in charity.[40]

It is precisely her reliance on the absolute system of mores that enables the genteel Cecelia to transcend the temptations of everyday life. At the conclusion of the novel, she and her lover are wed, a new beginning which presumably establishes a permanent state of harmony in her world. The unwritten chapters after the conclusion are an important feature of the domestic novels, as the protagonists will enjoy an idyllic existence free of the cares that had beset them throughout the story.

The first domestic novelist in America is generally considered to be Miss Catherine Marie Sedgwick, who wrote A New England Tale in 1822, and Redwood in 1824. These tales were primarily concerned with how the heroine endured life's trials, such as marriage and poverty. In 1837 Sedgwick wrote A Poor Rich Man and a Rich Poor Man, in which according to Papashvily, the heroine, Susan May,

> showed how simple and satisfying it is to support a large family, dispense charity and educate children on meager

---

[40]Overman, Investigation Into the Character of Fanny Burney, p. 49.

> wages, a pleasure denied those fortunate enough to be wealthy.[41]

Because the setting of each novel was so critical to the domestic novel, this genre of fiction was distinctly regional in nature; Sedgwick and Susan Warner, for instance, are representative of New England domestic fiction. By the 1840's, a Southern regional domestic fiction flourished. Jay Hubbell notes,

> The number of Southern women who took to writing in the forties and fifties is very considerable. In fact, there were at this time more women than men among Southern writers who could be classed as professional.[42]

Next to Mrs. Southworth, Caroline Lee Hentz stands as the most prominent and influential Southern regional author of her time. Mrs. Hentz was born in New England in 1800. Soon after her marriage to a French historian, they moved to Chapel Hill, North Carolina. From there they moved to a succession of cities, all located in the South. Her perspective as a transplanted Northerner appears throughout her work. An examination of the career of Caroline Hentz reveals a striking number of similarities between Mrs. Hentz and Mrs. Southworth. The Hentz' established a school for girls in five of the cities where they lived. Like Mrs. Southworth, Caroline was responsible for educating her young pupils and preparing them to conduct themselves properly in society. In the same manner, the novels of both authors served as texts for the instruction of young women. Mary Forrest describes the work of Mrs. Hentz in Women of the South, a piece of sentimental criticism which was published

---

[41]Papashvily, All The Happy Endings, p. 43.

[42]Jay B. Hubbell, The South in American Literature, 1607-1900 (U.S.: Duke University Press, 1954), p. 603.

in 1866:

> The sensibilities, which gave to her a power of enjoyment, and were, at the same time, alive to 'an angel's scope of agony,' quiver in her works as truly as they once played upon her face or throbbed in her pulses--equally apparent on every page are the vigor and vivacity, the moral perception, the religious faith, which marked her life and conversation.[43]

Like Mrs. Southworth, much of Mrs. Hentz's work is autobiographical; in fact, her last work, Ernest Linwood, which was published in 1856, is subtitled The Inner Life of the Author. This work deals with the trials of marriage and the strain on the institution brought about by woman's expanded interests and acquaintances. Certainly the success of Mrs. Hentz produced tension in the Hentz household that ultimately affected her husband's emotional and physical health. Papashvily notes,

> Life in the shadow of a brilliant, accomplished, attractive wife intensified certain insecurities, self doubts he possessed. Certainly, as the years passed, Professor Hentz grew more and more to resemble the creature of his wife's imagination (Ernest Linwood) until finally he became what his eldest son, a physician, called 'a miserable hypochrondriac--unfit for work.'[44]

Mrs. Hentz began writing for magazines in 1838 with a story entitled "Lowell's Folly"; a collection of these tales first appeared in book form in 1846. Like Mrs. Southworth, Caroline Hentz was driven to serious literary endeavors through economic necessity. As her husband's health began to decline, Mrs. Hentz was compelled to write in order to survive. The impending dangers of everyday life bacame a focus of Mrs. Hentz, as her characters struggle against these very conditions in order to attain a measure of ideal happiness. Ironically, these tales of characters who

---

[43]Forrest, Women of the South, p. 268.

[44]Papashvily, All The Happy Endings, p. 94.

triumph over the pressures of living reflects her own efforts to attain fame and economic independence. However, unlike her contemporary, Caroline Hentz wrote several short stories that contained instances of social revolution, in which the rich fall from power and the deserving poor are rewarded in society for their virtue.

The novels of Mrs. Hentz are most notorious for their eloquent defense of the institutions of the South, particularly slavery. Her fiction was regarded by the critics and audiences of the period as a literary response to Harriet Beecher Stowe's Uncle Tom's Cabin. The Planter's Northern Bride appeared in 1854, and, according to Mrs. Forrest, "took rank at once among our best novels;"[45] this novel was consciously directed against the abolitionist view expressed by Stowe. The preface to the novel asserts that,

> Our national honor is tarnished when a portion of our country is held up to public disgrace and foreign insult by those, too, whom every feeling of patriotism should lead to defend it.[46]

Significantly, the plot of The Planter's Northern Bride reflects Caroline Hentz' own personal experience, as she was transplanted to the South and came to recognize the Christain framework behind the institution of slavery.

Thus, Southern domestic writers like Mrs. Southworth contributed to the formation of a distinct Southern cultural identity. As a writer of domestic fiction, Mrs. Southworth acquainted her audience not only with her personal

---

[45]Forrest, Women of the South, p. 268.

[46]Papashvily, All The Happy Endings, p. 85.

circumstances but with her cultural experience as well. The widespread success of these novels indicates the degree to which her audience enjoyed and approved of Southworth's conception of Southern culture. Entertainment which is positively received demands a degree of participation on the part of the reader. Audience involvement in a popular medium enriches the experience, so that the reader absorbs and then reinvests meaning to increase his enjoyment. This reciprocity between the audience and popular art forms a delicate system of communication which serves to reinforce cultural values. Mrs. Southworth capitalized on an attractive conception of Southern life already in existence in order to insure commercial success, which in turn served to reinforce these previously accepted notions about the South.

CHAPTER 2

Mrs. Southworth and the Southern Mythic Culture

Mrs. Southworth's fiction does not correspond exactly with an objective, historically accurate picture of Southern life but instead reflects a Southern myth, which reveals the self-concept of the Southern culture: how the Southerner thought of himself and how he preferred others to perceive him. Myth was generally considered as the product of primitive cultures and regarded as fantasy by early scholars. Richard Chase declares,

> We find no general theory of myth beyond the assumption that myth is the kind of falsehood which has always satisfied the feeble understanding of mankind which has been an age-old weapon of oppression in the hands of scheming priests and legislators.[1]

Myth is undeniably a valuable source of entertainment in a culture. In this sense, myth provides vicarious experiences for people who are disappointed in what they must endure in the course of their everyday existence. As fantasy, myth also reaffirms the possible in life. John Creed observes,

> And perhaps even more important than the belief that these particular things happened is the belief that things <u>of this kind</u> can easily happen.[2]

---

[1]Richard Chase, <u>Quest for Myth</u> (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1949), p. 10.

[2]John Creed, "Uses of Classical Mythology," in <u>The Theory of Myth: Six Studies</u>, ed. by Adrian Cunningham (London: Sheed and Ward, 1973), p. 3.

Myth thus has a therapeutic effect, compensating for the burdens of the real world and providing a necessary release from the frustrations accompanying everyday living. This is particularly true for the post-Civil War South; living amid the ruin of the Confederacy and the social upheaval of reconstruction, they clung all the more tenaciously to the Southern myth.

In his survey of mythology, Richard Chase identifies what might be termed the preternatural function of myth. The seventeenth-century Italian scholar Vico first pointed out that myth, which relies heavily upon the use of metaphor, was interpreted differently in ancient times. Chase comments,

> (Vico) thinks it a mistake to suppose (metaphors) to be artifice or decoration. . . In early times the metaphor meant exactly what it said: it was not, in other words, thought to be a metaphor; it was language perfectly fused with reality.[3]

There was thus a time when myth, which appears to the modern sensibility as fantastic and preposterous, was regarded as within the realm of man's experience. Chase carefully distinguishes between the supernatural, which is the intervention of the gods in the affairs of men, and the preternatural, which he defines as the existence of the wonderous and extraordinary in the world. Myth, then, reinforces man's belief in the unexpected and the improbable. In his view,

> Any narrative or poem which reaffirms the dynamism and vibrancy of the world, which fortifies the ego with the impression that here is a magically potent brilliancy or dramatic force in the world, may be called a myth.[4]

---

[3]Chase, Quest for Myth, pp. 25-26.

[4]Ibid., p. 81.

This explanation of the preternatural can to some degree account for the sensational elements in Mrs. Southworth's novels when considered as cultural myth. Southworth's fiction reflects a belief in the preternatural, which is presented as real within the context of the story. This sensationalism, which is regarded by literary scholars as a clumsy device to arouse interest,[5] actually contributed to the popularity of the stories. Keeping alive a belief in a preternatural world is a key to the success of Southworth's novels, and the romantic or sentimental literary genre as a whole. Chase declares,

> Myths may be regarded. . . as the aesthetic exercise which preserves and reaffirms the magic fusion; myths keep the magician's world--and the poet's world--from falling apart.[6]

Many of the plot contrivances in her novels that seem ludicrous to the modern critic--the emphasis on coincidence, or "fate", and the merging of subplots which resolves all mysteries--reflect her faith in a mystical, transcendant Goodness which ultimately restores peace and harmony to the deserving. And, while one cannot in reality rely on the timeliness of circumstances to solve life's problems, such events do occur in the lives of men. As Southworth observes in Ruth, The Faithful Bride,

> It was very curious that he should have done so, Ruth thought; but, then, experience shows us many curious coincidences in life. (Ruth, The Faithful Bride, p. 152.)

Southworth strongly believes in fate, which controls the destiny of the individuals in the novels. The protagonists seem to be guided by a divine providence which, within the context of the novel itself, is the author,

---

[5]See Montrose J. Moses, The Literature of the South (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell & Co., 1910), p. 337.

[6]Chase, Quest for Myth, p. 81.

who constructs plots that will eventually enable the heroes to prevail over misfortune.

The preternatural also refers to those powers that are beyond the conventional understanding and control of man. As Ernest Cassirer observes, "The world of myth is a dramatic world--the world of actions, of forces, of conflicting powers."[7] Mrs. Southworth's work features a continuing struggle between the forces of good and evil; these forces exist in the novels as independent and external entities that test man's moral fortitude. In this sense, there are no truly evil characters in Southworth novels--only weak ones. The plots generally move from an edenistic state of bliss to a series of trials that threatens the protagonists. Those who have succumbed to evil temptations are ultimately punished, while the characters who have the moral strength to endure life's ordeals find a happy resolution to their problems.

The conflicts which appear in Southworth's fiction also correspond to the tension between what may be termed a rational and emotional understanding of the world. This opposition represents what has traditionally been considered the masculine versus the feminine sensibility. For instance, Tudor Hereworth in Ruth, The Faithful Bride is punished for ignoring his better instincts and casting out his wife for infidelity on the basis of circumstantial evidence. In rejecting his wife, Tudor is also repudiating his emotional, or feminine, self. After discovering that his wife is innocent of all charges of adultery, Tudor collapses, as his weak emotional nature is unable to bear the strain.

---

[7]Ernest Cassier, "The Power of Metaphor," in Mythology, ed. by Pierre Miranda (Middlesex, England: Penguin Books, 1972), p. 80.

At the end of the story, the repentant husband embraces his wife (and the feminine sensibility she represents) and refuses to listen to her very rational explanation about the events leading to their misunderstanding.

Myth also serves what Chase refers to as a Promethean function, dramatizing man's attempt to deal with his own fallibility and struggle to reach perfection. Chase declares,

> Myth dramatizes in poetic form the disharmonies, the deep neurotic disturbances which may be occasioned by this clash of inward and outward forces, and. . . by reconciling the opposing forces, by making them interact coercively toward a common end, myth performs a profoundly beneficial and life-giving act.[8]

As myth-maker, Mrs. Southworth satisfies the public's need for a complete and satisfying resolution of all the seemingly chaotic and destructive elements of life. The story, then, serves as a ritual in which the sanctity of the mythic structure is threatened, only to emerge at the conclusion as whole, harmonious, and renewed.

Although myth may be historically inaccurate, it does nevertheless depict a particular kind of experience within a culture. A pervasive cultural myth, as Will Wright points out, determines to a great extent how individuals define themselves and relate to others. Myth reflects "the classifications, interpretations, and inconsistencies that a particular society imposes on the individual's understanding of the world."[9] Myth fulfills many functions within a culture. William R. Bascom notes,

> Folklore, like language, is a mirror of culture and incorporates descriptions of the details of ceremonies, institutions, and technology, as well as

---

[8]Chase, Quest for Myth, p. 85.

[9]Will Wright, Six Guns and Society (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975), p. 12.

> the expression of beliefs and attitudes. . . (It) may provide a means of getting at esoteric features of a culture which cannot be approached in any other way.[10]

Through myth, man is able to discover significance in his own experience. According to the Euhemeristic theory,[11] the origin of myth is essentially human, as celebrated men were elevated into gods, and their exploits were magnified to grand proportions. As a result, the tales of the gods may be regarded as a form of cultural history. In addition, by worshiping the gods of myth, man is in essence glorifying his past. The South, particularly during the nineteenth century, was preoccupied with its past, identifying itself with a tradition that extended into classical times. This glorification of the past generated a pride and a resistance to change which characterized the South. Myth thus fulfills the legitimate historical function of defining the cultural origins of a society. Andrew Lang, a major contributor to the anthropological approach to the study of mythology, regarded myth as a form of cultural history. Lang, Chase notes, "thought that a great number of myths were invented to explain the origin and function of the totemic social system."[12] Cultural mythology defines the social structure, influencing people's perceptions of their experience. In addition, the structure of myth contains practical guidelines which regulate man's behavior; a myth establishes a pattern of responses to highly dramatized problems that occur

---

[10]William R. Bascom, "Four Functions of Myth," in The Study of Folklore, ed., by Alan Dundes (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1965), p.284.

[11]Euhemerus the Messenian (c. 330-c. 260 B.C.) held that gods are in reality deified men and that myth is actually the history of the exploits of these men, altered over time by storytellers.

[12]Chase, Quest for Myth, p. 61.

in the life of the audience, which in turn provide cues for acceptable forms of conduct. Myth expresses social approval of those who conform, as mythical characters are ultimately rewarded or punished on the basis of their adherence to the values prized by the society. As a result, the Southerner demonstrated restraint at all times in conformance with the code of Southern gentility.

Not only does myth define the past and dictate the present, but it influences man's perception of the future as well. Myth provides clues concerning the future of the soul and the means by which a person can be saved from perdition. Being a part of a mythic tradition which has endured over a long period of time also insures the individual of a measure of immortality, as the tradition will continue in all probability beyond his death.

Finally, myth fulfills an overlooked but essential socio-political function in society. Joseph Fontenrose observes that a myth is not merely an explanatory tale, but has a justifying or validating function in society:

> A myth narrates the primeval event which set the precedent for an institution. . . It may be a social, political, or economic institution; it may be a natural 'institution', a process or phenomenon important to a society's economy.[13]

In terms of Fontenrose's theory, the myth of a Southern aristocratic culture--which explains the existence of slavery, as a part of its philosophical framework--rationalizes the implementation of an economic institution which might otherwise be difficult for a genteel and "civilized" people to live with. Thus, the myth of the antebellum South was a

---

[13]Joseph Fontenrose, The Ritual Theory of Myth (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1971), p. 57.

convenient construct that enabled the Southerner to justify the existence of an economic system as a social institution.

The characteristics of the Southern myth have been eloquently outlined by Patrick Gerster and Nicholas Cords:

> The antebellum or pre-Civil War South is made to appear a nearly perfect society. This Southern utopia is supposed to have been one of luxuriant landscapes, occasionally graced by spacious white-columned mansions caressed by the intoxicating fragrances of magnolia blossoms. The legendary picture of when 'things were different down there' reveals the principal inhabitant of this earthly paradise to be an aristocratic 'colonel', either busily at the gentlemanly task of raising thoroughbred horses and cotton or, in courtly style, sipping mint juleps in the restful shade of a splendid portico. Close by his side sits a Southern matron with auburn hair, delicate features, and a distinctly refined quality about her. She offers the perfect portrait of true womanhood--properly reserved, dressed in her ruffled hoop-skirt, and reading the latest novel then fashionable in polite society, most likely Sir Walter Scott's Ivanhoe. The scene also includes a self-effacing black butler who knows his place and is happy to be there. The conduct of the day-to-day affairs of the big house, of course, hinge on the loyalty and devotion of the black mammy who. . .governs the 'chilluns' while her own barefoot youngsters sit out behind the shanty in the black quarters eating watermelon and singing spirituals. The entire scene is one of serenity and security. . .Briefly here one has, in full bloom, the plantation legend.[14]

The plantation plays a large role in the Southern myth. The plantation was a complete society which included a comprehensive social network. This model social order was self-sufficient, as the plantation was not only an autonomous economic entity but also an independent social unit, encompassing all classes. Tradition was the foundation of Southern society. The plantation provided a vital sense of continuity for the Southerner. Francis Pendleton Gaines comments,

> (The plantation house) is a storehouse of memories, a conservatory of spiritual heritage. No tradition is ever

---

[14]Patrick Gerster and Nicholas Cords, Myth in American History (Encino, California: Glencoe Press, 1977), pp. 116-117.

> quite complete without it, for it gives an ultimate tone.[15]

Inheritance and the proper disposition of property was essential to the continuence of the social order. Marriage was arranged on the basis of lineage and was regarded as the primary method of adding to the power and prestige of the plantation family.

The mythic South was a utopian civilization of enlightened aristocrats. The manners and general decorum of the elite reflected a perfect society. The plantation society was centered around a strong partiarchal character, and the members of the plantation, including the slaves, were members of a family unit. The plantation owners were charged with the responsibility of maintaining the system. This patriarch was benevolent, and the slave "children" were grateful for his protection and kindness.

Like all myths, the Southern framework does contain a certain degree of truth. Gaines declares,

> The student of actual plantation conditions discovers unmistakable evidence which points to the existence of an order of life in a few limited localities which approximates in real social charm the traditional social charm of the romances. In a few limited localities, be it remembered, this order existed.[16]

There are on record a number of large, flourishing plantations which formed the model of the Southern mythic society; however, these rather limited instances were misconstrued as forming the entire Southern culture. The plantation owner was dominant in Southern society, both socially,

---

[15]Francis Pendleton Gaines, The Southern Plantation: A study in the Development and Accuracy of a Tradition (Gloucester, Mass: Peter Smith, 1962), p. 166.

[16]Ibid., pp. 143-144.

economically, and politically and as such was highly visible in the culture. This aristocratic gentleman, who made up a small minority of the Southern population, served as the ideal which dominated the popular conception of Southern life. This ideal was imitated by the lower classes, particularly by the small number of merchants and professional men who lived near the Southern cities. Southern life thus to a certain extent became a parody of the popular conception of the region.

Significantly, one fallacy of the Southern plantation myth lies not in exaggeration but in understanding its true significance in Southern culture. As Edmund S. Morgan observes, the great house of the plantation served as the symbol of the family, "dominating its environs as the gentleman who lived in it dominated his family."[17] The plantation house was designed to display the owner's position in society and his aristocratic style of living. The manor house was also the center of family life, another aspect of the Southern life that, if anything, has not been emphasized enough in the mythic history of the South. Gaines declares,

> ...Family life had a power, a persistence of influence, almost a sacredness, not often suggested by the tradition of groaning tables and shuffling feet. . .This quality is not in the frivilous tradition.[18]

The Southerner was not so much identified as an individual as he was a member of his family, which provides insight into the provincialism of the South. Social, political, and economic life centered around the family.

---

[17]Edmund S. Morgan, Virginians at Home: Family Life in the Eighteenth Century (Williamsburg, Virginia: Colonial Williamsburg, 1952), p. 75.

[18]Gaines, The Southern Plantation, p. 170.

Social position was carefully cultivated through marriage, so that if at all possible, the plantation was kept in the family. Slaves were regarded as part of the household, as the planter liked to think of the slave as not merely property but as a contributing member of the family.

However, there are several important distinctions between myth and reality. The notion of the South as a European-style closed aristocracy overlooks two important factors--the frontier and the element of time. Gerster states,

> Since the fundamental fact of life in the antebellum South was the frontier, conditions were not at all ripe for the growth of an aristocracy. Beyond this, the word 'aristocrat' implies that one's position of economic and social privilege has been acquired over time and that more than likely at least a portion of the wealth and prestige which goes with it has been inherited. When it is understood that prior to the American Revolution no cotton of any great quantity was even grown in America, the notion of a Southern cotton aristocracy of long-standing wealth and prestige having emerged by the eve of the Civil War must be dismissed as a historical impossibility.[19]

The myth of affluence in the South was exaggerated, even in respect to the elite planters. Few, if any, plantations achieved economic self-sufficiency and most had to rely upon the importation of industrial goods from the North. Gaines notes,

> The illusion of sectional affluence was sometimes achieved by patricians who resorted to the simple device of excluding them in the items of per capita wealth.[20]

Even the myth of vast holdings of land was delusive, as most large planters held a considerable amount of acreage that had been worn out by overplanting and had to be abandoned.

---

[19]Gerster, Myth in American History, p. 118.

[20]Gaines, The Southern Planter, p. 150.

The romanticized portrait of the institution of slavery is also filled with fallacies. In contrast with the picture of harmony and contentment presented in myth, in which the happy slave not only tolerated but was actively involved in the welfare of the plantation system, evidence suggests that there was widespread discontent among the slaves. Gerster points out that slave songs, for example, are filled with melancholy lyrics about escape to heaven, depicted as a sanctuary from the "cares" of this world--namely the plantation. That the slaves were alienated from the plantation society is evident from the recorded incidents of work slowdowns, the breaking of tools, feigning sickness, and various other forms of nonviolent protest and rebellion . . .[21] These non-violent demonstrations gave rise to the myth that the black man is lazy. However, Gerster declares that "On average (the black slave) was harderworking and more efficient than his white counterpart."[22]

According to the myth, the black slaves were not only conscious of their inferiority, but maintained their own standards, distinguishing between dark and light skinned blacks and acknowledging caste system of the house and field slave. Actually, according to Gerster, considerable movement occurred between the fields and the plantation house. Gerster also deflates other notions regarding the childlike nature of the black slave. The black man was not relegated to menial duties; 25% of all adult male slaves were craftsmen, managers, professionals, or semi-skilled workers. The housing of the black man was generally on a level with that of his neighbors, with the exception of the owners of the grand plantation

---

[21]Gerster, Myth in American History, p. 121.

[22]Ibid., p. 113.

manors. Another historical fact not accounted for by the myth is that 250,000 free blacks lived in the South in 1860. These people worked to support themselves, holding responsible positions in society.

Another discrepancy between image and reality involves the role of the woman in the antebellum South. Even in the plantation setting, the majority of Southern women spent their days clearing the land, laboring in the fields, preserving fruits and vegetables, sewing, making soap, and raising their children. Even the greatest of the plantation ladies was not free to enjoy a life of leisure:

> Though she might have all the servants she could ask for, most of them would be unwilling workers, indentured servants who looked forward only to the day when they would be free, or slaves who had nothing to gain by their service. To manage a large mansion with such a crew was no small task in itself.[23]

In addition to her considerable everyday duties, the Southern woman was compelled to maintain the appearance of a leisurely existence. Women were further limited by the unwritten code of Southern chivalry, which minimized their capabilities and dictated their behavior, preventing them from finding personal fulfillment outside of their prescribed role. Women were victimized by the Southern myth; the ideal code actually served as an oppressive form of slavery, pressuring the woman to maintain the aura of an aristocratic lifestyle in what was essentially a frontier setting. Ann Firor Scott contends that

> Women, along with children and slaves, were expected to recognize their proper and subordinate place and to be obedient to the head of the family. Any tendency on the part of the members of the system to assert themselves against the master threatened the whole, and therefore slavery itself. It was no accident that the most articulate spokesmen for slavery

---

[23] Ibid., p. 42.

were also eloquent exponents of the subordinate role of women.[24]

So pervasive was the Southern myth, that it presented many dangers to the members of Southern society, distorting their sense of reality and proportion. The Southerner felt that he was defending a tradition, regarding Southern culture as an entity more sacred than any national boundary. The Southerner's loyalties were regional rather than national in scope, and the gentleman was protective of his "family," including his slaves. The self-sufficiency that characterized the South was in fact a self-imposed isolationalism which prevented the Southerner from participating in the growth of a national consciousness. Gaines comments,

> In plantation legends, this (provincialism) is associated with a 'splendid isolation' resulting in conservatism of delightfully archaic flavor, in the flaming love of liberty. . .As a matter of cold fact, this condition of life is responsible for a stubborn pride, which sometimes took the form of self-praise...[25]

The Southerner was also motivated by what Clement Eaton refers to as "an exaggerated sense of honor,"[26] which dictated both personal and political conduct. The Southern gentleman regarded the political issues preceding the Civil War as an affront to his honor.

Because of its belief in tradition, the South was a conservative community which was opposed to change. For example, South Carolina was the only state in the Union that did not permit divorce. The South was also characterized by an intense religious orthodoxy, which became a part of

---

[24]Ann Firor Scott, The Southern Lady: From Pedestal to Politics (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1970), p. 17.

[25]Gaines, The Southern Plantation, p. 157.

[26]Clement Eaton, The Civilization of the Old South (Lexington, Ky.: University of Kentucky Press, 1968), p. 304.

its social and economic framework. Issues like slavery assumed a spiritual flavor; the Southern gentry regarded themselves as missionaries who were educating the slaves about the Christian life. The South staunchly refused to admit economic innovations to infiltrate their culture. Cities remained small, and industry remained a Northern commodity. The South was thus a static culture which was intolerant of new thoughts and ideas that might threaten their society.

