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Revising the View of the Southern Father: Fighting the Father-Force in the Works of Shirley Ann Grau, Gail Godwin, and Alice Walker

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REVISING THE VIEW OF THE SOUTHERN FATHER:

FIGHTING THE FATHER-FORCE

IN THE WORKS OF SHIRLEY ANNE GRAU, GAIL GODWIN

AND ALICE WALKER

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Title: Revising the View of the Southern Father: Fighting the Father-Force in the Works of Shirley Ann Grau, Gail Godwin, and Alice Walker

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This study examines the cultural and historical constructs of the patriarchal father, the dutiful daughter, and the "Cult of Southern Womanhood" that have impacted the depiction of the relationship between fathers and daughters in the works of southern writers Shirley Ann Grau, Gail Godwin, and Alice Walker. The authors illustrate fathers who influence their daughters by supplying their needs and supporting their desires, but also of fathers who have hindered the emotional growth of their daughters.

The term father-force describes the characters' understanding and revision of the power of the fathers over their lives. Evidence includes the primary works by the writers themselves, criticism of these writers from other sources, and their own words about their works. New Historicism theory supports the position that Grau, Godwin, and Walker use the historical context of the 1960s to help shape and articulate some of the more contemporary issues, anxieties, and struggles, reflected in the literature.

The impact of father-daughter relationships in southern novels is an important aspect in the understanding of Grau, Godwin, and Walker's contributions to American literature. These writers try to discover acceptable methods of dealing with their characters' relationships with their fathers within the requirements of a society that has established clear roles for both father and daughter. The three writers emphasize good and bad examples of the cultural contexts being explored, and their writings show a

historical perspective of the changes that have occurred in the South in father-daughter relationships from 1950 until the present time. The authors show their characters often becoming successful in the real world outside the home in an effort to gain their fathers' recognition of their accomplishments, his acceptance of their individuality and differences from him, and his approval of their methods of gaining success. Strong feminists characteristics are displayed in the writings of the three authors. Grau, Godwin, and Walker share the characteristics of female characters that connect with their fathers through race, the burden of the past, gender, class and religious expectations.

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"Location is the ground conductor of all the currents of emotion and belief and moral conviction that charge out from the story in its course….Place absorbs our earliest notice and attention, it bestows on us our original awareness; and our critical powers spring up from the study of it and the growth of experience inside it." (Eudora Welty, "Place in Fiction")

"[In life and time] Instead of fairy immunity to change, there is the vulnerability of human imperfection caught up in human emotion, and so there is growth, there is crisis, there is fulfillment, there is decay." (Eudora Welty, "Some Notes on Time in Fiction")

PREFACE

Being born in the state of Mississippi, the home state of William Faulkner and Eudora Welty, drives home the importance of the sense of place found in southern fiction. The beauty, the climate, the strong sense of family and belonging, and the renewal after an extended absence—all contribute to an immense pride in my own heritage as a southern daughter. The need to defend the South from outsiders causes a fierce devotion to the area. The place that begets emotion, establishes beliefs, confirms moral convictions, and supports understanding allows for spiritual and intellectual growth.

In the midst of peace, however, imperfection, crisis, and decay exist along with the growth. Nurturing parents raise the daughter sometimes to meet only society's goals, but more often she is encouraged to reach her own height of achievement. Parental models set guidelines, and parental approval is desired. Often a love-hate relationship between child and parents, especially the father, develops. Both fathers and daughters are human, vulnerable, and emotional.

Becoming an independent southern daughter often results in unintended hurt to surrounding loved ones. However, sometimes this hurt is intended; in this case, hurt pride results, and anger forms. Often codes of society and the traditional views of her father conflict with the daughter's desire for freedom and accomplishment. If she remains silent and thwarted, she becomes bitter. Fathers can be loved, respected, feared, and hated all at the same time. It is this conflict of feelings that contributes to the daughter's dilemma in accepting, rejecting, or restructuring the powerful father-force.

Often, Southerners see the South through the "fairy" world of enchantment that veils many of its real problems. Poverty, oppression, alienation, and racism belie that perfect ideal of a mystical and mythic South. However, many of its imperfections contribute to the unique southern experience leading to a daughter's maturity in the land of cotton, tobacco, and rice. No one is immune to crisis, but if willing, everyone can learn from it. Daughters can learn from their fathers or be destroyed by them.

The Southern daughter tolerates restrictions in her youth but doesn't necessarily enjoy them. Restrictions prevent the daughter's acknowledgment of her own voice, much the way a librarian restricts a young nine-year-old female reader from reading books above her age level, books for older boys, or books for young adults. Sometimes mothers and older brothers check out books that they never read, and the young daughter continues her education through reading. Reading, writing, and speaking help the daughter discover her voice so that she can write and learn of the South's imperfections and promote her own growth as an individual

The South, like Henry David Thoreau, marches to a different drummer because of its tortured heritage and its many traditions derived from the past. Any southern daughter who speaks against oppression develops a voice and finds her own drummer. Three particular daughters, Shirley Anne Grau, Gail Godwin, and Alice Walker, beat the drum of resistance to traditions in order to change and restructure the future.

CHAPTER 1

MOTHERS, FATHERS, WOMAN WRITERS: INFLUENCES ON A DAUGHTER'S RELATIONSHIPS

Southern writers Shirley Ann Grau, Gail Godwin, and Alice Walker grew up in the South in the 1950s and 1960s. The literature published during these years suggests that most women growing up during this time were aware of the cultural and historical constructs of the patriarchal father, the dutiful daughter, and the "Cult of Southern Womanhood," even though these ideas were no longer as dominant as they were in the nineteenth century. Grau, Godwin, and Walker illustrate fathers who influence their daughters by supplying their needs and supporting their desires but also fathers who have hindered the emotional growth of their daughters through absence and mental or physical abuse. These three writers' works illustrate good and bad examples of the cultural constructs being explored, and their writings show a historical perspective of the changes that have occurred in the South in father-daughter relationships from 1950 to the present time.

Southern institutions and customs set guidelines for the behavior of the proper young lady who is influenced by cultural and historical standards, by her mother's training, and by her father's expectations. Both black and white women of all social classes would adopt some of these requirements. Grau, Godwin and Walker show a strong awareness of these guidelines and illustrate, through the portrayal of their characters, an effort to liberate themselves from these constructs, although not totally abandoning them. Instead of telling women's stories from a patriarchal point of view, Grau, Godwin, and Walker begin to give their own interpretation of the behavior of a southern daughter discovering her own identity.

Coined for the purposes of this study, the term "father-force" describes the characters' understanding and revision of the power of their fathers over their lives while they discover their own view of womanhood and self-identity rather than accepting one prescribed by society. Father-force illustrates the father's use of power to control all, or at least many, of his daughter's activities and beliefs. To use the father-force for good, the father should encourage a supportive relationship with his daughter without interfering in her ability to form strong attachments with other males. In Fathers and Families: Paternal Factors in Child Development, Henry Biller notes that a father can encourage his daughter to take responsibility for her own actions and give her strong foundations to inspire confidence as she makes her own choices in an adult life (178). The "father-force" that motivates the characters of Grau, Godwin, and Walker is also influenced by the historical concepts of the past, race, gender, class and religion in addition to patriarchy, the dutiful daughter, and the "Cult of Southern Womanhood."

Gordon Clay, creator of the National Men's Resource Center, and Gordon Dabney, a motivational speaker for the Christian Men's Movement, both use the terms "father-wound" and "father-hunger" to describe the absence of love and the need for love from the birth father. These two men have been in the forefront in the study of single fathering issues since 1976. They feel that the lack of this love causes low self-esteem and deep emotional pain within a person. Suffering from this absence and need, the daughter sees herself in life functioning as a "doer" rather than a "being." Because of this wound and hunger for contact, the daughter considers herself unworthy, stupid, incompetent, unloved and unlovable. In The Father-Daughter Dance: Every Woman's Guide to the Key of Male Relationships in Her Life, Barbara Goulter and Joan Minninger

use the term “father-hunger” to refer to the negative impact of the absence of a father in a daughter’s life that may adversely affect relationships with men. Goulter is a free-lance journalist interested in social dynamics while Minninger is a psychotherapist specializing in father-daughter issues. For the purposes of this dissertation, father-hunger describes the need the daughter has for her father’s love, and her willingness to do everything within her power to gain this love. Father-wound describes the pain a daughter feels at the betrayal of her father, her pain at his lack of love, and her pain when he rejects or ignores her.

Various psychologists have descriptions of patterns of father/daughter relationships. Although Goulter discusses six unhealthy father-daughter patterns, only three appear to be clearly evident in the works of Grau, Godwin, and Walker. In a Lost Father/Yearning Daughter relationship, the father abandons his daughter. In this case, the daughter is obsessed with her own shortcomings, struggles to earn his acceptance, and often seeks a father substitute. In an Abusive Father/Victim Daughter relationship, the father persecutes the child through physical, emotional, or sexual abuse. The child identifies herself as a victim and grows up seeking other relationships in which she can play victim and/or rescuer and/or persecutor. In a Pygmalion Father/Companion Daughter relationship, the father mentors his daughter, molding her into a capable woman and a fine companion. While she grows up feeling special and privileged, she also feels that she would be nothing without him. Goulter also mentions the relationships of Pampering Father/Spoiled Daughter, Ruined Father/Rescuing Daughter, and Anguished Father/Angry Daughter (10-11). Godwin describes the relationship of both Lost Father/Yearning Daughter and Pygmalion Father/Companion Daughter while Grau

depicts Lost Fathers and Yearning Daughters. Walker more often describes abusive fathers and victim daughters.

History and culture have established the evidence that the patriarchal father, the dutiful daughter, and the "Cult of Southern womanhood" are elements that provide a strong background for many Southern women writers in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. In his essay, "Culture," Stephen Greenblatt says that society's expectations often force its members to follow certain standards of behaviors, beliefs, and practices that society approves as acceptable to the public (225). It is important for readers of today to understand this cultural background, since it adds to the reader's understanding of much of the subject matter that might be contained in Southern women writers of today. An adequate understanding of the social constraints and early oppression of women can help focus on the oppression of women and ethnic minorities of today. In another essay, Greenblatt notes that a study of earlier texts of Shakespeare's time gives examples of social forces that help to form individual identity and the sociohistorical situation ("Towards a Poetics of Culture" 1). Therefore, this dissertation begins with a look at the 1950s in order to understand the present.

Clifford Geertz, in his Interpretation of Cultures, points out that culture is "an historically transmitted pattern of meanings that embodies in symbols, a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which men communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about and attitudes toward life" (89). For Geertz, culture imposes meaning on the world and makes it understandable. The ideals of a patriarchal father, the dutiful daughter, and the Cult of Southern Womanhood are emblems that Southern women use to develop certain concepts about life. These three

concepts establish a structure in society in which many Southern women were raised, including Grau, Godwin, and Walker.

One of the most important traditions in families is that of the parent-child relationship. The traditional American family of the 1940s and 1950s consisted of a father who worked outside the home and a mother who worked in the home. According to Stephen Poulter in The Father Factor: How Your Father's Legacy Impacts Your Career, fathers have more significant impact on a child's career than mothers. Poulter is a thirty-five year clinical psychologist in the area of family relationships. Poulter notes that society usually judges men by their success in the workplace while it defines women by how well they care for children and tend to the home. Poulter observes that, with the absent father, negativity in work ethic, ambition and relation to authority figures can occur. He feels that fathers do matter, and all children crave the father's involvement in their lives (23-4). Quite often it is the model of a father that gives a daughter a male example. She needs his attention, love, advice, and praise. Today's society allows fathers to be emotionally absent from the home while mothers have much of the parenting responsibility. It appears that negative effects can occur when one of the two parents is missing. These ideas of today relate back to the 1950s and 1960s, the childhood years of Grau, Godwin, and Walker.

As traditional heads of the family, fathers exert much influence on family members and especially affect their daughters' view of self-identity. A Southern daughter is often trying to gain her father's approval by making an acceptable marriage, by sacrificing her own desires to nurse an ailing father, or by accepting society's standards of becoming a submissive daughter and later a submissive wife. A mother's

example is also needed. Today's society often demands that women have to fulfill the conflicting roles of daughter, wife, and mother. Usually a career is not expected, unless the male is not available.

History

Many historic periods include examples of class dominance and the practice of using slave women as servants and sex objects. In The Creation of Patriarchy, Gerda Lerner discusses Aristotle's theory that the supposed inferiority of the female's biological internal structure made her inferior in her capacities, her ability to reason, and her ability to make decisions. In Aristotle's view, man's natural superiority made him born to rule while the female's inferiority made her easy to rule (207-08). Lerner also mentions that women of subordinate classes (serfs, peasants, workers) were expected to serve men of upper classes sexually whether they consented or not (88). Lerner again notes that one of the features of race and class oppression for women is that enslavement meant having to perform sexual services for masters or for those whom the masters might designate. She discusses the fact that slavery included sexual exploitation and the sexual dominance of higher-class males over lower class women (88). Sexual use of servant girls by masters is often a subject of nineteenth-century literature. Eighteenth and nineteenth-century literature, culture, and history provide evidence of the sexual use of black women by white males. Harriet Jacob's Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl and Harriet Beecher Stowe's Uncle Tom's Cabin are two examples. This element of race relations survived into the twentieth century and is seen in the writings of Shirley Ann Grau and Alice Walker.

Bertram Wyatt-Brown, in Southern Honor, explains that often a woman's idea of masculine characteristics came from observations of her father or other males in her life. He also notes that both sons and daughters are under pressure to live up to the southern ideals of home, honor, and valor. Brown uses a statement by Martha De Saussure-Taylor to prove his point. In Rosser H. Taylor's Ante-Bellum South Carolina, a Social and Cultural History, Martha De Saussure-Taylor makes this statement about a woman's view of the man: "There is nothing a woman so dreads as to lose respect for the manhood around her, so sweet to trust, to look up—we are willing to be second, but second only to the first . . . .How would the men and women look each other in the face if the men failed or compromised (270). Wyatt- Brown notes that both mother and daughter were bound by society to have ultimate respect for the male patriarch in their family. Wyatt-Brown observes that although the children were expected to honor both the father and his position, fathers still expected liveliness and even independence from his children. Wyatt-Brown explains that most Southern parents saw children as figures to be molded as required for family needs and assumed that their own behavior was worth following (Wyatt-Brown 131). Wyatt-Brown discusses a close companionship between brother and sister that became a consolation in their growth to adulthood as he tried to live up to family tradition and she learned the ways of womanly subordination. Wyatt-Brown notes that this brotherly bond often substituted for her lack of power in her family (SH 252-53). Sometimes, the closeness to the brother substitutes for a desire of closeness to, or recognition by, the father.

For a long period of time, especially during the plantation system and even beyond, the idea of women's inferiority and submission to males was accepted by

society. Even if the female was unhappy, she had no power to make any changes. According to Lucinda MacKethan in Daughters of Time: Creating Woman's Voice in Southern Story, the daughters were a product of a culture that defined and preserved itself based on the female's silence (5). MacKethan also mentions the fact that this patriarchal culture lasted longer in the South than in other regions of the country and that, for southern women writers, a love-hate relationship exists for the father, "who holds the power to define, to validate, to circumscribe, and to disinherit" (10). Women's silence was taken as a sign that this tradition was a good one. Kate Chopin's 1899 The Awakening was an early example of a woman finally speaking her displeasure against society's rules. Zora Neale Hurston, Eudora Welty, and Flannery O'Connor also no longer remain silent and use their writing to increase women's voices. Grau, Godwin, and Walker also focus on the bad connotations of remaining silent and point out ways to foster acceptance of all genders, communities, and ideas. Silence often enhances the destructive powers of the father-force when the father has total control over his daughter.

Celebrations at the birth of a daughter often exist in many cultures because the daughter can bring potential wealth to the family. In Elementary Structures of Kinship, Claude Levi-Strauss suggests the exchange of women is the first form of trade by which women are turned into a commodity (115). Using Levi-Strauss' theories, Gerda Lerner in The Creation of Patriarchy feels this exchange marks the beginning of woman's subordination because others control her sexuality (24). This ideal of exchange of women and the value of women carried over to the South's plantation system. The belief in the value of women places them in a revered status. That revered status puts them on the South's pedestal, although they were still to be submissive to the white patriarch of

the family. The value of women also emphasized the importance of marriages of convenience to gain advantages for the patriarch's family. Walker's The Color Purple uses Celie as a means of exchange, although her value is only seen through the domestic work that she completes for Albert's family. Grau and Godwin have no such obvious examples of the use of women as commodities.

Woman's earlier inferior status began to change around 1970 with the Civil Rights Movement and the Woman's Movement. More independence for women meant that women's rights were more recognized, and women had more variety in choices. In The Companion to Southern Literature: Themes, Genres, Places, People, Movements and Motifs, Joseph Flora notes that women did not have to make choices between creating their writing or having a family, as Hurston, Welty, and O'Connor did, or have someone else raise their children as did Caroline Gordon and Zelda Fitzgerald (989). Grau, Godwin, and Walker all experienced marriage, but only Grau's lasted. Both Grau and Walker had children. However, all three women had successful writing careers.

Before women were given the possibility of careers, daughters were raised to be flirtatious to attract men. Of course, these daughters were first able to practice at home on brothers and fathers. Having an attractive, unmarried eligible female living at home during this time period often created sexual conflicts for both father and daughter. In Relative Intimacy: Fathers, Adolescent Daughters and Postwar American Culture, Rachel Devlin uses the Oedipus conflict to explain girls' antisocial acts and juvenile delinquency. She also states that adolescent girls are motivated by their Oedipal needs and dependent on paternal sexual approval. She feels that many advertisements illustrate examples of father-daughter eroticism in many areas of American Society (2). According

to Lynda Zwinger, in Daughters, Fathers, and the Novel: The Sentimental Romance of Heterosexuality, the father must not break the sexual taboo of a possible relationship. Zwinger also argues that if the daughter is to retain her value for the father, he must maintain his distance with her (4). Grau, Godwin, and Walker write of fathers who break the taboos and adversely affect their relationships with their daughters.

Although Grau, Godwin, and Walker are aware of this father-daughter eroticism, they disprove it in their writings that come shortly after this time period. This view is an example of a destructive use of the father-force that is not even addressed in Grau and Godwin. Walker's beating and rape scenes show no examples of eroticism. The fathers depicted in the works of the three authors punish their daughters severely in some cases, but often because of a misguided sense of love and justice. The importance of the ideal of raising a "proper young lady" often overshadows the father's love and justice, causing him to make decisions that are not always beneficial for the daughter.

Another emotional conflict between father-daughter occurs when the father acts on his erotic feelings. Biller argues that in incestuous families, adults are more likely to use emotional control rather than violence to dominate the children. Biller also states that sometimes a daughter is given a special wife-like role within the family structure by a father/stepfather with the mother's approval. Biller reports that father/daughter and stepfather/stepdaughter incest accounts for three-quarters of reported cases. Quite often, the father displaces his physical needs onto usually the eldest daughter (223). Dramatic descriptions of this abuse are various examples of man's mistreatment of what he considers to be an inferior being over which he has power; this abuse is sometimes a product of racial discrimination that will be discussed later.

Literary Connections

Before actually observing the influence of mother, father, and culture upon these writers, one must first consider the perspective of the woman writer and the many changes that have happened to her throughout the twentieth century. According to Lerner, women writers of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries use a feminine language of symbols, myths, and themes that often undercut the typical male traditional roles. Lerner states that the heroines of these novels are often good and strong although they might be banished to unimportant places. She also writes that many of these writers are writing to improve their secluded domestic environment (225). Joanne S. Frye, in Living Stories, Telling Lives: Women and the Novel in Contemporary Experience, notes that eighteenth and nineteenth-century women writers continue to see their lives in relation to the cultural customs of the time period which consist of a male-dominated sexual ideology that often results primarily in a life of marriage, painful isolation, and premature death (195). Often, again according to Frye, the ideal of feminine failure derives from a cultural denial of feminine abilities rather than any inadequacy on the woman's part (199). Breaking from tradition is difficult, especially for women writers whose sex has consistently been deemed inferior.

Peggy Prenshaw, in her "Introduction" to Women Writers of the Contemporary South, points out that women writers have a shared sense of the world of women, having "grown up as women, daughters, sisters, wives, mothers" (viii). According to Prenshaw, the South, for a very long time, has tried to preserve the traditional time-honored roles for women such as the Southern lady, the belle, and the sheltered white woman on a pedestal, the pious matriarch, the naïve black girl, and the enduring black mother. Prenshaw also

argues that modern writers do not ignore these expectations but have different interpretations of them. She also states that, for the modern writer, these ideas can be seen as "constraining, artificial, simplistic, often something of a sham, but occasionally even as ennobling" (viii). Grau, Godwin and Walker recognize these stereotypes and either revise them, rebel against them, or eliminate them. Later chapters in this dissertation illustrate the various ways the authors treat these stereotypes and often re-examine many of the myths associated with the southern woman.

Interviews, biographies, and letters of Grau, Godwin, and Walker seem to show that the parents of these writers were influenced by these traditional views. They encouraged education for their daughters but also hoped that they would be successfully married. Some of Grau, Godwin and Walker's own disagreements with their fathers concerned educational and career choices. Often fear and anxiety cause the daughter to doubt her own choices in making decisions. Should she live a life of her own choosing? Should she follow society's rule of marriage and children? Should she remain a dutiful daughter and be available to take care of aging parents? Can a dutiful daughter be a successful career woman? The nineteenth-century view of women in the South emphasized marriage to an acceptable man and self-sacrifice on the part of the female/mother/daughter, while Zwinger notes throughout the nineteenth, twentieth, and twenty-first centuries, that daughters in literature are often defined by the important presence of fathers in the text (4). Both real and fictional daughters are still ruled by the father. The characters of Grau, Godwin, and Walker do not follow these old ideas, and the authors try to answer some of these questions in their writings.

In addition to women trying to establish themselves as writers of credibility, Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar, in The Madwoman in the Attic, note the feminist frustration of dealing with a society that feels that a writer's conflict with a male counterpart is either "absurd, futile, or even . . . self-annihilating" (48). According to Gilbert and Gubar, if the female writer does not adhere to male definitions of her "femininity," she should justify her own gender definitions and her own identity as a writer (50). Although The Madwoman in the Attic focuses on nineteenth-century women and mostly British writers, this ideal continues to a smaller degree in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Gilbert and Gubar promote the idea of encouraging female models (writers) to write about female experiences. Again, it is a matter of women breaking silence to tell their stories.

Grau, Godwin and Walker are among many twentieth-century women writers who begin to break silence to tell women's stories. Growing up in the South during the 1940s and 1950s, as these writers did, scripted them the typical future of a female child—one of marriage and children. According to Gilbert and Gubar's No Man's Land: The Place of the Woman Writer in the Twentieth Century, often culture seems to dictate to a wife and mother that she must sacrifice herself for her family while warning a daughter that it is better not to oppose the set standards (115). Women also feel that men often "mythologized, fictionalized, and trivialized" women's ambitions, language, and achievements (149). "Male praise [often] undermined women writers by isolating them in conventional gender categories that diminish[ed] their power" (148). During the twentieth century when Grau, Godwin, and Walker were beginning to write, Joanne Frye, in Living Stories, Telling Lives: Woman and the Novel in Contemporary Experience,

notes that an independent woman making her own choices was a cultural contradiction (Frye 5). Education is important but is not always necessary. If the daughter has a career "to fall back on," it is usually that of a teacher or a nurse.

The work of women and black writers appears to have difficulty in finding acceptance in a world dominated by white men who strongly support the traditional literary canon. In Female Pastoral: Women Writers Re-Visioning the American South, Elizabeth Jane Harrison states that at the beginning of the twentieth century, black writers, both men and women, wanted to distance themselves from the past in order to become a part of the mainstream American life (102). Gilbert and Gubar note that during the same time period, black women writers played an important role in the transformation of the African-American culture by criticizing the feminism described by their white counterparts. Gilbert and Gubar also question the emancipation efforts that shaped black modernism. Even though black men and white women were still struggling to gain recognition, no one noticed that the black woman writer was still unrecognized (Gilbert and Gubrar No Man's Land, 128-29). Although Gilbert and Gubar make specific reference to black writers, white southern women writers were also struggling to be recognized as writers of merit, not just regionalists or domestic novelists.