Indeed, Southern mythic history was so influential that it had a decided impact upon the course of events leading to the Civil War. Gerster notes,

> Americans, and many historians specifically, have generally accepted the idea that the Civil War was a conflict which could not have been avoided because of the fundamental differences between the regions and their ways of life.[27]

Even more than a political struggle, the Civil War was a cultural conflict. The South's attempt to secede was not dissimilar to America's revolution against Mother England; in both cases a region which had developed a distinct cultural identity demanded the right to govern themselves. Southerners regarded the issues of slavery, the tariff, and the role of the federal government in the affairs of the individual states as a direct attack upon their way of life. As a result, the Southerner approached the War Between the States with a fervor that extended far beyond mere political issues. The Southern aristocrat considered himself inherently superior to the predominantly middle-class Northerner and felt that his military tradition and moral strength would dispatch the industrialists with minimal effort. The South regarded this conflict as a modern crusade, with

---

[27]Gerster, Myth in American History, p. 115.

the Southern guardian of Christian civilization pitted against the barbaric, pagan North. Indeed, the pagentry and zeal that accompanied the South's preparations for war were analogous to the celebration accompanying King Richard's march against the Moors. Significantly, the defeat of the rebels served only to solidify the Southern myth. The Southern mystique was preserved as a part of its tradition, transcending the actual breakdown of the order. Gerster comments,

> And Confederate frustration, despair, and defeat during the war years only served to reinforce the South's already obvious tendency to allow fictions to serve in lieu of facts.[28]

The cultural division of the North and South began as early as the American Revolution and became a part of the national consciousness by the early 19th century. Gerster observes, "The general agreement among historians. . .is that the South became self-consciously aware of its distinct characteristics about 1830."[29] Several factors contributed to the establishment of a distinct Southern culture. The vast distances, coupled with a poor system of roads, isolated the South, making it in effect a separate culture. The temperate climate and fertile soil of this region produced an agrarian society that, with the free labor provided by slaves, was economically sound. Unlike the North, the South remained a rural society which discouraged immigrants from settling in this region. R.S. Cotterill observes,

> At the time of the eighth census the people of the South were as much a rural people and as much given to

---

[28] Ibid., p. 115.

[29] Ibid., p. 111.

> agriculture as they were when the first census was taken. Cities were still small and few.[30]

As a result, the South was a relatively homogenous society; after the first wave, the majority of immigrants traveled to the North, which had use for the cheap labor in the factories. Because Southern culture was land-oriented, most of the acreage was quickly taken, leaving little opportunity for newcomers unless they not only had ambition but capital as well. This agrarian society produced a different, more "elevated" attitude toward work than existed in the mind of the Northern businessman. Eaton remarks,

> Many Southerners had a high sense of pride in regard to money matters; they did not wish to appear petty or mean in financial transactions. Horace Holly, who came from Boston to be president of Transylvania University, observed in 1832 that the people of Kentucky and Tennessee were influenced in the manners and character by slavery and the subtle forces of an agricultural interior. 'Commerce,' he remarked, 'makes a different sort of population from agriculture.'[31]

In this fixed social system, the criteria for success differed from those of the North. What was chiefly valued was how deeply one was rooted in the social traditions of the South; one's name, family, and property holdings were highly regarded, while business acumen and ambition, which enabled people to rise in Northern society, were not considered important in the South. Further, the economic system of the South remained fixed, in contrast with the sweeping changes that characterized the North.

---

[30]R.S. Cotterill, The Old South: The Geographic, Economic, Social, Political, and Cultural Expansion, Institutions, and Nationalism of the Antebellum South (Glendale, California: The Arthur H. Clark Company, 1936), p. 262.

[31]Eaton, The Civilization of the Old South, pp. 283-284.

Cotterill states,

> The quantity of the Old South increased tremendously from 1789 to 1860 but its quality remained much the same through the seventy years. Slavery, the plantation system, and the production of staple crops were characteristic of it in 1860 as they were in 1789.[32]

As a result, this culture appeared to resist the radical economic and social changes of the industrial North, creating a sense of timelessness that became a part of the Southern myth.

The mythic conception of the South was not merely a product of that region but was cultivated in the North as well. This picture assumed a nostalgic flavor in the North as the lifestyle of America began to alter. Institutions such as the church and the family were being undermined by the pressures of industrialization, a faith in science, and the social problems that resulted from the growth of big cities. The absolute system of morality was replaced by a more subjective, pragmatic approach to individual conduct, as reflected in the business ethics of the Rockefellers. Even the old conceptions of time and space altered drastically; time was no longer fixed but was replaced by rapid change, and lesiure became an expensive commodity. With the introduction of the railroad and the telegraph, as well as the growth of the cities, space was reduced, depriving the American of the privacy and isolation he valued. As Gerster notes, sacrificing so much in the name of progress, "Post-Civil War America seemed exceedingly vulgar and venal compared to the south of Antebellum times."[33]

The Southern myth is tied to the pastoral tradition, an attractive

---

[32]Cotterill, The Old South, p. 261.

[33]Gerster, Myth in American History, p. 124.

concept for a country fast evolving into an industrial age. The English settlers who initially founded the colonies carried with them a mission--to establish a heaven on earth in the New World. Michael Cass declares,

> The myth proposed that America was the new Garden of Eden, where mankind had a second chance to escape history. Civilized Europe had failed, but in the New World, in the new Garden, man as a new Adam would begin again. This was the errand into the wilderness: the gnostic idea of the New World as redemptive garden. The myth was pastoral, in that it emphasized the garden or the wilderness, and it was a myth of innocence, in that the settlers regarded themselves as God's chosen people.[34]

What Gaines refers to as "the American embodiment of the golden age"[35] is in part a response to the absence of a cultural tradition in America. Young America found a convenient and satisfying identity through the pastoral ideal, with its connection to a vague and timeless past.

However, economic factors soon threatened this pastoral ideal. The development of cotton as the principal cash crop brought with it a modern imperial market which altered the economic structure of the South. The heavy demand for manual labor necessitated the importation of slaves, which hardly fit the conception of the South as a land of innocence, a free and equalitarian paradise. The Southerner, who had a fear of being corrupted by the pressures of the modern world, clung to the innocence of the pastoral ideal. Thus, the South incorporated its reality into the pastoral myth. Louis Simpson notes that the entrance of the South into the modern industrial world created a uniquely reactionary community. This concept of the slave-cotton South as agrarian paradise was also in part a

---

[34]Lewis P. Simpson, The Dispossessed Garden: Pastoral History in Southern Literature (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1975), p. ix.

[35]Gaines, The Southern Planter, p. 4.

reaction against growing anti-slavery sentiment in the North and in Europe. The South became in essence a "paradise improved" by slavery; society was regarded as a patriarchal garden in which the plantation owner functioned as a benevolent Lord responsible for the moral welfare of his charges. The slaves were regarded as the gardeners in the garden, allowing the plantation to remain a heaven on earth.

Another aspect of the pastoral tradition which was conveniently absorbed by the myth was the analogy of the Garden of the Mind; according to western tradition, Arcadia was also an intellectual community which served as a symbolic place of the mind and spirit. The head of the plantation assumed this role of patriarch-philosopher who protected and guided his inferior black children. Thus,cultural myths appear,only to become more firmly established through contact with the pressures of the real world.

The Southern myth also appeals to America's innate love of feudalism. Gaines declares,

> Our imaginative interests are keenly appreciative of social gradations and our romantic hunger is satisfied by some allegory of aristocracy...The antebellum Southern estate is rich in both the pageantry and the psychology of Feudalism.[36]

Despite the Americans' professed love of democracy, the predetermined caste system of the feudal society remains an attractive conception. William R. Taylor notes that popular authors like John Pendleton Kennedy capitalized on the popular conception of the South as a feudal state. He states,

> (Kennedy) catered to the prevailing popularity of the chivalric romance and to the sentimental attachment that

---

[36] Ibid., p. 2-3.

> Americans had come to feel for the Middle Ages; he indulged them in their desire to see continuity between their own social world and the social world of Europe.[37]

The American sensibility is keenly aware of social distinctions, and indeed, the democratic ideal may be regarded as not so much a freedom for all as the opportunity for an enterprising person to attain an upper-class status, often at the expense of others in the free-enterprise marketplace. The romantic conception of the feudal lord is a celebrated figure and in many ways embodies the American ideal of the self-sufficient individualist who holds and governs his property. The aristocrat is also eminently successful. He is wealthy; besides an inexhaustible store of money, which is itself an American dream, the feudal lord is a cultured personage. He is knowledgable about the social graces, is educated, and has cultivated the highest state of intellect, manners, and aesthetic appreciation.

The feudal lord has another commodity which Americans covet--power. The structure of the feudal society includes a lower class whose function is to serve the master of the estate. Beyond any specific services that the serf can render, the very presence of the lower class insures the superiority of the aristocracy. The feudal lord is the object of respect and adulation; as the celebrity of the social system, he is the object of absolute attention, which contributes to an influxed sense of importance. In this position, the aristocrat is free of the everyday cares that plague the common man; he is irresponsible in the sense that all others are responsible to him.

---

[37]William R. Taylor, Cavalier and Yankee: The Old South and American National Character (New York: George Braziller, 1961), p. 185.

Finally, the feudal lord is a majestic figure, larger than life. His lands are vast, his home palatial, his wealth immense, his wife beautiful. It is no wonder, then, that this romantic myth co-exists with the common-man ideal, since this story is in a sense the story of a man (Abraham Lincoln, Andrew Jackson) who, because of his innately aristocratic qualities, rises to an elite position which roughly corresponds to aristocracy. Gerster suggests that one factor behind the cultivation of the Southern myth in the 19th century lay in the trauma that resulted when America actually began to democratize in the 1830's:

> Yet another reason why the plantation legend enjoyed a sustained vitality in the North related to the anxiety found in the decade of the 1830's...There were some Americans...who viewed democracy as a threat to their elite positions..To them, this European-style aristocracy had apparently discovered a way of assuring stability and cultivating a sense of gentility and honor, yet at the same time had maintained a commitment to the public good under a republican form of government.[38]

Until Andrew Jackson was elected president, power was in the hands of a relatively few people. The Education of Henry Adams is a testimony to the aristocratic nature of the United States during its first forty years of existence. Adams' autobiography recounts the identity crisis he experienced due to the fact that Henry's father and grandfather both served as presidents of the United States. With the election of Jackson, power was taken away from the governing elite, and Henry Adams, among others, was forced to make his way in the world as a common citizen. The romantic conception of an aristocratic South, where birthright was important, was obviously an attractive myth for those who lost their privileges as America finally fulfilled its democratic prophesy.

---

[38]Gerster, Myth in American History, pp. 123-124.

Part of the appeal of the Southern myth is the archetype nature of its makeup. Carl Jung developed the theory of the archetype, a collective or universal unconscious which is to some degree a part of every man's psychological self. Jung defines archetypes as "complexes of experience" which originate in the inner sensibilities of man in his most primitive and fundamental state. Jung explains,

> An archetype in its quiescent, unprojected state has no exactly determinable form but is in itself an indefinite structure which can assume definite forms only in projection.[39]

According to the psychologist, archetype appears as a projection of man's collective unconscious:

> Primitive man...has an imperative...need to assimilate all outer sense experiences to inner, psychic events...All of the mythological processes of nature... are symbolic expressions of the inner, unconscious drama of the psyche which becomes accessible to man's consciousness by way of projection.[40]

These archetypes, which recur throughout human history, thus exist as a reflection of man's universal experience. Bascom observes, "Archetypes are a priori and given, so that primitive mentality does not invent myths, it experiences them."[41]

Jolande Jacobi identifies what he considers particularly significant Jungean archetypal figures:

> Among the symbols of the individuation process there are a few particularly significant ones, which appear in human or sometimes in subhuman form, and which may be classified according to a series of types, 'the chief of the being...the shadow, the Wise Old Man, the child (including the child hero), the mother ('Primordial Mother' and 'Earth Mother') as a

---

[39]C.G. Jung, The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious, Vol. 9, Part I of The Collected Works of C.G. Jung (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968), p. 70.

[40]Ibid., p. 6

[41]Bascom, "Four Functions of Myth," p. 291.

> supraordinate personality ('daemonic' because supraordinate), and her counterpart the maiden, and lastly the anima in man and the animus in woman,' each of these representing a different sector of the psyche, and finally, the 'uniting symbols,' the symbols of the 'psychic center,' the self.[42]

The Southern mythic structure corresponds with the delineation of these major Jungean archetypal characters who in turn reflect the various dimensions of the individual human personality. The Wise Old Man, who appears in the form of the patriarchal plantation owner, represents the aspect of man which is in supreme authority. Jung observes,

> The superior master and teacher, the archetype of the spirit symbolizes the pre-existent meaning hidden in the chaos of life.[43]

Without apparent weakness, the wise old man is an ideal figure, the prototype of order and rationality.

The anima, according to Jung, represents the feminine and chthonic part of the soul, and is analogous to the Southern Belle in this American version of the archetype. Jung's description indeed seems tailored to the woman of the genteel tradition:

> The anima is a factor of the utmost importance in the psychology of a man wherever emotions and affects are at work. She intensifies, exaggerates, falsifies, and mythologizes all emotional relations with his work and with other people of both sexes. The resultant fantasies and entanglements are all her doing. When the anima is strongly constellated,she softens man's character and makes him touchy, irritable, moody, jealous, vain, and unadjusted.[44]

Thus, while the anima is in many respects attractive, she is not to be trusted. The charm of this belle-figure obscures a fundamental weakness of

---

[42]Jolande Jacobi: Complex/Archetype/Symbol in the Psychology of C.G. Jung, trans. by Ralph Manheim (N.Y.: Pantheon Books, 1959), p. 114.

[43]Jung, Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious, p. 35.

[44]Ibid., pp. 70-71.

character and lack of stability. However, the permanent loss of the anima within the individual is equally threatening, according to Jung, resulting in

> ...a diminution of vitality, of flexibility, and of human kindness. The result, as a rule, is premature rigidity, crustiness, stereotype, fanatical one-sidedness, obstinancy, pedantry, or else resignation, weariness, slopiness, irresponsibility, and finally a childish ramollissement with a tendance to alcohol.[45]

These characteristics frequently appear in characters in Mrs. Southworth's fiction, such as Squire Waugh in The Missing Bride, who is widowed and has hard-heartedly rejected his daughter because of her love for someone beneath her station. He is depicted as a drunken, sloppy, indolent man who demonstrates one of the few instances of slave-abuse in all of Southworth's fiction. His ultimate regeneration is tied to a reconciliation with his daughter and, in Jungian terms, with the anima within himself.

Thus, while anima is essential to the integration of both the individual and the legendary Southern society as a whole, it is at the same time perceived as dangerous to man's development. Jung states,

> The growing youth must be able to free himself from the anima fascination of his mother...The important thing at this stage is for a man to be a man.[46]

Man must thus consciously separate himself from anima, which provides a clue to the oppression of women in legendary Southern culture. Woman is kept at a distance--not merely for her protection, but also for the welfare of the Southern gentleman, who harbors fears concerning the anima within him. The social framework of the legendary South serves to check this vital though threatening archetype of man's own personality; the Southern structure

---

[45] Ibid., p. 71.

[46] Ibid., p. 71.

is filled with extremes of masculine and feminine characteristics, as the members of the society can only deal with the conflicting emotions within themselves by assigning prescribed sex roles to the various external archetypes of the myth.

The third character in the Jungian framework is the Mother Archetype, who represents fertility and fruitfulness. Jung declares,

> The qualities associated with (the mother archetype) are maternal solicitude and sympathy; the magic authority of the female; the wisdom and spiritual exaltation that transcend reason; any helpful instinct or impulse; all that is benign, and all that cherishes and sustains, that fosters growth and fertility...On the negative side the mother archetype may connote anything secret, hidden, dark; the abyss, the world of the dead, anything that devours, seduces, and poisons, that is terrifying and inescapable like fate.[47]

What is significant about this archetype is its absence in the concept of the legendary Southern belle, who, within the context of Mrs. Southworth's fiction remains young and virginal, relinquishing the care of her children to the black mammy; it is instead this figure who is established in the tradition of the old South as the representation of fertility. The mammy is typically large (protective) and large breasted (nurturing) and is unquestioningly loyal to the white children, to the point of neglecting her own offspring.

According to Jung, this condition, in which the mother archetype has been displaced, typically produces a mother-complex in the male, in which "(The man) unconsciously seeks his mother [who is not there] in every woman he meets."[48] This psychological state creates a personality that provides insight into the Southern plantation aristocrat of popular myth:

---

[47] Ibid., P. 92.

[48] Ibid., p. 85.

> (The mother-complex) gives him a great capacity for friendship, which often creates ties of astonishing tenderness between men and may even rescue friendship between the sexes from the limbo of the impossible. He may have good taste and an aesthetic sense which are fostered by the presence of a feminine streak...He is likely to have a feeling for history, and to be conservative in the best sense and cherish the values of the past. Often he is endowed with a wealth of religious feelings, which help to bring the ecclesia spiritualatis into reality; and a spiritual receptivity which makes him responsive to revelation.[49]

Characteristics which are regarded as weaknesses in the Jungian archetype also appear in the heroes of Southworth's novels:

> ...What is in its negative aspect in Don Juanism can appear positively as bold and resolute manliness; ambitious striving after the highest goals; opposition to all stupidity, narrow-mindedness, injustice, and laziness; willingness to make sacrifices for what is regarded as right, sometimes bordering on heroism; perserverence, inflexibility and toughness of will; a curiosity that does not shrink even from the riddles of the universe; and, finally, a revolutionary spirit which strives to put a new face upon the world.[50]

Finally, the figure of the Trickster, or Shadow figure, represents the defects of man's conscious personality. Jung declares,

> (The shadow) represent(s) counter-tendencies in the unconscious, and certain cases by a sort of second personality, of a purile and inferior character...(They) cause all those ineffably childish phenomena so typical of poltergeists.[51]

According to Richard Dorson, one broad category of slave folktales consists of stories in which a slave, whom Dorson has labeled "trickster John", deceives Old Marster.[52]

---

[49] Ibid., p. 87.

[50] Ibid., p. 87.

[51] Ibid., p. 262.

[52] Richard M. Dorson, American Negro Folktales (Greenwich, Ct: Fawcett Publications, 1968), p. 124.

In discussing the psychology behind the slave steroetype of the antebellum South, Gaines points out the universality of this figure;

> The plantation...furnishes through the person of the genuine darkey, essentially the most conspicuous figure of the tradition, the closest native approximation to a type almost as old as history, proverbially dear to the masses, as opposed to the literati: the folk figure of a simple, somewhat rustic, character, instinctively humorous, irrationally credulous, gifted in song and dance, interesting in spontaneous frolic, endowed with artless philosophy.[53]

Jung notes that this aspect of man's personality is so disagreeable to him that it must be repressed into the unconscious and projected onto an external figure such as the black slave. Jung comments,

> Like many other myths, (the shadow) was supposed to have a therapeutic effect. It holds the earlier low intellectual and moral level before the eyes of the more highly developed individual, so that he shall not forget how things looked yesterday.[54]

This psychological process is most in evidence in the mythic South through the institution of slavery. The white man represses, or rather, oppresses the black slave, who represents the inferior, puerile side of his personality. Once the characteristics of the shadow have been firmly implanted on the black slave, the white man can assume the role of the superior member of society; thus, the slave's inferior nature provides a necessary antithesis for the mature plantation head and sophisticated lady of the household.

Like all archetypes, however, the shadow is not an absolute figure, but embodies characteristics that are attractive, though threatening, to the white male:

---

[53]Gaines, The Southern Plantation, pp. 3-4.

[54]Jung, Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious, p. 267.

> He is both subhuman and superhuman, a bestial and divine being, whose chief and most alarming characteristic is his unconsciousness. Because of it he is deserted by his (evidently human) companions, which seems to indicate that he has fallen below their level of consciousness. He is so unconscious of himself that his body is not a unity, and his two hands fight each other...Even his sex is optional; despite its phallic penis he makes all kinds of useful plants. This is a reference to his original nature as a creator, for the world is made from the body of a god...The trickster is a primitive cosmic being of divine-animal nature, on the one hand superior to man because of his superhuman qualities, and on the other hand inferior to him because of his unreason and unconsciousness.[55]

Within the Southern mythic structure, the black man is a supremely sexual animal. His sexual appetite poses a threat to the Southern gentleman who controls all of his emotions, including his passionate nature. By constructing a society that is set apart from nature, the white man is out of touch with the procreative urge and thus with life itself. The white man's feelings of racism contain elements of contempt and jealousy; he is to a certain extent envious of the black man's uninhibited nature, with its repressed sexuality. In contrast with the virile black, the white aristocrat appears as an effeminate, if not emasculated figure; the white man thus asserts his masculinity by controlling his slaves. The white man is both fascinated and threatened by the black, who is the projection of his own repressed sexuality and testifies to the superiority of the impulses.

The black male also presents a menace to the white female. In all of Mrs. Southworth's fiction, the virile black man is conspicuous through his absence; the slaves are either old men or young children, so that the Southern belle is not threatened (or attracted) by the sexuality of the shadow figure.

---

[55] Ibid., p. 264.

The stereotypical figures of the ante bellum South, then, correspond to Jung's archetypal model; as a result, the Southern Myth serves as a projection of what Jung refers to as the "inner, unconscious drama of universal psyche"[56] which satisfies man's most primitive fears and needs. Writers like Mrs. Southworth retold the myth over and over in their stories; thus, the very predictability of these tales was reason for their popularity, as these stories reflected the universal archetypal experience of the audience. Indeed, Mrs. Southworth's fiction served as a ritual in which the reader could formally work through his own personal experience.

Literature such as the novels of Mrs. Southworth can be examined as cultural mythology. Chase regards myth as a form of artistic expression. He declares,

> The word 'myth' means story: a myth is a tale, a narrative, or a poem; myth is literature and must be considered as an aesthetic creation of the human imagination.[57]

After considering the work of a number of literary figures, including Donne, Wordsworth, and Yeats, Chase concludes that these writers are in a sense creating myth, employing metaphor to preserve a preternatural vision of the world. The entire structure of literature is centered around what Chase refers to as myth. He states,

> The problem of the poet is how to discover in the given situation the energy and order of a coherent poetic statement. The poet needs an incandescent focus around which to consolidate and realize his discursive thoughts and more or less random emotions. In short, he needs a

---

[56] Ibid., p. 6.

[57] Chase, Quest for Myth, p. 73.

> myth. The myth must rise out of the necessity of the poem, for it cannot be any myth that occurs to the poet.[58]

Chase contends that literature fulfills many of the functions of myth that have been identified by the various scholars through the ages. Literature celebrates the preternatural vision of the world, employing various types of figurative language to amplify man's experience. Literature also features resolutions of conflicting forces, both internal and external, and can be interpreted as a cultural map. He thus advocates what he refers to as a "mythical method"[59] as a new, fertile, and productive approach to literary criticism.

Authors such as Mrs. Southworth took advantage of a conception of Southern life that already flourished in the consciousness of the public. This attractive picture of the antebellum South, while not originated by popular writers, soon became a part of a distinct literary tradition that further solidified its hold on the American public. This tradition, which began in the 1830's with John Pendelton Kennedy's Swallow Barn and James Kirk Paulding's Westward Ho!, responded to public demand for regional color and to the timeless attraction of the myth itself. Other considerations were distinctly social and political in nature, which is characteristic of popular art. Gaines notes,

> In the decade of the thirties there were at least three developments which sharply give re-direction to (literary) history. The first of these facts was political in effect, however moral in origin; the rise of a vigorous abolitionism which, to the Southerner was fraught with such possibilities as the Nat Turner insurrection. The second was economic: the increasing agricultural opportunity of the lower South which produced a new type of plantation and greatly modified plantation policy in the older states. The third was both

---

[58] Ibid., p. 120.

[59] Ibid., p. 131.

> political and economic and something more: the assumption of the South of a definitely defensive attitude marked by a solidification of political action if not of thought, by the death of pronounced emancipation sentiment which had previously been considerable...by the rapid growth of intense sectional consciousness.[60]

Thus, fiction like Mrs. Southworth's can be examined as a form of cultural mythology which reveals the values, attitudes, and preoccupations of Southern society.

---

[60]Gaines, The Southern Planter, p. 19.

CHAPTER 3

Cultural Heritage of the Mythic South

The purveyors of the Southern myth regarded themselves as descendents of the Classical and English cultural tradition. Gaines declares,

> More ambitious romancers have claimed for this social order the philosophic tone of Greece, the dominant political energy of Rome, and the beauty of chivalry softened by the spiritual quality of Christainity.[1]

This sense of cultural identification was of considerable importance to the South. As Simpson explains, "The imperative quest of the south was for a basis on which firmly to establish itself as a novel civilization."[2] The South, which was essentially in a stage of cultural adolescence in the nineteenth century, yearned for the security and definition supplied by its association with these established civilizations. The cultural heritage of the South also provided a necessary sense of continuity, giving this region a historical sense of belonging. In Southworth's The Missing Bride, Thurston Willcoxen presents a lecture on "The Progress of Civilization", which traces the cultural roots of the South:

> ...the patriarchs, the architecture and ruder manners that succeeded; next, Egypt, in her haughty days; Greece in her glory and her degradation; Rome in her rise and progress, and decline and fall; the feudal times; the Crusades, the Reformation; the settlement of the New World. (The Missing Bride, p. 45.)

---

[1]Gaines, The Southern Planter, p. 155.

[2]Simpson, The Dispossessed Garden, p. 36.

Man's sense of personal identity is deeply rooted in a society's quest for a cultural heritage, supplying the individual with a past and a sense of ancestry that affects self-concept and relationships with others. Significantly, Mrs. Southworth became a believer in spiritualism in her later years and according to Boyle, felt that "certain classic writers of the early Italian School, gathered to comfort her."[3] The author felt secure through her attachment to the Classic writers and, indeed, her work reflects her close identification with the Classic and English cultural tradition.

The Southern gentleman, who regarded himself as a part of these established cultural traditions, embraced those aspects of Classical and English life which best served his own society. It must be noted that the Classical and English civilizations that provide the basis of the Southern culture are also mythic conceptions and represent a romanticized view of these societies. Eaton observes,

> In the struggle between the classic tradition and the romantic spirit for supremacy over the southern mind, the victory went decidedly to romanticism; even classical culture was viewed in a romantic and unhistorical light... The antebellum South was filled with new-classic architecture, Greek Revival colonades decorated courthouses, churches, banks, theatres, and mansions. Yet behind the imposing facades there was little to suggest the classic tradition.[4]

The Southerner had an enormous regard for the past, reflected in his approach to education. Latin and Greek was considered the foundation of all learning, even through the nineteenth century. Both boys and girls were given intensive training in the arts, particularly in music and dance. The young Southern boy was trained to live according to the values and traditions

---

[3]Boyle, Mrs. E.D.E.N. Southworth: Novelist, p. 20.

[4]Eaton, The Civilization of the Old South, p. 294.

of his ancestors and to be unconcerned with the conditions and demands of the nineteenth century. This attitude was picked up by popular novelists like Mrs. Southworth. In The Missing Bride, the author comments,

> Now you ask whether the men of the family never were forced into the world of business, or if the youths never were sent to college, and so learned to modify their exaggerated exotism of their race, I answer no. The head of the family usually affected his sales and made his purchases through his agent, a shrewd, long-headed trader, who did business with several important mercantile houses in Baltimore, and was little likely to cross the self-conceit of his most profitable patron. And as for the young men of the house they never went farther into the world for their education than the neighboring academy of C_____, an old and well established classical and mathematical school, founded by the planters for the benefit of their sons--even there the boys of Luckenough assumed to be lords paramound of their schoolmaster. (The Missing Bride, pp. 27-28.)

This emulation of the Classic culture also appears in the neoclassical architecture of the plantation manor. The Southerner attempted to live in much the same manner as the old Greeks and Romans, to the point of residing in houses modeled after the Classic tradition. In The Missing Bride, Southworth's description of the Luckenough mansion is designed to create a romanticized conception of the Graeco-Roman civilization:

> The house fronts north. It is built of the darkest red bricks, and is three stories high, with a very steep roof, broken into three gables front and back, and one at each end--an old-fashioned, fantastical style of architecture highly favorable to leakages, as the attic and the upper chambers of Luckenough can testify...The principal entrance occupies the center of the front of the house. Above it is a stone scroll, built into the wall, and bearing in old English characters, half-effaced, this inscription: 'A.K., 1644. Will is Fate.' By which you may know this time the old house has stood the storms of two hundred winters. (The Missing Bride, p. 7.)

As Kenneth Clark observes, the architectural language of this type of edifice conveys a message about a civilization. In this case, the

Graeco-Roman mode of architecture expressed an ideal of perfection--"Reason, justice, physical beauty, all of them in equilibrium."[5] The pillars in Southworth's mansions, in effect, join Southern society with heaven. The arches and columns that appear through Southworth's stories also symbolize the material and moral support that the plantation owner provides for the other members of society. The mansions are strongly constructed, so that the plantation house also functions as a bastion of civilization. Southworth observes,

> So isolated, indeed, was the manor, that for generations the owners seemed to consider it the very center of things created--the capital of civilization, and to sneer at all beyond the forest as mere 'outside barbarians.' (The Missing Bride, p. 8.)

Architecture thus not only provides an important link to the past, establishing a sense of continuity between the Graeco-Roman culture and Southern society, but it conveys a sense of timeless constancy; while two hundred years is negligible in terms of European civilization, the Luckenough manor dates from the very origins of this country, providing a historical framework that adds significance to the story. As stated earlier, the descriptive scenes of nature that characteristically begin one of Southworth's tales is very much in the pastoral mode; nature is rich and lush, a picture of harmony and innocence. In The Missing Bride, the narrator comments, "It is not in Arcadia, or before a castle of Indolence, but upon a Maryland plantation, that you stand." (The Missing Bride, p. 7.) At the same time, however, nature is consciously kept at a distance in Southworth's novels, an attitude which also reflects a Classical perspective. This conscious separation from nature stems from the Greek insistance upon

---

[5]Kenneth Clark, Civilization (New York and Evanston: Harper and Row, 1969), p. 3.

restraint and balance. According to John B. Harrison and Richard Sullivan, "Nothing was worse than excess in any shape or form in Greek culture."[6] Nature is separated from man in Southworth's novels; after the introduction, nature is disassociated from the characters and is regarded as something to be seen from a carriage. For example, in The Discarded Daughter, Elsie flees to the forest; she takes refuge in a log cabin which, although simple, has ample room and someone to serve her. In the world of Mrs. Southworth, nature is associated with passion, chaos, and ultimate death, representing a grave threat to mankind. For instance, in The Doom of Deville, a storm at the beginning of the novel resembles the biblical description of the Judgment Day:

> Just at that instance, a blinding glare of lightning seemed to set the whole heavens and earth in flames, and a deafening peal of thunder broke and rolled crashing down the abyss of space, followed by a sudden darkness that seemed to have swallowed up all nature in original night and chaos. (The Doom of Deville, p. 8.)

Although the slave (ironically named Nero) is frightened, Lieutenant Orville Deville retains his self-control; he is not only master of his own nature, but as a consequence, of the forces of the external world as well. No harm comes either to him or his servant. Thus, the South embraces the innocence and plentitude of the pastoral ideal while also rejecting the unbridled passions of nature. The societal structure of the Graeco-Roman and Southern cultures--in which the labor is handled primarily by slaves--can thus be regarded as a means by which the upper class could separate itself from nature and instead cultivate a higher sensibility through a life of leisure.

---

[6]John B. Harrison and Richard E. Sullivan, A Short History of Western Civilization (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1968), p. 89.

Classical philosophy also plays a fundamental role in the Southern cultural framework. Socrates held that an objective Truth did exist, and that man was prevented from discovering it by his own ignorance. Society serves as a primary vehicle through which man can discover Absolute Truth. The assumption that an objective Truth which can be realized does exist is an essential part of the Southern cultural tradition, legitimizing the institutions and class structure of Southern society. This school of thought firmly committed the Southerner to his convictions since, if he is right in his beliefs, others must be wrong in theirs.

Greek philosophy also sought rational answers to fundamental questions of the nature of the universe. Protagoras (485-410 B.C.), a principal member of the sophist school of philosophy, contended that human reason can be utilized to understand and discover the kinds of knowledge that would be useful to man. Reason was thus regarded as the means through which man might be elevated to god-like stature. As reason was considered a divine faculty, the emotions were regarded as that part of man that kept him at a bestial level; as a result, the emotional side of man's personality was discounted by Greek culture.

Roman culture was also vital to the Southern heritage. Though Roman culture was chiefly borrowed from the Greeks, the intensity of the imitation was a characteristic that later became fundamental to the Southern tradition. The Romans felt a keen responsibility to maintain social order; and their sense of duty, responsibility, discipline, and obedience enabled them to transmit their culture throughout the world. The Romans held a belief in the historical importance of Rome; Southern culture shared this missionary sense, as witnessed by their conscious association with such cultures as Greece and Rome. The South felt that it was not merely struggling for its

own survival, but for the preservation of the civilized world. Thus, the strong devotion to duty that characterized the Southern gentry was to a large extent acquired from their Roman models.

The South, as depicted in Southworth's fiction, was a republican society, a concept derived in part, at least, from Plato. In The Republic, Plato begins by defining Justice. Harrison and Sullivan observe:

> (Plato) concludes that justice consists in each man's doing that for which he is best fitted. The ideal state is the one in which every man holds that station and does the job for which he is qualified. Such a state...must be ruled by a philosopher-king who will be wise enough to know and recognize the talents of his subjects and put these talents to work. The philosopher-king must train the lower classes to do their jobs and must keep them from learning those things that will distract them from their jobs...An economy controlled by the wise king must be instituted so that each will be rewarded according to his merits and so that competition and greed can be eliminated from society.[7]

Translated into the framework of the antebellum South, the ideal philosopher-king is the plantation owner, who assesses the potential of his subjects and puts these talents to their most appropriate use in order to achieve a state of ideal justice. The Classical conception of republicanism is central to the pro-slavery argument of Southern culture. The South utilized those elements in Graeco-Roman civilization that justified the social and political existence of what was primarily an economic institution. Eaton comments,

> The interest in ancient history and the classics might very well have been a liberating force on the Southern mind. Instead of emulating the liberal side of the classical tradition, however, Southerners of the ante-bellum period were attracted to the conservative elements. From the examples of Greek and Roman society, Southerners drew some of their strongest arguments for justifying slavery. They

---

[7] Ibid., p. 88.

> regarded their own society as an extension of a Greek type of democracy, which had been based on slavery.[8]

The South believed that the elite, privileged class must be free of the constraints of the everyday world, so that its members might perform the duties for which they alone are qualified. Hubbell explains,

> In all social systems there must be a class to do the menial duties, to perform the drudgery of life...It constitutes the very mudsill of society and of political government, and you might as well attempt to build a house in the air as to build either the one or the other, except on his mudsill.[9]

Ideally, this concept is democratic in nature, in that each man is permitted to fulfill his own potential; however, in reality, many were denied the opportunity to overcome caste barriers and fulfill themselves as individuals.

The fiction of Mrs. Southworth reflects this Southern version of republicanism, which recognizes that natural virtue which has elevated the gentleman to his elite status. This natural aristocracy is endowed with the capability to lead and provide guidance for the society at large.[10] Many of the characters who appear in Southworth's fiction are of the classic mold, displaying the innate virtue and nobility of form and bearing of a Roman patrician. For instance, in The Doom of Deville, the protagonist, Lieutenant Orville Deville, is described in terms of a Roman statue:

---

[8]Eaton, The Civilization of the Old South, pp. 292-293.

[9]Jay B. Hubbell, Southern Life in Fiction (Athens, Ga.: University of Georgia Press, 1960), p. 45.

[10]William Taylor notes that Thomas Jefferson believed in a "Natural Aristocracy" which was based not on wealth, position, or heritage, but on natural aptitude and ability. By the 1850's, however, the South accused Jefferson's views of being corrupted by French republicanism.

> His figure was tall and finely proportioned; his features were cast in the purest classic mold...This really beautiful countenance was saved from the slightest suspicion of effeminacy by the whole character of its expression--by the flash of the falcon eyes, the curve of the eagle nose, the curl of the short upper lip, the upward protrusion of the well-turned chin, the stately carriage of the head, the erect position of the body, and, in short, by the general and unmistakable air of conscious strength, invincible courage, and almost insufferable arrogance, that distinguished his whole bearing. (The Doom of Deville, p. 5.)

Although this innate nobility is generally associated with members of the upper class in Mrs. Southworth's novels, the natural aristocrat is at times enmeshed in the lower class. Indeed, in The Curse of Clifton, the hero describes his mother, who appears to be very much like Mrs. Southworth herself:

> She is the only true republican I know in this whole Republic. Sprung, herself, from an ancient, noble, and haughty race, she yet honors talent and virtue, when met with in the lowest ranks. (The Curse of Clifton, p. 33.)

One common plot convention in Southworth's fiction which will be examined later involves the issue of identity; an instinctively noble person who belongs to the lower class discovers that he is indeed a member of the aristocracy. In Ishmael, for example, the hero, who is actually the son of an influential landholder, astonishes those who regard him as a mere commoner:

> 'Who is he?' asked Dr. Jarvis.
> 'The nephew of my overseer, Reuban Gray. That is absolutely all I know about it.'
> 'The nephew of Gray? Can it be so? Why, Gray is but an ignorant boor, while this youth has the manner and education of a gentleman--a polished gentleman.'
> 'It is true, and I can make nothing of it,' said Judge Merlin, shaking his head. (Ishmael, p. 145.)

Thus, heredity marks Ishmael as an aristocrat despite the caprices of environment; high birth is detectable, so that the republican ethic

prevails, and the protagonist is ultimately restored to his rightful position in society.

Cases do occur in Southworth's fiction in which members of the aristocracy are rendered unfit for their station because of moral weakness, just as a few members of the lower classes are elevated to a privileged position in society through a natural goodness and nobility. In The Curse of Clifton, Clifton's mother exclaims,

> Archer, you will find more moral worth, more mental worth, among the so-called lower classes than among the higher. Look at some of their brows, of Shakespearian height and breadth and I tell you, with all their disadvantages, the lower classes will give to our republic the greatest of her future great men. (The Curse of Clifton, p. 226.)

However, although lower members of society do occasionally transcend their class boundaries to join the elite, the odds are against them:

> A highly-gifted man of low birth must have extraordinary talents to elevate himself above his condition--for a girl such a case is impossible. (The Curse of Clifton, p. 30.)

Significantly, those exceptions who demonstrate a nature far superior to their classes are generally absorbed into the system. For instance, in Lost Heiress, a talented youth, Falconer O'Leary, at first rebels against the rigid aristocratic system. He cries,

> (The upper class) is all of a piece, renegade republicans! Upstart aristocrats!...Let them sun themselves in the glare of foreign courts! (Lost Heiress, p. 99.)

In the course of the story, however, Falconer proves himself to be of such a high moral caliber that he merits admission into the elite upper class. Falconer marries the daughter of Daniel and Lady Augusta Hunter and becomes legal heir of all of Hunter's wealth and lands. Thus, while Southworth's work conveys the impression of a democratic ideal, she is a

---

thorough republican; characters like Falconer are absorbed into the aristocracy rather than broadening the democratic base of the common people.

Southern mythic history was also influenced by the English cultural tradition. The antebellum South was regarded as a reflection of the English social structure, and the Southern gentleman considered himself a cultural descendent of the British aristocrat. Hubbell delcares,

> The Virginia planter families prided themselves in being of gentle blood. The influence of their Cavalier blood, when they inherited any, may be disregarded; but their belief in their aristocratic heritage was profoundly influential. They had an ideal to live up to.[11]

The degree to which the Southern culture identified with the English aristocratic tradition is reflected in the Southern educational system. Throughout the eighteenth century, boys from wealthy families were sent to England for a proper education in order to mold them into gentlemen and equip them for their moral, social, and political duties in society. In the eighteenth century, English schools were widely advertised in America; as one such notice for the Academy at Leeds which appeared in the Southern newspapers in 1789, declared, "Due regard is paid to the Gentleman's health, morals, and behavior."[12] In the latter half of the eighteenth century, Southern gentlemen often resorted to the practice of hiring private tutors who resided on the plantation. Morgan observes that the

---

[11]Hubbell, Southern Life in Fiction, pp. 44-45. The Cavalier myth had no basis in fact, as studies of Virginia society have shown.

[12]Morgan, Virginians at Home, p. 10.

tutor "should be a gentleman, for he would take dinner with the family and participate in family activities almost as a social equal."[13]

The English literary tradition was also a large part of the artistic heritage of the South. The novels of Sir Walter Scott were extremely popular during the Southern antebellum period, and his romantic fiction became a model for popular writers such as Mrs. Southworth. Indeed, in The Curse of Clifton, Mrs. Southworth refers to Scott as "Our greatest poet." (The Curse of Clifton, p. 93.). Taylor notes,

> From English portrayals of Squire and manor house Southerners learned to edge their characterizations of the planter with irony. From Scott's form of the historical romance they learned to deal in cultural contrasts between aristocrat and plebian, gentleman and commoner...[14]

American novels that had an English flavor held a distinct advantage in the literary marketplace. Taylor declares,

> American readers as a whole continued through the (19th) century to prefer European and English books to native writing. When they did read books by Americans, their own cultural insecurity led them to prefer those American books which bore some obvious similarity to the literature they were familiar with.[15]

Mrs. Southworth's fiction was often compared to her English counterparts by literary critics; for instance, The New York Literary World declared that the characters in Southworth's The Deserted Wife were copies of English contemporary works, specifically Wuthering Heights and Jane Eyre.

Mrs. Southworth's fiction reflected the Southern cultural allegiance to England. For example, The Curse of Clifton contains a brief epigram

---

[13] Ibid., p. 13.

[14] Taylor, Cavalier and Yankee, p. 178.

[15] Ibid., p. 186.

preceding each chapter by poets like Shakespeare, Tennyson, Keats, and Byron, which puts the subsequent action of the novel into proper perspective. In The Doom of Deville, a young woman who had been raised in the wilderness was provided with a number of books which her father considered imperative to the proper upbringing of any young lady; this collection consisted of Rippon's History of England, as well as works by Chaucer, Spenser, and Shakespeare. These few volumes were intended to direct all of her natural experience into a proper framework; as a result, her very perception of reality was colored by the English interpretation of history, as well as the views of notable English authors. Lionne's counterpart in the novel, Orville Deville, was educated in a more formal manner, for his mother, Lady Elizabeth, "in compliance with the will of her late husband, conveyed her son to England to be educated." (The Doom of Deville, p. 35.) Young Deville was enrolled at Eaton, since only in England could he receive the type of instruction that would enable him to assume the responsibilities of lord of his plantation. Significantly, later in the book Orville became the heir to an estate in Scotland, where he then traveled in the company of his wife. Although the scene shifts from the sunny South to an iron gray castle in Scotland, the story is strikingly unaffected by the change in scenery; the couple function in this new setting without the awkwardness that often accompanies a shift in cultures. Of course, since Orville had received his formal training in the British Isles, his journey to Scotland is in a sense a return home--culturally, as well as literally.

The parallels between the English cultural traditions and the mythic South are striking. In a speech on the Irish Land Bill in 1870, British

Prime Minister William Gladstone described the English country gentleman, a portrait that also characterizes the plantation owner of Southern myth:

> ...A Position marked by residence, by personal familiarity, and by sympathy with the people among whom they live; by long traditional connection handed on from generation to generation, and marked by constant discharge of duty in every form that can be suggested--be it as to the administration of justice, be it as to the defense of the country, be it as to the supply of social, or spiritual, or moral, or educational wants, be it for any purpose whether that is recognized as good or beneficial in a civilized society.[16]

As Gladstone notes, the possession of land was of critical importance to the English gentry. Each estate was a miniature kingdom; well into the nineteenth century the poor condition of the roads isolated the individual manors, which strengthened local loyalties and traditions. According to this romanticized notion of the English gentry, the estate existed in a splendid isolation, with the members of the community remaining uneducated and ignorant of matters beyond the sphere of the estate. As Sir George Sitwell observes, "From the busy world outside one entered a little haven of peace and rest within the gates."[17] The proper English gentleman was a benevolent guardian over the interests of his subordinates, providing support and assistance in time of need. The landlord while growing up played among the other children on the estate and, as a result, took a personal interest in the welfare of his dependents. Kebbell declares,

> The tenants and labourers on this gentleman's estate would probably in those days have done anything he wanted them to do. But he never abused his power over them, was ...an indulgent landlord, and, what perhaps was the great secret of all, lived and died among his people. All his

---

[16] T.E. Kebbell, The Old and the New (Edinburgh and London: William Blackwood and Sons, 1891), p. 40.

[17] Sir George Sitwell, Country Life in the Seventeenth Century (Scarborough: Printed by the author at his private press, 1901), p. 14.

> pleasures, all his cares, all his ambitions were centered in that one spot. [18]

This local aspect of the English societal order enabled the gentleman to fully appreciate the problems of his underlings, so that he was more capable than an outsider of representing the interests of his district. Kebbell observes,

> (The country gentleman) comes to understand their language, and their peculiar modes of expressing themselves. He grows up in real sympathy with them; and in after-life his charities and his benighties lose all the eleemosynary or patronising element which is sometimes imparted to such favors, in the savour of personal affection and 'ault lang syne' which still clings to them.[19]

This romantic version of the English life has its counterpart in popular Southern literature. The plantation order is depicted as a family, and the Southern gentleman is regarded as a paternal figure who is deeply involved in the lives of his subordinates. As such, he was (according to popular myth) infinitely preferable to outside intruders during the Civil War, even though the Yankees were ostensibly fighting in the interest of the slaves.

The Southern plantation was modeled after the English estate of the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. Hubbell declares, "The Virginia planters, whether or not of gentle blood, tried as best they could to live on their farms like the country gentlemen of rural England."[20] Significantly, the names of the plantations in Southworth's novels are distinctly English in derivation--including the Dell, Oak Grove, and Shannondale. Sitwell's description of the Renshaw Estates is strikingly similar to many of Mrs. Southworth's introductory portraits of Southern plantations:

---

[18]Kebbell, The Old and the New, pp. 52-53.

[19]Ibid., pp. 45-46.

[20]Hubbell, The South in American Literature, p. 41.

> It stood...on the summit of a rocky hill projecting into the vale of Rother, which narrows here to two or three hundred yards, and commanding fine views toward the north and south. On the latter side, a richly cultivated country, cut up into innumerable enclosures by hedgerows and scattered with forest trees forming a pleasing contrast to the wild and rugged moorland by which Eckington was approached, and beyond it, to the south and southwest, rose that beautiful ridge upon which Barlborough, Bolsover Castle, and Hardwick stand...
>
> The river below the house was crossed by a highway described in a letter of 1663 as a 'great road from the West parts of Yorkshire towards London.' Approaching from the London side, a traveler would catch his first glimpse of Renshaw from the point where the manors of Barlborough and Eckington meet. The building was three storied and of stone, with a four-gabled front facing the east, and towards the south, a battlemented hall between two projecting wings, of which the nearer was furnished with a great bow window. It was surrounded with orchards and walled gardens, and behind it a plantation of ancient trees formed an impressive background.[21]

Now consider Southworth's description of a Southern plantation:

> The river _____, taking its rise in the Allegheny Mountains, flows through the valley of Virginia, and, passing through a defile of the Blue Ridge Mountains, falls, roaring and rebounding, from a rocky precipice, and boils howling on, over and between the jagged and pointed rocks sticking up or piled up in its channel...The northern division of this isle of beauty had been left in all the wild loveliness of nature. The southern division had been cleared up, and laid out in groves, lawns, terraces, gardens, and conservatories. Upon the highest point of this southern division of the isle stood an elegant mansion, built of white free-stone, and surrounded by piazzas, both above and below, and running all around the house. Below these came a terrace covered with green turn, and diversified by shade-trees and by parterres of beautiful flowers. From this, marble steps descended to the lawn. This lawn was traversed by serpentine walks, which, winding over the turf between borders of bright flowers and rows of pine-trees, by the side of a singing brooklet, beneath the shadow of an old oak or elm, around the margin of a clear pond, over the swell of a green hill, or under the shadow of

---

[21]Sitwell, Country Life in the Seventeenth Century, pp. 12-13.

> a gray rock, would terminate at some rustic seat, some tasteful arbor...(The Mother-In-Law, pp. 5-6.)

From these passages, it would appear that both the English and Southern cultures were indebted to the Graeco-Roman tradition. Each portrait begins with a panoramic view of nature, finally focusing on the house as a compliment to the scene. The descriptions emphasize the size, stability, and enduring quality of the architecture, which withstands the powerful, often relentless forces of nature. In both cultures, then, the estate is presented as a bastion of order in a beautiful though chaotic world.

Until the close of the nineteenth century, the English social system revolved primarily around the estate as an economic resource, which was the basis for the romantic conception of the English cultural tradition. Dorothy Marshall observes,

> But though rural society contained both non-landowners and landowners or land users of varied economic and legal standing, in most areas...this society was held together and dominated by the Big House...in many districts it was the wealthy squire to whom unchallenged homage was paid. In part it was a tribute to his economic power: many rented land from him or received wages or enjoyed his patronage, many of the young people were employed as his servants. To oppose the lord of the manor was to court economic ostracism and to be a dangerous man to know.[22]

The English estate not only provided employment for the house servants but for the entire community surrounding the manor. The squires and baronets created jobs for such tradesmen as saddlers, cutlers, ironmongers, builders, and brewers; in the parlance of the times, the estate "kept up the country."

The aristocrat also performed important political functions in English

---

[22]Dorothy Marshall, English People in the Eighteenth Century (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1956), pp. 45-46.

society. The landlord gentleman represented his district in Parliament and, as a result, symbolized the majesty of English law to his subjects. In addition to his legislative obligations, the gentleman handled the executive duties of the estate. The English aristocrat assumed responsibility for the security of his lands and the surrounding area, providing protection for all those who fell within his jurisdiction. The landowner was also charged with maintaining the financial balance of the community. Sitwell remarks,

> Amongst his poor neighbors (the landed gentryman) acted the part of a little providence, arbitrating upon their disputes so as to save them the expense of law, advising them in their difficulties, arranging for the education or apprenticeship of their children, and often at their request, taking charge of their title deeds or making investment of their little savings.[23]

The English gentleman was also the judicial branch of local government. As a landholder, he served as justice of the peace, maintaining the order as he interpreted it. Kebbell regards this office as particularly well suited for the landed gentry:

> When a prisoner is brought up before the bench, the squire or the patron can tell at a glance to what section of the country people he belongs, and calculate the antecedent probabilities of his guilt or innocence with considerable accuracy. They will understand the full significance of many apparent trifles which would escape less experienced observers, and the triviality of many incidents which for others might appear to be important. More than this, they can tell better than anybody else could whether the offense committed by any particular prisoner is a specifically bad one of its class, and bespeaks criminal propensities in the perpetrator, or whether the extenuating circumstances which may be alleged in mitigation of it are really deserving of consideration. No criminal judge, a stranger of the people, could tell this so easily as a country gentleman.[24]

---

[23]Sitwell, Country Life in the Seventeenth Century, p. 50.