The patriarchal system of empowering the father to make all major decisions for the family, especially for his daughters, and adds to this negative image of women. Since women feel devalued by society, they devalue themselves. Frye argues that women's ideals of self-identity are promoted by cultural stereotypes, and she states that merely because they are female, women are perceived as incompetent and inadequate to perform tasks that lead to adulthood. She also feels those writers, their own characters, and

women readers all have the problem of changing the negative perceptions of women designated by culture (198). Adding to this negative view of women, Lerner adds her comment that because women live in a world where they are devalued and their experience seems insignificant, they have often learned to distrust their own experiences and devalue them (224). This example illustrates another negative view of the father-force. According to Frye, the typical female protagonist in many twentieth-century novels is relegated to a life that often involves passivity, self-denial, marriage and/or motherhood. Frye also argues that these models prevent a growth of self-identity (3). The 1960s Civil Rights Movement and Women's Liberation Movement created new freedoms for women and opened avenues that encouraged Grau, Godwin, and Walker to rebel against these restricting stereotypes.

Rapid progress in the South allowed more change. In addition to contradicting the stereotypes, Flora notes that what Southern women writers have in common is "a new vision of the South and of the women living in it, a vision that attempts to retain the good things about the past—the pride of tradition, of family, and of place—tempered by a realistic understanding of the damage this pride can do if it is misused" (992)

Virginia Woolf in A Room of One's Own says that women need their own distinct heritage to nourish their art (70). Frye argues that through the reading of novels involving feminist change, the reader might find the growing edge of her own humanity, learn new ways to interpret her own and other women's experiences, and help reshape culture's understanding of women (191). Women are bound by regional qualities of setting, character, and time.

The question often raised by Grau, Godwin, and Walker, who are influenced, but not controlled, by these early writers, is whether the ideal of "woman on a pedestal," discussed later in this dissertation, makes it difficult for her to live a life of an autonomous adult woman in the modern world if she adheres to society's stereotypes. In Tomorrow Is Another Day: The Woman Writer in the South, 1859-1936, Anne Goodwyn Jones states that often southern women writers "strip [the southern life] of its veil with which ethical and conventional standards have draped it" (362). However, Jones feels "their ambivalence should be forgiven; it is quite a magician's trick, after all, to make a marble statue live and move, and then to make it speak" (362). Often the veil that Jones refers to half reveals and half covers the truth about Southern life. Although Jones is speaking of earlier Southern writers, the same description could also apply to Grau, Godwin, and Walker. They only reveal limited truths about the power of the father or authority figure in their portrayal of Southern families and create images that are not always accurate or typical of all Southern families. In Walker's works, men are often not figures that have the cultural stamp of approval for father-of-the-year. The father-force maintains its own cultural ideal of good and bad fathers. The daughters in the above works manage the consequences of their fathers' actions in different ways. Often, covering the realities and imperfections of life in the South allows the characters of Grau. Godwin, and Walker to create their own identity in spite of the importance of traditions.

Traditions are often set up in communities, which Grau, Godwin, and Walker define as a family usually of their own making. Fred Hobson, in The Southern Writer in the Postmodern World, writes that most under-50 Southern writers, both male and female, are more concerned with family than non-Southern writers even though that

family may be eccentric and non-traditional. They are also very concerned with community (74). According to Hobson, Southern writers are often also concerned with place, family, religion, social visibility, and the power of the past in the present (4). Often this family does not present a patriarchal father as its head. Marriage may exist for the various couples, but it is not required.

From their writings, it is evident that Grau and Godwin create women that learn to defy tradition by establishing strong families not always dominated by men. In Moving On: The Heroines of Shirley Ann Grau, Anne Tyler, and Gail Godwin, Susan S. Kissel argues that the writing of both black and white women at the turn of the twentieth century threatened the South's social system. Kissel also states that while the white southern female writer rebelled against the patriarchal tradition, the family romance, the heroic father and the ideal of white southern womanhood, the black writer exposed her own personhood and cultural value by describing a differing view of life. Kissel feels that both groups see the concept of female subservience and self-sacrifice for husband and family as destructive for the women involved, for their children and husbands and for the society that they serve (10-11). Grau's characters destroy traditional family images that were built on pretense, not actual commitment or love.

Grau, Godwin and Walker were aware of the patriarchal idea of the father/husband in total control of his submissive wife and daughters. That idea contributes to the fact that males can easily dismiss women's writing. Hazel Carby, in Reconstructing Womanhood: The Emergence of the Afro-American Woman Novelist, uses Elaine Showalter's three phases of development of feminist theory plus one of her own to illustrate the progress of black women writers. The first view is a concentration

on the misogyny and racism of literary practice. The second view is the discovery that black women writers had a literature of their own previously hidden by patriarchal values and the development of a black female sensibility. (Not recognizing the black sensibility and keeping black issues hidden allowed the white male to maintain his superiority.) The third view is the challenge to and rethinking of conceptual grounds of literary study and an increased concern with theory. Carby adds the aspect of a search for the existence of a black female language (16). Carby's ideas can be applied to Grau and Godwin, but especially to Alice Walker as the black writer in this study. Although there was not necessarily a hatred of women displayed, the idea prevailed among male writers and critics that blacks and women had very little to say about everyday life and labeled their work as domestic fiction since women are most involved in running the home and making sacrifices for the family.

Even though Grau, Godwin and Walker write about women's issues, they are also concerned with the reasons why the characters act as they do. The three writers appear to disagree with Sigmund Freud's view of inferior women since their writings show strong women who do not remain silent in spite of their subsequent abuse. Christine Froula's essay, "The Daughter's Seduction: Sexual Violence and Literary History," discusses Freud's idea in "Femininity" that a woman has an inferior sense of justice and participates in her cultural placement of inferiority because of her shame at her genital lack. Froula feels that Freud is trying to protect the father and maintain the cultural structure that credits male authority at the expense of female authority. Froula observes that Freud himself agreed with a culture that hides woman's desire, silences her language and credibility, and refuses to bring the stories of sexual abuse to public awareness (120-

121). Minrose Gwin in her essay, "Nonfelicitous Space and Survivor Discourse, Reading the Incest Story in Southern Women's Fiction," mentions that the breaking of silence about a rape for a daughter is often seen as an act of disloyalty to the family and community (420). Both Froula and Gwin disagree with Freud's interpretation of female inferiority.

Literary Influences

A view of history establishes the cultural mindset of the period in which Grau, Godwin, and Walker were raised. Yet, their knowledge of literature presented them with other authors on which to model their work. Grau, Godwin, and Walker owe much to their literary foremothers of Zora Neale Hurston, Flannery O'Connor, and Eudora Welty. They emphasize a strong sense of place, the story-telling ability gained from summer front-porch conversations and family reunions, and the use of Southern language, the use of common characters, the use of the past in fiction, and a family focus. All of these elements contribute to an adherence to Southern traditions and the importance of the family that will be discussed in later chapters in this dissertation. The earlier writers wrote both short stories and novels and had a knowledge of the past, a strong respect for family, and a childhood based on southern expectations for both black and white women just as Grau, Godwin, and Walker do. Even though their focus was the South, the crises faced by the white female characters are universal. The experiences depicted by Hurston and Walker could only happen in the South. Hurston, O'Connor, and Welty were, to a degree, still trapped by past traditions and expectations while a breakthrough occurs for Grau, Godwin, and Walker as they create differences and advancements for women in the later-twentieth-century world. All the writers grew up in a time period when the South

was still trying to conserve traditions concerning race and women, but Grau, Godwin, and Walker interpret these traditions differently.

One of the debts that Grau, Godwin and Walker owe to Zora Neale Hurston is her challenge to the existing patriarchal society. In Sacred Groves and Ravaged Gardens, Louise Westling notes that women writers growing up in the 1920s, such as Zora Neale Hurston, Eudora Welty, and Flannery O'Connor, had restrictions on who they were and "who they could not be" (37). Since these writers write of past injustices suffered by their mothers and grandmothers, they attempt to make discoveries about the past and its influences. In their work, Grau and Walker frequently return to the past to create settings for their stories while Godwin focuses on past customs. Hurston's support of women's individualism allows Janie Crawford to mature by experiencing life for herself. Hurston was one of the earliest writers to show problems that women faced in the existing patriarchal social structure. Hurston's preservation of this southern way of life and speech contributes to the fact that Grau, Godwin, and Walker can use this way of life and speech in their mid-twentieth-century writings in their challenges to patriarchal authority by promoting feminine individualism. Hurston's discovery of women's voice allows Grau, Godwin, and Walker to depict characters that strive against the restrictions of society to develop a world in which both sexes are treated fairly and equally.

The father-force of the mythical heroic father no longer constrains or guides the characters of Hurston, Grau, Godwin, and Walker. These characters are trying to find new avenues of social possibility that no longer make women subordinate or submissive. Hurston's influence on Grau, Godwin, and Walker has allowed them to create heroines that have "come of age" by learning to live a mature, purposeful female life independent

of male authority and authorship. The characters, especially of Godwin and Walker, create their own worlds. They emphasize family and ambition. While fathers and husbands are present, they are no longer required as a measure of a successful woman. Grau's characters can make the separation from male authority figures but seem caught up in the uncertainty of the next step

Hurston's three books, Their Eyes Were Watching God, Dust Tracks on a Road, and Mules and Men, have influenced Grau, Godwin, and Walker, especially because of how Hurston handles Janie Crawford's struggle to find her own woman's voice and also a woman's way of knowing. In this aspect, Hurston is the literary foremother of all three writers, but especially of Walker. Flora says that Dust Tracks on a Road begins a connection between Southern and African-American literature and the importance of Southern folk language in telling a story and preserving a Southern way of life and speech. He also notes that it challenges black patriarchal authority and endorses black individualism and isolationism when others were promoting integration and social bonds (363-64). As the women of Their Eyes Were Watching God and The Color Purple establish their own independence through self-discovery, their houses first include no men, such as Nettie's hut in Africa, Shug's mansion in Tennessee, and Janie's empty home in Eatonville. The home that Nettie and Celie inherit does include men. But these men have become respectful of the strength and equality of women. In "Color Me Zora: Alice Walker's (Re)Writing of the Speakerly Text," Henry Louis Gates, Jr., notes that, often, an ownership of property prevents domination by men (46). If the female is no longer dependent on the male for her home, support or approval, she is able to establish

her own identity. She can also make her own role, assume power in her household, and no longer has to be subjected to a patriarchal society.

Hurston, Walker, Grau, and Godwin all use their early childhood homes as settings for their stories. Elizabeth Harrison argues that Walker shows actual change in the black rural community and tries to envision a better society for both men and women while Hurston focuses primarily on just a female community. She also states that Walker illustrates black female autonomy and bonding among black rural women in The Color Purple (Harrison 102-03). Hurston's Their Eyes Were Watching God is set near Eatonville, Florida, while Walker's The Color Purple is set near Eatonton, Georgia. Grau uses primarily Louisiana and Mississippi settings while many of Godwin's novels take place in North Carolina. All four authors use imagery, characters, family stories, and language from their early past.

In creating their own or family stories, sometimes Southern daughters marry and write about men who imprison and beat them. Gates argues that Hurston's Janie and Walker's Celie discover their voices by describing their own troubled lives. He feels that Janie and her narrator speak themselves into being while Celie writes herself into being through her letters to Nettie and later to God. He also states that using diction and idiom similar to that which Janie speaks, Celie writes in Janie's voice (Gates 34-5). Although Gates applies these ideas to only Walker, Grau and Godwin also create characters that discover their voices by describing their own troubled lives. Grau writes of the troubled lives of her Louisiana characters as they work to achieve independence. Although her father-in-law's money supports her, Lucy Roundtree Evans Henley in Evidence of Love and Mary and Nanda Woods in The Roadwalkers come the closest to discovering self-

identity in spite of the conditions of the men's world in which they live. Grau's characters use art, business, and compassion to bring themselves into being while many of Godwin's characters use writing, teaching, acting, and painting to establish identity. Godwin also creates characters that gain independence from patriarchy and standards that society has established for women. Hurston's influence travels through Walker's similar black worlds to influence Grau and Godwin also. These examples further emphasize the ties that bind Hurston and Walker. They both make more use of the folk culture than do Grau and Godwin. However, the emphasis on women's independence and self-discovery is also seen in Grau and Godwin.

Grau, Godwin, and Walker take from Flannery O'Connor her family focus and her sense of language, while Walker also adds O'Connor's use of the grotesque. All three writers emphasize the importance of family in their writings. Grau's families are usually related by blood while Godwin and Walker have created families developed by community or connections. Walker's use of the grotesque or unusual occurs in her rape scene of "The Child Who Favors Daughter," the death scenes in The Third Life of Grange Copeland, and the dream sequences in By the Light of My Father's Smile.

O'Connor herself makes several statements about writing and the South that pertain also to Grau, Godwin, and Walker. O'Connor states that "when one Southern character speaks, regardless of his station in life, an echo of all Southern life is heard. This helps to keep Southern fiction from being a fiction of purely private experience" (Mystery 199). O'Connor feels that "it is easier for a Southerner to begin writing than for anyone from almost any other section of the country because we have so many conventions and so much more tension in the South. We have a content to begin on"

(Breit 7). It is possible that O'Connor uses the masculine pronoun in some of these statements because she is still writing in a man's world.

Techniques of writing emphasize the continued need of these writers to focus on the past but also show the need to alter past experiences to achieve a more progressive future for the female protagonists. In Literature of Memory, Richard Gray makes this statement about O'Connor that also applies to Grau, Godwin, and Walker: "She had to discover her own source of moral organization—a satisfactory way out of her Southern past that would help her to take what she needed from that past with her. She had to add and alter, rather than merely copy" (275). Betty Lockridge in "An Afternoon with Flannery O'Connor" makes this statement about O'Connor's use of language: O'Connor gains from the South "its idiom and its rich and strained social setup" (40). The above quotes by and about O'Connor are examples of why Grau, Godwin, Walker, and O'Connor continue to use the South, its past, and its present, as subjects for their fiction. O'Connor, along with Eudora Welty, also helped to establish a sense of place. In Dirt and Desire: Reconstructing Southern Women's Writing, 1930-1990, Patricia Yaeger says that Alice Walker admires Flannery O'Connor because she allows her black characters and their anger to grow and progress just as the Civil Rights Movement makes new advances for black people in the South. Sometimes this anger is directed at the exploitation of black workers by the whites that are in power (140). In Walker's The Third Life of Grange Copeland and The Color Purple, the male characters are unable to vent their frustrations and anger about inequality upon their white employers so they use the females around them instead.

O'Connor says of Grau in a 1955 letter, after reading two of her stories: "They didn't seem to me to have any moral focus, which makes them tedious, but I daresay, there is considerable talent there and that she is too young yet to make any judgment about" (Habit 121). She also says, "With the Grau stories, I can't discover that life is felt at a moral depth at all" (124). There is no evidence to support the fact that Grau ever saw this statement. O'Connor made both of these statements in December of 1955 when Grau was just beginning her career. O'Connor's Habit of Being was actually published in 1979. Perhaps, Grau, as a beginning writer, was just trying to establish herself. If Grau did read these statements, she may have been prompted to do more revision. Although her early short stories may not have met O'Connor's standards, the awarding of the 1965 Pulitzer Prize for The Keepers of the House seems to answer many of O'Connor's criticisms. I believe that Grau's works are worth consideration because of her vision of a South trying to break free of its past.

While O'Connor contributes family focus, a sense of language, and the use of the grotesque, Grau, Godwin, and Walker inherit from Eudora Welty their sense of place, their story-telling ability, quirky characters, the ability to write about ordinary people in daily relationships, and the importance of family. Although Grau, Godwin, and Walker sometimes branch out into other areas of the country, their best-known works take place in Louisiana (Grau), North Carolina (Godwin), and Georgia (Walker). Many of their writings concern specific families: Grau's Howlands, Henleys, Olivers, and Woods; Godwin's Stricklands, Gowers, and Quicks; and Walker's Copelands, Robinsons, Averys, and the families of Celie and Albert. Although concrete details of everyday life are evident in all three writers, Walker more often uses examples of Welty's quirky

characters in Sofia, Harpo, Squeak, and Manuelito. Flora notes Welty's emphasis on character, her close attention to detail, her ear for dialogue and narration, and her sense of a distinctively southern "place." According to Flora, the family is used as subject material with an emphasis on daily life, on relationships between family members, and the secrets, rituals, and eccentricities found in ordinary people (988). He also states that Welty's attention to the concrete details of everyday life makes ordinary people fit subjects for literature while the readers form their own moral judgments (956). According to Flora, Welty contrasts the discussion of class, race, and gender with the dullness of the Mississippi towns in which the events occur, establishing a sense of place, and contrasts "quirky personalit[ies]" with her "fiction of the human heart" (500). Each of the three writers frequently shares family stories with the reader. The all-important Place is very evident in their works.

Two similarities occur between Welty and Godwin. Both began writing at an early age and received much encouragement from their mothers. While Godwin's mother wrote fiction to supplement her earnings as a writer (Brown 5), Welty listened to her mother tell family stories. Another similarity is that Welty and Godwin, in their early twenties, both lost their fathers. Even though Godwin didn't consider becoming anything other than a writer, she "planned for [her] failure by preparing for a career that could support [her] but that was simply to assure [herself] that [she] could earn a living" (5). Welty gained a business degree so that she could do the same.

Grau is similar to Welty in the sense that both had to prove to demanding fathers that they could support themselves through writing. According to Paul Schlueter, Grau's father, like Welty's, would not support her in graduate school unless she was "doing

something," which he did not believe was true of writing, but by the time The Black Prince and Other Stories was published in 1954 and the first printing was sold out in two weeks, she was able to convince her father that writing was a possible and profitable career for her (18). The death of Welty's father so soon did not give her a chance to prove him wrong. Walker's college education, her civil rights activism, her fictional subjects and controversial essay topics drove a wedge between her and her father. Grau, Godwin, and Walker, along with some of their literary models, were also beneficially and adversely affected by the father-force.

Similarities between Grau, Godwin, and Walker

In her article, "Why There Are No Southern Writers," Daphne Atlas argues that in the 1940s Southern stories focused on social views of families, communities, time and geography burdened with the past but with "socially conscious" awareness of the New Deal, WPA, TVA, Roosevelt, and a post-depression economy (296). Many Southern families were struggling to exist in this time of poverty and change. Walker and Godwin felt the effects from their own early years, and Walker depicts father images struggling to provide for economically-deprived families. Godwin's strong women often survive without society's pre-requisite of a man to provide for them. Grau addresses economic consequences usually from the point of view of the wealthy.

Grau, Godwin, and Walker attempt to create women characters that become responsible for their own accomplishments by using their mental and emotional strength. While Walker promotes her womanist theory of black feminism, Kerstin Westerland notes that Godwin calls herself a feminist but would prefer for her works to be evaluated on their literary merits, not her choice of feminist themes (36). Grau's characters have

mental strength, but often their emotional ties to the past and their inability to proceed once they have gained liberty from old customs keep them from becoming strong, independent women. Many of Godwin's characters are able to become such strong, independent women, but they create their own family, not one that tradition has designated. Walker's characters also create families that may or may not include men. The absent father or negative father force is again evident in these writings because the fictional worlds created often do not depict the traditional family of father, mother, and child. Since their own fathers were either absent or distant, Grau, Godwin, and Walker create fictional families that do not require the traditional father.

Southern daughters usually move from her father's to her husband's house since she is not considered capable to take care of herself. The daughter then creates a typical family similar to the one she experienced as a child. Grau's aging father, Walker's distant father, and Godwin's absent father were not perfect examples of the typical Southern patriarch that made all the rules for his daughter, although these fathers lived in a period that approved such behavior. Southern culture was beginning to change, and Grau, Godwin, and Walker challenge tradition by becoming successful in their own careers. Only Grau created the traditional Southern family consisting of father, mother, and children. Their characters' creation of different kinds of families addresses many of the critical and cultural concerns of the mid-twentieth century.

With the exception of Walter Gower in Father Melancholy's Daughter, Godwin's heroines are usually fatherless. Kissel notes that Mose Godwin, Godwin's playboy, alcoholic father, divorced her mother when Gail was an infant. He then committed suicide in 1958 when she was twenty-one and had only recently resumed contact with

him (100). Thus, most of her characters are either bound to or controlled by either the memories or the actuality of the fathers/stepfathers enclosing them.

Although Walker's father is the one who introduced books into the family (In Their Own Words), Walker says the relationship between her and her father and brothers was distant and negative, marked by favoritism toward her brothers and violence observed from the life of her grandparents before and after an accident with a BB gun that left her partially blind in one eye. For Walker, these were examples of patriarchy and the father-force in a negative way. Walker calls her father a "brilliant man—great at mathematics, unbeatable at storytelling, but unschooled beyond the primary grades" (In Search 216). The poverty of the Walker family was another part of the estrangement between father and daughter because as a child she felt that "it was my father's own peculiar failing that we were poor" (213). He is portrayed in many of Walker's works as the exploited black sharecropper. A good influence of the father-force is that Walker had great respect for her father and her use of his life in her fiction works as a way for her to memorialize him. Little information exists about the fathers of Grau and Godwin even though they write of distant and absent fathers and illustrate examples of father figures in their work.

Although Walker learned much from her father, she is also concerned about women. Walker's In Search of Our Mother's Gardens speaks of a "womanist theory" of black feminism where there is a shared dialogue between women and men. In The Companion to Southern Literature: Themes, Genres, Places, People, Movements and Motifs, Joseph Flora notes that Walker focuses on black sisterhood, self-validation and emancipation (Flora 18). In "Introduction: Alice Walker, A Woman Walking into Peril,"

Ikenna Dieke notes that Walker uses certain themes or focuses in her writing that emphasize that it is possible, with enough self-belief, that human beings can transform themselves while searching for growth and self-discovery. Dieke also says that Walker has the "sense in which 'forbidden' in society is a possible route to truth," often because of a character's persistence in discovering the truth (4). Dieke argues that Walker's writings also emphasize a focus on unity and the interconnection of all life (35). In her fiction, Walker ultimately creates a community where women have some control over their own lives.

Grau, Godwin, and Walker create women who develop lives for themselves. However, Grau's women are so caught up in the past that they are fearful of facing the future. Walker's In Search of My Mother's Gardens sets forth her goals in writing and illustrates the four goals that Hazel Carby discusses. Again Carby's goals include a concentration on misogyny and racism, the discovery that black women writers do have a literature that can develop black sensibility, an increased concern with theory, and the existence of a black female language. The book describes her early childhood and includes her memories of her parents, brothers, sisters, and Northern aunts. Many of these stories and characters find their way into her fiction. Walker creates her own language when she coins the word "womanist theory" for black feminism. Walker has also published numerous other non-fiction essays. Although Grau's work primarily consists of short stories and novels, Gail Godwin has a similar writer's focus in The Making of a Writer; Journals, 1961-1963 and also in Heart: A Natural History of the Heart-Filled Life. The journals establish her beginning voice and announce her literary

ambitions and also contain sketches and characters that she uses in her later writings. Heart is Godwin's first venture into non-fiction.

These women are Southern writers and, like other Southern writers of this period, they seem to have had a love-hate relationship with the "South." Even though they continued to write about the area and its problems with positive improvements from traditional attitudes, Godwin and Walker could not live there. Grau remained in the South but spent summers with her family in Martha's Vineyard (Schlueter 18-20). Perhaps the different perspectives allowed Grau, Godwin and Walker to see behind the hidden views to present the South more clearly. Hobson again argues that the black Southern woman writer is more concerned with community, place, past, and its legacy founded in a rich traditional folk culture and feels that this legacy sustains a power of black community with the black church at the center (92). Alice Walker's In Search of Our Mother's Gardens states, "What the black Southern writer inherits as a natural right is a sense of community" (17). Frye feels that, culturally, issues are very different for black women than for white women and that black women have the opportunity to be more multi-dimensional (97). The writings of Grau and Godwin focus on community, a sense of place, and the legacy of the past. These writings include woman's oppression by a patriarchal system. However, in addition to the above-mentioned subjects, Walker includes sexual and racial oppression and victimization of black women by both white and black men. Walker also focuses on promoting a white awareness of all black struggles in her fiction and essays.