[24]Kebbell, The Old and the New, pp. 59-60.

Thus, the country gentleman exercised complete political power over his dominion, performing the executive, legislative, and judicial offices for the state. The political role of the gentry was also in operation in the Southern culture, as in England. Cotterill observes,

> (The planter) was commonly a justice of the peace and dealt out the high, low, and middle justice. He was often a member of his state legislature or of the national congress. His place in society was secure and so was that of his family.[25]

In Southworth's novels, the protagonists are either plantation owners, lawgivers, or soldiers. Indeed, the management of the estate is regarded as a particularly noble calling; in The Discarded Daughter, General Garnet declares, "Well, I do not know a more earnest purpose, or a more useful life, than that lived through in the proper administration of a large estate." (The Discarded Daughter, p. 57.) No industrialists or members of the middle class appear as heroes in Mrs. Southworth's fiction, with the exception of stories like The Missing Bride, in which a young tutor elopes with the daughter of the squire. However, he is quickly assimilated into plantation society, after voluntarily giving up his identification with the middle class and its values.

In the course of time, the English aristocracy assumed the responsibility of maintaining the order of society, which, not surprisingly, was also centered around the estate. Jean Holdsworth explains,

> Their great estates were family businesses...The English gentleman's love of his land was a phenomenon which enabled him to maintain the harmony which existed between master and man, and the upkeep of a complicated class system.[26]

---

[25]Cotterill, The Old South, p. 271.

[26]Jean Holdsworth, Mango: The Life and Times of Squire John Mytton of Halston (London: Dennis Dobson, 1972), p. 15.

Because their existence depended upon the acquiesence of the masses, the English gentry became the guardians of the social system. The gentry assumed the spiritual leadership of the community, often holding office in the church--either as reverend, vicar, or curate. Religion was mixed with social and political life; the gentry generally held a family pew in the front of the church, with the servants of the estate arranged behind them. After the service, the family would customarily entertain the more prominent members of the community at the manor. As the chief representatives of English society, the privileged class embodied its most beloved virtues. Sitwell notes, "Truthfulness he considered to be the first duty of a gentleman and courtesy the second."[27] As guardians of the status quo, the privileged class epitomized the morality of the church. Sitwell describes the gentleman, using the analogy of the household of the manor:

> In housekeeping, his servants yielded him a blind obedience; he had preferred his porter discretion to be usher of the Hall; Hospitality was his housekeeper, Charity, his treasurer, Prudence his steward, Loyalty and Chastity were waiting women, and Piety the mistress of the house in whose eyes was a charming modest and compassionate air...[28]

According to the romantic ideal, this moral framework supports and sustains the aristocrat and enables him to govern wisely and well. The English commoner supported the aristocracy since, according to the myth, the all-powerful gentry was careful not to abuse their privileges. Holdsworth observes,

---

[27]Sitwell, Country Life in the Seventeenth Century, p. 39.

[28]Ibid., pp. 45-46.

> The average Englishman of that time was not against wealth or its privileges, for with few exceptions the rich and powerful were taught from childhood to respect truth, honor, and integrity. 'Gentlemen are, or ought to be, the pride and glory of every civilization', wrote Thomas Bewick the Radical. 'Without their countenance arts and sciences must languish, industry be paralyzed, and barbarism rear its ugly head.' And indeed the squires, until the Industrial Revolution, were the backbone of society, basking in the reflected glory of a handful of great families who traditionally held the choicest court and state appointments, and drawing their strength from an order rooted in pastoral security.[29]

Eventually, the relationship between the English gentry and the peasantry became an accepted institution. The rationale behind the dominance of the aristocracy was inverted, so that the strong moral framework of the gentry somehow justified their continued economic superiority. Marshall declares,

> (The lord of the manor) also owed something to tradition: that tradition that looked to the local gentry as the leaders of the countryside. Long habit had made it natural for rural communities to turn to the manor house for guidance in local affairs.[30]

This sensibility lent itself to the myth of the superiority of the aristocratic class, which held that the English gentry ruled because they were best suited to the task; further, their cultivated sense of morality, initially employed to maintain the status quo, came to be regarded as an inherent part of the aristocratic character and justified the gentry's continued dominance of English society, including its economic resources. This belief in the preeminence of the English aristocratic class was a fundamental part of the Southern cultural tradition. For example, in The Missing Bride, Southworth declares,

---

[29]Holdsworth, Mango, pp. 15-16.

[30]Marshall, English People in the Eighteenth Century, p. 46.

> Miss Nancy piqued herself upon her own and her nephews' red hair and freckles--they were the signs, she said, of the very purest saxon blood--none of your celtic, or other inferior races, ever freckled or had red hair. (The Missing Bride, p. 80)

The Southern aristocrat inherited this notion of the moral superiority of the Southern elite. Cotterill observes,

> To the Southern planter nothing was more evident than that the Lord had looked down upon him as the choicest work of His hands and had pronounced him good.[31]

Because of this emphasis on race and status, one's family ties were of considerable importance. Significantly, many of the characters in Southworth's books claim members of the English aristocracy as ancestors. For instance, in The Curse of Clifton, the protagonists are all descendents of the European elite. Fairfax is a relative of Lord Fairfax of Greenway Courthouse, while Clifton's mother was a descendent of Cromwell. English aristocratic trappings are consistently kept alive in Southworth's fiction; the heroine of Lost Heiress is referred to throughout the novel as "Lady Augusta", and the plantation owner in The Missing Bride is given the title of "Squire Gaylord".

The English gentry also owed a great deal to tradition as a means of institutionalizing their place in society. Marshall states,

> ...Tradition...looked to the local gentry as the leaders of the countryside. Long habit had made it natural for rural communities to turn to the manor house for guidance in local affairs.[32]

The lower class derived some satisfaction from the continuity provided by the traditional social order. According to popular myth, the tenant took

---

[31]Cotterill, The Old South, p. 271.

[32]Marshall, English People in the Eighteenth Century, p. 46.

pride in belonging to an aristocratic tradition, if only in a subordinate position.

At the same time, however, the upper class was supposedly restricted by the very traditions that established its position in society. The heavy responsibility of governing and maintaining the social order conflicted with individual freedom, interests and inclinations. Kebbel observes,

> The path of duty lies through worse things sometimes than thorns and flints--through dreary wastes of noisome swamps, and among creeping things innumerable. But it may be the path of glory for all that.[33]

The role of the privileged class was thus regarded as a burden of sorts; the English gentleman was charged with the responsibility of preserving the system and the well-being of its members.

One such responsibility involved the transmission of the order through lineage. In compliance with the myth of hereditary superiority, the Englishman derived his identity through his family roots. For instance, the notable British publication, Burke's Landed Gentry still lists the members of England's elite in terms of their line of descent: "John Collins of Betterton, had a grant of arms and crest to himself and his issue May, 1692..."[34] The transmission of the order not only preserved the continuity of the family but of society as well. The landed gentry was duty-bound to produce a male heir, for a breakdown in lineage would produce a state of social chaos that was destructive to all classes.

---

[33]Kebbel, The Old and the New, pp. 67-68.

[34]Peter Townend, ed., Burke's Genealogical and Heraldic History of the Landed Gentry (London: Burke's Peerage Limited, MCMLXIX), p. 111.

Family history was also critical to the Southern social structure. Cotterill declares, "As a rule a planter's culture and refinement would depend on how long he had been a planter and on where he lived."[35] Family tradition serves as a form of immortality, in that the fortune of the family transcends the fate of any individual. Thus, characters in Southworth's novels who sever ties with their families are rejecting tradition and, as a result, their own identity. The abrupt termination of the line of succession marks the end of an aristocratic order, so that the daughter in The Missing Bride is literally "killing the father" by running off with her lower class tutor. This notion of transmission of order through lineage explains the importance of arranging marriages among proper families, even at the expense of personal fulfillment.

The lifestyle of the aristocracy did much to support the myth of inherent superiority. From childhood, the English gentleman was trained for a life of leisure and politics. English education emphasized classical learning, including a mastery of Greek and Latin. Marshall states,

> Though not utilitarian, such a training was eminently suitable for developing the critical faculties and literary appreciation of the man of leisure.[36]

Thus, the world view of the gentry assumed a broader perspective than that of the lower classes. The elite lived in a fixed, isolated world, impervious to the demands and requirements of everyday life; they lived on a majestic scale that elevated them beyond the experience of the common man.

---

[35]Cotterill, The Old South, p. 270.

[36]Marshall, English People in the Eighteenth Century, p. 79.

The South's avoidance of any connection with industry was motivated by a determination to separate itself from the middle class North; as aristocratic Southerners they were instead involved with the broader concerns of society as a whole. Southern aristocracy served as the center of culture and refinement, as in English society. The privileged class assumed the role of celebrities, who were the focus of all societal attention. The privileged class, who gained all the benefits of wealth and breeding, were rewarded for innate superiority and goodness. The aristocracy, for its part, strived to maintain distance between itself and the lower classes, perhaps in order to nurture the myth of innate difference between the two classes. The gentry's complicated set of manners and strict code of behavior was, among other things, a means of excluding the commoner and identifying its own members. Devoid of education, culture, and sense of decorum, the middle class was acutely aware of its ignorance and inferiority to the gentleman.

Despite the glamour associated with the life of the aristocracy, the daily existence of the privileged class was apparently devoted to routine, which is not surprising considering the gentry's concern with order and a fixed manner of living. Sitwell comments on English life:

> During much of the year when Mr. Sitwell and his youngest son were alone, life at Renishaw was quiet and orderly enough, and one day passed very much the same as another. At about seven o'clock they breakfasted upon beer, cold meat, Westphalia ham or neat's tongue, oarcakes, and white bread and butter. After breakfast, William walked down to pursue his studies at the Rectory, and his father rode out with starkeye, to inspect his farms and iron furnaces, or to attend the parochial and country business in which he interested himself. At eleven o'clock the servants, headed by the housekeeper, Mrs. Heays, filed in to family prayer in the hall, and immediately prayers were over, the butler laid the table with its cloth of homespun linen...for the noonday dinner...After dinner Mr. Sitwell wrote letters in

---

> his study and read the gazettes and newsletters which his cousin forwarded by every post from London: a little later in the afternoon he played bowles on the green, walked through the folds, looked at the horses, foals and oxen, and strolled across the grounds to watch the mowers or harvest fold at work. Supper, the second 'state meal' of the day, must have been early too, and after a pipe of tobacco, a tankard of ale, and a game of cards or shovelboard in the Great Parlour, the evening finished with family prayer.[37]

This emphasis on order and restraint in everyday life is an extension of the Graeco-Roman cultural tradition. The aristocrat considered it his duty to maintain order, both on a personal and societal level. Andrew Lang declares,

> (The gentleman) had no vague desires, no vain regrets: he lived in his work and in his home, undisturbed, as it were, by the passions. ..... A gentleman's command of animals was admired in English society; displays of discipline and control over horses parallels the aristocrat's ability to maintain control over the social order. While the lower classes were primarily motivated by their passions, the English gentleman was expected to exert proper control over these bestial impulses. Inherited wealth, of course, afforded an independence from life's most basic and immediate concerns, such as food, clothing, and shelter. Because the gentry was untouched by the demands for immediate gratification, they were free to follow proper forms of conduct; even though the rules of decorum were often indirect and time consuming, the privileged class had the leisure to devote their full attention to matters of social etiquette.[38]

The fiction of Mrs. Southworth reveals the fascination of the popular imagination with the leisured lifestyle and trappings of the English aristocratic culture, as copied in Southern life. In The Three Beauties, the author establishes the Southern social and legal connections to England:

---

[37]Sitwell, Country Life in the Seventeenth Century, pp. 23-24.

[38]Andrew Lang, Life, Letters, and Diaries of Sir Stafford Northcote, First Earl of Iddisleigh (Edinburgh and London: William Blackwood and Sons, DCCCXCI), p. xxi.

> The reader will recollect that the laws governing the social and domestic relations of Virginia are founded, wherever difference of position permits, upon those of England. (The Three Beauties, p. 77)

In this novel, an entire English community has somehow been transplanted to Virginia. Viola declares, "So here we are, deal Harold--your tenants, your friends, and your wife." (The Three Beauties, p. 10) Thus, this tale is essentially an English romantic novel, with a minimal adjustment to convert it to an American setting.

In The Missing Bride, the drama revolves around the romantic attachments of Edith, the eldest daughter of the Waugh family. As the heiress of the Luckenough plantation, Edith is restricted in her choice of husbands. Edith's father (who is given the title of Commodore) and his wife adopt a lifestyle patterned after the English aristocracy. Southworth writes,

> Commodore and Mrs. Waugh entered the family carriage, which they pretty well filled up. Mrs. Waugh's woman sat upon the box behind, and the commodore's man drove the coach. (The Missing Bride, p. 16)

The frontier, slave society of the South has been transformed into the genteel tradition of the English estate. The commodore's nephews have been given the rather exalted names of Cloudsley Mornington and Thurston Wilcoxen. Further, the black slaves are presented in the novel as English servants; Edith is attended by a maid named Jenny and by Oliver the groom.

In the course of the novel, the Waugh family travels to Bentley Springs, a fashionable "watering place", for the purpose of restoring the health of Jacquelina, the commodore's independent and high-spirited niece. There they participate in "mock tournament" and masked ball, in which "the splendid spectacle of the tenth century was revived in the

nineteenth." (The Missing Bride, p. 159) In this obvious celebration of their English heritage, the characters dress in armor and assume the identity of heroic English figures like Richard Coeur-de-lion, the Knight of Malta, Hotspur, and the Black Prince. The knights participate in a joust, in which the victor is "entitled to the honor of crowning the lady of his fealty Queen of Beauty and Love". (The Missing Bride, p. 162) This tournament includes many of the trappings of the courtly tradition, including trumpets, minstrels, and fair damsels who are courted by the knights.[39] In this scene, Jacquelina demonstrates her strong will, disguising herself as a knight and participating in the joust with the men. The commodore, outraged by this violation of the strict chivalric code of femininity, threatens to send his niece to a nunnery--an old English convention dating back to medieval literature.

The Haunted Homestead is yet another novel that features an episode borrowed from the English cultural tradition. The heroine, Mathilde Legare, falls in love with Frank Howard, in whom she sees noble qualities. She declares,

> ...He does dance well! and let me tell you that very few men can do so! he strikes the nice balance between le grand and la frivole in his manner! And then his name--Howard--la creme de la creme of aristocratic names. Don't you remember Le Lion blanc of the house of Howard? (The Haunted Homestead, p. 11)

Unfortunately, Frank is a lowly mechanic and is in disfavor with Mr. Legare. However, a mystery that surrounds the Legare's estate provides an opportunity for Howard to demonstrate his innate nobility

---

[39] In Cavalier and Yankee, Taylor notes that real-life associations of Southern Knights, such as the Knights of the Golden Circle, actually did exist in the South during the 1850's. These groups staged mock tournaments not unlike what Mrs. Southworth presented.

and worth. Mr. Legare confesses his perplexity about the mysterious and seemingly supernatural occurances at Wolfbrake Lodge. The narrator, an old schoolmate of the heroine, immediately manipulates the situation to the advantage of her friend. Mr. Legare exclaims in jest, "'That half of my kingdom' to the knight that shall deliver my castle from this dragon."

The narrator responds,

> Oh! your majesty! Never offer the half of your kingdom! None but a mercenary wretch would undertake the enterprise for such a bribe! Offer the hand of your princess, and a thousand lances shall be laid in rest for such a prize! (The Haunted Homestead, p. 63)

Legare replies, "Agreed! the hand of my princess to the brave knight who shall deliver me from this plague!" This burlesque of the court tradition actually is of key structural significance to the novel; Howard proceeds to unravel the mystery, winning the daughter and becoming a part of the "royal" family.

Thus, the Classical and English cultural traditions served as models for the mythic Southern society, as presented in the popular novels of Mrs. Southworth. This association provided a recognizable identity for the ante-bellum South which was essential to the self-concept of that region and affected the way in which they were regarded by outsiders.

CHAPTER 4

Values and Structure in Mrs. Southworth's Mythic South

Popular literature is an overlooked, but valuable and productive vehicle for the study of cultural history. Authors create a comprehensive world of art, comprised of a distinct system of values that determine how characters function within the novel. The nineteenth century Southern regional novels of Mrs. Southworth reveal values that identify the Southern myth in America. An extremely popular authoress, Mrs. Southworth's pre-Civil War work reflects the pervasive conception of the South as an aristocratic society charged with upholding the moral harmony of the universe.

Southern myth has been imparted through popular literature, as the novel is a complete world in which values are materialized through characterization, theme and plot. The characters in the novel are essentially collections of values which determine their status as hero or villain. The novels present these characters in the process of making choices on the basis of cultural values, which ultimately determine their fate in the stories. As a result, Mrs. Southworth's fiction also serves as a model which reinforces the myth by introducing young readers to the popular conception of Southern society, but also derives insight into its heritage and values through an entertainment medium--Mrs. Southworth's novels.

The values of the South, as depicted in Mrs. Southworth's fiction, are defined in terms of an absolute order of the universe. In Critique

of Practical Reason, published in 1778, Immanuel Kant examined the nature of values and value judgments. Risieri Frondizi asserts that this work "Established the relationship between knowledge and moral, aesthetic and religious values that has remained the focal point of modern value theory".[1] In this essay, which is critical to the study of axiology, or value theory, Kant states that:

> There exists a knowledge altogether independent of experience, and even of all sensuous impressions. Knowledge of this kind is called a priori...We do possess and exercise a faculty of pure a priori cognition and, secondly, with having pointed out the proper tests of such cognition, namely universality and necessity.[2]

According to the philosopher, things have an intrinsic merit or significance; values are proper and important, and, indeed, mirror God. These values are nomothetical, so that

> The locus of values is in the external world, and...values are transmitted to the human organism as always, normative, obligatory, and legitimate.[3]

These absolute values are prescriptive, operating independently of man. Because these values are external, personal good is equated with a universal good, so that man's happiness depends upon his ability to meet these standards. Thus, it is possible to identify and rank nomothetical values through deductive reasoning or by some type of objective measurement. Values are formed through society and culture rather than from individual experience. Risieri declares,

---

[1]Risieri Frondizi, What is Value? An Introduction to Axiology, translated by Solomon Lipp (LaSalle, Illinois: Open Court, 1963), p. 42.

[2]Immanuel Kant, "Critique of Pure Reason," in Man and Spirit: The Speculative Philosophers, ed. by Saxe Cummins and Robert N. Linscott (New York: Random House, 1947), p. 424,426.

[3]Ibid., p. 29.

"Duty cannot be derived from experience, so that duty, or awareness of ethical law, precedes value."[4] Since the successful upper class responds to the standards of societal value, the absolute value system is tied to the social class structure.

In the world of Mrs. Southworth's novels, it is up to the individual to discover the external value system and adapt his nature to this universal framework. The Lost Heiress, for example, is essentially an initiation novel, in which a young man, Falconer O'Leary, matures by growing to accept the established value system. This nomothetical system of values has a religious flavor, as it appears in perfect harmony and peace in heaven. Love, Justice, Truth, Beauty and Faith are mentioned throughout Southworth's novels as the values constituting the ideal framework of heaven. Like the Christian concept of God, these values are dimensions of one good, so that these abstract principles are interrelated and interchangeable. In The Discarded Daughter, Southworth remarks;

> "...If the contest were simply between ambition and love, ambition would triumph in a high, proud nature like hers; but, justice sides with love, and together they are invincible." (The Discarded Daughter, p. 207)

The characters in Southworth's novels are conscious of the heavenly order of values, and the heroes work toward the realization of this perfection. For instance, Dr. Hugh Hutton, in The Discarded Daughter appeals to his beloved to relinquish her tainted inheritance by pleading:

> "Oh, believe me, dear Garnet, to say nothing of the sublime beauty of faith [italics mine] displayed in the sacrifice of earthly interests to heavenly prospects--of

---

[1]Risieri, What is Value, p. 44.

> temporal pleasures to eternal joys--there is great good in seeking 'first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness'...Life, dear Garnet, is a journey to the Judgment Seat." (The Discarded Daughter, p. 116)

The term "Kingdom of God" is a critical one, establishing a model that the Southern society attempts to emulate on earth. In Southworth's world, society is regarded as the vehicle through which perfect earthly happiness can be attained. Elsie, the heroine of The Discarded Daughter declares, "I am a firm believer in perfect earthly happiness; I am so near it myself." (The Discarded Daughter, p. 196) For the heroes of Southworth novels, it is a short step from earthly paradise to eternal fulfillment. Southern society guides and prepares its members for ultimate ascension to heaven. As Frank Howard states in The Haunted Homestead, "May Heaven deal with me as I with her!" (The Haunted Homestead, p. 70) This correspondence between society and heaven is significant, too, in that the ethic of Christian forbearance also operates within the mythic society of the South. Those who submit to the inequities of life through the middle portion of the novel are frequently rewarded at its conclusion. In Ruth, the Faithful Bride, the heroine, who has suffered through seemingly endless torment and humiliation at the hands of her husband, is at last rewarded for her faith; Ruth returns home and is accorded the respect and adoration by her husband that her readers, long before, had recognized that she deserved.

Southern society, then, serves as a microcosm of heaven and is responsible for maintaining God's ideal order on earth. The absolute value system and the conception of God as the protector of the heavenly order are duplicated in the aristocratic social structure of the South,

through which man can realize earthly happiness. These values can be linked to distinct levels of society, which roughly correspond to the celestial hierarchy of God-Angel-Man. In The Three Beauties, the slave, Nerve, reminds her master of his moral responsibility to his subordinates:

> "Listen to me now: You 'pends upon your 'vine Lord to make you happy--other people 'pends upon you to make them happy. You won't never be no happier yourself till you tries for to make them as 'pends on you for happiness happy." (The Three Beauties, p. 253)

The material rewards reaped by the hero and heroine reflect their moral triumphs. In fact, the worldly success of the protagonists demonstrates that the ideal principle of justice is in operation, a concept vaguely reminiscent of Puritan doctrine; those who adhere to the universal values earn a just reward on earth as a foreshadowing of their ultimate eternal bliss.

In addition to the universal value system, Southworth's Southern mythic framework contains a code of societal precepts that maintains the ideal equilibrium of Justice, Love, Truth, Beauty and Faith. These precepts correspond loosely with the Ten Commandments, which provide concrete guidelines so that man can preserve a harmony with God. In the same sense, the societal code in Southworth's Southern myth governs man's behavior so that these ideal values can be maintained on earth.

The first societal precept can be classified as Obedience to the Lord--the male authority figure. The first two commandments, "I am the Lord thy God...", and "Thou shalt have no other Gods before me" are reduced in scope to apply to Southern society. These positive male figures generally appear as omniscient. For example, Daniel Hunter

in The Lost Heiress knows what is beneficial for his protege, Falconer O'Leary and tolerates Falconer's rebellious behavior until the youth recognizes his benefactor's wisdom. Plantation owners are certainly omnipotent within the confines of their estates. This mortal counterpart to the Lord rules absolutely over his domain, including the fate of his slaves. Since the master reflects the highest plane of earthly spirituality, the male authority figure commands respect and obedience in recognition of his supremacy in society. In Retribution, Hester avows her obedience to her guardian, Col. Dent, declaring, "His slightest intimation has for me a devine authority; it is happiness, enthusiasm, religion to obey it." (Retribution, p. 25) Disobedience to the Lord is regarded as a moral transgression with distinctly religious overtones:

> "Boy and girl, you have in your proper selves sinned against the sin of our first parents! You have in your proper persons incurred again the curse! Son of Adam! In taking this child from her parent's bosom thou has plucked again the forbidden fruit. Ardenne, in pain of body, in anxiety of mind, in failure of strength and disappointment of heart, shall thou expiate thy sin! And Winny! Boy, she has incurred the sorrows that wait on filial impiety, disobedience and rebellion." (The Three Beauties, pp. 28-29)

The second societal guideline might be categorized as Duty to the society. The Fourth Commandment, "Observe the Sabbath Day and keep it holy" illustrates the moral nature of the concept of Duty. For it is the observance of religious dogma that preserves the holiness of all moral law. The individual has a responsibility to observe the Sabbath as a reaffirmation of the sanctity of God's law. In the same sense, each member of the plantation has a moral obligation to contribute

to his or her society. This guideline of Duty, which maintains the order of society, requires the safeguarding of the rigid class bounds. Every station has its particular duty to the society at large which is essential for the moral as well as the practical welfare of the community. Each class assumes an amount of responsibility proportionate to its moral capacity. Southworth's slaves, then, are best able to contribute to the moral stability of the plantation as subordinates. In Southworth's Southern myth, blacks are not restricted by their condition, but rather can fully realize their limited moral potential through their position in society. Duty is also regarded as a means by which members of society, particularly women, might transcend their unhappy condition in life. In The Discarded Daughter, Alice is persuaded by her friends to desert her evil husband General Garnet. However, the narrator declares,

> But, simultaneously with this suggestion, arose the instinct of the wife and the inspiration of the Christian teaching her that scorned and outraged as she had been, her only post of duty, as of hope, was her husband's home. Yes, amid all the gloom and terror, she caught this one glimpse of Heaven. (The Discarded Daughter, p. 262)

The primary duty of the aristocratic class is to nurture the sense of duty in others and enforce the class distinctions. Mr. Legare, in The Haunted Homestead, reflects:

> "...The comfort remains that a patrician by birth is still a patrician, no matter how low his worldly fortunes; a plebian is still a plebian, even though accident or caprice may constitute him a legislator." (The Haunted Homestead, p. 15)

Of course, the protection of this order in society has a personal significance to aristocrats like Legare; for, a fixed society assures them of their social and economic status. However, their rationalization of this, not unlike the Divine Right of royalty, is that wealth and

---

position are but reflections of moral worth.

There are exceptions to this fixed societal order in Southworth's fiction; in fact, a recurring theme involves a member of the lower class, such as The Haunted Homestead's Frank Howard, marrying into an aristocratic family like Legare's. It is important to note, however, that these characters do not rise above the social order. Once these figures demonstrate their moral acceptability, the society absorbs them without difficulty. These "natural aristocrats" then assume the duty of protecting the established order against disruption.

Deportment is another societal guideline reflected in the Third and Ninth Commandments--"Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain...", and "Neither shalt thou bear false witness...". Behavior reflects beliefs, both in the Old Testament and in Southern culture. A rigid system of conduct is established in Southworth novels, in that the characters formally acknowledge an external, predominant set of values. Such signs, then, are not merely superficial trappings but indicate an implicit acceptance of established social values.

The system of deportment also serves as a code of interaction which insures the continuance of cultural values. For instance, the authoress comments, "The Virginians have rigid notions of propriety. It is not proper for a young lady to take a solitary walk or ride." (The Three Beauties, p. 13) This rule of decorum preserves the culture's conception of women as fragile and childlike, thus reinforcing the role of women by promoting female dependence on man. By discouraging a woman's private contact with nature, the female was encouraged to remain pure and virginal, above the world of natural law and possibly above natural impulses.

The concept of honor applies to those gentlemen who exemplify the standards of social respectability, a sacred trust of the elite class. Hence, the characters' obsession with reserving the external manifestations of societal values is a serious and weighty matter for men of honor, which often calls for severe measures. Archer Clifton declares;

> "That foolish jest of Cabell's has annoyed me. It is diabolical! Such light words, in which a young girl's fair fame is laughed and jested away, should be punished with death."
>
> "You feel this bitterly!"
>
> "I do! For her name has been used! Frank, if a word of disrespect were to be breathed by any man against my mother, I would lay that man dead at my feet!"
>
> "Yes, I thoroughly believe that."
>
> "And, if anyone were but to look an insult to Catherine, it would rouse all the ferocity of the demon in me." (The Curse of Clifton, p. 52)

Finally, these polite signs of society function as an elaborate system of communication which helps to preserve the exclusiveness of the elite class. The subtle and complex code of decorum often seems to interpret experience which lies behind surface appearance:

> "Clifton approached and with an air of gallantry, kneeled upon one knee and kissed her hand. She drew it coldly away--but that was the custom of the 'proud ladies' and did not surprise her lover." (The Curse of Clifton, p. 55)

This aristocratic ritual effectively excludes the uninitiated, thereby guarding the values of the aristocratic class.

Closely related to deportment is the fourth precept, restraint. Characters in Southworth's novels are compelled to govern their impulses in order to align their natures with the structure of society.

Equivalent to Old Testament guidelines are commandments prohibiting acts of passion such as coveting others' possessions, stealing, and murder. In Mrs. Southworth's fiction, society is the vehicle for elevating characters above the common state. Judgments are predicated on the basis of abstract principles that consider the general welfare rather than shortsighted personal gratification. Thus, terms like "disinterested goodness" and "unimpassioned nature" are employed to describe heroic figures.

"Restraint" also refers to the patience that enables characters to contend with misfortune. This involves an implicit faith in a morally just universe that ultimately rewards goodness, in heaven if not on earth. Thus, positive figures do not succumb to circumstances or act out of panic. Zulieme, in The Curse of Clifton, remains a cultured young lady even though she is temporarily exiled from her aristocratic surroundings. Her trial only increases her perseverance, so that she is eventually able to regain her former station in society.

Finally, the holiness of the institution of marriage constitutes the fifth societal guideline. The marriage ceremony traditionally joins two natures in harmony, reflecting the unity of the universe. Alice Garnet exclaims, "Oh! if heaven gave me one idea purer and higher than all the rest, it was that of the beauty and holiness of marriage." (The Discarded Daughter, p. 138) Man thus mirrors heaven's love through marriage.

Marriage is presented in Mrs. Southworth's fiction as a sacred pact which must not be corrupted. Those marriages that are secret, induced, confused, or strictly in the interest of worldly gain have disastrous

consequences. These weddings generally take place early in the novel, so that Mrs. Southworth can trace the evils that arise from such unions. Even in novels such as The Lost Heiress, the young couple who elope are doomed to suffer hardship and deprivation because their marriage was not properly sanctioned by the heiress' aristocratic parents.

Weddings also insure the continuance of the social order. Because Southern society is centered around the tradition of the estate, marriage ties the present to past, and the legacy of the plantation and the family name are assured into the future. The Seventh Commandment, "Neither shalt thou commit adultery" emphasizes the sanctity and finality of the marriage institution. Alice Garnet remains with her husband despite his many transgressions. She explains;

> "...As time passed, I learned to love you. Because you were my husband and the father of my child and because it was the greatest necessity of my nature to love, I loved you. God knows, I think there was no other reason." (The Discarded Daughter, p. 138)

Vladimir Propp's morphology, or structural analysis, of the folktale, can provide further insight into the fundamental nature of Southern myth. Propp dissected the fairy tale, divesting it of its individual embellishments in order to determine its skeletal formulae. He then traced the sequence of elements in a story in order to discover the basic structure common to this genre of tales. A morphology reveals the shared elements of a nation's tales as well as those differences that distinguish them from stories from other cultures. Propp declares,

> We are undertaking a comparison of the themes of these (fairy) tales. For the sake of comparison we shall separate the component parts of fairy tales by special methods; and then, we shall make a comparison of tales according to their components. The result will be a morphology (i.e., a description of the tales

> according to its component parts and the relationship of these components to each other and to the whole).[5]

Propp's basic findings are that: 1) The number of structural elements, or "functions" known to the fairy tale is limited and complete, 2) The sequence of functions is always identical, and 3) All fairy tales are of this one type in regard to their structure. Each general category, or function, contains a number of possible forms of expression. For example, Function VI is entitled "The Villain Attempts to Deceive His Victim in Order to Take Possession of Him or of His Belongings". However, three general plot alternatives are available under this general heading:

1) The Villain Proceeds to Act by the Direct Application of Magical Means.

2) The Villain uses Persuasion.

3) The Villain Employs Other Means of Deception or Coercion.

What defines a character in a morphological structure is not individual attributes but rather how he or she functions in the tale. Propp states,

> Both constants and variables are present (when comparing components of tales)...The names of the dramatic personae change (as well as the attributes of each), but neither their actions nor functions change. From this we can draw the inference that a tale often attributes identical actions to various personages. This makes possible the study of the tale <u>according to the functions</u> of its dramatic personae.[6]

---

[5] Vladimir Propp, <u>Morphology of the Folktale</u> (Austin, Texas and London: University of Texas Press, 1968), p. 20.

[6] <u>Ibid.</u>, p. 20.

These functions are defined in terms of consequence of action rather than through investigation of motivation. The general functions are also subject to some degree of variation within the structure. Some functions may be omitted from a tale, while the order of the other functions remains the same. At times the sequence of a tale is inverted. And, interpolated episodes are occasionally inserted in the middle of a tale, which complicates the plot. Propp explains,

> All...plots will reflect the basic scheme, while they themselves may not resemble one another. In order to create a tale artificially, one may take any A, then one of the possible B's, then a C, followed by absolutely any D, etc...In doing this, any elements may be dropped...or repeated three times, or repeated in various forms.[7]

Propp's methodology produces a singular framework which is distinct from the original fairy tale format. However, this essential formulae also contains a limited, easily remembered set of functions which reveals the essential properties of the Southern mythic structure.

Morphology

I. Description--Harmony
   - A. Nature
   - B. Plantation
   - C. Family History
   - D. Characters
     1. Lord of Plantation
     2. Wife of Lord of Plantation
     3. Daughter--Heiress
     4. Son--Heir
     5. Romantic Interest
        - a) Male
        - b) Female
     6. Slaves

---

[7] Ibid., p. 111.

II. Disharmony
  A. Mystery
    1. Estate
      a) Proper Heir
      b) Supernatural Events
    2. Identity
      a) Of Character
      b) Of Family
  B. Transgression
    1. Moral Transgression--Values in Opposition
      a) Universal Values vs. Worldly Concerns
      b) Social Precepts vs. Worldly Concerns
      c) Value Conflicts
        1. Universal Values vs. Social Precepts
        2. Social Precepts vs. Social Precepts
        3. Universal Values vs. Universal Values
    2. Crime
      a) Murder
      b) Bigamy
      c) Illegal Possession of Plantation
  C. Characters Outside the Plantation
    1. Selfless Women
    2. Companion to Heiress
    3. Tutor
    4. Villain
  D. Class Conflict
  E. Death
  F. Reversal of Fortunes
    1. Inheritance
    2. Disinheritance--Break with Plantation
    3. Dramatic, External Event
      a) Circumstance
      b) Providence
      c) Social Function
  G. Reaction to Reversal of Fortunes
    1. Suffering
    2. Illness
    3. Poverty--Destitution
    4. Fall to Lower Class
    5. Danger to Life
    6. Death

III. Resolution--Return to State of Harmony
  A. Restoration of Plantation
  B. Mysteries Resolved
  C. Regeneration of Protagonists
  D. Marriage
  E. Justice Prevails--Villains Punished
  F. Providential Help
  G. Death

Function I consists of the establishment of the state of harmony in the society of the South. As stated previously, the equilibrium of the universal order (justice, love, truth, beauty, faith) is maintained by societal guidelines (obedience to the Lord, duty, deportment, restraint and holiness of marriage). This universal order is represented in society by the estate. The plantation is the center of every Southworth plot. Novels like The Discarded Daughter focus on the cycle of generations; individual members of the family come and go, with the plantation itself serving as the only constant. The plantation can thus be regarded as the chief protagonist, which goes through many changes in the course of the story before prevailing at the conclusion. The narrator typically opens the novel with a description of the plantation, which is enjoying a state of prosperity and harmony with its surroundings. The Discarded Daughter, for example, immediately establishes an association between nature and the estate. The introductory chapter begins;

> "The scenes of our story lie along the western shore of Maryland, near the mouth of the Potomac River and among islets of the Chesapeake Bay.
>
> Nothing can be more beautiful, grand and inspiring than the scenery of this region..." (The Discarded Daughter, p. 1.)

Chapter One then provides a physical introduction to the estate itself in similar terms;

> "Let me introduce you to Mount Clam, the seat of General Aaron Garnet. Even from the bay you can see the mansion house, with its broad, white front as it crowns the highest of a distant range of hills. After passing through the village of Hutton and going up and down the grassy hills that rise one above the other beyond it, you enter a deep hollow, thickly grown with woods, and passing through it, begin to ascend, by a heavily shaded forest road, the last and highest hill of the range--Mount Calm." (The Discarded Daughter, p. 8.)

Mrs. Southworth then provides the history of each of her fictional plantations to establish the estate as immutable, both in time and space. At the conclusion of chapter One of The Three Beauties, Southworth declares, "And this is the tradition of the early settlement of the Vale of Shannondale." (The Three Beauties, p. 11.) The characters in the novel are introduced to the reader in relation to the plantation; the various classes--including master and mistress, young children, and the slaves--are established in terms of their roles on the estate. These figures are depicted as content and in harmony with one another and with their world.

However, the initial balance of the universal order and the plantation is soon disturbed in the Southworth novels, as seen in Function II, Disharmony. Mrs. Southworth's novels function as an arena for societal value conflicts, which provides the tension for the plots in the novels. Characters challenge the nomothetical value system, temporarily throwing the structure into chaos. This violation always carries severe and widespread consequences. The narrator warns:

> "There are intangible crimes carrying in themselves the seeds of their own most bitter punishment--the punishment being nothing apart from or opposed to this sin, but simply the evil principle itself, in its final stages of development. In these instances, no law may be able to touch the guilty--no upbraidings of conscience torment him--no visible judgment of heaven fall upon him--yet as surely as the plant is produced from the seed will the punishment be evolved from the sin." (Retribution, p. 40.)

This tension between values forms the basis for the plot conflicts in Mrs. Southworth's fiction. Values are clearly defined through contrast, which is perhaps the only way of putting abstract principles into perspective. The effect of the conflicts is explained by Mrs. Southworth in terms of two angels warring for ultimate good:

> "The angel of gladness is there; but the angel of affiliction is there too, and both alike are for good. May the angel of gladness visit us; I pray for it. But, that angel of affliction;--What shall we say to that? Shall we not say, 'come thou, too, when our father willeth; with saddened brow and pitying eye, come, and take us on thy wings and bear us up to hope, to happiness, to heaven..." (Retribution, pp. 136-137.)

Evil is thus presented as a trial that ultimately reaffirms the harmony of the cultural order. Without evil, there can be no understanding of good. Novels like The Hidden Hand are structured around the Adam and Eve story; Marah Rocke provides a clue when she exclaims,

> Ah! this is just what he used to say to me in the old, happy times--the time in Paradise, before the serpent entered. (The Hidden Hand, p. 85.)

Mrs. Southworth's novels consist of three stages: the harmony of the plantation, a fall from grace because of some form of transgression, and the resolution, in which the victims of the fortunate fall come to a happy recognition of their condition and dedicate themselves to a new covenant with God and society. Southworth's novels are often parables which illustrate a moral or religious lesson. Indeed, in many of Southworth's novels, one passage often outlines the basic moral premise that the plot serves to elucidate. In The Doom of Deville, Southworth declares,

> It is impossible to define the boundary line that separates extravagant emotions from absolute madness. Evil passions lose themselves by fine gradation in the dark shadows of insanity. (The Doom of Deville, p. 200.)

The author examines the evils of emotional excess through the actions of several characters simultaneously. Deville's passion leads to bigamy, a crime against society and God. The novel examines the "power of that fatal passion" (The Doom of Deville, p. 121), which robs the young man of his judgment and control and makes him susceptible to circumstances.

Lionne also exceeds the bounds of self-control, so that in the course of the novel she is transformed from heroine to villainess.

The conflicts between values serve to assert the supremacy of universal values. In The Three Beauties, the villain Sina Hinton makes a distinction between virtues which places them in proper perspective:

> "Prudence is a questionable virtue; it is incompatible, oftentimes, with truth, courage, faith, love--everything that is loveliest and most beautiful. [italics mine.] I observe that bad people have vastly more of that worldly commodity than good people. I wonder how it ever came to be enrolled among the virtues." (The Three Beauties, p. 34.)

Three fundamental plot variations characterized by distinct conceptual oppositions appear in Southworth novels, which define the cultural values of Southern society. The first pattern emerges when the villains corrupt universal values to satisfy their personal ambition. Thus, a woman like Juliette Summers in Retribution exploits her beauty to realize her personal aspirations. Juliette is presented as a calculating schemer who connives to win the devotion of Col. Dent, the influential husband of her best friend and benefactor. Hester Dent, a plain but selfless wife, eventually dies from lack of attention and love, freeing her unscrupulous companion to marry the weak-willed Colonel.

The Haunted Homestead, a gothic tale, contains a legend that further dramatizes the conflict between worldly concerns and ideal virtues. Madeline Van Der Vaugh, according to the story, is a woman whose goal was to restore her plantation to its former affluent state. Since the estate represents a microcosm of the universal order, the intention is honorable. However, the lady's obsession actually subverts the ideal values. "...Everything--money, health, peace, conscience, life itself

was sacrificed to her monomania." (The Haunted Homestead, p. 62.) Ironically, the restoration of the estate is accomplished at the expense of the universal equilibrium. Her husband remains to work the plantation against his will and is eventually ruined by his wife's obsession. The conflict created by the transgressions against a husband's love defines the domain of the universal order. Madame Van Der Vaughn's exploitation of ideal values for personal gratification soon returns to haunt her. The mistress of Wolfbrake dies in the ruins of the estate; however, her spirit reflects this chaotic condition, so that her ghost is compelled to revisit her home every evening in search of peace. It is only when the new, young mistress chooses love over ambition that the soul of "the late proud lady of Wolfbrake" is put to rest, and peace is restored to the plantation.

The second plot construct occurs as societal precepts are corrupted by worldly concerns, which disturb the symmetry of the universal-societal arrangement. For example, the sacred trust of parental authority is often betrayed for reasons of personal gratification. General Garnet in The Discarded Daughter is a man who, unconsciously perhaps, misuses his authority for the sake of his commercial interests. Southworth remarks:

> "...And what a position was hers when that devinely appointed parental authority--that protective and beneficient power--was perverted by pride, ambition and selfishness into an engine of mighty torture, inflicting a fatal and lifelong calamity.
>
> Yet the father verily believed that he was disinterestedly serving his daughter's best interests. There is no more profoundly mournful illustration of the ruined arch-angel, than that of any perverted love." (The Discarded Daughter, p. 20.)

First, the General marries Alice Chester in order to acquire her property, even though she is in love with another man. Then, once his daughter

Elsie has matured, he promises her to cousin Magnus Hardcastle to facilitate the merger of the two neighboring estates. Fortunately, the couple are already in love, so that the stratum of Ideal Values (love)--Precepts (holiness of marriage)--Worldly Interests remain in agreement. However, circumstances always arise in Southworth's fiction that require the characters to make choices, revealing their own values and priorities. Magnus' brother Lionel Hardcastle, who had been presumed dead, suddenly reappears as the legal heir to Point Pleasant. General Garnet then coldly withdraws the original engagement and proposes a new match between his daughter and the smarmy Lionel. This act subverts the societal guideline of the holiness of marriage and throws the entire order into chaos.

Garnet is eventually punished for his transgression; his death is a fitting recompense for the pandemonium he caused. The general's fall exposes the emptiness of using worldly concerns as societal precepts, as his plans for happiness are as finite as his own life. Garnet's demise makes way for the regeneration of the harmonious design, with the marriage of Elsie and Magnus. Thus, the resolution of the tension between worldly concerns and societal precepts defines the limits of personal ambition and reestablishes the heirarchy of values within the Southern mythic structure.

The third and most complex plot structure involves a conflict between two positive values, in which a character challenges one guideline in order to realize another. In The Three Beauties, Winny defies her father, Squire Darling, and elopes with Edgar, her indigent tutor. In opting for marriage as the holy and proper channel for her affection, Winny reinforces the ideal of Love; however, this action

also disrupts the social order by disobeying her lord. This moral dilemma introduces an intriguing dimension to Southworth's work, since these choices are neither clearcut or painless for the heroes. Although Squire Darling is clearly wrong for exploiting his daughter as a commodity, Elsie also commits a sin by defying her father. For this crime, Elsie enters a state of purgatory lasting through the middle of the novel, in which she suffers the consequences of her wrongdoing. She and Edgar are cast out of the paradise of the plantation like Adam and Eve and must survive without the protection of society and its laws. After a great deal of suffering, Edgar ultimately redeems the pair by sacrificing himself for Elsie. He abandons his wife, so that she will be free to return to Shannondale. As in Milton's Paradise Lost, the protagonist proves his worth by accepting his subordinate position. This selfless act restores the balance of order and contributes to the reform of the Squire, who finally realizes that happiness can only be attained by selflessly allowing the universal values to direct his societal choices. As a result, he accepts Edgar into the family, where his moral fitness qualifies him to carry on the aristocratic tradition as master of the estate.

The Discarded Daughter is concerned with the value conflict between love and duty; however, in this case, the opposition concerns a woman who is the victim of a bad marriage and her struggle to resist her feelings for another man. Not surprisingly, Alice, after a brief period of indecision, decides to remain with her husband. Southworth declares,

> But Divine Providence is kind, and nature is full of remedial power. We have all strength given as according to our need. If our joys are greater in

> anticipation than in realization, so certainly are our sorrows.
>
> Alice, in the terrible storm of passion that had temporarily dethroned her reason, believed that she could not outlive her marriage; yet she had lived twelve years and was comparatively happy...and her prayers and struggles had produced this happy effect. The image of Sinclair had faded away with the brightest visions of her girlhood. And now that that typhoon of youthful passion had long passed, even its memory had almost faded away, her general, affectionate, religious nature made her happy. With such a nature Alice could not live without forming attachments to those around her. (The Discarded Daughter, p. 40.)

Duty, which involves an attachment and commitment to society, provides Alice with rewards that compensate for her lack of romantic fulfillment. Alice thus derives her identification through this societal precept rather than through self-realization. Interestingly enough, however, the narrator follows these remarks with an important qualification:

> Yet, had the Angel of Destiny whispered to her heart this alternative: 'Your daughter! Two fates await her--to die in childhood, or live to be an unwilling bride--choose for her!' Alice would have answered without a moment's hesitation: Let her die in her childhood rather. Let her die now, rather. And to have saved her from the misery of wedding one she could not love, Alice would have been content to lay down her only heart's treasure, her idealized child in her grave. (The Discarded Daughter, p. 41.)

This passage reflects Mrs. Southworth's own ambivalence about the world about which she is writing. While she can put love in perspective as a mere sentiment, she also affirms it as a necessity; and it is interesting that she cannot fully resolve this conflict even in her fiction.

Southworth's novels often revolve around a mystery which is resolved in the course of the story. The assumption, of course, is that the mystery can be cleared up, although it is initially beyond the power of man to discover the solution. The issue of identity recurs throughout

Mrs. Southworth's fiction. Identity is of structural importance to Mrs. Southworth's world, as origin establishes a definitive set of characteristics which determines the Southerner's relationship to his world and those around him. In The Hidden Hand, for instance, a birth marks the beginning of the story. Capitola is brought into the world under some strange and nebulous circumstances; in the course of the story both the heroine and the reader are involved in a quest to discover her parentage. This theme of identity is compounded by the heroine's circumstances when she is forced to struggle for survival in the streets of New York City. In order to protect herself, Capitola dons boy's clothing, so that not only her family but her sex is concealed from the other characters. Thus, Capitola is in essence striving to reclaim her past, which indicates the essential role of tradition in defining Southern character. The plot moves backward toward a reaffirmation of the character, based upon a prescribed set of family lines and sexual roles, rather than toward individual growth on the part of the heroine. Once Capitola's identity has been revealed, she returns to the plantation and adopts a life style in accordance with her social position.

Several of Mrs. Southworth's novels contain gothic elements; for instance, The Haunted Homestead is structured around a mystery in connection with Wolfbrake Lodge. Strange sounds and sights eminate from the old mansion which are explained by the legend of Madame Van Der Vaugh. The mystery is presented as a supernatural phenomenon; the past, as the ghost of the late mistress of the house, is very much a part of the present, frightening the current occupants of the mansion. The heroine Mathilde declares,

---

> Our home contains as inexplicable a mystery as ever frightened human habitants away, and doomed a dwelling-place to desolation and decay, and this haunting presence infests a house in a neighborhood, as yet innocent of spirit-rappings, table-tippings, and 'sich like diviltires... (The Haunted Homestead, p. 15.)

In conformance with the gothic genre, the supernatural events are ultimately found to have a rational explanation, which is supplied by the mechanic, Frank Howard:

> There was no deception--there is none! It is a purely mechanical phenomenon! But, listen! Spiritual powers reside in mechanical forces. Every year we live elucidates this mystery, though none but the deepest thinkers see this truth in all its importance. Look you! A savage thinks that there is a diabolism in the self-action of a watch--in the reflection of a looking-glass. We think both mysteries to be simple mechanical combinations! Pray look at the lock before us. I observe that is Harmon's patent. Poor Harmon, a demented mechanist, scarcely knew what he would be at, and so undertook to make an invaluable improvement in the common door-lock. This is one of his; its 'the fantastic tricks before high heaven' that these rooms have witnessed! I am about to take off the lock, to prove what I have stated, as well as to remedy the evil. (The Haunted Homestead, p. 65.)

Reflecting on the incident, the narrator shares Howard's lament that the mysteries of life are so readily explainable:

> I was almost sorry that my ghostly mysteries had found so commonplace a solution--a mechanical defect taking the place of the phantom key, and an optical illusion explaining my midnight vision! (The Haunted Homestead, p. 71.)

Despite their romantic reveries, the mythic South remains a society in which mystery is equated with a state of chaos, usually stemming from faulty value choices but also (in gothic stories) from delusive appearances. Once order is restored to the household, Mathilde is free to marry Frank, and the novel moves to a happy and harmonious conclusion.

Class conflicts constitute another structural element centered on the important issue of lineage, identifying the proper heir to the plantation. In Ishmael, the young hero, who is presumably a member of the lower class, is in love with the well-born Claudia. The author makes use of a biblical allusion in this novel. Ishmael was the son of Abraham by Sarah's handmaid, Hagar, and was an outcast; similarly, Southworth's character is a social outcast, as he is not only a member of the lower class but is accused of being illegitimate as well--this marks him as unfit for the company of gentlemen or, of course, gentlewomen. Although Ishmael demonstrates a heroic and noble nature throughout the novel, this difference in status prevents him from approaching his beloved. Ishmael reflects,

> 'Oh, this will never, never do! It is weakness, folly, madness! What have I to do with Miss Merlin that she takes possession of my whole being in this manner! I must, I will conquer this passion!' he exclaimed, at last, starting up, throwing aside his book, and pacing the floor. (Ishmael, p. 125.)