Walker uses both good and bad examples of the father-force. Men often dominate her characters until they discover their own independence. Rapes, beatings, and insults

often continue until independence, understanding, or death results in the liberation of the female character. Women's issues are treated in the works of the three writers; however, their created worlds, especially of Grau and Godwin, depict men who are not patriarchs, but who are more understanding of the break from the submissive role of women. The father's influence has helped to mold these authors in their perceptions of the ways that women should be; however, their characters are discovering self-identities not dependent on men for happiness and success.

In the 1940s and 1950s, women were largely confined to the home and had domestic responsibilities along with the responsibility for the children. In contrast to Godwin and Walker, Grau was successful with both family and career. Grau's cultural background enforced the behaviors with which she was raised. Grau herself understood that many of society's restrictions against women in her time period seemed to prevent her advancement in the areas of law, classics, and teaching. Although 1950s readers would understand those restrictions, perhaps later readers would not. The ideal of total independence for women did not seem acceptable in the 1950s because society felt that men were still needed to provide for care of women. Grau's characters begin to work toward independence but do not always achieve it. Thus, her works were affected by changes in cultural ideas.

Each of the three authors has different views of herself as a writer. In "Interviews with Seven Contemporary Writers," Laurie L. Brown notes that Grau sees "the writer as interpreter—not of himself, but of everything else. . . . One's life inevitably conditions views of the world." Writing "has to have some meaning beyond the simple action story" (9). According to Kissel, Grau displays a collaboration of Southern white women with

white men in supporting white patriarchy. Kissel also notes that the father's death does not always result in immediate freedom for his survivors because the living family members often continue the "confusion, hypocrisy, greed, misery, and corruption" of their fathers. Kissel states that the daughters continue the tradition of corrupt fathers and feel its burden in their own lives (69). Lacking self-esteem, self-direction, and leadership abilities, these women remain their fathers' daughters even when the fathers are no longer in control.

For writers, observing daily events and images is important. Godwin, like Walker, developed her powers of observation to be aware of the people around her. Godwin makes this statement about writing: "I write for people who care about the things I care about—how to live life bravely and well and fully and curiously" (6). She feels that

> a good writer needs as much life as possible. However, your discrimination becomes more acute. You choose your 'normal' activities for sharpness and quality. There is not a time for the second-rate unless, of course, you are writing about the second-rate. Then you may have to subject yourself to a boring afternoon. (72)

With its various eccentricities and different locales, the South encourages observation of various experiences as Grau, Godwin, and Walker write about the vulnerabilities of their characters.

A portion of Godwin's works reveals some of the social forces that restrict her characters. Godwin places her characters under social restrictions and then evaluates the relationship between the social structures and the work itself. Perhaps Godwin is

applying New Historicist ideas since these restrictions are used as a form of power by the male ruling class. By the end of her various novels, the characters have revised these social structures to develop their own identity. In bringing the human imperfections to life, the characters are able to grow and fulfill their own life goals.

While Grau and Godwin present restrictions on women from a mostly-white viewpoint, Alice Walker gives a black perspective. Walker was born in Eatonton, Georgia, in 1944, as the youngest of eight children in a sharecropper's family. Much of her early childhood is described in In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens, where she writes of her parents, brothers, sisters, and Northern aunts. Her childhood was lived in the rural poverty that she always mentions in writing about her parents and dispossessed people all over the world. In Modern Novelists: Alice Walker, Maria Lauret states that Walker feels that she has inherited a cultural sense of community and solidarity that came out of the poverty (4). However, Walker insists that the Southern black country life should not be romanticized because of

> the hard work in the fields, the shabby houses, the evil greedy men who worked my father to death and almost broke the courage of that strong woman, my mother. No, I am saying that Southern black writers, like most writers, have a heritage of love and hate. but they also have enormous richness and beauty to draw from . . . . No one could wish for a more advantageous heritage than that bequeathed to a black writer in the South: a compassion for the earth, a trust in humanity beyond our knowledge of evil, and an abiding love of justice. (In Search 21)

Walker still has the sense of place in her vision of the South, but she experienced more poverty than Grau or Godwin.

In contrast, Grau lived a life of more advantage since her childhood was spent between Montgomery and New Orleans with wealthier parents. Both Grau and Godwin had a Catholic high school education. Westerlund notes that Godwin was born in Alabama but spent her early years in the Asheville, North Carolina, area. Kathleen Cole Godwin was a reporter and teacher who also wrote love stories for pulp magazines to support her young daughter (Brown 10). The families of both Godwin and Walker had to be more conscious of money.

Although the characters of Grau and Godwin are not as close to the land as are Walker's, they do seem to share Walker's sense of place, her trust in humanity, and her love of justice. Past events in the South such as the Civil War, black and women's oppression, and the Civil Rights Movement enforce the need of the writers themselves and their characters for justice and independence for women. The experiences in the Southern location highlight injustices and help foster moral convictions.

Grau and Godwin also depict "suspended" characters who strive for outlets for their creativity. These characters are caught in a web of boredom and seem to be unable to escape that web. Grau's work also covers some of the racial tensions found in the South. Godwin's characters are often teachers, writers, and painters who may be prevented by husbands or father figures, femininity, and their own ill-conceived lack of self-confidence and self-respect from searching for their own place. If the characters cannot change, they remain in a prison of their own making. Lack of change ultimately leads to decay and then death. The white characters found in the works of Grau and

Godwin strive to achieve their own identity in a patriarchal world. They also try to transform themselves. Their growth as females has often been stunted by society's expectations of them as daughters and protected, submissive women. All three authors focus on family unity and connectedness. For Walker, this focus is an expression of her "Womanist Theory." Their awareness of emotional consequences of their actions helps to create fulfillment as mature adults.

Walker emphasizes the struggles of her race against a backdrop of racial tension and white patriarchy. Mary Helen Washington, in "An Essay on Alice Walker," argues that one of Walker's recurrent themes is that of a suspended black woman who is an artist without an outlet for art. Washington also notes that although they have a deep spirituality and creativity, Walker's characters are blocked and stopped in their desires to create (91). In Modern Novelists: Alice Walker, Maria Lauret notes that Walker says that as a novelist she is preoccupied with "the survival, the survival whole of my people. But beyond that I am committed to exploration, the oppressions, the insanities, the loyalties, and the triumphs of black women. . . . For me, black women are the most fascinating creatures in the world (1). In Away Down South: A History of Southern Identity, James C. Cobb notes that Walker's fiction reveals her desire to look beyond white oppression of blacks and explore themes of community, identity, and gender (270). Walker uses the human imperfections of her characters to allow them to grow as individuals.

Walker credits a childhood accident and an abrupt move to live with her grandparents for her powers of observation. In playing "cowboys and Indians" with her brothers, she was wounded in the eye by a BB gun. Her brothers received no blame for

the accident which appeared to cause further estrangement from her father since they were excused as "just being boys." In Alice Walker, Evelyn White notes that Walker felt punished, exiled, and rejected by her immediate family, and she became despondent and withdrawn (38). Although childhood was ended, a writer was born: "From my solitary, lonely position, the position of an outcast. . . I began to really see people and things, to really notice relationships and to learn to be patient enough to see how they turned out. . . . I felt old . . . and read stories and began to write poems" (In Search 244-5). Although she had a physical and psychological scar, she compensated by developing her powers of observation, and her handicap allowed her to attend Spelman College, a historic woman's college, on a scholarship (McGill 501). Walker's sense of isolation as a child allowed her to create similarly-isolated characters such as Celie, Brownfield Copeland, Meridian, and Daughter in "The Child Who Favored Daughter."

In contrast, neither Grau nor Godwin had any life-changing experiences that formed their ambition to write. Laurie Brown's interview with Grau notes that Grau's interests in college, law, classics, and English, were closed to women in the early fifties (5). She tried to get into Tulane but, at that time, women were allowed only in the women's division at Sophie Newcomb College, a "kind of finishing School" according to biographer Paul Schlueter (16-17). Grau did not pursue an interest in law since, in her opinion, "no woman then [had] very much of a chance in law—she [had] to fight too hard" (20). According to Grau, she "became a writer by the process of elimination" (20). Grau became a victim of society's standards, and her characters are never able to reach full independence. Grau also adds about writing, "I certainly never became a writer as a matter of compensation for something like so many others say they have. I just don't fit

in that category, the one where authors complain about their unhappy childhoods and about being so socially alienated" (Schlueter 20). Yet, Grau was successful in creating believable characters based on her observations of the people around her. Thus, Hurston, O'Connor, Welty, Grau, Godwin, and Walker all use powers of observation to create characters that search for identity as much as their authors do.

Godwin always felt she wanted to be a writer and used her journals to help her remember people and ideas. However, Godwin's 1962 journals speak of the internal conflicts caused by her early environment. First, her early childhood years raised by mother and grandmother in the 1950s made her very much aware of women's advancements in education and civil rights. Second, because of her early, romantic expectations of marriage and a failed one at the time of the journals, she often yearns for a white knight who will sweep her off her feet. Third, some of her journal entries question friendships with ethnic minorities, but especially with those of the black race (Godwin, The Making of a Writer 155). Godwin is able to transfer some of thses views into her own fiction

Characters of both Godwin and Walker often have absent fathers who do not feel threatened by their daughter's entrance into the work world of contemporary society; however, Godwin's characters often seek traditional means of success while Walker's characters strive to advance beyond poverty level while dealing with white oppression. Grau's version of society's trap is to involve a love element that gives her black characters feelings similar to all other members of society. Walker responds by allowing her characters to break free of this subjugation. Godwin's characters are often inhibited

by their views of society's expectations. All three authors are searching for freedom from oppression for their characters.

In the essay, "Making Peace with the (M)other," Barbara Bennett argues that it is the father who first shows his daughter what her identity is in a patriarchal world. Bennett states that since her mother is limited in power, the daughter begins to realize that she will have little power in the male world. Bennett feels that once the daughter can accept what she believes are her mother's weaknesses, along with her father's shortcomings, she can begin to incorporate the strengths of both mother and father and reject their weaknesses as she creates her adult self with self-knowledge and self-confidence (187-88). The characters of Grau, Godwin, and Walker reconstruct the existing patriarchal world to allow differences from society's view of the typical family.

Historically, because of their powerlessness and supposed inferiority, many women have experienced oppression. Since they are perceived as not being able to provide for themselves, they have an economic need to choose strong male protection for themselves and their children. In exchange for sexual, economic, political, and intellectual subordination to men, the woman was able to share the power of her class to exploit men and women of lower classes. Thus, the women characters in Grau's novels are still connected, however loosely, to their male protectors, while Godwin and Walker's characters search for their own identity. Each of the three writers breaks the silence by describing female oppression, but the writings of Godwin and Walker create characters that fight against this oppression by creating new standards of acceptance.

According to Biller, a woman's adult life is filled with the "unfinished business" of "finding her father" (69). It may be that she is not so concerned with finding him as

she is with redefining his ideas to establish her own view of life. The father-force sometimes constricts the daughter's growth to adulthood, but frequently she uses the power of the father-force to establish her own voice as a person. Although the influences of other writers, culture, mother, and father are very strong in the fiction of Grau, Godwin, and Walker, the writers still work to revise these factors in their own writing. Even though much of the South was resistant to change, these three writers promote change so that their characters can grow to reach fulfillment. The effects of the father-force on these writers cause them to create heroines that are dominated by men until they discover their own independence. Their world eventually allows men who accept their break from society's norms. The father's influence has helped to mold the writers, but their characters are discovering a self-identity not dependent on men.

While Grau, Godwin, and Walker are influenced in their writing by Hurston, O'Connor, and Welty, they also have influences from social standards and restrictions. Chapter Two, "The Father as Patriarch," will establish a definition of and discuss the importance of the Southern father as patriarch. He uses his cultural power to keep his daughter in her inferior place. In the South, the father is often an educated, propertied white man who has political and economic power. These powers are examples of Althusser's ideological state apparatuses. In his belief in the chivalric and cultural world that he has established, he sees his vision almost as a religious right guaranteed in the Old Testament view of the patriarch. He gains his view about the submissiveness of women from the books in the New Testament written by Paul. Although the majority of Southerners did not fit into this aristocratic class, the men still supported the chivalric code that allows the male to be in total control of his property—property that includes his

family. Even though Walker's family also did not fit into this mold, the black fathers in her novels are strongly influenced by it. Most fathers in western society are patriarchs, but Grau, Godwin, and Walker strongly develop the influence of that patriarchal control in a southern setting amid traditional manners that affect the role of the daughter. Some primary sources include Grau's The Keepers of the House, The Condor Passes, and Evidence of Love; Godwin's A Mother and Two Daughters, Father Melancholy's Daughter, and Violet Clay; and Walker's The Third Life of Grange Copeland, The Color Purple and By the Light of My Father's Smile.

Chapter Three, "The Dutiful Daughter and the Southern Lady," explores the nineteenth-century version of the father-daughter relationship where the daughter martyrs herself in the service of her father's needs, and investigates and defines the "Cult of True Womanhood" while showing these ideas in the works of Grau, Godwin, and Walker. The principal conflict between fathers and daughters is that of separation and retention. The daughter functions as property to be given away by her father. Giving away his daughter at her marriage is still a sign of obedience to the patriarchal father rather than an example of the daughter's desire to leave. The daughter becomes an object of exchange, which Claude Levi Strauss compares to using woman as a commodity. Society expects daughters to organize their own homes and establish their sphere of influence elsewhere. Unless she is sacrificing her own married life to care for a sick or widowed father, the daughter's remaining at home is a threat to the family structure which does not allow two women to share what little power that might be found in the home. Although this kind of daughter is first seen in the nineteenth century, Grau, Godwin, and Walker also have examples of her in their twentieth-century writings, and she is even seen in writings of

the twenty-first century. Some examples include Grau's The Keepers of the House, The Condor Passes, Evidence of Love, and The House on Coliseum Street; Godwin's A Mother and Two Daughters and Father Melancholy's Daughter; and Walker's The Third Life of Grange Copeland, The Color Purple, and By the Light of My Father's Smile. Stephen Greenblatt's ideas of constraint and mobility are in evidence as these characters are constrained by cultural and historical concepts while they are trying to find their own identities.

Although the belief in Southern womanhood is a product of the aristocratic class, many Southern women try to maintain this ideal and continue to perpetuate the myth. If the woman is submissive and has some power only in the domestic sphere, society's standards and the dominant male of the home prevent her from becoming an influence in the world outside of the home. Because the idea of female obedience to her father or husband is linked to Southern religious practices of the male as the head of the household linked to the Old Testament, the powerful cultural influences of religion and the belief in the cult of Southern Womanhood restrict the woman's search for self-identity.

The Southern daughter's dilemma in this description of the female life is that the characteristics of passivity, dependence, sexual purity, submission, and ignorance fail to correspond to the reality of her life. She needs the economic protection of the male head of household, yet she dislikes her economic dependence. Grau, Godwin, and Walker were influenced by this Southern ideal in some form either through parents, grandparents, or the cultural expectations of the ideal Southern woman. Since women are either overvalued by being placed on a pedestal or undervalued by male dominance, the daughter has difficulty in determining her true value Even though Grau's father

discouraged her writing for the public because of the economic instability for a woman during that time period, her much older husband who was also an author encouraged her writing. None of Grau's heroines are writers or teachers. After beginning her writing experience by teaching and writing as a means of support, Godwin now writes as a means of self-expression. The Southern Family's Clare Campion is a successful writer while her friend Julia Richardson teaches in the local high school. Cate Gatlinsky in A Mother and Two Daughters is also a teacher. Walker has become a spokesperson for all women, but especially black women. Her character Meridian in the novel of the same name becomes a representative for many black women.

Chapter Four, "The Burden of the Past and Racial Themes," looks at the South's way of dealing with race as the Southern daughters become more accepting of differences in ethnicity and beliefs. The chapter also investigates the adherence to traditions found in the works of Grau, Godwin, and Walker. Carrying the burden of the past is usually a task of the oldest son and male heir of the Southern family. Sons receive the family name and must live up to that name by honoring family traditions and codes. The daughters of the family must behave honorably and learn to maintain good homes for their future husbands. Maintaining past traditions while living life in modern times is a difficult task in the constantly-changing modern world. Although carrying the burden of the past falls to the son, the daughter also has to maintain this restrictive burden in spite of her own desires to be an individual and live her own life. Sometimes the daughter may have to carry this burden for or because of her father and his own guilty feelings about past experiences. The heroines of Grau, Godwin, and Walker remember the past, chose the best it has to offer, and revise a future more suitable for themselves.

Although the institution of slavery is not a pleasant part of Southern history, it is definitely a distinctive difference between the North and South. Slaves were needed in order to make the plantation system run effectively. In some cases, cruel treatment of slaves was a tool to use fear to encourage them to follow orders. Privileged Southern women and their oppressed slaves were both prevented from becoming individuals in their own right. Rumors about the fear of slave rebellions and attacks upon Southern women further bound the two groups together. Some men felt they had the right to abuse the male slave because of what he might potentially do to the white female. Even though a white male feels that his patriarchal rights allow him to rape a black woman, he feels a right to beat his own daughter because of her associations with a black man. Since the black man cannot show his frustration with the white man, he often vents his frustrations upon his female family members. Grau's Abigail Howland Tolliver, Godwin's Jane Clifford, and Walker's Grange Copeland are heavily burdened by past mistakes, racial issues, and their own expectations. These issues influence father-daughter dynamics.

A section of this chapter will discuss the "Peculiar Sisterhood" between the plantation mistress and the black slave. Both the plantation mistress and the black slave were submissive to the master of the plantation. Since neither woman had a choice about her submissiveness, a "Peculiar Sisterhood" is established between the two women. The idea of slavery put both women in a submissive relationship to the male head of household and illustrated a connection between the conditions of slavery and the requirements of Southern womanhood. Both slave and wife were property of the master of the plantation; however, only the slave was the literal property. The white woman was revered yet deprived of sexual and maternal identity. The black woman was strong and

dependent, responsible and subservient, and yet society denied her status in the "Cult of True Womanhood." Even though she was a mother, she was frequently seen only as a breeder for her own children; yet, she often raised the white children on the plantation. The white woman was oppressed, but she also sometimes became an oppressor of her black slave. Although both women were victims of patriarchy, the fear of rape or the threat of being sold made the black woman more of a victim. This sisterhood was evident in times of slavery and in the writings of Grau, Godwin, and Walker. Usually this term refers to the sisterhood between white mistress and black slave; however, Walker has examples of unusual sisterhoods which will be more clearly defined in this chapter. The Color Purple and By the Light of My Father's Smile contain peculiar sisterhoods.

Chapter Five, "Gender, Class, and Religious Expectations," looks at the specified role of the woman as a representative of her class while adhering to society's religious views in the works of Grau, Godwin, and Walker. Religion can be uplifting or restrictive to the heroines. Stephen Greenblatt's "Culture" discusses the fact that society's expectations often restrict its members to follow certain acceptable standards of behaviors, beliefs, and practices (225). Gender, class and religion are three of these restraints. In the South, a woman's place is in the home. Traditionally, she keeps the household running smoothly following her husband's or her father's rules; however, she breaks tradition when she is forced outside the home to become the family breadwinner. Class in the Old South became linked with property and slaves. The Virginia planter represented the aristocracy, with the yeoman farmer, the merchant, the poor white, and the slave composing the other classes. The class society began with the overwhelming

pride in the possession of rich land and slaves and a dislike for those who lacked them (Cash 35). Doing research, reading fiction, and living in the South for a long period of time substantiates some opinions of the Southern way of life. During this time, people began to associate primarily with their own class. Each class expected certain standards of behavior. In order to maintain class distinctions, fathers prevented their daughters from social associations outside their own class. Therefore, the choice of female friends and potential mates was limited. Similar friendships with other ethnic groups were also discouraged. Grau's characters, descendants of Old South aristocratic ideals, try to break away from tradition but are often not strong enough. The characters of Godwin and Walker begin to find their own place, to accept those people that they like in spite of differences, and to make their own standards.

Religion provides punishment, solace, and redemption. The slave owner could congratulate himself on bringing Christian religion to the slave, while he used religion to justify his dominance over his wife and children. He could use religion to sooth his guilty conscience over the owning of slaves and committing adultery with other partners. The Southern father uses the example of the Old Testament to establish his role as a patriarch whose daughter finds solace in religious ceremonies and rituals. Religion plays an important part in the lives of many characters of Grau, Godwin, and Walker.

Chapter Six, "A Clearer Dilemma," summarizes findings and draws final conclusions based on the research.

CHAPTER 2

THE FATHER AS PATRIARCH

In the South, the father is often an educated, propertied white man who has political and economic power. These powers are examples of Althusser's ideological state apparatuses. The father uses his cultural power to keep his daughter in her inferior place. In his belief in the chivalric and cultural world that he has established, he sees his vision almost as a religious right guaranteed in the Old Testament view of the patriarch. He gains his view about the submissiveness of women from the books in the New Testament written by Paul. Although the majority of Southerners did not fit into this aristocratic class, the men still supported the chivalric code that allows the male to be in total control of his property—a property that includes his family. Many fathers in western society are considered patriarchs, but Grau, Godwin, and Walker strongly develop the influence of that patriarchal control in a Southern setting amid traditional manners that affect the role of the daughter. The idea of women's inferiority, subservience, and domination by males appears to make the father-force more powerful, since this view of women originated with the earliest of civilizations. Such ideas have been very resistant to change. Often, especially in America and in the South, the idea of "if it ain't broke, don't fix it" seems to prevail. Throughout the world, recorded history presents examples of male domination; however, Grau, Godwin, and Walker depict in their fiction a need for modification of this male control.

Growing up in the South from 1943-1965, a well-read Southern daughter must have been impressed by literary examples of the father-force from two very popular

books: To Kill a Mockingbird and Gone With the Wind. Harper Lee's 1960 novel, To Kill a Mockingbird, has examples of all kinds of fathers who influence their children for good or bad. The patient and respected Atticus Finch shapes his children, Scout and Jem, by listening to them and answering their questions truthfully. Tom Robinson, likewise, loves his family and even has compassion for Mayella, his accuser. Both Atticus and Tom maintain control in the face of adversity. In contrast to these shining examples of fathers, both Arthur Radley Sr. and Bob Ewell are ashamed of their respective children, Arthur (Boo) and Mayella. In contrast, Gerald O'Hara of Margaret Mitchell's 1936 Gone With the Wind is an impulsive, reckless, family-loving father and plantation owner who instills in his daughter, Scarlet, a passion for the land, a love for the plantation Tara that serves as a symbol of her own security, and the determination to survive. Both Lee's Scout and Mitchell's Scarlet have been provided a strong background from which they can achieve future maturity and independence.

Although Atticus Finch and Gerald O'Hara have admirable qualities that can influence their daughters, the reader knows that, realistically, most Southern fathers are human, emotional, and vulnerable, primarily because their worldviews seem to be intertwined with the male-controlled cultural traditions of the South. Their pride in their daughters' accomplishments appears to be occasionally influenced by the father's need to keep his daughters nearby and control their destiny. In some instances, the patriarchal view might cause these fathers to mistreat their daughters in misguided efforts to do what they believe to be in the daughter's best interest. In contrast to these misguided efforts, some mistreatment may occur because the father has the power to control his daughter's

destiny. Victimization by the father might cause hatred or strong rebellion on the part of the daughter.

Although the majority of Southerners did not fit into an aristocratic class, the typical Southern father could adopt the same chivalric code that allowed the male to be in total control of his property—a property that includes his family. Grau, Godwin, and Walker strongly depict the influence of patriarchal control in the American South amid traditional manners and deep-seated beliefs held by all members of society, especially about the daughter's place in the Southern home. In these examples, the father appears to use the Southern tradition of the father's absolute authority to criticize and inhibit his daughter as she strives to reach maturity. If she cannot overcome these controls, her independence may often be destroyed by her father's desire to keep her under his control in a submissive state, maintaining the traditional role of women.

History of Patriarchy

Some fathers seem to be patriarchs who repeatedly exhibit some of the worst examples of the father-force, the father's use of power to control all or at least many of his daughter's activities and beliefs. The Southern patriarchal father seems to use his cultural power to keep his daughter in what he believes is her inferior place. As in other geographical areas in the United States, the Southern father often has political and economic power in addition to other means of control, including Althusser's ideological state apparatuses. In the chivalric and cultural world of the plantation system that has been established in the South, the father may see his power to control his daughter almost as a religious right guaranteed in both the Old Testament and the New Testament view of

the patriarch. The writings of the Apostle Paul and others in the New Testament appear to emphasize the submissiveness of women.

The power of the patriarchal Southern father appears to have become established in traditional and religious roles from the earliest times. Both Lucinda MacKeithan's Daughters of Time: Creating Woman's Voice in Southern Story and Gerda Lerner's The Creation of Patriarchy trace the origin of patriarchy back to Biblical times and the earliest civilizations. Lerner traces the line of descent to the male heir back to the time of Hammurabi, Assyria, and Mesopotamia, and the Neolithic period, and notes the religious view that since woman was created after Adam, she was inferior and was assigned different tasks and biological functions than the male; therefore, since God or nature created these sexual differences, sexual inequality and male dominance were obvious results (Lerner 10), and women's subordination in these early civilizations was repeatedly seen as a universal, god-given right (16). Even though inequality was evident in Biblical times, these ideas seem to be still in evidence in the nineteenth, twentieth, and twenty-first centuries. According to Lerner, the scientific theory of Darwin's "survival of the fittest" claims to justify the unequal distribution of wealth and power in American society since women's maternal roles make them unfit for economic or educational opportunities (18). MacKethan says that, in the Biblical sense of family, ownership is interrelated with the right of naming (14). According to MacKethan, the system of patriarchy lasted longer in the South than in other sections of the country (5). The designation as the nation's "Bible Belt" influenced the region to adhere to the Old Testament view of the patriarchal male as the head of the family. MacKethan affirms notable differences between the patriarchal society in the North and the South. According to MacKethan,

Northern women found areas to reform in the urban environment while Southern women were the "wives, daughters, sisters, and slaves of men who expected to remain patriarchs eternally and who thus held tenaciously to ideals for women that kept them in their subservient place" (226). The subservient southern daughter is not allowed to maintain the family name because of her eventual marriage; therefore, she is unable to perpetuate a family dynasty for her father.

Patriarchy developed from the idea that certain occupations were considered men's work while other occupations were considered women's work. In The Second Sex, Simone de Beauvior argues that an early division of labor created the inequality between the sexes that supported patriarchy. According to de Beauvior, women's occupations deal with mothering and child rearing, much like today's traditional housewife. She also affirms that man had the more exciting occupations of providing for his family (42-43) and other productive labor. De Beauvior claims that a lack of ownership of property subjugated the female even more since the patriarchal family was founded on the ownership of private property (54). De Beauvior expresses the idea that women should liberate themselves from social and economic oppression to become active in social production (54). Social and economic involvement outside the home can be considered an effort toward liberation.

However, liberation from the father is not one of the traditional goals of a daughter. In "The Daughter's Seduction," Jane Gallop observes that Sigmund Freud promotes the idea that patriarchy is "grounded in the uprightness of the father. If he were devious and unreliable, he could not have the power to legislate. The law is supposed to be just, that is, impartial, indifferent, free from desire" (106). Lerner argues that

biologically higher testosterone levels gave greater strength to men and caused more aggressive male behavior. She adds a psychological reason for the aggressiveness: men tend to compensate for their inability to have children by their sexual dominance and by aggression toward other men (45). Gallop also notes that the importance of patriarchy and the supposed absence of a father's sexual desire for his daughter go back to the idea of the exchange of women, the marking of children with the father's name and the proof of inheritance. If proof is obtained that the woman is not pure, then the father's right of exchange and the family's economic status would be changed (102). However, Gallop also notes that any action of the father on the daughter's desirability would prevent him from exchanging her because she would no longer be of high enough value to exchange. Gallop also observes that the veiled seduction that denies the daughter's worth and traps her in a desire to please her father can be more damaging than an actual seduction because of the continuous circle in which she remains trapped (107). The daughter's wish to please her father in all his demands may lead to her own destruction. It is this circle that Grau, Godwin, and Walker deconstruct.

The importance of the use of the family name appears to have significance to all fathers because of the emphasis on a future inheritance. This application appears to be more important in the South because of the desire of the purest blood line for the male inheritor. Lerner notes that this idea of the right of the ruling male to exchange a female family member in marriage originated before the actual development of the patriarchal family (110) and supports Claude Levi Strauss's idea of the use of woman as a commodity in various exchanges. Lerner observes that the daughter's subordination becomes permanent as she moves from her father's house to that of her husband (218).

Lerner recognizes the view that the daughter gains economic support and protection in exchange for subordination in all matters, sexual service, and unpaid domestic service (218). Problems occur when the daughter asserts her independence from either father or husband.

Governments in the past appeared to use the same means of control for their citizens. In "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses (Notes Toward an Investigation)," Louis Althusser discusses ideological and repressive state apparatuses as a means of political power used against women. Althusser sees culture and even the patriarchal system as a part of the ideology or set of ideas that is agreeable to the aims of the state and the political status quo. Althusser believes it is more desirable for the citizens of a country to think that they have a freedom of choice, even when the choice is being imposed on them. According to Althusser, the apparatus of power functions as long as the citizens recognize their lower position in the power structure and continue to follow orders. In a patriarchal society, the male is in control. Often enough, this theory is evident in a capitalist social system, and the educational system perpetuates this view. (181). Problems begin when the female no longer wishes to remain subordinate and submissive. She then sees herself caught in a power struggle against the ruling male class. The characters of Grau, Godwin, and Walker seek recognition for their talents, want freedom for their thoughts and ideas, and have desires to be treated as equal citizens, not inferior ones.

Because of the agrarian economy which dominated the South, Lucinda MacKethan notes that patriarchy was perpetuated longer there because of the connection to the economic system of slavery. The power of the father-force was supported by

tradition and religion. Clifford Gertz, in the first chapters of The Interpretation of Culture, points out that "humans could not survive without the symbolic structure by which we interpret experiences" (75). Lynda Boose notes that an undisciplined daughter may pose a threat to the system because she desires identity and freedom. However, in Boose's opinion, sometimes it is the fathers themselves who rebel against the god-like image of dictatorship and sentimentality (37). Many of the symbolic structures of the ante-bellum South dealt with a class system, named designations for women, a code of honor that stems from England's chivalric code, and a patriarchal society. Grau, Godwin, and Walker challenge these effects of patriarchy as they strive to construct different frameworks that do not limit the advancement of their characters into a world of maturity and freedom. Their characters wish to control their own lives. These characters strive to liberate themselves from oppression and often finally have the ability to succeed if they so choose.

For many civilizations, patriarchy appears to be a form of control. Although patriarchy can be defined as "all forms of male dominance" (Fox-Genovese 63), it can also be seen as tribal rule or a way of tracing descent and succession through the male line. In Within the Plantation Household, Black and White Women of the Old South, Elizabeth Fox-Genovese argues that patriarchy was formed to protect the rights and power of the male head of household from undue influence from the state. She notes, that with its strong Christian commitment to honor and domination, the Southern society recognized the male authority and the human rights of women, children, and slaves, and preferred the term "paternalism" that emphasized the protective domination of father over family. Fox-Genovese argues that the South's persistence of the household as a dominant

unit of production and reproduction guarantees the power of men in society. She notes that this belief enforces gender constraints as women are placed under the domination of male heads of households and restricted to the company of women of their own households (38). It was unlike the Roman society in which the male head could kill the wife, children, and slaves (63). It is this view of paternalism that many twentieth-century fathers copy and is a concept that continued into the twentieth century when Grau, Godwin, and Walker began their writing. Although Grau, Godwin, and Walker are aware of this belief and were affected by it in their own childhood, they depict characters who try to change this paternalistic view by creating communities that include men who do not dominate the females around them. Life in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries seems to suggest more equality for both males and females of all colors.

Patriarchy in Literary Situations

Many women writers of the late twentieth century suffer patriarchy in their writing careers since they are habitually dismissed because of what male critics perceive as feminist themes. Tillie Olsen in Silences illustrates this dismissal when she discusses male critics' terminology for a female writer. Olsen notes that the label of "feminine sensibility" applies to female writers whether or not the literary work contains it. She cites the male critic's habit of concentrating on domestic themes in a female writer's work, ignoring other issues. Olsen debates the ultimate, but degrading male compliment that, "She writes like a man," which symbolizes that which is good. Using those standards, a qualified woman writer receiving a higher male status by critics is no longer considered just a "female writer". Olsen argues that being a bad writer is the term

typically assigned to female writers by male critics (230). Good writing should be a matter of talent, not gender.

Males quite often dominate the literary world. To emphasize the continuing existence of literary patriarchy for twentieth-century women writers, Adrienne Rich refused to accept a 1974 National Book Award as an individual but accepted it for all women writers. Rich co-authored an acceptance speech with Audre Lorde and Alice Walker, the two other poetry nominees, which "refused the terms of patriarchal competition" (Olsen 174) and advances the cause of all women writers:

> We . . . together accept this award in the name of all the women whose voices have gone and are still unheard in a patriarchal world, and in the name of those who, like us, have been tolerated as token women in this culture, often at great cost and in great . . . . pain. We symbolically join here in refusing the terms of patriarchal competition and declaring that we will share this prize among us, to be used as best we can for women. . . . We dedicate this occasion to the struggle for self-destruction of all women, of every color, identification, or deprived class . . . the women who will understand what we are doing here and those who will not understand yet: the silent women whose voices have been denied us, the articulate women who have given us strength to do our work" (174).

Rich, Lorde, and Walker, along with Grau and Godwin, recognize the need to change the patriarchal, literary stronghold to one that also recognizes women. Grau, Godwin and Walker attempt to do so in their fiction. Even in the literary world, women have to continue in a patriarchal struggle.

A male-dominated literary society usually wants awareness of only the male viewpoint, not what has been termed "domestic fiction" concerning women's problems. When stories are told from the woman's point of view, the power of the male becomes less as the reading public becomes aware of his domination and oppression. Louise Westling affirms that not only have women writers been left out of patriarchal literary traditions but also have been actively, and sometimes violently, forced to tell their stories from the father's point of view. She notes that since fathers define culture and history in their own image, they feel that women's speech needs to be silenced when it threatens the father's power (110). Minrose Gwin, Deborah McDowell, and Christine Froula note the conflicts that occur between "the daughter's story and the father's law" (McDowell 392) and "the literary violence against women's works to privilege the cultural father's voice and story over those of women, the cultural daughters, and indeed to silence women's voices" (Gwin 427). Susan Kissel notes that symbolic death of the father as a patriarchal authority should be a cause for celebration in contemporary literature, but, instead, "Bewilderment, fear, regret" because of the "double movement of desire and repulsion for the world of the fathers" (2) are created. Grau, Godwin, and Walker break the literary silence for daughters who write and express the need for women to find their own literary voices.

Women, in general, and women writers, in particular, have often continued the oppression of patriarchy by not breaking their silence earlier. Joseph Flora cites Adrienne Rich, in "Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence," as she notes that in upholding patriarchal structures, women have destroyed bonds between themselves, and their loyalty to men may have been detrimental to other women. She

observes that contemporary Southern literature, as opposed to writing from other sections of the country, creates community among women (Flora 256). Women writers of the twentieth century fought to change the mindset of submission and domesticity in the real, fictional, and literary worlds.

Patriarchal Fathers in Grau, Godwin, and Walker

Grau, Godwin, and Walker challenge patriarchal society in their work in a need to establish their own identity as women writers and, for Walker especially, to survive society's restrictions on women and African Americans. In attempts to restructure male-dominated and restrictive views, Grau, Godwin, and Walker depict heroines who work to change the status quo, sometimes with the support, but more often in spite of imperfect, but competent, fathers. By illustrating the unfortunate consequences of maintaining the traditional social order, these authors hope for change so that the daughters in their works can grow and seek fulfillment. Grau, Godwin, and Walker also provide many second chances for the characters who are willing to try to discover an avenue through which they can change for the better.

Grau, Godwin, and Walker illustrate the more protective view of the father-force that often interferes with the daughter's plans in an effort to protect her. However, some of Walker's fathers and stepfathers feel that this right to protect their daughters also gives them the right to beat and abuse their daughters. Grau, Godwin, and Walker portray the patriarchal father who controls his environment. Patriarchy, slavery, and Southern honor were also a major part of the economic life of the plantation period that emphasized family as a high priority. These elements also affect Southern characters of the later twentieth century. Since the family was all-important, there had to be one designated

leader. In "'What She Got to Sing About?' Comedy and The Color Purple," Priscilla Walton argues that marriage "perpetuates stereotyped roles, operates on feminine inferiority, and keeps everyone [women] in their place" (189). She notes that nonconformity causes religious criticism (189) for those resisting society's conventions. According to Grau, Godwin, and Walker, patriarchy, paternalism, and marriage are traditions that keep women oppressed and subservient.

The fathers in Grau and Walker appear to display more patriarchal qualities than the fathers of Godwin who are often absent. However, lingering ideas of patriarchy remain in the memories of Godwin's characters. Grau experienced patriarchy via limitations on her educational goals, while Godwin lived in a household with three women as she observed her mother's work at two jobs to supplement the family's financial situation. Growing up in a sharecropper's family contributed to Alice Walker's first-hand knowledge of patriarchy in an agrarian society, and her black fathers are strongly influenced by it. A racial disadvantage requires Walker's women to be subservient to their black husbands or fathers who are subservient to white men. Celie in Walker's The Color Purple and Abigail in Grau's The Keepers of the House are examples of Claude Levi Strauss's view of the use of woman as a commodity in various exchanges. While her characters often appear in unhappy marriages, none of Godwin's characters seem to be used as a commodity in marriage. Each of the three writers portrays characters that gain their individual identities by arguing against the oppression in their patriarchal society. Even if the patriarch is benevolent, the father-force may hinder the growth of the female characters into maturity.

Grau, Godwin, and Walker often depict fathers the same way Eudora Welty does. In Welty's fiction, the father is often represented as Simone de Beauvior's "Other" that still represents a minority although, in this instance, the minority is the male, not the female. In her article, "Fathers and Daughters in Welty and O'Connor," Louise Westling notes that Welty's fathers are often human, vulnerable, beloved men on the outside of their daughters' lives, seldom intruding as the daughter asserts her right to self-determination. Sometimes she even portrays a comic vision of fathers and daughters (111). The fathers of Grau, Godwin, and Walker are also human and vulnerable and are portrayed in some comic situations. However, a major difference between Welty's fathers and the fathers of the other three writers is that those fathers, especially of Walker and Godwin, often intrude and try to control their daughters' lives. Grau's fathers exert a great influence either by their presence or their memory. After years of searching for identity because of their inferior, oppressed, minority position, the female characters of Grau, Godwin, and Walker are influenced by a male-dominated society that does have the power to change its outlook. Grau, Godwin, and Walker often use substitute males, rather than females, as the subordinate "Other" beings that do not fit into the society in which their characters reside. Unlike Walker, whose fathers are often present and domineering, Grau and Godwin seem to present fathers or father figures who can still positively or negatively influence their daughters even if often absent. These fathers also serve as de Beauvior's "Other."

Each of the three writers presents the Southern patriarchal father in different ways. Shirley Ann Grau's works depict patriarchs who want desperately to produce sons who will continue the family name and control the family inheritance. In "Shirley Ann

Grau," Linda Wagner-Martin notes the huge burden of maintaining a family dynasty on the dominant father who often chooses unsuccessful "would–be" sons (158). It is ironic that, in many cases, only daughters are born into these families, and these daughters are frequently more capable than the chosen sons. In Moving On: the Heroines of Shirley Ann Grau, Anne Tyler, and Gail Godwin, Kissel remarks that, in contrast to the heroic Civil War soldiers, modern Southern patriarchs make deals, struggle for control, take risks, and dominate anyone less powerful, often supported by females who defend the actions of the male (67), a common motif in Grau's works. Since the modern patriarch has no war stories with which to create tradition, he strives for success in the economic world. Grau's patriarchal fathers display corruption, power in business and finance, greed, revenge, selfishness, great wealth, lack of respect for women, and a high regard for their male species. Grau's daughters often gain their independence by accident, but they passively still waste their privileges and responsibilities through a lack of vision and their own negative behavior. Such behavior is illustrated by Abigail Howland Tolliver in The Keepers of the House. Abigail's father-figure is her grandfather, William Howland, who raises her and builds industries that help his home town and the people in it to prosper. However, although he loves his daughter and granddaughter, he sometimes does not recognize them as individuals. The majority of Grau's women have been mentally imprisoned by society's views of the patriarch and are unsure what to do with independence once it is gained. Some experience decay in their lives while others grow from their experiences.

In contrast to the good influence of The Keeper of the House's benevolent patriarch William Howland, Thomas Henry Oliver, the "Old Man" of Grau's The Condor

Passes, is an example of the negative father-force. Oliver builds his fortune by manipulating others and ignoring his daughters. Although unwilling to modify his beliefs, he does think of his youngest daughter, Margaret, in this way: "Too bad you were not a man, you are very astute" (Grau The Condor Passes 268). At his wife's death, even relatives pity Oliver by sympathizing, "Sad, sad, that poor man left with just two daughters" (196). Margaret herself sees his power and wants "to have what men have. To initiate, to choose. Not to wait, not always to wait. For the sleek, preening male. Because I need him. I don't want to need him" (195). Margaret herself wants male power, but she is anxious about accepting the responsibilities.

Still, in manipulating the lives of his daughters, Oliver does not obtain their love. Upon seeing him after spending time in New York, Margaret verbalizes her feelings about him:

> When she saw him, she felt the usual shift in her feelings. A lift, a jump, a tug. Pleasure, but not totally. Love, but not completely. Dependence. Fear, familiarity, identification. That's part of me there, walking along. Tree from which I sprang. His spasm produced me. Shake of his body and here I am…. (192-3)

Although Margaret has respect for her father and expects his interference in her life and his help when she makes mistakes, she does not have any daughterly love for him.

In Oliver's effort to escape the poverty of his youth, his entire life has been spent in manipulation and financial control, not in emotional entanglements. In Shirley Ann Grau, Paul Schlueter acknowledges that, in the constant amassing of wealth, Oliver's actions engender the same greed in his daughters (173). To ensure stability and an

ultimate dynasty, Oliver buys a husband, Robert Caillet, for his oldest daughter, Anna, and tries to acquire a son to perpetuate his dynasty. Kissel notes that Oliver's attempt at immortality passes on his "corroding destructiveness" of family values while Anna and Margaret continue the negativity of patriarchal Southern tradition (60) that keeps Southern daughters in their place. Kissel also states that, like Oliver, his daughters are "callous, self-centered, and selfish" (58), believing Oliver's patriarchal view that money can buy everything. It is ironic that, because of Robert's failure as a son, this dynasty also fails. Oliver meets his economic obligations to his daughters, but he provides no moral guidance. His dynasty has produced daughters who love only their sons and who have no morals. Anna's son dies, and Margaret's son goes into the priesthood. Although Margaret's business sense allows her to ultimately become the son Oliver has always wanted, both she and Anna grow up unloved and unwanted simply because they are females. In contrast to Abigail Howland Tolliver of The Keepers of the House, they will continue Oliver's corruptive use of wealth and power.

Edward Milton Henley of Grau's Evidence of Love provides another example of a corrupt and destructive father-force who views women in this way:

> Women get you at the last. For a while you think you have them, with their soft bodies and their beckoning distances that lure you on as if there were something waiting for you. But you grow tired and they don't, and in the end they have got you. Look at me now. Nurses, goddamn nurses. I shall be carried to my grave by women…. women again, measuring your life. (215)

Although Henley's view of women has not changed, he is aided in his death wish by his daughter-in-law, Lucy Roundtree Evans Henley, and sets up a trust fund for her because

of her strength of character and personal integrity. Despite Henley's insight, however, Schleuter notes that the patriarch has no sense of propriety, little sense of duty, and significant indifference to others' values and desires, and that he sees human relationships in terms of monetary worth (89). His "evidence of love" for his son, Stephen, is giving him railroad interests at his christening, an action to control the future life of his son. In contrast to the heroines of The Keepers of the House and The Condor Passes, Lucy is able to free herself from influences of the past, desires for revenge, and a need for control of the family business. Kissel affirms that Lucy does not feel the need to uphold family honor and traditions or family needs and responsibilities (63). Although Lucy recognizes the lack of love within her own family between her sons and is, therefore, disappointed, she sees herself changing positively:

> Matter of fact, I could feel myself firming and hardening, as if I were developing emotional muscles. I began to feel that I could look more directly at things than ever before…. Because now I have freedom…. I need very little…. I suppose I need silence. I need emptiness. I am content. (Grau Evidence 216-18)

It is unlikely that Henley intends for his money to provide happiness for his daughter-in-law without aiding his grandsons, but Lucy is able to avoid the Henley male power struggle and gain her own independence.

Joan Mitchell in Grau's The House on Coliseum Street substitutes various father figures for her absent father. Schleuter notes that the abortion of her child with Michael causes her strong identification with her own father's betrayal of her since he leaves home and dies (45). Both fathers refuse recognition of and responsibility for their children. At the end of the novel, Joan is locked out of the house, yet, as Kissel observes,

all that the house represents traps her (52). Joan has the opportunity to move forward, but her life has been one of waiting without making any major decisions. Although she still has her bequest from her deceased father, she needs courage for a new beginning.

Annie Landry in Grau's The Hard Blue Sky is the center of her father's life until his remarriage to Adele. However, Annie refuses to accept this marriage, rebels, and finds a father substitute in Inky. Although she did make the decision to leave Isle aux Chiens for New Orleans to escape her isolation and loneliness, she is passively waiting for something to happen. Giving up the steering of the boat to Inky on her departure perhaps illustrates the point that she still takes no control over her own life.

Thus, Abigail, Margaret, Anna, Lucy, Joan, and Annie are all influenced by a destructive father-force. However, only Lucy is able to overcome that father-force to make a positive change in her own life. Lucy knows her worth and is not caught in the traditional trap of submissive women who rely on men to take care of them.

While Grau's women seem unable to act, Godwin's women explore their possibilities. They "do what [they] can do. That's the duty, that's the privilege of the living" (Godwin, Mother Two Daughters 457). The traditional view of patriarchy emphasizes full-time motherhood and wifehood as a fulfillment of female identity while the opportunities of professional growth are not encouraged. Another traditional patriarchal view is that the female remains subordinate while she limits her economic pursuits and her political activities, fearing a threat to her own sexuality and a threat to the hierarchy of the males surrounding her. Kerstin Westerlund, in Escaping the Castle of Patriarchy: Patterns of Development in the Novels of Gail Godwin, argues that the development of Godwin's women characters within patriarchy determines, to a large

extent, their struggle for identity (38). Westerlund also cites women's need to deconstruct the patriarchal images of women and to recognize their own collaboration in the perpetuation of these images (41). Some of Godwin's depictions of domineering husbands in her earlier works, including The Perfectionists and Glass People, are based on the patriarchal view of the father's role in a daughter's life. The father-force represented here is that of the neglectful or absent father.