Ishmael's ability to restrain his emotions is regarded as definitive evidence that he indeed possesses a noble and virtuous nature. Claudia, on her part, is repulsed by the stain on Ishmael's background, despite her considerable affection for the young man. In the course of the story Ishmael bravely rescues Claudia from danger, at the risk of his own life. As he lies in a coma, the protagonist unconsciously reveals his feelings for Claudia, much to her consternation:

> During the excitement and terror of the day, while the extent of Ishmael's injuries was still unknown and his life seemed in extreme danger, Claudia had not had leisure to receive the fact of Ishmael's love, much less to reflect upon its consequences. But, now that all was known and suspense over, now in the silence and solitude

---

> of her bed-chamber, the images and impressions of the day returned to her with all their revelations and tendencies and filled the mind of Claudia with astonishment and consternation! That Ishmael Worth should be capable of loving her seemed to Miss Merlin as miraculous as it would be for Fido to be capable of talking to her! And in the wonder of the affair she almost lost sight of its presumption! (Ishmael, p. 226.)

Of course, in reality Ishmael is the son of Mr. Herman Brudenell and is heir to his estate. Ishmael is the product of a secret marriage between the young Herman and Nora Worth, a union that remained secret throughout most of the novel. Throughout Ishmael's trials, he is championed by Claudia's cousin Beatrice, who has faith in Ishmael's elevated sensibility. The narrator declares,

> But though Claudia, whom he adored, was his watchful patroness, Bea, whom he only loved, was his truest friend. Claudia would warn him against danger; but Bea would silently save him from it. (Ishmael, p. 167.)

Bea is able to see through appearances and recognize the inherent nobility of the young protagonist, which of course, is there all along. In time, Ishmael is also able to see through appearances and realize his true affection for Bea, which is based not solely on beauty but on the unselfish quality of her devotion and love.

The Hidden Hand presents this same class conflict, with a slight twist. Traverse Rocke falls in love with a woman who actually is above his social station. No one is more aware of the hopelessness of this situation than is Traverse's mother. She explains to Clara's father, Dr. Day,

> If Clara's mother were living, sir, she would probably tell you that young ladies should never associate with any except their equals of the opposite sex. (The Hidden Hand, p. 164.)

As a responsible parent, it is Mrs. Rocke's duty to discourage her son from entertaining such high aspirations, even though the doctor himself is impressed with the noble nature of Traverse. Marah Rocke declares,

> (The doctor) does not see! His great benevolence blinds him! In his wish to serve he exposes Traverse to the most dreadful misfortune--the misfortune of becoming hopelessly attached to one far above him in station, whom he can never expect to possess! (The Hidden Hand, p. 165.)

Again, the inherent nobility of the young hero will not permit him to declare his love for Clara. The narrator observes,

> To feel how deeply and hopelessly he loved the doctor's sweet daughter--to feel sure that she perceived and returned his dumb, despairing love--and to know that duty, gratitude, honor commanded him to be silent, to tear himself away from her and make no sign, was a trial almost too great for the young heart's integrity. (The Hidden Hand, p. 202.)

Doctor Day, who regards Traverse as a son, trains the boy to become a doctor, which will elevate him in social status. At the conclusion of the novel, the doctor sends his young graduate to the west, with the understanding that once he has established himself in a practice he can return to his home and take the hand of his daughter. This is one of the infrequent cases of upward social mobility in Mrs. Southworth's fiction; however, it is significant that the expected resolution through marriage does not take place in the novel, but instead takes the form merely of the promise of a marriage. The young man must serve a term in exile, further proving himself worthy and prosperous before he can reap the rewards of admission to the upper class.

Another important element of Function II (Disharmony) involves the Reversal of Fortune that accompanies the sudden breakup of the social order. This shift often appears in the form of dramatic events which,

according to Boyle, "Are brought about by external circumstances rather than by characters initiating these moments themselves."[8] However, it is chiefly those characters who violate the strict aristocratic moral code who become susceptible to circumstance. For example, in The Doom of Deville, the hero, who has committed bigamy, is suddenly exposed to a world of chaos beyond his control and understanding. The narrator declares.

> Orville Deville felt as though he has lost all power over his own fate, and was being drifted he knew not where. (The Doom of Deville, p. 64.)

Those who do transgress must repent, or they are damned, both in a religious and a societal sense. Southworth states,

> Remorse, not tempered into repentence toward God only hardens the heart and sours the temper...(Adelaide) wept over (Deville's) decline of moral strength...She loved him as devotedly as ever, the only difference being that she loved him in fear and sorrow instead of pride and joy. (The Doom of Deville, p. 180.)

Thus, the reversal of Fortune is a state of social purgatory in which characters who violate the social order suffer the consequences of their moral choices. This period of trial corresponds to Southworth's personal Doctrine of Suffering, in that characters who rededicate themselves to the values of society ultimately prevail in the novels.

One of the most frequent devices employed by the author is the sudden disinheritance of a character. Again, the locus of power and identity is the plantation, so that punishment takes the form of exclusion from the estate and the family. In The Three Beauties, the heroine chooses to marry her lover in the face of her father's objections; for this she is cast out of her father's home and is

---

[8]Boyle, Mrs. E.D.E.N. Southworth: Novelist, p. 104.

forced to scramble for survival in a rude hut in the forest. Characters like Winny who have suddenly lost control of their social position are relegated to the lower class. Violations against the nomothetical value system are equated with loss of power, so that Winny comes to realize how difficult life is without the support systems of the Southern aristocratic tradition. Slaves and the other subservient figures in Southworth's novels are also totally without control; their lives are ruled by circumstances which are to a certain extent determined by the Southern gentry.

Another category of Reversal of Fortune is the sudden inheritance of a plantation. This acquisition of power is presented as a recompense for a previous injustice which has occurred at the beginning of the novel. In The Hidden Hand, Capitola is suddenly transformed from a street gamin into a polished young lady; her metamorphosis is swift and complete, due to her naturally enlightened sensibilities and impeccable dialect. The novel focuses on the young heiress testing and defining her rights and privileges in Southern society.

Social functions are often employed by Mrs. Southworth as critical moments for dramatic turns of events. Ceremonies such as the christening of children, the reading of wills, weddings, elections celebrations, dinners, and parties celebrate the society and epitomize order and harmony. Because morality is rewarded or punished through one's status in society, it is fitting that these ceremonies commemorating the order of society be chosen as pivitol points of the novel. In The Doom of Deville, the hero is repeatedly confronted with his crime of bigamy in public. For example, in the course of the novel, Orville inherits an estate in Scotland and travels to his new home to participate in

ceremonies honoring him as the next Earl. Deville's wronged wife Lionne appears at the festivities, as she recognizes "in that incident her best opportunity to break 'the good meeting with the most admired disorder.'" (The Doom of Deville, p. 206.) Lionne's disruption of the ceremony reflects Deville's transgressions, which have already destroyed the social order. Southworth declares,

> The fate of Mr. Deville was that of Tantalus. Than Orville Deville there never lived a man with a greater thirst of ambition, and here was the spring of wealth, rank, and honor within his reach, even at his lips, yet he might not drink of its water, guarded as they were by an awful Nemesis, whose avenging arm would be raised to hurl him down to the deep dishonor of detected crime.
>
> Called Earl of Glen Lennark, with no apparent bar to his right, he might not retain his title or enjoy his estate, yet unwilling formally and finally to renounce his claim, he took the middle course of quietly leaving Scotland, ostensibly traveling for the benefit of his wife's health. (The Doom of Deville, p. 192.)

Lionne's revenge frustrates Deville's ambitions, so that his own lack of moral strength effectively prevents him from achieving worldly success.

Illness is another function which appears in response to adverse circumstances in Mrs. Southworth's fiction. The physical breakdown of the body is often representative of a deteriorartion of a person's moral state. In Ruth, the Faithful Bride, Dr. Kerr declares, "The body and mind are so nearly connected that when one is weakened or diseased, the other is apt to be so, too." (Ruth, the Faithful Bride, p. 18.) This correspondence between physical and spiritual health is a common convention in nineteenth-century literature. Such illnesses as brain fever and melancholia were regarded as diseases of the nervous system, finely attuned to external stimuli. When the harmony of Southern society

is disrupted and the world of the character is thrown into chaos, the nvervous system becomes unsettled and illness results. Thus, illness in Mrs. Southworth's fiction symbolizes the collapse of the social order.

Infirmity most often strikes Southworth's female characters, whose fragile sensibilities cannot withstand the agitation caused by the breakup of the social order. Women are presented as victims, with sickness serving as their only response to conditions which are out of their control. In The Missing Bride, Edith, who has just learned of the murder of her husband, immediately becomes insensible. Her friend and confidante Mrs. Waugh declares, "She breathes--it is better to leave her to nature for awhile--too much attention worries her--she is very weak." (The Missing Bride, p. 80.) It is precisely because of this reaction to adversity that women in Southworth's novels must be protected. Edith is a delicate creature whose nature can hardly withstand the terrible strain caused by a break in the shell of society. Unconsciousness, or even death is preferable to life when the Southern mythic society falls into ruin.

However, there are also cases in which a male figure is felled by illness, often following some grievous violation of the moral framework. In Ruth, the Faithful Bride, Tudor Hereward is incapacitated following his unjust repudiation of his devoted wife. Hereward's illness is described as a disease of the soul. Southworth remarks,

> To his sick soul, as to the diseased mind of another, the beauty of the earth and the glory of the heavens were but 'A foul and pestilent congregation of vapours,' for all the pleasure he could take in them...His mental suffering was not now sharp. He was much too weak to feel acutely. His sorrow had settled into a dull despair--a cold and lifeless misery. (Ruth, the Faithful Bride, p. 6.)

Hereward's breech of gentlemanly conduct emasculates him, as he has lost the vigor and independence that mark the Southern gentleman. The narrator states,

> Physicians and friends alike ascribed his illness to nervous shock upon a system already run down after the long-continued pressure of work and worry. He was convalescent now, yet he seemed the mere shadow of his former vigorous manhood. (Ruth, the Faithful Bride, p. 5.)

The social structure of the South is in essence responsible for defining the masculine ideal. Having violated the absolute value system, Hereward, like a Southworthian female, cannot contend with the pressures caused by his unjust treatment of his wife, and becomes a passive convalescent.

Death is also significant as a response to the Reversal of Fortunes. Six deaths occur in The Discarded Daughter, and no fewer than ten characters are eliminated by the author in The Haunted Homestead. When it appears as part of Function II (Disharmony), death serves the purpose of removing characters from the novel whose continued presence would impede the ultimate resolution of the plot. Certain characters in Mrs. Southworth's stories must be sacrificed--not only for the convenience of the author, but for the good of the world of the novel. Mrs. Southworth's Southern society seems to demand the selfless sacrifice of an individual in order to insure the well-being of the culture as a whole. In this case, death is regarded as a transcendent rather than a tragic act. In The Discarded Daughter, Hugh Hutton mourns the loss of his mother and is comforted by his beloved, Garnet:

> 'Dead! really dead. Dead four days!' he exclaimed, burying his face in his hands.
>
> 'No, not dead--living in heaven! You know that--try to feel it also,' (Garnet) said tenderly. (The Discarded Daughter, p. 250.)

In the same novel, Agnes interferes with her evil husband's plans to force his step-daughter to marry against her will. She cries,

> So, pirate! we meet again at last! We meet upon the spot of the outrage which first separated me from home and country, friends and kindred, holiness and heaven! We meet upon this spot that you would again desecrate with crime! We meet in an hour of retribution! For this have I lived! For now that at last I see my mortal foe, never will I lose sight of you again, until I have put you in the hands of justice! Never will I cease to pursue you, until I hunt you to the scaffold! Never can I die, until I see you dead before me by the death of a felon! (The Discarded Daughter, p. 235.)

The two antagonists struggle, and the gun which the General is holding goes off, killing him. Although the demise of the General is presented as just retribution for his previous crimes, Agnes remains guilty of murder. The novelist solves this difficulty by permitting Agnes to swoon into a coma from which she never recovers. Garnet comforts Agnes' son, explaining,

> Ah! do not mourn so! believe me, it is far better as it is. There are some living so wronged, so broken, that nothing but death can set them right. Such a life was hers. There are some sorrows so deep that nothing but heaven can cure them. Such sorrows were hers. Oh! believe me, by all the loving-kindness of the Father, it is better as it is. (The Discarded Daughter, p. 251.)

Function III in the morphology of Mrs. Southworth's fiction is the Resolution, in which the world returns to its former harmonious state. The mysteries that permeate the novel are all divulged at the end of the novel; identities are revealed, and what before was ambiguous and seemingly subjective is established as clear and absolute, in keeping with the value system of the mythic South. Mrs. Southworth's novels contain a series of seemingly unrelated subplots which converge in the

conclusion. This fusion reflects the author's faith in a grand and unified design which governs Southern society. Providence plays a major role in the resolution of the novels. The Hidden Hand contains three hard-luck stories which are apparently independent of one another; as if by divine plan, the fates of Herbert, Traverse, and Capitola are joined, so that the audience gradually recognizes the interrelatedness of the characters and the world they inhabit.

Order is restored to the plantation, and the family tradition is re-established. At the conclusion of The Discarded Daughter, the heroine Garnet returns the title of the plantation to Elsie, its rightful heir. Garnet's act of generosity enables her to achieve "moral greatness" (The Discarded Daughter, p. 261), so that restoration of the plantation is tied to regeneration of the protagonists in the novel. Marriages abound, suggesting that the conclusion of the novel is actually the rebirth of the social order. The Lost Heiress concludes,

> "And, at this moment, Howlett Hall is the elegant seat of refined hospitality; the honored shrine of genius; and the favored abode of domestic love and bliss." (The Lost Heiress, p. 263.)

Other Southworth novels end with a convocation in which the characters dedicate themselves to society and its values;

> "...Oh, God! How shall I thank Thee? Hear me: I consecrate my whole future life to Thy service, in acknowledgement of this, Thy gift." (The Curse of Clifton, p. 318.)

As part of the restoration of the universal order, the villains in Mrs. Southworth's fiction are properly chastised for their sins at the conclusion of each novel. Death is regarded as the ultimate form of retribution; this punishment confirms the Old Testament sense of justice,

in which the villain must pay for his crime. As the author observes, "Death was the only rectifier of some lives." (The Discarded Daughter, p. 254.) Mrs. Southworth has little compassion for the fate of these characters. Upon the demise of the villainess Sina Hinton, the author simply states, without comment, "One hour after this, Sina Hinton died...Her funeral took place the third day..." (The Three Beauties, p. 204.) These deaths generally occur at the conclusion of the novel, as accounts are settled and the social structure is restored to a state of peace and harmony.

Thus, the Southern mythic society as revealed through the popular novels of Mrs. E.D.E.N. Southworth is an aristocratic system concerned with maintaining the moral order of the universe. Each Southworth plot serves as a ritual which reestablishes a positive system of values. The syncretism in the novels clearly defines each value in relation to others, which are then communicated to the audience. This portrait has become familiar to the public to the extent that the stereotype of Southern culture is easily recognized and accepted. Popular artists like Mrs. Southworth do, then, contribute to the inculcation of a cultural identity, an ideal containing vast social and historical implications.

CHAPTER 5

Characterization in Mrs. Southworth's Novels

One of Mrs. Southworth's most obvious limitations as a novelist is her flat, predictable characterizations. Boyle observes, "Similarity exists among the various novels...with regard to character's names and occupations (and) situations."[1] The characters, which are drawn from the popular conception of the ante-bellum South, are admittedly stereotypical. However, in spite of its literary shortcomings, Mrs. Southworth's characterization is valuable in terms of cultural mythology, reinforcing previously accepted notions about the South and its inhabitants. Readers enjoyed the very predictability of these characters; because popular art relies upon the expectation of the audience, the reader's familiarity enhances their enjoyment and understanding of the subject matter. Popular art can thus be regarded as a ritual in which the audience become active participants; because the characters in a novel are fully identifiable, the allegiances of the audiences are clearcut. As a result, the reader becomes involved in the story, and the world of the novel takes life and in a sense becomes real.

Little development takes place within the characters depicted in Mrs. Southworth's fiction. The figures are fixed, much like Southern society itself as presented in Mrs. Southworth's novels. Three distinct character types appear in her work, reflecting their different roles in

---

[1]Boyle, Mrs. E.D.E.N. Southworth: Novelist, p. 123.

the mythic Southern society: the male figure, the women, and the black slaves.

The male heroic figure who appears in Southworth's fiction is generally described in aristocratic terms. Referring to her young suitor, Cloudesley Mornington, Edith Waugh declares,

> I do not know how princes ought to look, or how they do look...yet I have but one word to convey my impression of this gentleman's appearances and address--both were--princely. (The Missing Bride, p. 190.)

This nobility appears as an inherited characteristic handed down from generation to generation, along with the title to property. So visible is this aristocratic countenance that it is apparent even in those characters who have been temporarily removed from their rightful station in life. In Ishmael, the young protagonist, who is unjustly accused of being illegitimate, dramatically saves the life of the young heiress Claudia; his deed is described by the narrator as, "A simple act of instinctive gallantry that any man, worthy of the name, would have performed". (Ishmael, p. 111.)

The plantation owner literally functions as the lord of his estate, providing not only for the material comfort but also for the moral welfare of his subjects. The master of the estate is presented in a manner similar to the traditional Old Testament presentation of God. The lord has created his slaves, defining their character, role and existence on the plantation. He serves as a father to his subjects, especially since black slaves are portrayed as children who lack a sense of identity and responsibility apart from their role on the plantation. The master also acts as judge within his estate. There

are no explicit scenes of punishment in Southworth novels, primarily because the slaves are always obedient to the master's laws, and therefore do not require chastisement.

Although he is the master, the plantation owner is ultimately subject to the laws of heaven. Frank Howard declares in The Haunted Homestead, "May Heaven deal with me as I with thee." (The Haunted Homestead, p. 70.) Like the Arch-Angel Satan, those masters who defy the higher authority of Justice, Love, Truth, Beauty and Faith are soon deposed. These characters, incidentally, provide the few instances of slave abuse in Mrs. Southworth's fiction. Commodore Waugh, in The Three Beauties, expresses his displeasure by hurling an object at a slave, nearly blinding him. The Commodore is referred to by the slaves as "Old Nick", since his behavior violates the universal moral order and is in effect a rebellion against God. However, the system of justice ultimately prevails, as this same disregard for the moral framework disrupt's Waugh's world and casts him into a chaotic state of unhappiness. He eventually repents, learning through the selfless example of a young woman, Harriet Joy, that true fulfillment lies in the submission of the individual to the moral order. He exclaims:

> "...She has taught me by example and experience a true lesson--to be happy myself I must try to make others happy--blessed be God!" (The Three Beauties, p. 267.)

Thus, in this aristocratic world, it is submission to society rather than to the individual will that insures personal fulfillment. Providence replaces the democratic ideal, as the external order provides for the moral welfare of all of the people. A system of justice operates within Southern society that makes slave revolts

unnecessary, since harmony and happiness are always restored at the end of the novel. The exemplary plantation owner supports and maintains this universal order. In The Lost Heiress, the protagonist, Daniel Hunter, exercises great restraint and wisdom in permitting rebellious Falconer O'Leary to mature into society at his own rate. Mrs. Hunter proclaims;

> "I feel such faith in Daniel Hunter, that I am sure he will convert and redeem...Falconer and make him worthy to be his son." (The Lost Heiress, p. 194.)

In fact, Daniel Hunter, as an archetype of the moral aristocrat, personifies the harmony of ideal values throughout the novel. His daughter Maude declares, "...Father, my dear Father--oh, your patience is like the patience of our Lord." (The Lost Heiress, p. 187.)

The Southworth aristocrat combines courtesy of manner with a definite sense of honor. A good man cherishes, inspires, and supports his women and guides them toward the universal good. However, while man serves as protector, it is not without sacrifice. Honoria declares to her mother, Lady Augusta:

> 'You look twenty years younger than papa. You have no grey hairs. Your head is as raven black as ever.'
>
> 'No," said Augusta with emotion, 'because he has sheltered it so well. His hair is bleached by the storms of life that have beaten on his head; and mine is unfaded, because he has leaned over me, and sheltered me with himself; because, notwithstanding all the trials and sorrows and casualties of life, he has made me so content.' (The Lost Heiress, p. 161.)

The male is thus accountable for the well-being and happiness of society, a responsibility that no one but a noble character would dare to undertake. Significantly, the role of the father and the role of the husband are

indistinguishable in Mrs. Southworth's fiction. In both cases, the male figure is regarded as lord and is worshipped accordingly. In Ruth, the Faithful Bride, Ruth declares,

> I do not remember the time when I did not love Tudor Hereward as I love my Lord. It was my religion to love him. I was brought up to worship God, and to adore Tudor Hereward. Under the Almighty, he was my lord, my law-giver. (Ruth, the Faithful Bride, p. 114.)

This passage is reminiscent of Alice's attitude toward her father, Colonel Chester:

> She had been taught to love and venerate her father above all earthly beings, and next to God...She had been taught how to bow with implicit and reverential obedience to his will. (The Discarded Daughter, p. 19.)

Southworth's South was thus a paternal system, with the male character assuming the role of guardian and protector of society. In The Three Beauties, the slave Old Uncle Kill laments the disastrous fate befallen his owner, Squire Darling, crying, "My own master--as I loved nex' bes' to God." (The Three Beauties, p. 202.) This attitude is indicative of the absolutist nature of the society, in which the aristocrat is universally regarded as a father figure, a societal Almighty.

Because he is so committed to the proper regulation of social norms and values, Southworth's male characters are obsessed with controlling their own natures as well. Excess of emotion is associated with weakness and, indeed, is so threatening to the masculinity of the Southern male that he ironically loses his composure over this very issue. Old Hurricane explodes,

> 'Emotion! Demmy, sir, what do you mean by emotion? Am I a man to give way to emotion? Demmy, sir, mind what you say!' roared the old lion, getting up and shaking himself free of all weakness. (The Hidden Hand, p. 82.)

Considering this obsession with restraint, it is not surprising that Southworth's male characters never exhibit any sexual drive to speak of. In The Discarded Daughter, Hugh Hutton is more interested in the sea than his newly-wedded wife. So excited is young Hugh by his forthcoming voyage that he neglects to consummate his marriage. The narrator remarks,

> As he looked upon this scene (of the sea), Hugh's eyes kindled, blazed. He did not see how sad was the brow of his young bride. No! the sea-king had already risen above the lover. (The Discarded Daughter, p. 33.)

After a brief word to his bride's guardian to "be kind to my little Agnes", Hugh sprang into his boat and struck out to sea. Strangely, Agnes' chief regret is that Hugh has neglected his nourishment. She laments,

> I wish he had only stayed to breakfast with us! I could have parted with him better then, if I had known he had eaten a good, warm breakfast. (The Discarded Daughter, p. 33.)

Southworth appears to be conscious of this incongruity, at least on some level. The governess, Miss Joe, observes,

> Well, I declare to man, if it is not wonderful! All them Hutton's had never seemed to value woman's love--have every one of them always got more than they deserved. (The Discarded Daughter, p. 34.)

Bound as they are by convention, the chivalric code, and their sense of decorum, the male character offers little in the way of the unexpected in Mrs. Southworth's novels. The male protagonist exhibits an inflexibility in the novels which reflects the fixed value system of Southworth's mythic South; he is unable to deal with appearances that run contrary to the reality they represent. In Ruth, the Faithful Bride, Tudor Hereward is confronted with circumstantial evidence of his

wife's unfaithfulness. When faced with the choice of belief in the absolute value system or in his wife, Tudor places his faith in the value system. He denounces Ruth with a malediction which is repeated throughout the story:

> I never loved you! I married you only to please my dying father. In a very few hours I shall leave this house, never to return while you desecrate it with your presence! (Ruth, the Faithful Bride, p. 67.)

This rigid attitude is perhaps one of the greatest distinctions between the male and female characters in Mrs. Southworth's work. The male is committed to the rational and to the system, rather than toward the emotional and a faith in the individual. As the title of the novel indicates, Ruth is at all times a devoted bride, maintaining her belief in her husband despite his insensitivity. Ruth leaves the sanctity of the plantation--not in rebellion, but as a loving act--to spare him the trial of living with a woman he did not love.

Often, too, the hero's attention to the external value system distorts his perception and undermines his ability to deal with the complexities of the real world. In The Doom of Deville, young Orville first secretly weds Lionne, only to remember he has been bethrothed from childhood to Adelaide. Such complications confuse Deville to the extent that he deserts the pregnant Lionne. He then commits himself to the fair Adelaide, whom he grows to love and appreciate in a manner not unlike his dutiful attitude toward society. Deville discovers that sacrificing his immediate gratification in the interest of society leads to ultimate personal fulfillment. Significantly, Deville, who is a bigamist and wife-deserter, is not presented as a villain by the author. Although he suffers the personal torment

that accompanies the ruination of Lionne, he remains unpunished by the law for his transgressions. Instead, Mrs. Southworth focuses on the vindictive reaction of Lionne, who proves unworthy to have been Deville's wife in the first place. Appropriately, Deville finds the solution to his confused personal affairs through the social structure. The protagonist learns to love his wife Adelaide and adopts the daughter of his marriage with Lionne, so that he is in effect making one family out of his two marriages. Because young Perdita strongly resembles her mother, Lionne is thus indirectly incorporated into the family as well.

One male character who differs from the fixed and controlled personna of the aristocrat is the young man who is struggling to realize his manhood. Falconer O'Leary is described as "Young, firey, headstrong, self-willed. He has always not only really been his own master." (The Lost Heiress, p. 146.) What distinguishes a boy from a man in these tales is that the youth is unable to exert self-control, which is the first step toward assuming responsibility for the society as a whole. Even manly virtues become faults if not moderated by restraint and refinement, the key ingredients in the maturation process. Describing young Hugh Hutton, Mrs. Southworth declares,

> Honest, brave and frank, even to rashness, generous even to extravagance, unselfish to the degree that the worldly-wise would call fatuity..." (The Discarded Daughter, p. 29.)

Hugh disappears early in the book, to return only after he has attained the self-control that transforms him into a dependable and responsible man.