In Godwin's Father Melancholy's Daughter, the bond between Walter and Margaret Gower is very strong; however, Walter's mental problems limit, for a long period, Margaret's growth to maturity. Both Walter and Francis Lake, of Godwin's The Good Husband, display the ideal fatherly qualities of supporter, companion, and caregiver. Yet, Gower's bouts with depression make him more dependent on his dutiful daughter, Margaret, than The Good Husband's heroine, Magda, is on Francis, her husband, until her final days. Leonard Strickland in A Mother and Two Daughters represents the Southern gentleman and family man; however, he teaches his daughters that a man must take care of them. In contrast, Clare Campion's relationship with her stepfather, Ralph Quick, in A Southern Family is one of antagonism. Godwin lacked a stable father-image and a motivating father-force in her own life, so her depiction of strong fathers is limited to Walter and Leonard.

Godwin's heroines are free to explore new possibilities for themselves, their families, and their communities away from the destructive elements of the father-force. In Gail Godwin, Jane Hill notes that Godwin herself admits to a weakness for stories about fathers and expresses the view that many of her heroines express a strong feeling of loss associated with the absence of father figures. Hill comments that, with the exception

of Leonard Strickland, most of Godwin's father figures bear a resemblance to Mose Godwin (3). Kissel observes that, in five of nine Godwin novels, stepfathers interfere in the heroines' lives, invading the domestic pattern of a traditional family, often displacing the real (often deceased) father and distancing the real mother (100). Depiction of some type of father force, either positive or negative, might suggest an unspoken need for many of Godwin's characters to have a father figure.

Godwin's novels often explore the possibilities of a daughter finding her own life after the patriarch is dead. In an August 25, 1989 interview with Godwin, Westerlund notes Godwin's recognition of the adverse effects of a patriarchal culture that "keep[s] women prisoners" since they need to break "out of a certain kind of enclosure forever—call it the prison of safety, the castle of patriarchy" (12). Godwin also asks in a 1989 letter to Westerlund: "What does a daughter who has grown up under the (loving) wings of a patriarchal point of view do with her freedom when the patriarch is buried and she must go out into the world and discover her own?" (12) Her heroines make this decision for themselves and often move from subordination to transformation. Although Grau and Walker do not ask this particular question, their fiction illustrates that they have similar concerns.

Leonard Strickland, the father in Godwin's A Mother and Two Daughters, sees his role of patriarch as one of preserving foundations that others have built, of maintaining the status quo. Since he was a member of the Old Guard, he wants to preserve the old-fashioned values of the Old Guard that ensures women's subservience. Leonard's eldest daughter, Cate, fears "more than death…. The loss of my [her] will to resist….The sucking pull of the Status Quo." (65) According to Leonard in his most

memorable quotation, “If we can’t trust our foundations, what can we trust?” (24). Leonard wants to maintain these traditional foundations while Cate, a “tough, independent” woman, wants to find a limit “to the traces anybody can kick over” (17). Foundations appear to be important but should not limit possibilities.

Leonard is a visionary who admires Cate because she does all the things he wanted to do. However, Leonard’s very reasons for admiring Cate

> made him wish to protect her from herself. That he was, in effect, punishing her for her independence and her egalitarian tendencies did not, perhaps, occur to him ….Leonard …could not bring himself to relinquish his paternal hold on his interesting, troubling, elder daughter even after his death. (57)

In Cate’s eyes, Leonard’s small annuity left to her in his will “undermined her. It cast doubt on the kind of life she led. Why should he show less faith in her because she lived for seeing things and feeling them honestly than he did in Lydia” (73). Leonard gives conflicting and “contradictory” signs to Cate as he admires her independence but doesn’t trust her decisions. He would much prefer that she choose marriage as he and Lydia did; for Leonard, marriage for his daughters helps him maintain the “status quo.”

Cate sees Leonard more as an “armchair visionary with only good visions” (355) rather than as a reactionary. Her life with men has been one of passiveness, vagueness, and fierce rebellion while she searches for her version of Leonard. Westerlund argues that Cate’s search for a father figure much like Leonard Strickland marks her relationship with men (46). Westerlund also notes that often Godwin’s men hinder the development of her heroines (108). Leonard’s will seems to show that his “ideals of freedom and equality were bigger than his passions when it came to acting on those ideals” (73).

Cate's first marriage to Lieutenant Pringle Pritchett, a man very much like Leonard, supports the "status quo" as Cate tries to be the traditional wife. Her second marriage to Jake, the "sexy, roguish" poet, is the complete opposite of her childhood image of her father and represents her form of rebellion from the "status quo." Eventually, Cate learns to "absorb into herself the strengths and qualities she admired in and needed from Jernigan" (471). Jernigan is the new man in Cate's life. Only after two marriages and her father's lasting impression on her choices is Cate able to live a life of her own choosing.

In this novel, Godwin often uses Nell, the mother of A Mother and Two Daughters, and the two sisters, Cate and Lydia, to share her views on patriarchy and womanhood. Nell's book club discussion of The Scarlet Letter mirrors the plot of A Mother and Two Daughters and Godwin's other novels. The main character of both books is "a strong-minded independent young woman living inside a repressive, patriarchal society" (181). Hester Prynne, Nell Strickland, Cate Galitsky, and Lydia Mansfield all escape from the patriarchal society in their own way and answer for themselves the question that Hester asks in the novel and answers through her example of living: "Can the individual spirit survive the society in which it has to live?" (Godwin Mother Two Daughters 181). All four women ultimately believe they can survive, but they must survive in their own way. Their way, however, may not include the typical marriage expected by the society in which they live. Both Cate and Lydia learn to be true to themselves and their own sense of rightness. They defy society's standards of marriage, conventional friends, and traditional jobs to live the best possible life for them.

Adhering to the "status quo" and the patriarchal society's expectations of marriage has produced one failed marriage for Lydia and two for Cate. The first

marriages are to acceptable young men; however, both Lydia and Cate see marriage, according to Westerlund, as an "enclosure, a cutting off of freedom and other meaningful relationships" (Mother Two Daughters 125). The women of this novel are searching for their own identities and creating their own worlds. They both hope for a promising future which, for Cate, contains "hopes for the future [that] lay in keeping a space ready for what you did want, even though you didn't know what it would be until it came …. I would feel I had returned from the struggle without having finished facing it" (MTD 235). For Cate, marriage would prevent her from facing the struggle for life that her father envisioned for her. Lydia also looks for an occupation outside marriage: "I don't know what it is yet …only I know it's going to make me more alive than ever. I will be living a life in which I do something that's important. It will be something that I do well and care about doing" (253). Happiness for these Southern women can come only through finding themselves.

Meeting Robert Jernigan so soon after her father's death prevents Cate from accepting his proposal of marriage because she would have made him into "a father figure just as sure as Jake made [her] into a mother figure. People aren't really marrying when they just shelter under a parent figure" (344). According to Cate, "I made the right decision about Robert Jernigan. I would have regressed into dependency. He was just too good a father; it was the thing he did best, I think. He would have been perfectly willing to be father to one more child" (345). Although Cate loves Robert, she values her independence and freedom more than her love for him.

Both Cate and Lydia have different personalities because of the way that Leonard raised them, and they both need to break free of the demands of patriarchy to form their

own identities. Their stepfather, Marcus, sees Cate's need like others to "fling themselves against the world, to let it pierce them and knock them about" (533). Cate thrives on "extra intensity" and gives "herself up to the moment more than most" (533). Marcus sees Lydia as his "stern" daughter with a "relentless drive" and "formidable sense of responsibility" (534). He values these relationships with his inherited daughters. Thus, Leonard and Marcus illustrate many good qualities of the father-force.

When Cate loses her teaching job, she substitutes a different type of family which she calls "a cluster," just a "few engaged minds so I don't go crazy with loneliness" (351) for a traditional one. By the end of A Mother and Two Daughters, Cate has found her cluster and has created an extended family that goes beyond traditional boundaries in its celebration of the marriage of Leo, Lydia's son, to the black daughter, Camilla, of her teacher, Renee. The immediate family consists of mother, Nell, and the two sisters, Cate and Lydia, along with two grandsons, Leo and Dickie. Other males present include Marcus Chapin, Nell's new husband, the sisters' two lovers and non-southerners, Jernigan and Stanley, a Jew. Cate's extended family also includes Theodora Blount, a member of the Old Guard; two blacks, Camilla and Azalea, Theodora's maid, friend, and now companion; Sicca Dowling, a recovering alcoholic living with Nell and Marcus; Wickie Lee and family, a distant cousin of Theodora; Wickie Lee's husband and two children from a previous marriage; Lizzie Bee, child of Max and Lizzie, his second wife, but the responsibility of Lydia and Stanley; Heather, the doctor who shares Cate's house; and the members of Dickie's band. Cate has found happiness on her own terms and uses the qualities of family, independence, tradition, and inclusion to finally learn to appreciate the strong influence of Leonard's father-force.

Like Leonard Strickland, Walter Gower is another father who has greatly influenced his daughter. Godwin says that Father Melancholy's Daughter is her "farewell to patriarchy." She also says,

> My Melancholy Father is close to what I am. In a way, it will be my closest self-portrait and yet he happens to be a man. He has a low opinion of himself. He suffers from depression. He's searching. He has mixed feelings about the social class in which he happens to find himself. He doesn't really feel at ease with privilege. He's my most. . . he's the closest I've gotten, only he's a man who is being interpreted from the point of view of his daughter. It is totally her book. But he has been her study. (Westerland 13)

Margaret's friend, Harriet, warns her of the overwhelming concern that she has for Walter:

> You start talking about your father. His depression. His garden. His sermon. His memories of the seminary or that dead priest whose bed he still sleeps in. His memories of England. What some old gossip said to him. You talk about his problems, what he's reading. You never start off with how you are. . . . And it's not healthy . . . . But now. . . .well, watch out that it doesn't become a form of escape. . . .[From] your deep, dark self. (Godwin Father Melancholy's Daughter 130)

Until his death, Margaret has been unable to separate her own wants and needs from her father's requirements. His death forces her to form her own identity. Thus, Cate, Lydia, and Margaret are all greatly influenced by the continuing authority of their fathers long

after these men have died. Although this authority is not destructive, it does prevent the characters from finding their own self-identities.

Godwin's daughters are, like Margaret, in search of their own stories and their own adulthood. None of them are looking for wealth. They merely want happiness, adulthood, and freedom on their own terms. Several remarks from Margaret detail her own search. However, the majority of Godwin's characters have similar searches. They desire happiness with the hope that if they "take care of day-to-day responsibilities in good faith, then my future will take care of itself: I'll get a good ending, like the heroines in the books I like. Not necessarily a *happy* ending but one I can accept as belonging to me" (Father Melancholy 152). These daughters wish to be recognized as adults by being recognized as "a grown woman with a grown woman's responsibilities" (348). Godwin's characters, like Margaret, are searching for the ability to live and tell their own stories: "Where was my own story? When was it going to begin? What would I have to go through to get to the beginning of it, or far enough into it to realize it was mine?" (351). For so long, these women have lived under the shadow of their father's influence that they face difficulty in beginning to live their own lives. Often fatherly acceptance, or maybe even disapproval, is lurking in the background as they begin to make independent decisions.

Leonard Strickland and Walter Gower are vividly depicted as very strong men. Depictions of fathers and stepfathers in Violet Clay and The Odd Woman rely on Godwin's memories of her own relationships with her father and her step-father. According to Hill, Godwin's successful women should be able to maintain within themselves the traditions of the past while looking forward to the prospects of the future

(109-10). Her characters often exist between the world of marriage and a struggle to find themselves. The death of Uncle Ambrose, Violet's surrogate father, in Violet Clay, gives Violet an opportunity to escape New York and find her own destiny as an artist. [Ambrose's death is very similar to that of Mose Godwin (Kissel 112.)] Although The Finishing School depicts a family patriarch who damages his own family members' lives as well as causing destruction in the nearby society, the characters struggle to maintain their vision of class, family traditions, and the past importance of the family name. Ultimately, the patriarchal control damages two families. The heroine, Justine, uses the traumatic experience to grow and not remain "trapped in the ancestral past or enclosed in the nuclear family hothouse" as discussed by Kissel (119). Often, Southern views of class, traditions, and family expectations are in contrast to the desired goals of Godwin's characters. Also, in the South, the importance of family names, family pride, and family relationships takes priority over individual growth of Godwin's characters. Conflict, according to Anne Cheney in "Gail Godwin," often occurs between stepparents and children because these unions lack the strength of Southern "blood ties." She notes that, because of Godwin's own childhood, her families consist of strong women and few men, and when marriages have insurmountable problems, Godwin's heroines get divorced (210). Godwin often depicts marriage as a form of patriarchy.

In comparison to both Grau and Godwin, many of the women of Walker's stories feel helpless and trapped by husbands, fathers, or both. The lack of power in the modern world that Walker's women feel is often enforced by the physical abuse they encounter from their fathers and within their own marriages. In The Voice of African-American Women: The Use of Narrative and Authorial Voice in the Works of Harriet Jacobs, Zora

Neale Hurston, and Alice Walker, Yvonne Johnson notes that within the patriarchal system women are objectified and regarded as less than human (81). It is this inhuman treatment that both Hurston and Walker depict in their novels, while Grau and Godwin depict the unequal treatment of women by males in their novels.

The influence of the role model of the father is very important in the male-dominated world of Alice Walker's early fiction. Many of the fathers in Walker's novels and stories make mistakes in rearing their children and sometimes try to rectify those mistakes. In some cases, even a bad father is better than no father at all. When speaking of The Third Life of Grange Copeland and the short story, "The Child Who Favored Daughter," Walker says of her subject: "Because all along I wanted to explore the relationship between parents and children, especially between daughters and their fathers . . . and I wanted to learn, myself, how it happens that the hatred a child can have for a parent becomes inflexible (In Search 256). In addition to depicting a father-daughter relationship, these two examples, especially Grange's first life and the father in the short story, illustrate the father-force at its most destructive level. Sexual jealousy, violence, and racism are also depicted in the hatred of the children for their fathers.

Grange's change in his third life shows a good example of the positive father-force as he helps Ruth grow from dependent child to young teen. In Barbara Kramer's Alice Walker: Author of The Color Purple, Robert Coles, a writer for The New Yorker, describes Grange's relationship with Ruth: "What goes on between that daughter, that growing child, and her grandfather is told with particular grace; it is as if one were reading a long and touching poem" (48). Grange transforms from absent father and violent husband to a kindly grandfather. Maria Lauret, in Modern Novelists: Alice

Walker, calls Grange the moral center of the novel (36) who shelters Ruth from the violence and victimization faced by Margaret, Mem, and Josie. In "'East Out Alone/to Heal/ and Re-create Ourselves:' Family-based Identity in the Work of Alice Walker," Peter Erickson notes that Grange's return from New York coincides with the birth of Ruth, and their relationship begins at the exact center of the novel (7). Hope for the destruction of an abusive cycle grows as the relationship between Ruth and Grange strengthens. Education and political action will also help Ruth advance her life above that of a sharecropper's existence.

Throughout their time together, Grange has encouraged Ruth's potential for a positive family life. Toward the end of The Third Life of Grange Copeland, when the civil rights workers visit Grange in an effort to get him to register to vote, he is both impressed by their calmness and concerned for their safety. However, Helen, one of the female workers, speaks for many of the civil rights workers and many of the black women in Walker's works when she explains, "if you fight with all you got, you don't have to be bitter" (Walker The Third Life 332). Grange could be bitter about his first two lives; however, he fights hard to preserve Ruth's heritage as an independent young woman. As a father/grandfather, Grange has taught Ruth how to fight for her beliefs and has given her the courage to leave the farm if necessary.

In The Third Life of Grange Copeland, there is a great contrast between the imperfect Brownfield, Grange's son who only wants Ruth to gain his revenge on Grange, and the competent Grange, who wants Ruth to "survive *whole*" (298). Brownfield establishes his patriarchal role as a father when he declares, "I'm a man. And a man's got to have something of his own!" (306). Brownfield exemplifies the South's view of a

patriarchal father. Grange uses his love for Ruth to redeem himself and to establish a future for Ruth. By his third life, Grange represents a good version of the father-force. In total contrast to Grange, if Brownfield had succeeded in gaining custody of Ruth, he would have continued the destructive example of the father-force by which he was raised and with which he had raised his oldest daughters.

The 1960's Civil Rights movement focused on black oppression and the subjugation of black women by white men and white women, by black men, and by society as a whole. Walker herself notes that The Color Purple displays patriarchy through "the weight of tradition and the passing down of the 'natural order of things' [which] is typified in the relations between Old Mister, Mister, and Harpo" (Walker The Same River Twice: Honoring the Difficult 196). Walker sees male friendships, the hierarchy between father and son, and the general bond between men as other aspects of how patriarchy survives and is enforced (196). In The Color Purple, Sofia's description of her home life with her father and brothers is both sad and humorous. Sofia describes the situation when she says to Celie: "a girl child ain't safe in a family of men" (Walker TCP 40). When Celie and Sofia finally resist their subjugation, Harpo and Albert begin to change how they respond to the women around them. Both women in the story are transformed as they view their worlds in a different way. Grange, Albert, and Harpo display their ability to change by adjusting their view of family and male and female roles within black families in the South. The changes that occur in Grange Copeland in his third life and Albert at the end of The Color Purple show good examples of the father-force. Both men realize past mistakes and begin to work with, rather than against, the women surrounding them.

Both Shug, an unacceptable marriage partner for Albert, and Sofia, who fights back against male oppression and relies more on sisterhood rather than male dominance, help Celie to overcome patriarchal oppression in her marriage by leaving Albert, in self-esteem by finding love with Shug, in economics through her successful pants business, and in religion by finally recognizing "God and Everything" (285). However, Catherine Colton, in "Alice Walker's Womanist Magic: The Conjure Woman as Rhetor," notes that Shug is also an example of patriarchy when she values her relationships with men more than women and when she places obstacles between herself and potential women friends. When Shug first appears, she has no respect for Albert's first wife, Annie Julia, so she sides with men in support of patriarchal values. She is, therefore, a product of the society in which she lives. As she begins to know and love Celie, Shug changes for the better, as do Albert and Harpo.

Although Shug helps Celie overcome her low self-esteem, the rapes by her stepfather are physical, psychological, and social. However, they are not true biological rapes by Celie's father. Nevertheless, within her own mind, Celie's finding her voice and finally telling the story of her rape, if only in letters, is an example of what Minrose Gwin, in "Nonfelicitous Space and Survivor Discourse: Reading the Incest Story in Southern Women's Fiction," calls the daughter's obedience to her father's power. Gwin also notes the patriarchal complicity of the daughter still seeking her father's love and approval (424-5). In "Somebody I Can Talk To: Teaching Feminism Through *The Color Purple*," Carla Kaplan notes that Celie becomes a living example of feminism by being reduced to an object and ultimately becoming a speaking subject. Celie is finally able to change her world by becoming economically independent from the men around her.

Ultimately, she is the beneficiary of a positive father-force as she eventually inherits money and land from her real, but dead father.

Similar to The Color Purple, the same themes of an abusive father, a healing, loving sexual relationship with another woman, and the search of two sisters for emotional and spiritual liberation from the patriarchal oppression of a dominant male also appear in By the Light of My Father's Smile. This novel explores the effect of the entire Robinson family on one daughter's unforgiving attitude because of her father's single hypocritical act of child beating that destroys a love relationship for another daughter. The younger Susannah witnesses the father's beating of the older Magdalena for pursuing a relationship with Manuelito, her Mundo lover. Although Robinson has a healthy sexual relationship with his own wife, he cannot accept the fact that his daughters are desirable and sexual to others. The story is about a ghost father who, in his spiritual after-life, watches the lovemaking and excesses of both daughters. Neither child can forgive the father for his lack of judgment and his lying pretense of appearing to be a missionary when he only wants to study the Mondo culture.

The beating scars Magdalena so much that it keeps her from knowing a loving father. Magdalena feels that "he should have been happy for me. If in fact he loved me as he often said he did" (Walker By Light 26). To pretend strength, she "sent her spirit flying out the window" (26). As an explanation for some of the actions of the story, Walker feels that women wish

> to be blessed in our sexuality by our parents. As women, I believe we'd especially like to be blessed by our fathers. In that blessing, we'd like our father to know everything about us, just like when we were born and to love us still. We

> want them to love what we love and to bless what we bless. The only way to show that clearly was to have him witness the sexuality of his children. (Afterward)

She also states that her novel is a call to fathers to protect and support the vulnerability of their daughters who live in a realistic world. Magdalena is punished for engaging in a noncontractual sexual exchange with an Indian boy, and she comes to overeat after this severe punishment. For Magdalena, ". . . fatness serves a purpose. When I am fat I feel powerful, as if I could not possibly need anything more" (Walker By Light 124). Feeling abandoned by her father, she does not wish to lose her anger for the beating. Consequently, because she cannot forgive her father for her older sister's beating, Susannah experiments with sex in various marriages and in lesbian and other male relationships. Ironically, the good daughter Susannah becomes the whore that Robinson felt that Magdalena had become in her youthful experiences with sex. Again, the father-force becomes a destructive element for both of the daughters in this novel.

It appears that patriarchy has been used throughout history as a form of control of many people and throughout literature as a male form of controlling subjects and styles of female writers. A female writer has a need to find her own voice and break the silence concerning oppression and abuse. Overcoming her fear of the father-force, voicing her need for a father figure, who may be either absent or abusive, and speaking out against unfair restrictions on the female are ways of breaking the silence that many females seem to maintain. The world itself contains a variety of people who have been oppressed and abused, and their stories need to be told even though these stories have been labeled by some male critics as "domestic fiction" because of the subject matter. The subject, talent,

and concern for all races should be more important than the gender of the writer, so such labels should not exist.

Therefore, in their works, Grau, Godwin, and Walker show evidence of patriarchy but also show how their characters change this social construct to develop worlds that include untraditional families that are more inclusive, more accepting, and more equal. The characters can endure oppression, but they can also overcome its scars as they create new lives for themselves. Only Grau's characters seem still restricted by these male-dominated rules. Even though Grau, Godwin, and Walker explore domestic themes and use "feminine sensibilities," they definitely deserve the sincere compliment of "writing like a man" because the stories told often include universal themes. Walker's own statement about the subject of her writing emphasizes her view of critical restrictions:

> In my own work I write not only what I want to read—understanding fully and indelibly that if I don't do it no one else is so vitally interested, or capable of doing it to my satisfaction—I write all the things *I should have been able to read*. Consulting, as belatedly discovered models, those writers—most of whom, not surprisingly, are women—who understood that their experience as ordinary human beings was also valuable, and in danger of being misrepresented, distorted or lost. . . . It is, in the end, the saving of lives that we writers are about. Whether we are "minority" writers or "majority." It is simply in our power to do this. (In Search 13-14).

The three writers depict vulnerable and sometimes imperfect characters that are also human, facing typical problems endured by nearly all women. Most people in today's world are striving to improve their lives; however, not everyone is given the second

chance for improvement that many of the characters of Grau, Godwin, and Walker receive. These characters have to acknowledge their complicity in patriarchy and recognize their subjection also as dutiful daughters and Southern ladies before they can be totally free.

CHAPTER 3

THE DUTIFUL DAUGHTER AND THE SOUTHERN LADY

In order to further understand the father-daughter relationships found in the novels of Grau, Godwin, and Walker, we must explore the nineteenth-century version of this relationship where the daughter martyrs herself in the service of her father's needs, investigate the idea of the dutiful daughter, and define the idea of the Southern belle and the "Cult of True Womanhood." Often the principal conflict between fathers and daughters appears to be one of separation and retention. The daughter functions as property to be given away by her father. Giving away his daughter at her marriage could be interpreted as a sign of the patriarchal father's approval of the marriage rather than an example of the daughter's desire to leave her home. The daughter becomes the object of an exchange, which Claude Levi-Strauss compares to using woman as a commodity (115). Society expects daughters to organize their own homes and establish their influence outside the father's home. Unless she is sacrificing her own married life to care for a sick or widowed father, the daughter's remaining at home seems a threat to the family structure that does not have room for two women to share what little power might be found in the home.

The Southern daughter's dilemma in this description of the female life is that the characteristics of passivity, dependence, sexual purity, submission, and ignorance fail to correspond to the reality of her life. Society tells the daughter that she needs the economic protection of the male head of household, yet she dislikes her economic dependence. Grau, Godwin, and Walker were influenced by these Southern ideas through parents, grandparents, and the cultural expectations of the ideal Southern woman. Since women are

either overvalued by being placed on a pedestal or undervalued by male dominance, the daughter may have difficulty in determining her true value. Although these kinds of daughters are first seen in the nineteenth century, Grau, Godwin, and Walker also have examples of them in their twentieth-century writings, and they even appear in writings of the twenty-first century.

Both Scout Finch of Harper Lee's 1960 To Kill a Mockingbird and Scarlett O'Hara of Margaret Mitchell's 1936 Gone With the Wind are aware of the requirements of the Southern belle, the Southern lady, and the dutiful daughter. Although Scout is more of a tomboy at the time of the novel, the other female characters try "to make [her] a lady" (Lee 257) even though she wears her "britches" "under her dress" (262). The ladies of Maycomb County, Alabama feel, in order to be a lady, Scout needs to "start wearing dresses more often" (263). Scout approaches ladyhood with fear, knowing that she "must soon enter this world, where on its surface fragrant ladies rocked slowly, fanned gently, and drank cool water" (266), even though she "was more at home in [her] father's world" (266). To Scout's mind "[l]adies seemed to live in faint horror of men, seemed unwilling to approve wholeheartedly of them" (267) but seemed willing "to be a lady" (271) during stressful times. In spite of her boyish ways as a child, Scout could very easily grow up to become a Melanie Wilkes or a Harper Lee.

In contrast to the tomboyish Scout, Scarlett O'Hara wishes to be a great lady like her mother, Ellen, because "the necessity of being helpless, clinging, doe-eyed creatures" (Mitchell 53) has been impressed upon her since childhood: "All Southern girls were taught . . . to make those around them feel at ease and pleased with themselves" (104). Scarlett practices these methods but only "to further her own goals" (104).

In his The Companion to Southern Literature: Themes, Genres, Places, People, Movements, and Motifs, Joseph Flora notes that Gone With the Wind seems to imply that a fragile Melanie could not survive in the world of the New South which seems to require Scarlett's ambitious self-involvement (313). Flora affirms that the demur, genteel Southern belle needs strength, determination, and intelligence to survive the aftermath of war and reconstruction (800). Although raised to be Southern ladies, both Melanie and Scarlett seem to be able to rise above the limitations of the belle to become strong Southern women. Using the 1860-1870 time frame of the novel, Scarlett becomes a liberated woman long before women's liberation becomes popular.

Although women are very aware of women's liberation, their Southern fathers often seem to like the idea of having a submissive, dependent daughter under their care while they train their sons to be the "men" in the family. In the early to mid-twentieth century, this idea was a dominant one, and daughters were often trained accordingly. In her article, "Why There Are No Southern Writers," Daphne Athas notes that the idea of "the beauty, the 'Southern belle,' 'the victim of the sheltered life'" was a major part of the Southern society background until World War I but not as important by World War II. She notes that male writers such as Tennessee Williams see the Southern belle as a "pathetic caricature" and women writers of the '40s do not. According to Athas, the more modern Southern belle "is sexy rather than a beauty, gets on with the job, sees through things, but also sees things through" (300). To exist in the twenty-first century, the daughter should learn from the past rather than continue to live in it or be destroyed by it.

History

Lady-like qualities have existed for many years in the South, originating from the agrarian society and the plantation system. According to Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, author of Within the Plantation Household: Black and White Women of the Old South, in the Old South, the term "lady" was one of the highest positions to which white women of the upper class could aspire. Fox-Genovese notes the female had to adhere to carefully-prescribed conventions and responsibilities and accept male dominance (203). Fox-Genovese also says that the figure of the lady dominated the Southern ideas of womanhood (47). Although the myth of "southern ladyhood" allowed every white woman of the upper class to think of herself as a "southern belle," the belle image usually did not prepare the female for the stresses of wifely duty and motherhood that awaited most Southern belles (Wyatt-Brown Honor and Violence 92). Assuming the appearance and demeanor of the belle/lady seemed to be a goal to which all white women could aspire, while black women could aspire to the domestic aspect of the southern lady by running a well-organized household.

The respect that was given to the Southern Lady seemed to affirm her control of the home; however, she still was under the rule of the male head of the household. In The Enclosed Garden: Women and Community in the Evangelical South 1830-1900, Jean Friedman notes that, in the Old South, the woman is often called a "belle" or "mistress;" however, in the New South, she is often called a "New Woman" (39). Neither of these terms sees her as an individual with her own identity. According to Friedman, both the church and the patriarchal society control the female, and her conflict comes with an "external adjustment to evangelical social and religious control and an

internal struggle toward self-definition" (40). The father figure can use religion and society to hinder the daughter as she struggles to become her own individual self.

Daughters of the Old South were often trained in the accomplishments of lady-hood and in the use of flirtation to catch the proper husband. That same mentality was used in the training of young ladies in the early twentieth century. The prevailing idea behind this view was the premise that a young woman would eventually marry and have a husband to provide for her. In exchange for the male's care, the female organized his household and bore his children. The male and society placed the female in a domestic role of controls and restrictions and presumed that she needed no self-identity. By the 1950s period of Grau, Godwin, and Walker, women began to develop careers to sustain them or to fall back on in case of unsuccessful marriages, the lack of marriage, or the death of a husband. Both Godwin and Walker had failed marriages while Grau had a successful marriage, children, and career. Their characters often exhibit the standards of ladyhood in their relationships with their husbands and their fathers.

Raising the perfect daughter helps to contribute to stronger family units when the daughter begins her own family. In Bertram Wyatt-Brown's Honor and Violence in the Old South, he observes that the "glorification of motherhood, the sanctity of virginity, and the noble self-sacrifice of a matron shows an outward submission to male power" (91). The female illustrates the ideas of inner restraint and handiwork softened by softer values of modesty, reserve toward outsiders, and warmth of affection toward men who are important in their lives. Wyatt- Brown seems to feel that the lavish praise made the disadvantages more bearable (91). Flora observes that woman's honor consists of her sexual purity and her submission to a man. However, her behavior and praise or blame as

a wife, mother, or idealized lady can serve as an honoring or shaming influence on her male kin. It is the upper class of the Civil War and Reconstruction period that emphasized the definition and construction of honor (347). The wives and daughters of these plantation families had to maintain that honor in their own actions and were often considered symbols of the family's good name.

Society's rules and the male head of household appear to set the standards for women's behavior. Hazel Carby cites Barbara Welter, a feminist historian, who expresses her vision of the basic beliefs of the "Cult of True Womanhood" as divided into "four cardinal virtues—piety, purity, submissiveness, and domesticity . . . . With them she was provided happiness and power" (23). Cultural effects show that it was not only the most recognizable convention governing female behavior, but it also was clearly a "dominating image describing guidelines within which women were measured and declared to be, or not to be women" (23). It appears ironic that this viewpoint defines self-hood for a woman rather than allowing her to define it for herself.

The Southern lady is quite often a dutiful daughter or sentimental daughter. According to Lynda Zwinger, in Daughters, Fathers, and the Novel: The Sentimental Romance of Heterosexuality, the sentimental daughter is a trainee in the "Cult of True Womanhood." In becoming a dutiful assistant to her father, she is a loving, innocent young lady who gives up any desire to please herself. She has characteristics of passivity and submission which are also desirable qualities in a wife. Critics observe that how she treats her father is a sign of how well she will treat her husband (5-8). Zwinger also notes that she gives her parents absolute and cheerful obedience, carefully practices religion, dispenses charity to the poor, runs the household for her mother, helps family and friends

with moral assistance and strives for dutiful perfection (14). Zwinger acknowledges that, like her mother, the good daughter is also devoted to disguising the defects of her father by "placating, pleasing, soliciting, and editing him" (64). She has also been taught to want what her father wants her to want (93). The view is that if she accepts her father's teachings and successfully conforms to his rules, she becomes an "accomplished complacent mother" of a successful husband in a happy home (55). Quite often, the only expectation for a woman is to be a good wife. If her ambition is different, then she seems to rebel against society's standards.

In the South, one strong image of the ideal woman is that of the Southern belle. In Outside the Southern Myth, Noel Polk observes that the ideal of the Southern belle is a myth of ball gowns and Southern gentlemen who court the belles. He observes that these myths concern male and female expectations of each other. The myths imply that females are often almost too fine to exist in real life; therefore, their only life is at dress balls. The Southern gentleman, according to these myths, exists only to fight and dance, and he defends Southern honor by blood if necessary (141).

Since she is to grow up to become an ideal of nineteenth century womanhood, Joseph Flora observes that the belle herself is a younger, unmarried, incomplete version of the Southern lady. By the time she becomes a lady, her life becomes basically unchanging. The tenseness comes as the belle arrives at her goal of marriage. By her early teens, the belle is beautiful, graceful, charming, virtuous, and loyal to family, submissive to her father, in need of a man's protection, yet resourceful and brave. By her late teens, she may not have perfected the tendencies for self-sacrifice and self-possession, but marriage is still her goal. To attract her husband, she must be innocently

flirtatious, winsome, spirited, haughty, spunky, mischievous, and impulsive. Once she is married, these tendencies must be discarded. The lack of a husband to serve and a household to manage, plus the characteristics of attracting a husband, are the items that separate a belle from a lady (95). Quite often, perpetuating the myths of the perfect lady and a happy family life become more important than facing the reality of managing a large household for an unloving and unappreciative husband.

If she has dreams of her own, it is difficult for a young Southern girl to grow up contemplating other goals that have been set for her. Her desires do not appear to be of any importance. In The Southern Belle in the American Novel, Kathryn Seidel observes that the Southern notions of aristocracy and chivalry cause the Southern woman to become the ideal and symbol of the South (136). Nagueyalti Warren's "Introduction" in Southern Mothers: Fact and Fictions in Southern Women's Writing observes that the ideal of Southern womanhood antedates and goes beyond the system of slavery. The Southern father's patriarchal attitude toward women as inferior beings contributed to the slaveholder's ideal of his daughter, mother and wife, refining the image of the belle, the Southern lady and ultimate mother figure (5). Living up to the designation of a living symbol for the Southern half of the United States becomes another part of the dilemma that a Southern daughter faces.

In The Mind of the South, a definitive book of Southern customs and history, W. J. Cash stresses the importance of the Old South's vision of woman:

> She was the South's Palladium, this Southern woman—the shield-bearing Athena gleaming whitely in the clouds, the standard for its rallying, the mystic symbol of its nationality in face of the foe. She was the lily-pure maid of Astolat and the

> hunting goddess of the Boeotian hill. And—she was the pitiful Mother of God….There was hardly a sermon that did not begin and end with tributes in her honor, hardly a brave speech that did not open and close with the clashing of shields and the flourish of swords for her glory. (89)

It was this belief that placed the Southern woman on the pedestal in the mid-1800s. However, even this tribute conveys contradiction since it praises the woman for her purity and innocence while extolling her abilities as a warrior. It is this pedestal and its expectations that Grau, Godwin, Walker and other Southern women writers of the mid-1950s have had difficulty abandoning. Since these three writers were raised with this image of the ideal Southern woman in mind, it was very hard for them to form their own idea of the modern Southern woman who searches for independence and self-identity. Bertram Wyatt-Brown, a noted southern historian, argues that, in the South, the family as a unit was much more powerful than in other sections of the country, and the discipline of the parents was often more rigid in order to ensure more social stability and respect for order among the children (Southern Honor 117). Both men and women have a definite place in Southern society, and the daughter of the family observes the behavior set by her parents and often tries to imitate the same behavior. Thus a dilemma is created for the Southern daughter: Does she remain submissive and on her pedestal, become strong to preserve tradition and family land, or does she search for her own identity?

Although freedom is the desire of most Southern ladies, this desire contrasts sharply with the absolute restrictions patriarchy places on adult women in marriage. In "Making Peace with the [M]other," Barbara Bennett notes that the American culture, especially in the South, does not promote independence and autonomy for females as

much as it does for males. While the daughter acknowledges that cultural power belongs to the white male, she may fear that seeking her independence may displease her parents, especially her father (186). Joanne Frye observes that growing up female, especially for a southern girl, is the process of being subdued, being tamed, and losing power (79). An independent woman of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries does not wish to be subdued.

Many of the attributes of the southern lady are not often openly expressed because most Southern daughters would probably not want to know about their very limited freedoms as adults. In Tomorrow Is Another Day: The Woman Writer in the South, 1859-1936, Anne Godwyn Jones notes that the identity of the South is linked to the continued belief in the ideal of the lady (4). This connection seems to maintain the ideal of the southern lady longer than other ideas. Jones also notes the contradiction that while the lady should promote culture and arts, the reality is that there is a low quality of education for women in the South (26). Perhaps the isolation caused by the South's agrarian economy and plantation life contributed to the continued adherence to this outdated tradition.

Quite often fathers are supported in their traditional beliefs by religion and society. Anne Firor Scott observes that institutions such as churches, schools, parents, books, and magazines all emphasize the perfection of the Southern lady with the following idea: "[b]e a lady and you will be loved and respected and supported. If you defy the pattern and behave in ways considered unladylike, you will be unsexed, rejected, unloved, and you will probably starve" (20). It seems that defying the expected pattern makes you less of a lady while limiting your chances of a successful marriage. Scott

notes that women were "taught to regard marriage as the one thing needful, the only avenue of distinction" (62). Scott cites the fact that while this image "was weakened, but not destroyed, by the experiences of the Civil War and Reconstruction, it continued to shape the behavior of southern women for many years and has never really disappeared" (x). In the South, girls are trained for this image from an early age, so their efforts to change appear to be more difficult than in other areas of the country. In Sacred Groves and Ravaged Gardens, Louise Westling observes that this image of lady-hood becomes a symbol of Southern culture that represents the racial purity that men require to maintain the caste system, but which many disregard in their own sexual behavior (8). This view of lady-hood seems to be created by man, who has no understanding of the Southern lady's real life, managing a home and maintaining the myth.

The Southern Lady and Dutiful Daughter in Literature

Both the Southern lady and the dutiful daughter seem to have originated in the isolated world of an agrarian society. In Daughters of Time: Creating Woman's Voice in Southern Story, Lucinda MacKeithan observes that, particularly in the South, the patriarchal system of slavery implied a racial and sexual dominance of white over black and male over female. She feels that these factors delay the daughter's growth to selfhood (5). MacKethan confirms the importance of the Southern daughter to claim her voice through writing within and about her father's house with respect for the family as the heart of the social order and the focus of the home as a source of all inheritable values. MacKethan notes the love/hate relationship for a father "who holds the power to define, validate, circumscribe, and disinherit his daughter" (10). Although the writing daughter may have to accept the

risk of losing her secure position within the family in order to gain her artistic freedom and selfhood (11), she has the desire to express her viewpoint. Flora notes that before the Civil War, the Southern lady was an invented necessity for the patriarchal culture that existed; however, in the twentieth century, male writers have often used the term "lady" to distinguish those women who were not ladies. He feels that often the fictional characters are measured against this old ideal that no longer exists (415). Flora argues that these ideas were reinforced in the 1850s, while black, white, male, and female Southern writers of today question, resist, and redefine this ideal (623). It is possible to have ladylike qualities but not necessarily be dismissed as an unimportant person.

Writing seems to be a profession that women, not driven by economic necessity, could pursue. Anne Godwin Jones notes that a dilemma occurs when the writer tries to portray her own sex according to society's standards of the fragile, submissive female (5). Many of these writers find their voice and write about Jones's "idea of doubleness" as a living person and as a symbol of the South (356). Jones notes that the characters of such writers as Grace King, Kate Chopin, Ellen Glasgow, Eudora Welty, Carson McCullers, Flannery O'Connor, and Margaret Mitchell were able to learn more about themselves and were able to grow stronger by speaking from and for that self (354). Westling notes that women writers growing up in the 1920s knew who they could not be but had to discover who they were with the knowledge that the past traditions mistreated their mothers and grandmothers (36). She also notes that, although problems of women writers exist all over the country, the Southern tradition

of ladyhood makes discovering a definition of a positive female self more difficult (183). For in the South, the expectations often appear to be predetermined.

White girls growing up in the 1950s, as did Grau and Godwin, still hope to become a Southern belle or a Southern lady, quite often fulfilling their father's expectations of them. In The Second Sex, Simone de Beauvior emphasizes the fact that a woman needs economic independence in order to understand herself and the myth that is created around her. The myth is that "women are mysterious and beyond the comprehension of men" (Leitch 1405). According to de Beauvior, a contradiction exists between woman's status as a real human being and her assigned role as a submissive female (335). A connection between an expression of approval from her father and his affection, in de Beauvior's eyes, makes her existence justified. If the father's love is withheld, she may feel guilty or condemned and may look elsewhere for an evaluation of her worth. She could also become indifferent or hostile. The Second Sex notes that the superiority of the male who holds all the world's prestige and power is ingrained in the female from childhood (287-288). Since most business arrangements exist between males, according to de Beauvior, woman becomes "other" because there seems to be no similar arrangements between the male and female sexes. Since she is a part of the man's property, the marriage agreement is more often between two males about possession of property of which the woman is considered a part (70), further illustrating Claude Levi Strauss's theory of woman as commodity. Since the woman appears to be for the male amusement or pleasure, de Beauvior expresses the idea that exchanges are based on the value the merchandise has for the buyer, not the seller, and often the exchange is not of two items of equal

value (172). Since she is raised in a male-dominated society, it is unusual for the female to see herself with any value, especially when she is considered a part of her father's property. Since society seems not to value women, it is difficult for women to value themselves both as individuals and as writers.

The terms *dutiful daughter*, *Southern lady* and *Southern belle* all originated in the mid-1800s; however, these terms are still used in the twentieth century with similar but different connotations. Stephen Greenblatt, in "Culture," speaks of using language to move symbolic materials from one cultural zone to another, changing the emotional force of desire, fear, and aggression which alters the significance of the language (230). In the mid-1800's, the terms symbolized honor along with a woman's submissiveness and dependence. In the twentieth century, the terms are used by modern authors as a continuation of ideas that need to be changed.

Greenblatt's ideas of "constraint and mobility" are in evidence as the characters of Grau, Godwin and Walker are constrained by cultural and historical concepts while they are trying to find their own identities. In "Culture," Greenblatt defines culture as "gestures [movements] toward what appear to be opposite things: constraint and mobility" (225). Although the belief in Southern womanhood is a product of the aristocratic class, many Southern women try to maintain this ideal and continue to perpetuate the myth. Greenblatt believes that society's expectations constrain its members to follow certain standards of behaviors, beliefs, and practices that are considered acceptable by the public. According to Greenblatt, these constraints are used as a means of control to which people must conform (225). He notes that boundaries are set through praise and blame (226). Praise for the

submissive qualities of the dutiful daughter, the Southern lady, and the Southern belle sets society's standards for these views as role models for women. It is this submissive, dependent role that Grau, Godwin and Walker are trying to deconstruct.

Grau, Godwin, and Walker's View of the Southern Lady and the Dutiful Daughter

The father's relationship with the Southern belle, the Southern lady, and the dutiful daughter can represent both positive and negative examples of the father - force. Several examples of Barbara Goulter's father/daughter patterns that were explained in the first chapter exist. Godwin often uses the pattern of the Lost Father/Yearning Daughter where the daughter often blames herself for her own shortcomings, tries to earn her father's acceptance and often seeks a father substitute. Father Melancholy's Daughter is a good example of the Pygmalion Father/Companion Daughter where Margaret becomes an ideal companion for Walter but needs to assert her independence more after the death of both parents. Grau uses the Pampering Father/Spoiled Daughter in both The Keepers of the House and The House on Coliseum Street. In both of these cases, the daughter has no sense of personal accomplishment. Grau also uses the Abusive Father/ Victim Daughter where the daughter often seeks other relationships where she can be victim, rescuer, or persecutor. Grau's daughters are usually more mentally abused. While Walker often uses the Abusive Father/Victim Daughter where the daughter is physically abused, the examples in this chapter are those of Lost Father/Yearning Daughter.

A strong female is usually not a typical example of the traditional role of the Southern lady or the dutiful daughter. Often, a Southern daughter had to visualize her own version of an independent female role model. Grau, Godwin and Walker all had

parents who believed that the man should be the head of the household, handling all of the major outside responsibilities of the household, while the wife had the designated role as housekeeper, wife, and mother. Grau's parents, a dentist and a wife/mother, followed the typical family role even though her father was often absent. Godwin's father divorced her mother when she was only two, and her family consisted of three women. Walker's parents worked together in their sharecropper's existence, and Walker describes the distance that existed between her and her father because of her education and modern ideas. Although two of the writers did not experience the typical family background, many of the characters of all three writers create atypical families which may have women in control in a society where male dominance is desired. In these families, the fathers may or may not be present. Grau's upper class women still have the tendency to cling to the old standards of the ideal Southern gentleman, the ideal Southern lady and belle, and older traditions.

The protagonists of Godwin's Violet Clay, A Mother and Two Daughters, The Finishing School, Father Melancholy's Daughter, The Odd Woman, and A Southern Family are all Southern women. They struggle to come to terms with the ideal of Southern womanhood and try to establish their own identity outside the established roles of traditional marriages set for them by society. They work to make changes in this tradition while keeping its good qualities of genteel living, soft voices, self-sacrifice, politeness, gentleness, and strong family ties.

The men in their lives, both black and white, often victimize Walker's women characters. These women have a more difficult time establishing their own success stories. Poverty, beatings by their husbands and fathers, and racial inequality have all

contributed to low self-esteem on the part of Walker's characters. The fact that these three authors are able to articulate many of the South's problems allows their characters to face life and its problems by trying to find acceptable solutions.

Some of the characters of both Godwin and Walker have similarities to the characters of Eudora Welty in selection of occupations. Many of Godwin's characters have occupations of mother-teachers or daughter-budding artists, which Betina Entzminger notes in The Belle Gone Bad: White Southern Writers and the Dark Seductress (129). Even Mem in Walker's The Third Life of Grange Copeland struggles to be a teacher because that profession can help to raise her family's standard of living above that of a share-cropper. Often marriage prevents similar ambitions for Grau's characters. For the authors and their characters, teaching often becomes a means of support away from the typical marriage and family. Both Godwin and Walker, like some of their characters, spent time teaching.

Eudora Welty's examples of dutiful daughters provide a model for Grau, Godwin, and Walker. Quite often these women cannot create their own stories because of too much involvement in taking care of their own families. Welty's Edna Earle in Ponder Heart and Laurel Hand in The Optimist's Daughter are examples of Welty's dutiful daughters, as Welty was herself. Lucinda MacKethan in Daughters of Time: Creating Woman's Voice in Southern Story says that the role of the dutiful daughter is two-fold: She is caretaker for male family members, and she completes the man's life by giving him power over her own destiny (2). Dutiful daughters often appear to sacrifice their lives for the benefit of others.

Each writer has characters that seek acceptance into a larger family/community; however, that family/community may sometimes be one of their own making. The characters develop as daughter-artists through the making of pants, quilts, and paintings and innovation in teaching and religion. Some of these characters may be belles themselves, but they all are able to deconstruct the myth of the belle. Each of the characters is able to establish new truths that she can accept while assuming responsibility for her own actions.

Grau, Godwin, and Walker's dutiful daughters often show compassion in their concern for their fathers in the same way as Godwin's Father Melancholy Daughter's Margaret, Grau's Evidence of Love's Lucy Roundtree Evans Henley, and Walker's "A Sudden Trip Home in the Spring"'s Sarah Davis. These women display a genuine love and respect for their fathers. The Condor Passes's Anna and Margaret seem to be duty-bound to care for their father. Again, the influence of the father-force can be supportive or can adversely affect the main female characters.