The young male initiate who lacks the iron-will and resolute masculine constitution of the mature man is depicted as a nearly feminine figure. He is free to entertain excesses of emotion, and it is no coincidence that the courting scenes generally feature a young lover who is as filled with emotion as his sweetheart. In The Three Beauties, Edgar cries, "Care for you, Winny! Care for you! I love you! love you more than my life, my soul, Heaven, God!" (The Three Beauties, p. 37.) Even the excesses in punctuation, which are generally reserved for the female and black characters, are testimony to the relationship between restraint and masculinity. Edgar's priorities are inverted, as the man is generally the recipient of all rapt attention. Edgar appears as a selfless figure who is anxious to sacrifice himself for his lover. He states, "I am proving that bodily pain and fatigue, without moral suffering, endured for a loved one, is a deep religious joy." (The Three Beauties, p. 85.) However, the mature man is more committed to society and God than to any woman, which is a lesson that Edgar must learn as he grows into manhood.

The villains who appear in Mrs. Southworth's fiction are presented as demonic counterparts to Southworth's aristocrats-as-lord analogy. The most dastardly villains, like General Garnet in The Discarded Daughter, repudiate their responsibilities and abuse their power as gentlemen. General Garnet is a solitary figure, isolated from the community of man. He is an inflexible character who exploits the law, which is intended for the welfare of the whole society, in order to satisfy his personal ambition. The General is a violator without principle. He marries Alice against her will, in order to add to his land holdings. While property and lineage are important considerations

in marriage, there is ideally in Southworth's world a harmony between love and worldly concerns which Garnet violates. The General then attempts to perpetrate the same crime upon his daughter, arranging a marriage between herself and Magnus, the young heir of a neighboring plantation. The narrator asserts,

> General Garnet's heart was set on the marriage of those two joining plantations. If Magnus had backed out, he would have shot him like a dog. If Elsie would have retreated, he would have turned her out of doors. If both had broken off, by mutual consent, he would have--Satan knows what he would have done. (The Discarded Daughter, p. 78.)

In the climactic scene of the novel, the General places the heroine, Garnet Seabright, in his power in order to force the young woman to marry against her will. The General is a satanic figure whose attack on womankind threatens the social framework of the South. Indeed, the villain appears to be invoking the Evil One with each speech:

> In the fiend's name, young woman, what do you mean?
>
> *
>
> By all the demons, girl! I wonder that you should give breath to that fear!
>
> *
>
> By Satan, Miss Seabright, I am thunderstruck by your audacity. (The Discarded Daughter, p. 233.)

Garnet is able to resist his attack because of the very societal and heavenly laws which the General has determined to violate. She declares,

> I am under the protection of God and of the laws...by Heaven, I do defy you! Under the protection of Heaven, in the name of Heaven, I do defy you! (The Discarded Daughter, pp. 232-234.)

Mrs. Southworth has no mercy with rascals like General Garnet, and he meets a violent and just end.

One villainous type who is treated rather comically by the author is the irascible old gentleman who, although harmless, raises a commotion in response to all types of experience. Old Hurricane in The Hidden Hand, is described as possessing "A noble nature, but it was often obscured by violent passions." (The Hidden Hand, p. 54.) Old Hurricane is buffeted by the social structure, in the form of understanding servants, relatives, and, of course, the affluence to rectify his errors. However lightly he is depicted by Mrs. Southworth, however, the beginning of the novel explains that in the past he not only ignored his poor sister and nephew, but deserted his wife and daughter. The story traces his attempt to correct the situation, so that characters who have been misled into celebrating their "home comforts" (The Hidden Hand, p. 6) at the expense of spiritual well-being can be redeemed. Old Hurricane is portrayed in a rather patronizing manner by the author as an overgrown, petulant child; this attitude is consistent with Southworth's philosophy, for Old Hurricane has not matured into the ideal of restrained and responsible manhood that would entitle him to the reader's respect. Old Hurricane's behavior and judgment are confused by his sudden and irrational emotions, which also makes him easy prey for the charming though manipulating manner of his niece, Capitola. As a result, the young heiress has her way with the old man throughout the novel; it requires the strong hand of a determined suitor to tame her spirit and mold her into a proper and ultimately more fulfilled woman.

The heroine of Southworth's ante-bellum South was the ideal of beauty, femininity, and grace which characterized such traditions as

the Elizabethan woman. Gaines observes "The true heroine of plantation romance is...a crystallization of all legends of fair women, perfect and peerless.."[2] These women are portrayed as aristocratic figures. In The Three Beauties, for example, Mrs. Summerfield is described as having "A queenlike air of majesty and graciousness." (The Three Beauties, p. 5.) In The Lost Heiress, Lady Augusta is described as possessing "...a queenly turn of head and neck...graceful, gracious, noble air and expression..." (The Lost Heiress, p. 85.) Southworth consciously draws this analogy to royalty to the attention of her audience. She declares, "(Lady Augusta) stood like an outraged Empress, her imperial form drawn up to its haughtiest height..." (The Lost Heiress, p. 105.) The superiority of the heroine's nature is an innate quality which cannot be disguised by either appearance or circumstances. In The Hidden Hand, for instance, Capitola is abandoned as a child and must forage for her living in the streets of New York. The only clue to her real identity was a birthmark. The author observes, "In the middle of her left palm is the perfect image of a crimson hand, about half an inch in length." (The Hidden Hand, p. 28.) It is of some significance that this sign was "perfect"; for, the deprivation into which young Capitola fell contrasted with the lasting and indelible perfection of her nature. The circumstances of real life which threatened her existence on earth could not conceal what she was: an essentially ideal figure.

Considerable attention is devoted in Mrs. Southworth's work to the physical attributes of the heroine. The female protagonist is, of course, beautiful, presented as an ideal of feminine pulchritude. She generally

---

[2]Gaines, The Southern Plantation, 174.

is fair in complexion, which distinguishes her from the dark villainess and the blacks on the plantation. The rather formulaic accounts of the heroine's lovely eyes, with their long lashes, and even, white teeth, establishes an ideal of beauty that reflects the perfection of Heaven. Physical attributes in Mrs. Southworth are but a reflection of internal virtue, so that the female figure is spiritually pure. Gaines observes,

> There are in the presentation of the Southern girl many spiritual qualities, certain hints of idealism which are not suggested in the characterization of the masculine world.[3]

Because the South is depicted as a glamorous society, Mrs. Southworth pays considerable attention to describing the dress of the female characters. Gaines states,

> The belle is usually credited with lavish costumes; thus she concentrates in herself much of the tradition of social splendor, for the sheen of wealth in a social order is most glittering in the attire of its womanhood.[4]

The heroine is generally extremely young, often just entering into womanhood at the outset of the novel. Youth is equated with an innocence that is an essential quality of the Southern belle. This simplicity of character may be regarded as a flaw in Southworth's literary technique, but it also reinforces her conception of woman as a pure, almost childlike creature. The woman is certainly treated as a child, as she is dependent on the male in both a legal and social sense. Southworth declares,

> No woman is at the same time under bonds to both father and husband; she passes from the protection of the former to that of the latter. You left your father for me--Now new duties invest you; now you no longer belong to him, but to one, your husband, who proudly

---

[3] Ibid., p. 176.

[4] Ibid., p. 174.

> claims all your love and duty and holds himself in all things responsible for you. (The Doom of Deville, p. 33.)

The ideal female has thus lived very little in the real world, having been protected from the cares of everyday life.

The slave structure of the mythic Southern culture is not restricted to blacks but extends to women as well. The heroic female in Southworth's fiction is devoted to her man and, like the black slave, is grateful for the opportunity to serve him. In The Curse of Clifton, Ardenne declares,

> It shall be I who will work for you. I will be your servant--your slave; and, if fatigue comes, if privation comes, oh! it will be passing sweet when borne for you! Ah! If pain comes, it will bring ectasy--no agony! Ah, I knew it! It is wonderful--it is beautiful--it is divine--it is true! Every pain endured for a beloved one is no longer a pain, but an exquisite pleasure!--the deepest, strongest joy known in life! a silent, hidden, profound ecastatic trance of the soul, that brings Heaven down! Oh, my archangel! may God give me the heaven of toiling and suffering for you! (The Three Beauties, p. 38.)

Throughout Mrs. Southworth's fiction, the female protagonist displays forbearance and acceptance of her position, no matter how unjust. The heroine epitomizes perfect Faith and Trust in God through her obedience to the social precepts and norms of the social system. Female characters are frequently victimized by the male-oriented society. In Ruth, the Faithful Bride, the heroine is accused of infidelity and forced to flee the plantation. Ruth experiences poverty and deprivation before she is cleared of suspicion. Yet, the heroine freely forgives her husband, demonstrating far more generosity than her inflexible master. Many of Southworth's stories explore the depths of torment that a woman would gladly subject herself to as an expression of her love. Indeed, the extreme suffering of some of Southworth's selfless women borders on

masochism. In The Three Beauties, Winny exclaims,

> 'Oh, it would be such a heaven to share that poverty! Oh, it would be a divine joy to work and bear pain for Edgar!' said Winny, clasping her little white hands in a sort of ecstasy. (The Three Beauties, p. 44.)

To which the villainess Sinai Hinton responds (and not without reason), "The inconceivable little idiot!" That these women felt they had to express their devotion in this particular manner is a reflection of Southworth's conception of men and of how life operated in her mythic South. From a literary point of view, however, it is more understandable; the more insensitive the hero appears and the more terrible the trial for the woman, the more the audience respects and admires the heroine and the depth of her devotion.

Among the female characters who appear in Southworth's fiction are those women whose entire existence is devoted to the service of others. In The Curse of Clifton, Catherine is a lowborn nurse who sacrifices her personal happiness in order to uphold her society. The author notes,

> Catherine lived only for the good of others. She had grown to believe that there was no individual happiness for herself, except in the service of others...Behold, the handmaid of the Lord. (The Curse of Clifton, p. 199.)

The welfare of the male aristocrat is dependent upon the sacrifices of not only black slaves, but of women as well. In Ruth, the Faithful Bride, the heroine loves to be useful to her husband. She devotes her days to copying his letters--a small part of his life, which makes up her total existence. Southworth's personal Doctrine of Suffering seems to be in operation here, as women must derive their personal fulfillment through a higher, societal good. Thus, the religious analogy to the Divine Lord has its counterpart for women in Southern society.

That this social system would require such sacrifices on the part of women raises questions about its justice; however, this issue is never directly addressed by Mrs. Southworth. However, occasional references to the oppressed state of women do appear in Southworth's novels. In Ishmael, the hero unjustly wins custody of his wife's children, property, earnings, and alimony in a divorce settlement. The narrator states,

> Woman--woman, loving, feeble, and oppressed from the beginning of time--Woman, hardly dealt with by nature in the first place, and by the laws, made by her natural lover and protector, man, in the second place. (Ishmael, p. 190.)

Southworth admits that women are occasionally victimized by this male-dominated society. In The Doom of Deville, she comments,

> It was not the first or the last time that a good, wise woman has been forced from her better judgment by a foolish, bad and tyrannical man. (The Doom of Deville, p. 243.)

However, the tragedy, in Southworth's view, is not that the woman is subordinate, but that the man should take advantage of his superior position. The role of the woman, according to the author, is to bring out the best qualities in man. In The Hidden Hand, for instance, Old Hurricane is a male figure whose temper often flies out of control. He needs to be tamed by the good influence of a woman, in this case Capitola. Thus, while woman assumes a subordinate position in Southworth's Southern society, like the slaves, she actually contributes to her greatest capacity.

One character that often appears in Southworth's fiction is the poor widow or country spinster, who performs selfless acts. In Ruth, the Faithful Bride, for instance, Aunt Sophie takes in the homeless

Ruth and provides her with shelter when it appears that the heroine is without hope. Characters like Aunt Sophie represent a quality in life that seems to be sadly lacking in the male world--Charity. Aunt Sophie is a warm, emotional woman who can see beyond appearance. Unlike Ruth's suspicious husband, Aunt Sophie senses that the heroine is a good woman and puts her faith in her instincts. Aunt Sophie is a maternal figure who nurtures Ruth back to health. Significantly, this type of character is free of the influence of a husband and thus can follow her intuition. In addition, she is essentially an asexual figure, so that her emotional nature remains pure and clear to the reader.

Woman's submission is presented as a moral issue which is, not surprisingly, tied to the surrender of her legal rights. In The Lost Heiress, Maude voluntarily gives up the title of Howlet Hall to her husband, Falconer, even though they will both share it in marriage. She explains,

> '"Oh!' said Maude, hiding her blushing face in his bosom and speaking in the soft, low tones of shy devotion, 'You do not know a woman's fond, doting heart. She does so delight to depend upon her husband, to owe all things to his love; to receive everything from his hand! This is the way with her. God has made her so!' (The Lost Heiress, p. 260.)

While Southworth's women characters demonstrate a highly defined nature, they have only limited intellectual capacity. The female is concerned with domestic economy and social graces rather than the more arduous intellectual tasks which are suitable for males. Gaines notes,

> High intellectual power of either native capacity or of extended mental training is not in the tradition...The social attainments of the young ladies were, however, considerable. Poise of manner, resourcefulness and ease of conversation, sparkling vivacity, refinement

> of judgment, to say nothing of graceful supervision of entertainment, these faculties seemed instinctive.[5]

Occasionally Southworth's female characters demonstrate capabilities that exceed her prescribed role in society. In The Hidden Hand, Capitola is forced to wear boy's clothes in order to survive in the streets of New York; she is successful until her true sex is discovered, making her dependent upon her newly-discovered family. Capitola laments, "I felt bitter against Fate for not making me a boy." (The Hidden Hand, p. 44.) Strength in women is frowned upon except for a spiritual strength that enables her to endure what she hasn't the power to change. One male character remarks, "I hate to see strength in women! It don't belong to them, nor grace them anyhow." (The Curse of Clifton, p. 17.) Spiritual strength is also essential in subduing a female's emotional nature, since an unrestrained emotional self is regarded as dangerous to life itself. Mrs. Southworth declares, "And she sank upon his bosom, pale, faint, with excess of joy." (The Discarded Daughter, p. 148.) Earthly love must be a reflection of spiritual devotion:

> I know, I feel, that if I should ever love at all, I should love intensely--that my whole soul would be absorbed in the passion--that the highest affections, hopes, and aspirations, that should seek a home in Heaven and an enjoyment in God, would settle upon earth; and earth would be my Heaven. (Retribution, p. 14.)

As a result, the heroines of Mrs. Southworth's fiction are out of touch with their own sexuality, so that all romantic involvement is purely spiritual. Gaines declares,

> The chastity of Southern womanhood is almost axiomatic, a spotlessness of thought and act...an accentuated whiteness of soul by very reason of

---

[5] Ibid., p. 175.

> the contrast with the deeply colored civilization in which these women lived.[6]

However, the issue of woman's sexuality is taken up rather tentatively in some of Southworth's novels. In The Hidden Hand, Capitola is presented as a wild, untamed creature of nature, described as a "wild bird". (The Hidden Hand, p. 171.) The novel follows her ultimate taming, as her wild spirit is cultivated once she has been reclaimed from the chaotic and degenerate existence of the New York streets. Excess of emotion is presented as a menace to women which can lead to eventual destruction. The Doom of Deville offers an interesting insight into the dangers of a woman's unrepressed sexuality and man's response to it. The story traces Orville Deville's involvement with two women. Lionne is a wild and free creature, as close to a sexual being as Mrs. Southworth can manage. Orville falls passionately in love with this woman, who as a resident of the forest is a product of nature; Lionne is described as "a solitary child of nature and the wilds." (The Doom of Deville, p. 22.) Carried away by his strong attraction to Lionne, Orville conveniently forgets that he has been since birth bethrothed to Adelaide, a blonde beauty who is the epitome of the feminine ideal. Describing Adelaide in conversation with his mother, Orville states,

> 'She is the most beautiful, the most graceful, and the most charming maiden I ever saw. She is fair, sweet and bright as a poet's vision of an angel; and yet that does not do her full justice. She is more than all I have described. I want one comprehensive word--'
>
> 'Well, that word that describes Adelaide--what is it?' she asked.

---

[6] Ibid., p. 176.

> 'Lovely! Yes, that's it. Other girls may be beautiful, graceful, fascinating; Adelaide is all that, and in addition to that, she is lovely.
>
> 'Aye; for loveliness in women includes all excellencies--beauty, wisdom, goodness!' (The Doom of Deville, p. 55.)

Thus, despite his appreciation for this cultivated, pure "angel", Deville feels an intense desire for Lionne. However, Orville recognizes his duty and abandons Lionne to live with Adelaide. The passionate Lionne, however, is unwilling to postpone her gratification, as her selfless rival has succeeded in doing. She commits herself to revenging her dishonor and crops up at strategic moments to destroy Orville's happiness. Her response thus provides the solution to Southworth's plot conflict and resolves the dilemma of the hero's divided loyalties. Orville admires Adelaide but passionately loves Lionne; together, they represent the two sides of woman's nature. By yielding to her passions, Lionne is transformed into an animal, losing her femininity, and as a result, Orville's love. Instead he turns to the wife who is recognized legally by society; he ultimately cultivates a finer, purer, and more lasting love than would have ever been possible with purely sexual Lionne. Adelaide has maintained a selfless, patient attitude, more endearing and enduring than the short-spent, intense, passion of Lionne, which could (and did) turn to hate.

Through a series of literary acrobatics, the daughter of the marriage of Orville and Lionne is adopted by Adelaide and Orville; her identity is, of course, unknown until the conclusion of the novel. Significantly, Lady Adelaide cautions Deville that Perdita's wild, passionate, and obviously sexual nature must be controlled for her own well-being:

> She is already too ardent, too impassioned, too excitable! Her heart, and fancy, and imagination are too impressible, too impetuous, too enthusiastic! They need repressing, not stimulating! (The Doom of Deville, p. 243.)

This excess of passion constitutes a critical flaw of women, according to Southworth, which can mark them as villainesses. In Ruth, the Faithful Bride, Madame Von Bruyin is spoiled and willful, qualities which run contrary to the ideal of woman as selfless and subordinate to men. In The Curse of Clifton, Georgia is also willing to sacrifice her morality for her more immediate gratification. Georgia admits,

> I am not scrupulous. I am one who will do, dare, or suffer anything! I ask no leave of earth or heaven! I do what I will and take the consequences. There is no pain or loss that I weigh with the loss of my love! And not for the fear of eternal perdition--not for the hope of everlasting salvation, will I forego the joy of my mortal love! (The Curse of Clifton, p. 208.)

Georgia, referred to as "the dark lady", is guilty of making her passion for a man more important than her sense of morality. She cries,

> I, too, love Clifton! I loved him the first hour I ever saw him. I have loved him ever since, more madly for every obstacle dividing us! I have schemed, dared, sinned for him! Twice he has been snatched from me by fate...If there be any power in my own soul, on earth, or in hell to help me, I will enlist it to give me this one desire of my heart, this man's love! I have lived for nothing else! Oh! angels and devils! how we have suffered for him...Now hear me! If you dare to come between me and my love, I will find a way to kill you! (The Curse of Clifton, p. 208.)

Georgia is thus guilty of worshipping false idols--man instead of God.

Georgia is juxtaposed in the novel to Catherine, whose love for Archer Clifton is expressed through selfless devotion, even at the expense of her personal fulfillment. Catherine's love for Clifton is primarily spiritual, and she loves him as she loves her God. She loves

him through her sense of morality, as opposed to the dichotomy expressed by Georgia. She delcares,

> He does not even notice me now. Yet I would like to live with him, to serve him--myself unknown, unnoticed. You are not the only one who has missed earthly happiness I think it must be written in the book of fate that we may not have those whom we love too deeply--that we may not have idols. It would make us too happy, in an existence designed chiefly for trial and probation...If we may not have joy, there remain the peace and cheerfulness found in duty. (The Curse of Clifton, pp. 210-211.)

Another type of villainess is the woman who exploits her beauty, which is regarded as not only a gift of Heaven, but a reflection of Heavenly grace. Juliette Summers, in Retribution, is a dark-haired beauty whose exact background is obscure, an important issue in the lineage conscious mythic South. She is befriended by good, though plain, Hester Gray. Though Juliette's physical attributes are compelling, she is described as dark and sinister:

> As Miss Summers joined the young ladies in the recreation room upon the evening of the day of her arrival, she appeared a superb beauty, with the air and manner of a princess. She was a tall and finely formed brunette. Her small and classic head sat proudly above a chest and shoulders of unequaled grace and luxuriant beauty. Her abundant and shining black hair was grained to droop in large, smooth, glossy ringlets on each side of a face whose richness of complexion could only have come from Italy. But the glory of that matchless face were the large, black eyes, with their long, black fringes, so dusky and brooding one instant, so melting and suffused the next, and suddenly so resplendent with light and soul, and upon occasion, so fierce and flaming in anger. There was a mesmoric spell in those eyes. Indeed, the sinister and inviting coquette had once, in an unguarded hour, asserted that she had 'only to look into the eyes of a man to make him love' her. (Retribution, p. 35.)

This story is in some respects an Adam and Eve parable, with Juliette serving as temptress. Men are depicted as essentially weak creatures who can be manipulated through their passions. As a result, the chief issue in the novel is the morality of sexuality. Hester cautions Juliette,

> Ah! Juliette, love, you are right in thanking Heaven for your gift of beauty. I do not agree with the old saws that would have us disparage it. It is a gift of high value, this 'mere physical beauty', as it is sometime contemptuously called. Like all other blessings--of wealth, talent, or station--it involves a serious responsibility. (Retribution, p. 17.)

Characters like Juliette Summers commit a moral sin by using their sexuality to help them win social prominence and acceptance. In the course of the novel, the unscrupulous Juliette bedazzles Hester's guardian, Colonel Dent, to whom Hester is devoted. Juliette exploits her beauty in order to win social approval for herself and the Colonel, who lapses into a state of passivity that leads to his eventual downfall. Juliette is drawn as a satanic figure who commits herself to the pagan rites of passion without love. Such total abandonment of soul to one's sexuality, while temporarily heightening experience, is actually too intense for man's moral sensibilities and is self-destructive:

> What enthusiasm, what inspiration, glows through the being who has cast down reason and crowned Passion in her stead; what high festival, what insane revelry, what a jubilee, a carnival, she keeps up on the palace of the soul, until, consumed by her own excesses, she perishes in her own fires. (Retribution, p. 185.)

In Southworth's world, such moral sins are not left unpunished. Juliette and her unethical husband are left in a state of purgatory, in which their love is undermined by jealousy and mistrust:

> There was no lasting peace or happiness for them. A love sown in treason could not possibly flourish in trust. Sin is its own retributor. "God is his own interpreter." (Retribution, pp. 184-185.)

Thus, the couple's attachment is transitory and impermanent in a world in which ideal love is constant and everlasting. Juliette's ultimate retribution is that she remains unfulfilled as a woman. Like Sisiphus, she is doomed to forever flirt with those gentlemen who can be of use to her. Southworth comments,

> I had intended to have reviewed and analyzed this woman's character and life, to have traced from its germ the development of evil in her soul. to have shown how she began by a dalliance with sinful thoughts; how the entertaining of sinful thoughts generated wrong desires, which grew to evil passions; how the indulgences of these evil passions became an inveterate habit; and how, with all this, it had cost this sinner as much of struggle, resistance, perseverance, to become the demon she was, so ever it cost a Christian to become a saint. Life is and must be a struggle. The wrong-doer is as great a wrestler as the right-doer, with this difference--that the saint struggles against his worse nature, and the sinner against his better nature. (Retribution, pp. 230-231.)

One other interesting villainess appears in the novels of Mrs. Southworth. In The Three Beauties, Sinai Hinton is a Jewess who serves as a companion to the heroine Winny. Beauty is a reflection of spiritual grace in the world of Mrs. Southworth; conversely, Sinai's appearance is a sign that she is not in harmony with this Christian world. The author recounts a conversation between the young Sinai and her mother:

> 'You go out alone, Sina! you have only your cleverness to carve your fortune with; but you can do it!'
>
> 'If I were beautiful I could,' said Sina

> 'A woman with a fine pair of eyes can produce the effect of beauty, or she can manufacture any other beauty."
>
> 'What can a girl do with such a nose as I have?' (The Three Beauties, pp. 13-14.)

The old Jewish sterotype appears as evidence of the absence of the spiritual grace that appears in Sinai's counterpart, the blond Winny.

Sinai is portrayed as a godless creature who is more closely related to the bestial side of man than his divine nature; this is distinctly tied to the evolution of her race:

> If there be any truth in the old heathen idea of the transmigration of souls--Sinai or Sina Hinton's soul had ascended the scale of creation, first through the subtle narcotic poisons, then through the snake, the jay bird, the cat, and had at last reached its most powerful development in--Sinai Hinton. (The Three Beauties, p. 13.)

The struggle between good and evil appears as an internal conflict within Sinai. She admits,

> This is the truth, There was in me, as in you, and in us all, originally, an angel and a devil striving for pre-eminence. They kept up in my soul such an eternal war that I had no peace between them; so I just strangled and cast out the angel, and the fiend has quiet possession. (The Three Beauties, p. 59.)

Mrs. Southworth is consciously drawing an analogy with the Adam and Eve story. Sina obviously lacks the spiritual strength to resist the temptation of evil, which is the basis of Southworth's anti-semitism. As a result, the villainess is susceptable to worldly, base, bestial feelings. Southworth declares,

> When Sina Hinton arrived at Oak Grove, the fine old hall, the wealth of the estate, every description, excited her admiration and envy--envy of its heiress. Such a set of feelings could not arise in a subtle and unprincipled

---

> nature like hers without becoming the master motives of her actions. She watched the favorable points of her position. 'Why should this silly, simpering little fool have all this great plantation, and I, her cousin, have none?' (The Three Beauties, p. 59.)