Shirley Ann Grau's The Keepers of the House depicts the former Southern belle and now lady, Abigail Howland Tolliver, whose entire life seems to be that of political wife and mother, spending most of her time in the home. She has no awareness of husband John's segregationist political stance and her grandfather's secret other family. The patronizing attitude of both her grandfather and husband, John, has relieved Abigail of acting or thinking on her own, since these two men have made most of the decisions for her. Abigail lives in a political structure that gives power to a few white men while ignoring blacks and white women. In Moving On: The Heroines of Shirley Ann Grau, Anne Tyler, and Gail Godwin, Susan Kissel notes that many of Grau's novels focus on

the father's death which still does not give instant freedom to the daughter. Kissel observes that often these women seek to maintain the father's traditions and repeat patterns similar to his (35). Confusion exists for these daughters because they have not been allowed to live their own lives, and they are uncertain about the use of their own independence. These ideas reflect a negative influence of the father-force.

Abigail is able to accept Margaret, her grandfather's black housekeeper, into the family simply because her own mother did:

> My mother liked Margaret. Maybe because Margaret had everything she hadn't: size and strength and physical endurance. Maybe my mother was so sure of her own position that she couldn't be challenged by her father's Negro mistress and maybe as simple as this: my mother was a lady and a lady is unfailingly polite and gentle to everyone . . . . (Grau Keepers117)

Ladies hardly ever betray their innermost thoughts. In describing his own daughter, William Howland makes this remark: "Behind that bland smooth face, those gentle eyes . . . He had never imagined her as having thoughts and feelings of her own. She had always seemed so content . . . ." (37). Since he was raised with the idea that the " . . . Howland woman [is] always spoiled" (107), William Howland has difficulty seeing his own daughter, Abigail, as a real person.

Husband John dismisses Abigail Tolliver as a unique individual in her own right when he shares the view of his parents about her: "They approve of you. . . . That's a lot better in their books than liking you . . . .Said you'd make a good wife" (158). When Abigail tries to help John in his political campaign, John again dismisses her efforts with the following comment: "You're doing great. . . . Why should I spoil you by telling you

how to do things? You're sweet and kind to everybody. . . . Honey, you're perfect for the job, and that's why I married you" (195). Abigail is the perfect Southern lady for an ambitious politician because she is selfless and has a great concern for others.

As a dutiful daughter and wife, Abigail must learn to stand on her own. When she discovers that her husband only married her to improve his career, the dutiful daughter prevails as she dedicates herself to saving her grandfather's house. Her passive life has not prepared her for making major decisions without a man's guidance. She observes, "All my life I had been trained to depend on men. Now when I needed them they were gone" (215). By the end of the novel, Abigail has to rethink everything, re-evaluate everyone she has known, and discover her own identity as a person.

In Grau's The Condor Passes, both Anna and Margaret become dutiful daughters, not necessarily out of love, but out of necessity. Margaret is Oliver's son in every way but gender. Like her father, Oliver, having money and power are more satisfying to her than the old ideas of the past that describe how a lady should act. Since her father denies her demands for partnership, she gradually learns to accept the female subordinate role of dutiful daughter by keeping his house and at first running the family business behind the scenes to help maintain the family empire and control over her wealthy lifestyle. She attempts rebellion but fails. Toward the end of the novel, she notices that "the excitement, the hysterical amusement had disappeared—they'd seeped away so slowly that she did not miss them. In their place was a calm competence" (Grau CP 263). For her father, she "designed the huge greenhouse—a way to give him comfort, without being therapeutic" (264-265). Boredom occurs after she "had redone her father's house a dozen times" (264), and she becomes a collector of various items just so she can spend

her father's money. Kissel notes that Margaret seeks fulfillment of herself through men and personal indulgence (959). However, she, like Oliver, is never completely satisfied, although life does continue.

In contrast to Margaret, Anna is Grau's depiction of the proper Southern lady with manners and desires. In her essay, "Shirley Ann Grau," Linda Wagner-Martin notes Anna's disinterest in sex, while Margaret sees sexual pleasure as a necessary part of her life as a woman (159). Wagner-Martin illustrates the idea of the double narrative in the story of Oliver's disillusionment with his chosen son just as Anna is disillusioned with her chosen life (155). Kissel cites Anna's charitable works as examples of her hierarchical and materialistic values and her will to maintain them (59). Kissel also observes that the roles of neither Margaret nor Anna are appreciated by their father, husband, or sons (155). For Anna, perfection comes through God and money, and she seeks to have a perfect house, a perfect marriage, and a perfect life. Anna illustrates how much like her father she is by denying genuine love to her son and husband just as her father has denied his love to her.

Margaret describes her sister as having "conservative elegance, that's Anna. Theatrical conservative" (Grau Condor 271). She also sees the perfect Anna in this way: "Anna's voice was level and correctly modulated, neither affected nor course, the smooth voice of the perfect lady. Like that sleek shining head of hers, with its gray-dappled hair. Lady of wealth and dignity. That polish only money gives" (297). Both Margaret and Anna appear to be dutiful daughters, but they feel that the love and respect that they never received from their father can eventually be bought with his money. Margaret desires power over men while Anna seeks respect through good works.

The undirected life of Joan Mitchell in Grau's The House on Coliseum Street appears to be caused by the absent father. Joan's mother, Aurelie, is a more competent Southern lady who has the ability to "arrange" (Grau House Coliseum 9) things but feels daughters would be "happier if [they] were married" (58). Aurelie herself is a Southern lady who requires her daughters to appear at breakfast with no regard for the activities of the night before. Grau uses this description to describe Aurelie: "Aurelie, her hair carefully arranged, her face carefully made up, her robe of crisp taffeta in the summer and soft velvet in the winner, sat at the head of the table and made polite cheery conversation" (53). Tradition is important to women who see themselves as Southern ladies. In Shirley Ann Grau, Paul Schlueter notes Joan appears to be suffering from the "lost father" syndrome. Although she refers to her house as "a house full of bitches," (71) she feels abandoned by her father through divorce and his subsequent death. The house built by her great grandfather and left to her by her father is her inheritance. She feels displaced from it and from her family. She submits to, relies on, but also detests her mother Aurelie, whom she blames for her parents' divorce. Her relationships with men, both the stoic Fred and the debonair Michael, appear to be her search for a father substitute to fill the void left by her father's absence.

It is the Southern tradition to be a wife and mother with a strong male role model for a woman to feel important. Joan's parents have not provided this acceptable role model for her. Kissel observes that Joan's independence is "tied to dead father, house, and debiliated past. She has no idea how to use her inheritance constructively or escape her dependence on it" (53). Joan, like many of Grau's characters, wants more than

marriage and motherhood, but feels trapped by a tradition that limits her opportunity to determine her own self-identity.

In Grau's Evidence of Love, Lucy Roundtree Evans Henley experiences the role of the dutiful daughter to her father-in-law, Edward Milton Henley. Lucy has twice been a faithful wife and a dutiful housekeeper to both Harold Evans and Stephen Henley. She also has two children by second husband Stephen. She is of English-Boer descent and has provided for herself as a teacher at Greenwood College before she marries Stephen Henley. Lucy's mixed ancestry and outsider status (not born in the South) allows her to escape the Southern tradition of ladyhood and woman's dependence on a man. For Stephen she "has been a comfort, a support," has been "quiet, thoughtful, busy," (Grau EL 103) but unremarkable. She takes care of her husband but does it quietly. Stephen remarks about Lucy: "And yet when she is out of the room, I have trouble remembering that she was ever within it. She seems strangely shadowy to me, without substance. I do not know what she thinks about so many things—or if she does" (103). Lucy has fulfilled her role as wife and mother by allowing Stephen to pursue his goals as preacher and writer. Lucy, like so many other Southern ladies, appears invisible.

In contrast to Lucy's acceptance of various church parsonages, the Florida retirement home is "Lucy's retirement haven, the dream house of her later years[.] The perfect place for us to advance, hand in hand, into golden senility" (114). Much of their home life is arranged so that "Stephen would not be unnecessarily disturbed" (214). Lucy makes compromises in her marriages by conforming to the needs of the academic Stephen, her second husband, in contrast to the passionate Harold, who commits suicide. After Stephen's death, widowhood allows her to "follow [her] own tastes, [her] own

instincts" (216). Although Lucy is the model wife to both husbands, she is never a submissive woman.

Although the Southern tradition of the dutiful daughter usually would not support assisted suicide, Lucy also performs a daughterly duty for her father-in-law, Edward. Putting seconals in his hand but requiring him to take them himself allows Lucy to become "[his] escape. An angel visiting [him]" (240). Lucy is able to perform her duties without becoming submissive to men and dependent on their money; therefore, she appears to be the most successful of Grau's characters in breaking the Southern tradition of submissiveness. Perhaps it is easier for her to break this tradition because she was not born in the South with all of its restrictions on women's freedom.

Often Grau's women maintain the tradition of the dutiful daughter by fulfilling their obligations. Kissel observes that the father's abandonment and betrayal cause rebellious action from the daughters (39). Politically and economically, these fathers maintain their control by protecting their property which includes their wives and daughters. Grau has several stories that use the word "house" in the title. The daughters who live in these houses are often enclosed by the houses and the fathers who run them.

Gail Godwin also has issues with the Southern lady. In her 1975 article in Ms. magazine, Godwin clarifies the definition of the typical Southern belle image that traps many of her heroines. Godwin and her characters try to restructure these views in an effort to find their own identity. In explaining the importance of the impact of Southern tradition, Godwin illustrates the power of the Southern belle vision:

> I know of no place in the country other than the South where a girl growing up has an image of womanhood already cut out for her, stitched securely by the

> practiced hands of tradition, available for her to slip into, ready-made, and henceforth "pass" as a "lovely person." . . . . Yet everybody knows "The Southern Woman," "The Southern Lady," "The Southern Belle." People who have never set foot south of the Mason-Dixon line can tick off her characteristics. . . . Her image pervades the entire South like an aura, even though it is aspired to by middle-and upper-middle class white women. ("The Southern Belle" 49)

Godwin further notes that the ideals of womanhood have not changed and have to do with "grace, elegance, modesty (and purity), tact, hospitality, and duty (to others, not yourself)" (51). According to Godwin, Southern daughters learn to use "Southern wiles" to get something from male bosses (84), are trained in skills of the home (52), and are told that "asking too many questions 'will make you unhappy'" (84). It is this view of womanhood, proposed by Southern mothers and supported by Southern fathers that Godwin's heroines inherit. Godwin suggests that education, travel, and rejection of old values can be a means of change. In The Southern Belle in the American Novel, Kathryn Seidel notes that Godwin often writes about difficult relationships between mothers and daughters. Seidel also observes that, although Godwin's characters often leave the South, many of them return because the South contains values that "console, sustain, and inspire them" (169). Perhaps the difficult relationship is enhanced by a desire to please an absent father, and leaving the South may be an attempt to escape a domineering father.

If they are dutiful daughters, Godwin's heroines seem to remain in the South and accept their mother's teachings and their father's whole-hearted approval. Godwin's article speaks of the "constricting, debilitating stereotypes" (84) that the daughter must

face. Carolyn Rhodes, in "Gail Godwin and the Ideal of Southern Womanhood," observes that women in most societies find it more difficult than men to rebel from the demands of tradition because of the expectation of unquestioned acceptance, fewer chances to test rules, and fewer chances for different experiences which could determine truth from tradition (61). Kissel expresses the ideas that only when Godwin's women begin to develop their own characters can they re-connect with family and community in a positive way (138). In order to grow as independent women, Godwin's characters must advance beyond the traditional notions of ideal Southern womanhood to discover new ways of learning to be themselves.

As a young writer, Godwin had definite views about the Southern lady. In A Voice of One's Own: Conversations with America's Writing Women, Godwin comments about how the ideal of Southern womanhood affected her growing up: "I may have been discriminated against and not even known it because I am a very conditioned southern woman brought up to be gentle and not push myself" (Pearlman 42). She also speaks of the lasting effect of Southern womanhood on her life: ". . . Then there's this southern woman element: you don't want to come on too strong, to make people uncomfortable, to mow them down with your intellect, so you put up smoke screens." (42). Part of the appeal of the Southern lady is to either not recognize or not publicize her own strengths.

Many Southern daughters leave the South but maintain an ambiguous relationship with it. Reflecting on "The Southern Belle" and her Southern birthplace eighteen years after its publication in Ms magazine in a 1993 interview, Gail Godwin observes about the South and the article itself:

> I was much fiercer than I would be now. I think I myself have drawn so much from it. I have found it an enormous wellspring for me, this whole southern heritage and southern womanhood. It can be of great use. . . . I used to call [my mother] a tight-rope walker. . . . Now I see that though this type of behavior has a negative side, it can also be very useful. It means becoming aware of what you are really doing. If you lie to yourself about it, then you're writing off part of the meaning. So you have to differentiate between when it's being used to cover up and when it's being used to open up. (Xie "A Dialogue with Gail Godwin" 178)

Godwin and her characters recognize the value of the Southern lady as they seek to refine their definitions of that ideal woman. Even though Southern daughters may reject some of their mothers' and grandmothers' traditions, certain traits like ties to the family and Southern accents still remain. Even though they often still try to please absent fathers, Godwin's characters continue to struggle to determine their own identities, forming different family structures than those under a patriarchal society.

Margaret Gower, the heroine of Godwin's Father Melancholy's Daughter who is an aspiring Southern lady, becomes a dutiful daughter by taking care of her father during his bouts of depression. She even fantasizes about bringing him out of his bouts of depression, hoping to

> fling open the Black Curtain and descend into the chambers of my father's depression and walk alongside him naming each of its demons and confronting their dreadful visages until he would allow me to lead him back into the light, there would be no guide, no companion other than myself. . . . It would be all my responsibility, and though the task would be daunting, I would conduct myself as

> a hero. There wouldn't even be Ruth around to lighten things with her humor and social put-downs. (Father Melancholy 42-43)

This view seems to express Margaret's desire to be her father's only companion. Her hope is fullfilled when Ruth finally leaves her family and later dies. As a child, Margaret shares with Walter bedtime reading and library trips while he companionably encourages her knowledge. It is a benefit to Walter to train an educated daughter.

In comparing her college career to that of other twenty-two-year-olds ("none of whom seem to have any relationships with parents, much less think about them,") Margaret feels that she "was not living the normal life of a person [her] age in contemporary America "(301). She is also concerned that she is going to England with her father after college graduation while her friends are usually going with boyfriends. She understands that her nurturing relationship with her father is very different from that of other typical fathers and daughters.

Margaret's mother, Ruth, leaves her family because the stifling idea of living her life as the perfect pastor's wife hinders her creativity. Ruth needs what Lihong Xie in The Evolving Self in the Novels of Gail Godwin describes as a "more fulfilling life as an achieving individual" (Xie 202). However, Margaret learns from Ruth the role of traditional womanhood with its domestic social responsibilities and exemplary behavior within her father's congregation. Margaret and Walter learn to depend on each other for emotional well-being, and their life together revolves around discussion of Ruth's life and her reasons for leaving and the crusades, triumphs and defeats of Walter's ministry.

Margaret does accept the role of dutiful daughter and Ruth's stand-in as Walter's caretaker willingly and with devotion. She is able to make new discoveries in her college

career while she continues to fulfill her obligations as Father Gower's daughter. Even though the nurturing characteristic is a part of Margaret's personality, she must maintain her independence to avoid the possible entrapment that affected Ruth. Both Margaret and Ruth have the Southern upbringing of traditional womanhood; however, Ruth becomes frustrated in her role as the rector's wife who has to please her husband as well as his congregation. While Ruth rebels against the conformity of companionship, subservience, and domesticity, Margaret, who is caught between the traditional role of caretaker and that of independence, finally learns that she can help others without sacrificing her own life, even if she breaks traditional boundaries and become a minister as her father before her. Kissel notes that Margaret "learns to give of herself without giving up herself" (122). Only after accepting Ruth's absence, death, friendship with Madelyn and Walter's death can Margaret discover her own self-identity. She must understand her parents before she can understand herself. Margaret's journey to England at the end of the novel draws her closer to God and to her eventual calling as she requests in a prayer "the right to serve You [God]" (Father Melancholy 404). She is definitely deviating from prescribed occupations for women.

After the fire and the loss of the summer cottage on Ocracoke Island, Cate, Lydia, and Nell Strickland of Godwin's A Mother and Two Daughters learn that "as long as there's life, there's hope and so much depends on the individual" (488). The destruction of the cottage finally allows the three women to put the past behind them and leave themselves open to what the future may hold. All three characters finally venture beyond what is socially prescribed for the well-brought-up Southern girl. None of them reject their past, but they learn to accept and attempt to understand it. Although they use

attributes of the Southern lady, they reject the entrapments that hinder their growth to self-identity by, according to Kissel, maintaining a positive relationship to family members without sacrificing themselves (123). In The Evolving Self in the Novels of Gail Godwin, Xie notes that "questing daughters" often flee from the South since, in the image of Southern womanhood, there is little hope for those daughters who stay home. (139) The women in A Mother and Two Daughters are the exception since they do find their self-identities in non-traditional ways. Xie also notes that, although Lydia still uses her feminine charm, she appears to be a new version of the Southern lady (139). Both Lydia and Kate form their own versions of extended families, not bound by the limitations of society. In "Gail Godwin and the Ideal of Southern Womanhood," Rhodes notes that these women become free of the constraining forms of Southern womanhood but are able to use the beauty, grace, and duty of that idea to form a life that values these ideas but doesn't succumb to them (55). Rhodes observes that these ideas were still present in the 1970s when Godwin began writing and that women reared with these values must learn to see the errors of this view and find new, self-creating ways to be themselves (64). This discovery occurs years after serving as a dutiful daughter much like Zora Neale Hurston's Janie Crawford and Alice Walker's Celie.

In Godwin's A Southern Family, both Clare Campion and Julia Richardson Lowndes are Southern daughters who search for a mature, fulfilled, grown-up identity. Clare is the novelist who flees the South to gain mobility and freedom but is so homesick that she and her lover maintain a vacation spot on the North Carolina coast. She is concerned that her books reflect a "docile, clever product of 'The Southern Way of Life' and of a European style convent education" that "have been achieved simply by learning

to satisfy the tastes of the culture that shaped me, rather than trying to sniff out its rotten spots or going beyond it in my imagination" (Southern Family 51). According to Julia, Clare and the Quicks "didn't give life a chance to express itself, they were so busy making it over into what they'd rather see, what presented them in a more intriguing light, what felt or sounded better" (35). The Southern lady often emphasizes those aspects that make both her family and herself look good.

In contrast to Clare, Julia Richardson Lowndes had the freedom when she "had dared to live purely for herself before Duty to Family called her back to Mountain City" (30). Kissel notes that Julia's life suggests that family ties need not destroy individuals if they maintain enough privacy, respect, and tolerance within the family to allow for individual expression and self-development (133). Neville Richardson, Julia's father, mentions to her that "the greatest portion of my adult life has been spent alone. It may well be that solitude is my most natural state" (47). Julia gives her father privacy, and it is this distance that seems to aid in their close family relationships. Since she is an adult, Neville does not try to control her as a patriarchal father usually does.

Julia is Clare's strongest critic, and Clare realizes that she "needs Julia in [her] life" (57) so that she "can watch her fine moral nature in action, and sprinkle a little of her integrity here and there upon the personalities of my sturdier fictional heroines" (58). Both Clare and Julia are concerned that Julia's return home might "mean that she's given up, that she's used Duty as an excuse to abandon the struggle for Self" (56). Yet, Clare says, "it's this very attitude of hers that gives me comfort. . . . The arc of her life has supplied me with more than material for a novel; it has illustrated to me that there are moral natures *outside* of books that are inherently superior to mine" (57). Clare is

worried about, but impressed by, Julia's sense of duty. However, Julia appears to have found a balance between self and duty. Between the two women, Julia is able to compromise and enjoy a positive father force with Neville while Clare receives negative reinforcement from her constant battles with Ralph Quick.

Jane Clifford of Godwin's The Odd Woman tries to find her true identity against a background of Southern womanhood represented by her grandmother, Edith, and mother, Kitty. Jane is looking for what Marilynn Smith, in "The Role of the South in the Novels of Gail Godwin," calls "the best and uncompromised" in life (105). Kitty explains that all of the three women "are products, we are prisoners of our times" (Odd Woman 172). According to Kitty, all Edith cared about "was being in fashion, and that fashion decreed beauty, good manners, and dutiful womanly behavior" (172). At her death, Edith possesses "fifteen pairs of white gloves" (168), "a bottle of Harvey's Bristol Cream" which she treated as "poison" and which the doctor told her to take for medicine (169), distinctive clothes, and fainting spells. Jane herself saw Edith as "a traditional Southern belle" who was "elegant, snobbish, beautiful to the very end" (56) but also remembers the stand that Edith took in denouncing her step-father, Ray, as both a suitable husband for Kitty and an appropriate father-substitute for Jane. In the minds of Southern ladies, the males and father figures also have to maintain certain standards, and Southern ladies can be forceful if a threat to the family deems force necessary.

Before her marriage, Kitty Sparks, much like Kathleen Godwin, wrote love stories on weekends to provide for her daughter. Kitty's awareness of women's roles causes her to create characters that "have respectable slightly glamorous jobs, but nothing too important. There must be nothing too permanent or too heavy in their lives because they

have to throw it out the window when the man comes along" (27). Kitty's women are secretaries, sales girls, bank tellers, models "(with impeccable morals) or—rarely, very rarely—aspiring actresses who were always rescued just this side of the wings by a man who had a full-time part in mind for them" (26-7). Even the fiction within the fiction has to maintain the pretense of a South "where people said pretty things but never meant them; where no matter how hard you worked or how pleasant you were to people, you seemed already to have been assigned a 'place' and were expected to stay in it" (164). According to Anne Mickelson in Reaching Out: Sensitivity and Order in Recent American Fiction by Women, the old traditions appear to represent security through marriage to a man who will take care of a woman as long as she lives within the rules of society (93). These old rules are the ones that Godwin questions in her novel.

Kitty is brought up "to believe woman's best virtue was that of denouncing herself" (172) and feels that she "was one of those people who have the misfortune to grow up with one foot in one era and the other foot in the next" (172). Her desire to write books is sacrificed to bear children and to fulfill what Edith calls "certain duties in marriage" because the "man needs them" (140). In her own marriage, Kitty has become "the tightrope walker" (122) between her husband and children, allowing herself to be both comforting mother and subservient wife: "Ray allowed Kitty her extravagances in return for her freedom. . . .but he did not like her to go off the mountain without him. He slightly resented her relationship with God because of the frequent trysts it required at the church in town" (115). Kitty makes a complete reversal from an independent woman to a submissive one. As a father-substitute, Ray makes Jane very uncomfortable because of

the many restrictions he places on her mother's life. Her desire to be independent is overshadowed by her concern for her mother's freedom.

Jane herself, like most of Godwin's female protagonists, is "in transit between the old values which threaten to engulf her every time she comes home and the new values, which she must hack out for herself" (134). Growing up, she begins her study of Posture, Poise, and Diction at the Pinner School, but attends only for one week. "Fainting. . .a feminine predisposition" (139) causes her transfer to a local convent school, and the problem of fainting continues through her adult years when she is placed in a stressful situation.

Jane, like Cate Gatlinsky in A Mother and Two Daughters, has not married because she feels she has "to keep [herself] open and alert. I have to keep ready for my other half. At the moment, I'm divided. I don't see much evidence for it, but yet I am collecting evidence" (Odd Woman 170). Some of Godwin's characters' views about marriage reflect their changing attitudes about that traditional institution. In a conversation with Jane about Edith, Kitty notes that "She was more of a lady than I was and I am more of one than you are" (168). Kitty sees "all the old forms, at least the effortless practice of the old forms, going out the window or maybe we'll have to rethink the reasons for them, and find ourselves wanting to practice them again. . . ." (168). Many of Godwin's characters examine the idea of Southern womanhood, take the best from it, and reconstruct the rest. For Jane, the dullness and propriety of the perfect Southern lady are too restrictive for success in a faster-paced modern world that is beginning to de-value older traditions. Having been raised in the traditional world, Jane, like Godwin's other characters, must now change her views in order to establish her own self-identity.