Because of her undisciplined nature, Sinai is unwilling to accept her unjust social position, which is ironically reinforced by the racist portrait of the Jews in this very novel. Although Sinai's anger may be justified, the true Christian in the mythic South accepts inequality. Indeed, this forbearance designates them as angels rather than devils in Southworth's eyes. Significantly, Sinai is guilty of envy, which was the flaw of the serpent in the Adam and Eve story. The snake was an instrument of Satan, rebellious against his inferior status in the social heirarchy. In the course of the novel, Sinai likewise attempts to undermine Winny's position in the plantation, much as Satan attemped to overthrow God's ascendent position in Heaven. However, Winny ultimately prevails and succeeds in casting Sinai out of the Southern paradise, reestablishing her own position in society.

Black slaves are the chief source of humor in the novels of Mrs. Southworth, a function which has served to perpetuate the racist sterotype in the imagination of the American audience. Gaines explains,

> The tradition insists that the plantation black is intrinsically a clown...This quality is all-pervasive; religion, superstition, music, are frequently turned to ultimate ludicrous effects.[7]

The use of the black character as comedic figure is an old convention in American popular art, perhaps most visible in the minstrel shows.

---

[7] Ibid., p. 198.

Gaines observes,

> These spectacles present over and over again the sterotyped devices long fixed in popular conception. The common 'sets' are the cabin by the cotton patch, the levee by the river side...and sometimes a graveyard for the effects of superstition. Comedy is the principal objective.[8]

Humor involves a process in which the audience is able to distance itself from the essentially human foibles presented on stage. The black characters behave in ways that the audience recognizes as laughable; and this sense of superiority, which is an essential element of humor, is fundamental to racism as well.

Mrs. Southworth's utilization of black characters for comic relief, like her attitude toward racism and the institution of slavery, is not consciously malevolent. Her aim is the accurate depiction of the Negro character. She comments,

> Jenny...a source of ever fresh entertainment to the English girl, to whom negro character, not as it is falsely presnted in books or comic songs, but as it really exists in the South, full of indestructible self-esteem, disinterested affections, and audacious wit and humor, was entirely new, quaint, and piquant. (The Missing Bride, p. 137.)

However in the very next sentence the author provides an illustration of the childlike naivete which is the source of the slaves' audacity:

> Not the least amusing to Marian was the air of perfect kindness and sincerity with which Jenny approved and patronized her, telling her that--the English were 'Jes as good as white people when they 'haved themselves.' (The Missing Bride, p. 137.)

It is the black person's ignorance, then, that provides much of the comedy in Southworth's novels; Jenny is unconscious of the incongruity of her remark, so that the joke is essentially shared by the white

---

[8] Ibid., p. 6.

characters in the book, as well as by members of the audience. Much of the humor derives from Jenny's pretensions of understanding her world (imagine a black woman approving and patronizing a white person!), much like a little child playing grown-up. Humor is thus employed to deflate the concerns of the black man by making him the object of ridicule. The effect is to reduce him in status so that the reader does not take the plight of the black man seriously. The humorous treatment of the black works in other ways to undermine the audience's respect for the black. Southworth includes in every novel long humorous passages that attempt to duplicate the dialect of the slave. These narratives are difficult to read, being filled with misspellings and mispronounciations.

> Well, Mars Tudor, I tole yer all dat; but I didn't fink of tellin of yer all de little trivles w'ich 'peared no 'count--sich as he makin' ob her dress herse'f in her close to go 'long ob him--dose berry close wot Miss Rufe gib her--dat warm cashy gown, an' de little hat--all wot was tied up in de bundle--did he make her take out an' put on to go 'long ob him genteel. No, I didn't tell yer dat; nor likewise as how she 'beyed him in 'spect of de close, but 'posed him when he tuk ebberyfin' out'n de house an' lef' me nuffin. An' dey bofe went 'way quarrelin'--quarrelin' werry bitter, an' I yeard 'em at it till dey got out of yearin'--an' next minit I heerd an awful screech, an' den anoder an' anoder. An' I say: "Dere now," I say, "he's beatin; of her, de brute!" An' den dere was silence. An' I nebber t'ought no wass ob it, dan it war bad 'nuff, but not so uncommon as to keep ne 'wake. (Ruth, the Faithful Bride, p. 13.)

Passages like these question the intellectual capacity of the black man. The language is very childlike, as the slaves are incapable of pronouncing particular consonant sounds like the letter "f" and the "TH" sound. That these passages are so difficult to understand makes the black man appear dense and incomprehensible. The narratives of the slaves generally

include long digressions that intentionally slow the plot. The slaves simply cannot keep to the point, which reflects their lack of discipline. Frequently it is the confused and overwhelmed slave who must impart critical information in the novel; this irony is intended to provide the humorous interludes in the novels. In The Doom of Deville, Old Nero is called upon to describe his master's brush with death at the hands of the Indians:

> Here (Deville) was interrupted by his host, who said, with a genial smile:
>
> 'Will my guest do me a favor? Will he let this original genius, who is described as your servant, come forward and relate his own and his master's adventures? for I know,' he added gracefully, 'that my young soldier will scarcely do himself justice in his own narrative.'
>
> Deville bowed with a smile, and Old Nero, who felt much reassured by the stately and kindly presence of the master of the house, approached and stood hat in hand.
>
> 'Well, you see, ole marse, when we fuss fell in long o' de amber-scalps--shades, I mean--de bushes was so thick and 'structing dat Marse Awful--'
>
> 'He means Orville, my Christian name,' put in the young officer.
>
> 'Awful or Offal, it's all de same, ole, marse, only ef you dem keeps puttin' me out, you'll make me forget to remember all about it, and now I shall have to go back to the beginnin'!' said Old Nero, in high dedgeon.
>
> 'Well, go on, you shall not be interrupted again,' said the smiling host. (The Doom of Deville, pp. 15-16.)

Old Nero's perception is distorted, as he cannot judge what is important and what is not. Further, Nero's faulty logic dramatizes the deficient sense of reason of the black man. He is filled with superstition, feeling that the attack of the Indians was "de debbil's work" and

exaggerates the incidents all out of proportion. Like a child, the black has only a limited understanding of this world.

The blacks occupy the lower stratum of society because in Mrs. Southworth's novels they also reflect a lower moral order. Blacks are portrayed as good-natured creatures who, unfortunately, were not blessed with the virtues that could be rewarded socially. Maude puts the prejudice in proper Southern perspective, remarking:

> ...I ask myself in fear and trembling, 'My God! Who has made me to differ!...How I realize that it is no merit of mine, that I am not one of them--as it is no fault of theirs that they are poor and ignorant and diseased and hideous--as it is not fault of mine that I am rich and intelligent and fair and healthy. (The Lost Heiress, p. 195.)

God has, indeed, made Maude a morally disciplined soul, endowed with refined taste and social position. The blacks, on the other hand, are defined as children whose lack of restraint presumably prevents them from attaining higher status. In The Missing Bride, the heroine remains to defend her plantation against British invasion with two slaves. Although Edith is a young, delicate and helpless maiden, she still possesses a spiritual strength that makes her, in effect, the parent of the two considerably older Negroes.

> "Oh, Miss Edy! If you would please--if you would please to let we-dem sleep close by your door dis ebenin!" pleaded Jenny. "Certainly, if that will make your sleep the quieter," smiled Edith. (The Missing Bride, p. 21.)

The black characters thus function as a humorous foil for the white race. The cowardly slaves help to dramatize the courage of the young white heiress. And, in The Doom of Deville, the chaos personified by the befuddled slave Old Nero only emphasizes the perfect order and rationality of the white protagonist. As a "chosen people", the white

race has a resevoir of moral strength which sustains them in times of trial. Just before the invasion of the British, Old Oliver asks,

> "But, oh, Miss Edy!...for Marster in Heaven's sake, what'll 'come o' you?" Edy replies, "What the Master in Heaven wills." (The Missing Bride, p. 39.)

Of course, in Southworth's world, the Master in Heaven wills that the white race prosper after enough of a trial to test its mettle. As Oliver notes, somewhat ironically, the black race is held in considerably lower esteem:

> An' if de British do come and burn de house, and heave we-dem into de fire jes' out of wanton, it'll only be two poor, ole, unvaluable niggers burned up. (The Missing Bride, p. 39.)

Because their spiritual faculties are undeveloped, blacks are regarded as somehow subhuman and described almost like a specie of animal. Southworth reflects;

> "The animal affections are all stronger in the Africans than in us; and among the strongest is their attachment to the soil upon which they have been brought up." (Retribution, p. 17.)

The slaves in Southworth's novels have a dim understanding of their moral laxity and, as a result, accept their position in society. Angels, a black slave, notes in conversation;

> "...But, I haves to walk arter them there lazy niggers from mornin' till night. I wish I was their mistress."
>
> "Miss Summerfield is merciful."
>
> "T'aint no massy to spile a raft o' lazy niggers!"
>
> "You must bear your cross cheerfully."
>
> "I do. I totes my crosses as strong as anybody does, only I get tired and mad sometimes." (The Three Beauties, p. 55.)

In The Missing Bride, which is set during the War of 1812, the black slaves refer to the unscrupulous British invaders as "white niggers". In other words, the enemy's excesses and abuses of the universal morality, which involved burning plantations and molesting the women, reduced them to sub-human status. These British "niggers" were contemptible to the slaves because as white men they could discipline their natures; the soldiers chose not to, however, and so were depraved and evil. It is imperative to remind ourselves that this is how the myth presents the self-concept of the black slaves; and this discrepancy contributed to some errors in judgment on the part of the Confederates during the Civil War.

This irresponsible but cheerful disposition of the slaves in Southern myth enables them to support the aristocratic system of the South. While white people are charged with the duty of maintaining the societal values, the childlike slave is free of those shackles. Southworth notes, "The African race are constitutionally happy; they will be happy under the most depressing circumstances." (Retribution, p. 18.) The author at times seems to envy the simple, natural and untroubled existence of the slave. "...Stella, with her head thrown back over her chair, was sleeping the profound, deathlike sleep only enjoyed by the child of Africa." (The Lost Heiress, p. 39.)

The slaves in Southworth's fiction are anxious to lead a moral life, providing that they receive the guidance of their masters. The author notes, "The Negroes are strongly inclined to worship, ready to cooperate in anything of that sacred character." (The Curse of Clifton, p. 268.) The slaves believe in a hereafter in which they will be taken care of--a vision in conformity with the ideal of the Southern mythic

structure. However, the slaves are also superstitious, believing in a world of spirits beyond the realm of Christian doctrine. Gaines observes,

> Superstition is associated with paganism, which is frowned upon in the Christian society of the aristocratic South. In addition, these superstitions are ludicrous to the white characters and the audience; belief in these superstitions is regarded as childish and humorous, as well as barbarous. The fact that the slaves are in touch with the supernatural world indicates that they are not quite human.[9]

No matter how devoutly the slaves behave in the course of the novels, it is always apparent that they have been converted to Christianity; in other words, they have been led to the right path, rather than finding it themselves, or, better yet, having been born to it. In the Christian hierarchy, the black slave is a newcomer, carrying with him the remnants of a savage and pagan past. In Southworth's novels, the fully realized white characters subscribe to a fixed world which is without mystery. In contrast, the black believe in a supernatural world that does not exist (at least in the "civilized" world), thus appearing ludicrous to the other characters in the novel and to the audience as well. Despite his resolve to lead a moral and Christian life, the black slave is incorrigible and seemingly cannot resist the minor transgressions that keep him a sinner. Gaines remarks,

> The darkey of romance is lazy, takes no thought for the morrow, lies, steals...Various other themes, such as ignorance and unchastity, have reinforced the popular conviction that the old-time Negro is cheerfully but irredeemably outside the pale of moral accountability.[10]

---

[9] Ibid., p. 245.

[10] Ibid., pp. 200-201.

In Southworth's Southern mythic society, the blacks participate in the system and support the established societal roles. Southworth observes;

> "...Poor, old Jenny had passed so much of her life in the family with 'the white folks' that all her sympathies went with them--and on the state of their spiritual atmosphere depended all her cheerfulness and comfort." (The Missing Bride, p. 73.)

The slaves are not only devoted to their masters but are protective of them as well. In The Hidden Hand, Old Hurricane's servant Wool is 'grieved and indignant' when his master departs on a long journey without him:

> Who's gwine to make his punch and warm his bed and put his slippers on the hearth and hang his gown to de fire?...They don't know his ways!" (The Hidden Hand, p. 30.)

According to Mrs. Southworth, the slaves are intensely involved in the dynamics of the household. The author explains,

> Henrietta's matrimonial admonition had been administered with all due privacy and discretion. Yet what is there that transpires in a house full of servants, especially old family servants, who have an interest beyond mere curiosity in knowing everything that happens, that is not discovered and discussed? (The Missing Bride, p. 133.)

The blacks are not merely regarded as property, but as members of the plantation family and as such have many more rights (freedom of expression, for one) than would be expected in a slave state. "Old Kill", a slave in The Three Beauties, considers himself a member of the "first family of Virginia". And indeed, the darky is an integral part of the social system, even in a subordinate position. Old Kill is even a bit of a snob and is indignant that his mistress Winny eloped with her impoverished tutor. He declares:

> "That eber I should lib to see the day as Winny 'ould go and fetch a 'sgrace on top o' wedem (us all) by takin up long o' a poor white herrin!" (The Three Beauties, p. 71.)

The blacks assumed the last names of their masters so that they were incorporated into the family of the plantation. The black characters are supportive of the institution of slavery and, in Southworth's post-Civil War novels, it is chiefly the blacks who have difficulty adjusting to the emancipation proclamation, since it in effect makes them homeless orphans.

Despite their animal natures, the black males of Mrs. Southworth's novels are essentially asexual. One way in which the author handles this rather delicate issue is to remove young, virile black men from sight. All one sees in Mrs. Southworth's South are either very young or harmless old black men; presumably all of the healthy, virile black men are working the fields during the course of the plantation dramas. In The Missing Bride, Old Oliver the slave requests permission to sleep in the same vicinity as Edy; however, Oliver has been so affected by age, servitude, and his submissive nature that the reader is not offended by this violation of social taboo. Indeed, the black slave has been almost entirely deprived of his manhood. All of those noble qualities of courage and strangth are absent in the black man, and he must seek protection from even the young white women. Old Pontius Pilate, the faithful black slave in The Discarded Daughter, is far more frightened by the events of the novel than are the white women. Pontius is far less concerned with solving the mystery of the ransacking of the plantation than he is relieved that he and his white "family" were absent:

> ...I does werily b'lieve how de Britishers is a been a landin' ag'in, or else Bonnypart. Chris' de Lor' be praised, ole mist', dat I an' you wa'n't home when dey came. (The Discarded Daughter, p. 62.)

Pontius' cowardice is most evident in this passage; for, despite his regard for his mistress, he puts himself first when thinking of safety, which would be inconceivable in the white gentleman. Indeed, the black slave who has been emasculated and reduced to the domestic care of his master, is not unlike the unliberated female presented in Southworth's fiction. He is temperamental, fussy, and extremely possessive of his rights in taking care of his master. Slaves appear in the role of butler, driver, cook, and household servant; the subordinate role of the black in romanticized Southern culture is a reflection of the limited intellectual, emotional, and spiritual capacity of the black man. Southworth declares,

> To be the personal attendant of Mr. Orville Deville, lieutenant in his majesty's provincial corps and heir to Riverview of Maryland, (the slave Nero) considered just the greatest honor that could be enjoyed by a person of his color. In fact, Nero seemed to consider that there was but one greater man than his master's servant, and that was his master's self. (The Doom of Deville, p. 6.)

References are also made to the various classes of slaves in Mrs. Southworth's novels, namely the field and house slaves. Boyle declares that, "Apparently, Mrs. Southworth was one of the first to portray in fiction this marked distinction."[11] The field hands are mere physical presences around the plantation and are employed for the physical aptitude rather than for any other qualities. It is no coincidence that in The Missing Bride the field laborer's name is Stupe. Southworth declares,

---

[11]Boyle, Mrs. E.D.E.N. Southworth: Novelist, p. 89.

> All the field laborers, except for Stupe, had also gone to church. This last named individual was a sort of nondescript functionary about the premises--useful in nothing but implicit and literal obedience. (The Missing Bride, p. 156.)

The black women in Mrs. Southworth's novels are, as previously noted, portrayed as maternal figures who raise the white children on the plantation and serve as nurses in times of need. Gaines observes,

> Related to her whites in the capacity of nurse, she is the most affectionately regarded. She is, in fact, the subject of many rich metaphors. Her devotion surely passes all description...This fullness of love is usually only implicitly in the tradition.[12]

Even though their intellectual capabilities are stunted, it is significant that these black "mammies" exhibit a rich emotional nature that exceeds that of white women. Of course, without the intellectual and moral capacity to govern these feelings, the black women are simultaneously both maternal and comic figures.

Old Jenny in The Missing Bride is the epitome of the good hearted, nurturing mother figure; at the same time, however, she is a misdirected, rambling woman who has only a limited understanding of the events that shape her and the others in the novel. Jenny is described as "excessively social and loquacious, like all her race". (The Missing Bride, p. 124.) She regards all of the other characters in the novel, regardless of race or station, as her "chillun", and shamelessly mothers them all. Both the characters and the author accept this mothering with good humor, as this is her legitimate function. The black women ruled those sectors of the plantation house which corresponded with their abilities and capabilities. Nancy, a mulatto wet nurse in The Hidden Hand, was in charge of the

---

[12]Gaines, The Southern Plantation, p. 191.

bedroom where the young heroine lay ill; here she reigns supreme, ordering even Old Hurricane out of the sick chambers until her patient is completely recovered. The kitchen is another room where the black woman predominates. There is a notable absence of scenes that take place in this area, since it is so much the province of the black woman that there is little reason for the white folks to intrude. However, in Southworth's Southern society, the traditional womanly duties which involve routine and drudgery, as well as the strong emotional foundation, are furnished by the black woman.

CONCLUSION

Thus, the popular fiction of Mrs. E.D.E.N. Southworth depicts a mythic society which was widely accepted as an accurate picture of Southern culture. The novels of Mrs. Southworth portray the South as an aristocratic society founded on a republican class structure. This mythic culture is based upon an absolute value system which mirrors the harmonious order of heaven.

Popular culture is a pervasive influence in society, not only reflecting the prevailing attitudes and beliefs of the public but also serving to inculcate values in young audiences. Popular art reduces the distance between art and life, so that the public frequently regards a popular image as an accurate historical account. As a result, it is important that scholars seriously consider popular literature, such as the novels of Mrs. Southworth, as a means of understanding the attitudes and values that shape and define a culture.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Bibliography

Bayan, Nina, Women's Fiction: A Guide to Novels by and about Women in America, 1820 - 1870. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1978.

Bentham, Jeremy, An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation. Edited by J. H. Burns and H. L. A. Hart, London: Athlone Press, 1970.

Boyle, Regis Louise, Mrs. E.D.E.N. Southworth: Novelist. Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1939.

Burney, Frances, Evelina, or The History of a Young Lady's Entrance into the World. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1930.

Chase, Richard, Quest for Myth. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1949.

Clark, Kenneth, Civilization: A Personal View. New York and Evanston: Harper and Row, 1969.

Cotterill, R. S., The Old South: The Geographic, Economic, Social, Political, and Cultural Expansion, Institutions, and Nationalism of the Anti-Bellum South. Glendale, California: The Arthur H. Clark Company, 1936.

Cummins, Saxe and Linscott, Robert N. Eds., Man and Spirit: The Speculative Philosophers. New York: Random House, 1947.

Cunningham, Adrian, Ed., The Theory of Myth: Six Studies, London: Sheed and Ward, 1973.

Davidson, James Wood. Living Writers of the South. New York: Carleton Publishers, 1869.

Dorson, Richard, American Negro Folktales. Greenwich, Conn.: Fawcett Publications, 1968.

Dundes, Alan, The Study of Folklore. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1965.

Eaton, Clement, The Civilization of the Old South. Lexington, Ky.: University of Kentucky Press, 1968.

Ellis, Annie Raines, Ed. The Early Diary of Frances Burney. Vol. I. London: George Bell and Sons, 1907.

Fontenrose, Joseph, The Ritual Theory of Myth. Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1971.

Forrest, Mary, Women of the South Distinguished in Literature. New York: Charles B. Richardson, 1860.

Frondizi, Risieri, What is Value? An Introduction to Axiology. Translated by Solomon Lipp. La Salle, Ill.: Open Court, 1963.

Gaines, Francis Pendleton, The Southern Plantation: A Study in the Development and Accuracy of a Tradition. Gloucester, Mass.: Peter Smith, 1977.

Harrison, John B. and Sullivan, Richard E., A Short History of Western Civilization. 2nd Edition. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1968.

Hart, James, The Popular Book. New York: Oxford University Press, 1950.

Hemlow, Joyce, The History of Fanny Burney. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1958.

Holdsworth, Jean. Mango: The Life and Times of Square John Mytton of Halston. London: Dennis Dobson, 1972.

Hubbell, Jay B., The South in American Literature, 1607 - 1900. U. S.: Duke University Press, 1954.

Hubbell, Jay B., Southern Life in Fiction. Athens, Ga.: University of Georgia Press, 1960.

Jacobi, Jolande, Complex/Archetype/Symbol in the Psychology of C. E. Jung. Translated by Ralph Manheim, New York: Pantheon Books, 1959.

Johnson, James Gibson, Southern Fiction Prior to 1860: An Attempt at a First-Hand Bibliography. New York: Phaeton Press, 1968.

Jung, C. G., The Collected Works of C. G. Jung. Volume IX. 2nd Edition. Bollingen Series XX: Princeton University Press, 1968.

Kebbel, T. E., The Old and the New. Edinburgh and Longen: William Blackwell and Sons, MDCCCXCI.

Lang, Andrew, Life, Letters, and Diaries of Sir Stafford Northcote, First Earl of Iddisleigh. Edinburgh and London: William Blackwood and Sons, MDCCCXCI.

Levi-Strauss, Claude, "The Structural Study of Myth." Myth: a Symposium. Edited by Thomas Sebeok. Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1958.

MacCarthy, B. G., Later Women Novelists: 1744 - 1818. Oxford: B. H. Blackwell, Ltd., 1947.

Maranda, Pierre, Ed., Mythology. Middlesex, England, and Baltimore, Md.: Penquin Books, 1972.

Marshall, Dorothy, English People in the Eighteenth Century. London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1956.

Martin, Jay, Harvests of Change. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1967.

Masefield, Muriel, Women Novelists: From Fanny Burney to George Eliot. Freeport, New York: Books for Libraries Press, Inc., 1934.

Morgan, Edmund S., Virginians at Home: Family Life in the Eighteenth Century. Williamsburg, Virginia: Colonial Williamsburg, 1952.

Moses, Montrose J., The Literature of the South. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell & Company, 1910.

Overman, Antoinette Arnold, An Investigation into the Character of Fanny Burney. Amsterdam: H. S. Paris, 1933.

Papashvily, Helen Waite, All the Happy Endings. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1956.

Pattee, Fred Lewis, The Feminine Fifties. New York & London: D. Appleton-Century Company, 1940.

Propp, Vladimir, Morphology of the Folktale. 2nd Edition. Translated by Louis A. Wagner. Austin and London: University of Texas Press, 1968.

Richardson, Robert D. Jr., Myth and Literature in the American Renaissance. Bloomington and London: Indiana University Press, 1978.

Roscoe, E. S. and Clugul, Helen, Eds., George Selwyn: His Letters and His Life. London: T. Fisher Univin, 1899.

Rubin, Louis D. Jr., and Holman, C. Hugh, Southern Literary Study: Problems and Possibilities. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1975.

Scott, Ann Firor, The Southern Lady: From Pedestal to Politics, 1830 - 1930. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1970.

Simpson, Lewis P., The Dispossessed Garden: Pastoral and History in Southern Literature. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1975.

Sitwell, Sir George, Country Life in the Seventeenth Century. Scarborugh: Printed by the author at his private press, MDCCCCI.

Southworth, E.D.E.N.

--Retribution: or, The Vale of Shadows. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1849.

--The Discarded Daughter. New York: Street & Smith Corporation.

--The Curse of Clifton. Chicago: M. A. Donohue & Co.

--Lost Heiress. Chicago: W. B. Conkey Company.

--The Missing Bride. New York: Hurst & Company.

--Three Beauties. Chicago: M. A. Donohue & Co.

--Haunted Homestead. Chicago: M. A. Donohue & Co.

--Hidden Hand. New York: Hurst and Company.
--Ruth, the Faithful Bride. London: Milner and Company, Limited.
--Self-Raised. New York: Grosset & Dunlap.
--Ishmael, or In the Depths. New York: Hurst and Company.
--The Doom of Deville. Chicago: M. A. Donohue and Company.

Stanard, Mary Newton, Colonial Virginia: Its People and Customs. Philadelphia and London: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1917.

Stephenson, Wendell Holmes, The South Lives in History: Southern Historians and their Legacy. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University, 1955.

Tardy, Mary T. Ed., Living Female Writers of the South. Philadelphia: Claxton, Remsen, & Haffelfinger, 1872.

Taylor, William R., Cavalier and Yankee: The Old South and the American National Character. New York: George Braziller, 1961.

Townend, Peter, Ed. Burke's Genealogical and Heraldic History of the Landed Gentry. London: Burke's Peerage Limited, MCMLXIX.

Veeder, William, Henry James--The Lessons of the Master: Popular Fiction and Personal Style in the Nineteenth Century. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1975.

White, Hayden, "Structuralism and Popular Culture". Journal of Popular Culture, VII (Spring, 1974).

White, Will, Six Guns and Society. Berkley: University of California Press, 1975.