Jane's half-sister, Emily, uses Southern wiles and charm to change "from child to bride" (99). Although there is a "female power in her, something much older and stronger than any cultivated practices of the subtle and delicate art of Being a Woman" (96), Emily, at age twelve, declares, "I will never have a boyfriend. . . . I will never flick my fingers helplessly in the air, and cry, 'Oh, you!' and act like an ass" (99). Emily ridicules the falseness of pretending to be submissive. In contrast to Emily, both Jane and Kitty inherit from Edith what Lihong Xie in The Evolving Self in the Novels of Gail Godwin calls "the feminine discourse" of subservience, dependence and relational orientation (78). Kitty settles for a protected, secure life with Ray Sparks which gives her a dual role of subservient wife and elegant, elusive lady. Having grown up with images of a dead hero for a father and a step-father that she dislikes for taking away her mother's independence, Jane is confused about her relationships with men and wants the best ideals out of Southern womanhood; yet, the lack of an acceptable father-figure seems to create problems as Jane tries to make positive commitments in male-female relationships.

Even the title character of Godwin's Violet Clay is accused of maintaining a "crumbly old death ship of the past" (4) and speaks of the "amenities I had been weaned on" (6). Violet strongly dislikes grandmother Georgette Clay's best friend, Violet Pardee, who is described as a "large Yankee-voiced, Titian-haired disturber of the local mores" (16).While Violet often day-dreams about "the pageantry of upper-class southern wife-and-motherhood" (23), she still desires to maintain her own independence. Because Violent fears failure, Kissel notes that she has to leave the image of herself as a white Southerner, a member of the Clay family, and her memories of a marriage of "captivity" (110) before she can gain her own self-identity. Rhodes observes that, as a daughter of

the South, Violet measures herself by half-truths of the family heritage (60). Often in Godwin's novels, the death of older family members helps to focus on change because the link to what Marilynn Smith sees as "an institution already dissolving" (108) is not as strong as before. Because of tradition, Violet finds it hard to publicly be unladylike. She displays the South's tendency to romanticize tragedy in her descriptions of the death of her parents. Perhaps hoping to redeem their deaths at an early age, Violet sets goals representative of unfulfilled life and art.

In Godwin's The Finishing School, Justine Stokes, the heroine, loses "the grandparents who raised her, her father, and then her home" (5). She feels that the move to the North "that she had been brought up to hate because its interference and brutalities had destroyed our gracious past" (7) will adversely affect her. Although Justine realizes that her father's death causes her family to move from their larger home, she hopes that they can find a smaller house "somewhere in town where everybody would still know who we were, who would remember what we had been—. . . ." (37). According to Justine, the people in the North "were deep within themselves and slow to respond, not given to graces or flourishes" (7). In adulthood, Justine does admit that this move was beneficial to her because of her meeting Ursula DeVane. Kissel notes that Ursula is another older woman who has sacrificed herself for others, especially her brother, Julian, while having such a "positive, liberating influence" on Justine herself (Moving On: The Heroines of Shirley Ann Grau, Anne Tyler, and Gail Godwin 115). Godwin's novels depict many Southern ladies who have made similar sacrifices.

Justine's mother, Louise Stokes, was the typical Southern lady who chose love and marriage. However, the death of her husband early in their marriage left her with no

skills which she could use in the job market. Kerstin Westerlund notes that Louise possessed beauty, grace, and style but no career ambitions and sees Louise as a "helpless victim who fell into the role of (graceful) martyr" (136). Louise is typical of other Godwin characters and Southern ladies who willingly give up opportunities for their own careers because society assures them that a good marriage and motherhood will help them become satisfied adult women. However, society measures success by evidence of a happy home and an accomplished husband. The question that Godwin often asks is what happens when the marriage is not successful.

Louise sees herself as "the little girl who got her own way for thirty-two years. . . [but now feels] that it would have been better if I hadn't had my own way quite so much" (FS 39). Justine describes Louise in this way: ". . . my mother had always starred as 'the Daughter.' I was left with the role of the sturdy little soul, the companion of the grandparents, who colluded with them in allowing Louise to go on being herself" (39). Both parents and Justine helped Louise "prolong her life as a girl" (40). Sometimes maintaining the family image might prove to be disastrous to certain members of the family. Although the influence of the Southern lady affected Justine, she never had the chance to truly be one because of her move to New York at age 11. She had only memories, her grandparents' stories, and Louise's own denunciation to guide her. Perhaps her need for a trustworthy adult, usually found in a father figure, led Justine to discover Ursula and Julian DeVane.

Quite often, Godwin explores the possibility of women affirming each others' lives rather than holding each other down and keeping each other trapped in the past traditions of Southern womanhood. Occasionally, the mothers in Godwin's stories are

similar to Godwin's own mother in that they have to work outside the home because they have been widowed or deserted by the Southern gentlemen in their lives. Instead of following the restrictive views, they branch out on their own to create a more inclusive view of family. A positive effect of the absent father in Godwin is that the heroines often eventually become independent. A negative effect of the absent father is that the heroines often cannot maintain traditional relationships with male partners.

In contrast to Grau and Godwin, Alice Walker's version of the Southern belle or the Southern lady can be exemplified in the small size and educated refinement of Mem in The Third Life of Grange Copeland. Walker's characters have some similarities to the Southern lady, but her heroines are usually not placed on a pedestal. In Dirt and Desire: Reconstructing Southern Women's Writing, 1930-1990, Patricia Yaeger remarks that many Walker female characters who have refinement lose their self-identity through continuous housekeeping, sharecropping, birthing, and sustaining a family (143). Yaeger notes that the smaller size makes these women vulnerable, and often their inner strength is defeated by economic poverty, loss of emotional stability, and neglect or violence by their husbands (143). The dedication to husband and children is exemplified by both white and black ladies in the works of Grau, Godwin, and Walker.

Although it may not be as readily recognized, the typical black woman of the South could appear to be a Southern lady because of her domestic role. Often, she may be cook, maid, and nursemaid for one or several white families. If the black woman has her own family, she is a double matriarch, raising her own children along with those of the white family, while neglecting her own husband and children. In the "Introduction to the 1994 edition" of Killers of the Dream, Margaret Gladney observes: "In a culture

where marriage and motherhood were women's primary roles, neither black nor white women were free to be fully wives and mothers, and neither was able to shield their children from the physical and psychic destruction of the racist society in which they lived" (6). It is ironic that both black and white Southern women are fulfilling roles and experiencing the life that white men and society have intended for them since their own opinions are not valued.

In The Color Purple, both Celie and Sofia make an effort to keep clean houses for their husbands. However, because husband Albert often abuses Celie, his children have no respect for her. Yet, Harpo confides in her about his problems with his wife Sofia, perhaps because she is better trained for a domestic role and appears to be more nurturing than his father. Since her children are clean when they appear in town, Sofia is ordered to keep house for the mayor's family. For the white family, this cleanliness of the children is a sign of Sofia's ability to do good work. She becomes friend and confidante of their white daughter, Eleanor Jane, whose own mother, like other white women, is concerned with society, propriety, and discipline. If Walker's fathers were more caring, perhaps they could recognize the alienation they cause within their own families.

Sofia, in The Color Purple, and the mother in "Everyday Use" show the strong spirit of the Southern woman. Celie eventually expresses this spirit by the end of the novel when she finally discovers her own self-identity. Although Sofia has feminine ways, she also has a fighting ability as she doesn't "even deal in little ladyish things such as slaps. She ball up her fist, draw back, and knock two of Squeak's side teef out" (Walker TCP 83). Sofia is trying to establish her marriage alignment with Harpo in this case, feels threatened, and finds it difficult to act like a lady.

The white people in control are impressed by lady-like qualities. After Sofia's imprisonment for hitting the white mayor, the women in The Color Purple try to free Sofia by using a relative of his to impress the sheriff. Celie explains:

> Us dress Squeak like she a white woman, only her clothes patch. She got on a starch and iron dress, high heel shoes with scuffs, and a old hat somebody give Shug. Us give her a old pocketbook look like a quilt and a little black bible. Us wash her hair and git all the grease out, then I put it up in two plaits that cross over her head. Us bathe her so clean she smell like a good clean floor. (93)

Squeak's physical appearance is enhanced to make her more appealing in her request for Sofia's freedom.

Although slavery has ended, the white Southern lady, Miss Millie, does not seem to recognize that fact. Sofia describes her life in the mayor's house in this way:

> They got me in a little storeroom up under the house, hardly bigger than Odessa's porch, and just about as warm in the winter time. I'm at they beck and call all night and all day. They won't let me see no mens. Well, after five years they let me see you once a year. I'm a slave, she say. What would you call it? (103)

For some Southern ladies, appearance is very important. Miss Millie is concerned about Sofia's riding with her in the front seat when the driving lessons are over because, after all, they still live in the South. Miss Millie is also upset when Sofia doesn't properly appreciate the 15-minute Christmas day spent with her children when she promises the whole day. Miss Millie is following tradition set by men and expects gratitude for her good deeds regarding the hired help.

Walker's best examples of dutiful daughters are Celie in The Color Purple, who succumbs to her step-father's advances; the narrator of "To Hell With Dying," who can bring the elderly Mr. Sweet back from a diabetic coma; Maggie in "Everyday Use," who remains home while older sister Dee goes off to college, and Sarah Davis, the heroine of "A Sudden Trip Home in the Spring." In "East Out Alone/ to Heal/ and Re-create/ Ourselves: Family-based Identity in the Work of Alice Walker," Peter Erickson notes that "A Sudden Trip Home in the Spring" was written at a time when Walker herself felt cut off from her father by her own education and his lack of opportunity to grow (17). Perhaps Sarah's lack of understanding of her father reflects Walker's own concern about the estrangement between her father and her. Although she returns home for her father's funeral, Sarah has an unforgiving attitude toward him since she feels he is partially to blame for her mother's death.

Setting an example of a true Southern lady, Sarah displays lady-like qualities at her white Northern school since she was

> gentle with her friends, and her outrage at their tactlessness did not show. She was most often inclined to pity them, though embarrassment sometimes drove her to fraudulent expressions. Now she smiled and raised eyes and arms to heaven. She acknowledged their unanswered curiosity as a mother endures the prying impatience of a child. Her friends beamed love and envy upon her as she tore open the telegram. (Walker "A Sudden Trip" 125)

Although Sarah could be a beautiful and nurturing mother figure to her friends, she still is not able to forgive her father for what she considers his part in her mother's death, often avoiding him when she still lived at home.

Sarah is an artist who "found black men impossible to draw or paint; she could not bear to trace defeat onto black pages. Her woman figures were matronly, massive of arms, with a weary victory showing in their eyes" ("A Sudden Trip" 126). Although Sara blames her father for the constant moves to find better jobs that causes her mother's death, she learns from her grandfather how to keep "with pride his family's trust and his own grief" (135). For Sarah, the trip home allows her to open the "door to all the rooms" (136), to finally forgive her father, and to discover "the child's duty to his parents after they are dead" (123). In "An Essay on Alice Walker," Mary Helen Washington expresses the idea that Sarah sees a necessity for a sense of continuity with the past and a sense of community with the family (49). However, later Washington views this ending as "an alliance with that male authority" (103) that set the traditional rules. By seeing the courage of her grandfather and establishing a link with her brother, Sarah finally decides that she can, after all, paint black men. The psychological gap between this father and his dutiful daughter is closed as she recognizes her own self-identity and is finally able to forgive her father.

Both the mother and Maggie in "Everyday Use" express the strong domestic qualities of the Southern lady by staying home; however, Dee also displays the strong spirit of the Southern lady. Dee, like many of Godwin's characters, has to leave the South to fully appreciate its qualities. All three women develop their own talents as artists and differing self-identities. The mother/narrator tells the story of her two daughters: Maggie, her stay-at-home quilt maker, and Dee, a college-educated, city-trained photographer, collector of art, and designer of her own clothes and jewelry. In a

1973 interview with Mary Helen Washington, Walker shares her view of the three characters:

> . . . I really see the story as almost about one person, the old woman and two daughters being one person. The one who stays and sustains—this is the older woman—who has on the one hand a daughter who is the same way, who stays and abides and loves, plus the part of them—*this autonomous person*, the part of them that also wants to go out into the world to see change and be changed. . . . I do in fact have an African name that was given to me, and I love it and use it when I want to, and I love my Kenyan gowns and my Ugandan gowns—the whole bit—it's a part of me. But on the other hand, my parents and grandparents were part of it, and they take precedence. (Washington 101-2)

Walker recognizes, as Dee does not, that cooking, gardening, quilt-making, singing, and even the making of furniture are part of a tradition prescribed by society for the black man and woman. Washington aligns Walker with Dee and notes that the story tells a "threatening tale of the woman writer's fears, of the difficulty of reconciling home and art, particularly when the distance from home has been enlarged by education, by life among the 'gentlefolk,' and by literary recognition" (103). In addition to their domestic and nurturing qualities, Walker's Southern ladies display strong inner spirits in the face of much adversity that is sometimes caused by fathers who hinder growth and change for their own daughters.

In conclusion, if the woman is submissive and has power only in the domestic sphere, society's standards and the dominant male of the home prevent her from becoming an influence in the world outside the home. Because the idea of female

obedience to her father or husband is linked to Southern religious practices, the powerful cultural influences of religion and the belief in the cult of Southern Womanhood restrict the woman's search for self-identity.

The isolation of the plantation and the agrarian society of a large part of the South have allowed these older ideas to linger longer than anywhere else in the country. A dilemma occurs when the submissive Southern lady has to take control in the absence of the male head of the household. Problems also occur when the daughter seems to have no male support from her immediate family. The characters of Grau, Godwin, and Walker take the best attributes of Southern ladyhood and modernize them for their own century. The Southern daughter should learn about her past and use her voice to change the unflattering elements of it. A Southern writer should be accepted because of talent, not judged on subject and gender. A general acceptance of the heritage of the South includes the knowledge of a white woman placed on a pedestal, a powerless southern symbol with no self-identity. Grau, Godwin, and Walker write of real women actually living lives in the real world. It is important to understand past traditions and pick the best aspects of those traditions to be put to use in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Rather than continuing to remain loyal to those traditional roles set in the 1800s, both black and white women must establish an identity where they are satisfied and respected. In addition to understanding woman's place in the Southern world, one must also be aware of how the burdens of the past and race relations, which will be discussed in the following chapter, have affected father-daughter relationships.

CHAPTER 4

THE BURDEN OF THE PAST AND RACIAL THEMES

Although the South carries a burden of guilt concerning slavery, it seemed to try to perpetuate the inequalities between blacks and whites for a long period of time. It also insists on protecting the purity of its southern daughters. The South has varied ways of dealing with race in the roles of its women characters and forces women to adhere to its traditions. Carrying the burden of the past is usually a task of the male heir of the Southern family. He receives the family name and must live up to that name by honoring family traditions and codes. The daughters of the family must behave honorably and maintain good homes for their future husbands. Maintaining past traditions while living life in modern times is a difficult task in the constantly-changing modern world. Although carrying the burden of the past falls to the son, the daughter also has to maintain this restrictive burden in spite of her own desires to be an individual and live her own life. Sometimes the daughter may have to carry this burden for or because of her father and his own guilty feelings about past experiences. Grau, Godwin, and Walker allow their characters to remember the past while revising the future.

Although the institution of slavery is not a pleasant part of Southern history, it is definitely a distinctive difference between the North and South. Slaves were needed in order to make the plantation system run effectively. In some cases, cruel treatment of slaves encouraged them to follow orders. Southern women and slaves were both prevented from becoming individuals in their own right. The fear of slave rebellions and attacks upon Southern women further bound the two groups together. Some men felt they had the right to abuse the male slave because of what he might potentially do to the

white female. Even though a white male feels that his patriarchal rights allow him to rape a black woman, he often beats his own daughter because of her associations with a black man. Several of Walker's works show that race prevents the black man from showing his frustration with the white man; therefore, he vents his frustrations upon his female family members.

Depictions of the South often make one think of gentility, big white plantation houses, hoop skirts, happy slaves, Southern belles, and handsome gentlemen. Those unrealistic views are of an Old South that seems to hide unpleasant associations. The land of gentility also harbors a tendency for violence. William Faulkner, Eudora Welty, and Flannery O'Connor write of the southern sense of guilt in relation to racial sins considered by many to be a burden of the past with which modern society must deal. Both community and personal guilt may have the possibility of redemption. Myths and contradictions appear to have existed in the South for a long period of time. In "*The Color Purple*: A Study of Walker's Womanist Gospel," Tuzyline Jita Allan observes that European conquests helped to develop the myth of an Africa overcome with poverty. Allan observes that Africa's poor economy served as an excuse to push Africans out of their land, to destroy their way of life, and to allow colonization by European countries (135). Quite often, even today, an ideal seems to prevail that any type of difference with the countries in power signifies inferiority on the part of those who are dissimilar.

The South is a land of contradictions. The idea of the submissive but strong Southern lady has been previously discussed. In The Companion to Southern Literature: Themes, Genres, Places, People, Movements, and Motifs, Joseph Flora highlights other dissenting factors: the possibility of slave rebellion while insisting on slaves' loyalty and

docility; arguments for the value of black labor while conveying an image of an incompetent worker continuously watched and often beaten; promotion of stupidity while legally prohibiting black literacy; insistence on racial purity while practicing miscegenation; laws that specified mixed-race children followed the mother's status; treatment of African-Americans as another race to protect and expand slavery; morality of ownership of other people; use of violence to force work from those who are reluctant and resistant (707). Earlier civilizations had examples of racism based on skin color, physiognomy, and hair texture that were also used in the South to justify slavery and the social order of the post-bellum period. In spite of such contradictions, in Redneck Mothers, Good Ol' Girls and Other Southern Belles, Sharon McKern observes that Southern white families have always depended on blacks as maids, housekeepers, gardeners, and laborers and may have a better understanding of them than people of the North because blacks are seen as flesh and blood people that have a sense of unity with whites, even though they might be hated (140). These various contradictions help to establish a place for misunderstanding and violence.

Many people in the South have the same beliefs as Ashley Wilkes of Margaret Mitchell's Gone With The Wind while they do not understand what he calls the betrayal of the Civil War. Ashley explains:

> . . . I see too clearly that we have been betrayed, betrayed by our arrogant Southern selves, believing that one of us could whip a dozen Yankees, believing that King Cotton could rule the world. Betrayed too by words and catch phrases, prejudices and hatreds coming from the mouths of those highly placed, those men

> whom we respected and revered—King Cotton, Slavery, States' Rights, Damn Yankees. (140)

Many Southerners have similar feelings and want, as Ashley wants to, continue "the old days, the old ways I love so much" (140). In the twenty-first century, most people would not desire the whole lifestyle as much as they desire the gentility and peacefulness that style represents. It is easier to admire the pleasant life than to recognize slavery and the many problems caused by its existence even today.

Gone With the Wind emphasizes the past, the Civil War, Reconstruction, and the violence connected to all of those events. Scarlett O'Hara even feels empathy for her surroundings when she states: "The South was too beautiful a place to let go without a struggle, too loved to be trampled by Yankees who hated Southerners enough to enjoy grinding them into the dirt, too dear a homeland to be turned over to ignorant negroes drunk with whisky and freedom (430). In this novel, these fears set into motion an attempted rape, a Ku Klux Klan raid on a black settlement, and the wounding and death of several prominent characters. The white race had a need to use slaves for labor in the South, brought Negroes to America, and then continued to blame them for the defeat in the war itself, poverty, Reconstruction and any other problem that existed in the South then and through the remainder of the nineteenth, twentieth, and twenty-first centuries. Patricia Yaeger observes that race and gender are inseparable and that neither Scarlett O'Hara nor Margaret Mitchell realizes that the whole civilization of the ante-bellum South was founded on the "oppression of four million African-Americans whose labor made southern wealth, gentility, and even ladyhood possible" (102). Although improvements are seen, some of these old beliefs still exist.

Part of the problem of violence between the races stems from the attitude of Tom Robinson in Harper Lee's To Kill A Mockingbird who got "tired of white men's chances and preferred to take his own" (Lee 269). Hopefully, every Southern town has an Atticus Finch who is paid "the highest tribute we can pay a man. We trust him to do right" because the South often makes unfair decisions that "aint right" (242) concerning the black man because "They've done it before and they did it tonight and they'll do it again and when they do it—seems that only children weep" (243). ("It" refers to mistreatment and sometimes murder of Southern blacks.) The novel suggests that, in the South, it remains easier for a white woman to accuse a black man of rape than suggest that her father beat her for wanting to be intimate with a black man. In this case, Mayella Ewell experiences the destructive elements of the father-force.

Both Scarlett and Scout retain memories of the injustices they witnessed, just as most Southern daughters are aware of the burden and guilt the South shares because of the agrarian society and the injustices of slavery. Quite often, as a means of expressing guilt over the situation, the white man vents his frustrations on the black man who is unable to retaliate. The black man usually has only his wife and children to punish. Frequently, oppression is inflicted upon a lower class than one's own. It is these burdens that Grau, Godwin, and Walker have inherited.

History

Racial problems are a major burden of the South stemming from historical acts. In "Race," Kwame Anthony Appiah observes that, for the whole time that African-Americans have existed in the New World, European and American traditions have denied any literary capacity for black people (285). According to Appiah, physical

appearances and common ancestry explain why people display distinctions in attitudes and aptitudes (274). Joseph Flora observes that quite often race is used as a social construct to maintain differences in economic and political power and status (105). Flora notes that a theory of monogenesis suggests that God created only one human species that through degeneration has caused some varieties to become distinctly inferior. Another theory of polygenesis suggests that different races were a product of separate creations. Flora also argues that by the end of the eighteenth century, the idea of the existing hierarchy makes some "races" inferior to others and raises questions about intermarriages and domination. He notes that racial theory and white supremacy justified the exploitation of Indians, Africans, and their descendants in efforts to expand a different way of life to further the economy of European and American civilizations (706). Since white Southern wives and daughters are responsible for manners and morality in their households, they are very much aware of what they consider to be their racial superiority.

Since both black and white women were submissive to the male head of household, they both experienced elements of oppression. The white daughter is even more oppressed than the white wife because she has father and society making her rules for her. In Reconstructing Womanhood: The Emergence of the Afro-American Woman Novelist, Hazel Carby notes the similar, although different, status of black and white women who were both excluded from any kind of power and kept in a submissive position. Carby argues that, although motherhood and womanhood were dependent on each other for existence, each race faced different material circumstances and different reproductive systems (25). The white woman on a pedestal had a duty to her husband "to provide him with heirs" and a duty to the country "to produce citizens" (24). Carby

recognizes that black women giving birth to slaves promoted capitalism, since slaves inherited their status from their mothers (5). The black female slave became a victim, either through rape or barter (38). In Black and White Women of the Old South: The Peculiar Sisterhood in American Literature, Minrose Gwin sees white women "as the faithful standard bearers of patriarchy and racial constructs." Gwin notes that rape makes clear the inferiority of the woman involved and symbolizes the white man's total dominance over blacks and women (67). Quite often, the white woman on a pedestal, supported by slavery, realized that the rape of the black female slave could be committed by her own husband. The system of slavery and the requirements of Southern womanhood limit the freedoms of both white and black women.

In the Old South, the ideal of the peculiar sisterhood is especially strong. A sisterhood existed because both the white plantation mistress and the black slave woman were bound together under the control of the white patriarch and submissive to him. They were both victims of his oppression and should have become allies. However, the distinction remained that the mistress was still a partial owner of her black sister, and such friendships were unacceptable to society. Since neither woman had a choice about her submissiveness, the idea of slavery put both women in a slave relationship to the male head of household and illustrated a connection between the conditions of slavery and the requirements of Southern womanhood. Both slave and wife were property of the master of the plantation. The white woman was revered yet deprived of sexual and maternal identity since the master could easily force sex from a slave and often the black female slave raised her children. The black woman was strong and dependent, responsible and subservient, and yet society denied her status in the "Cult of True Womanhood." Even

though she was a mother, she was seen only as a breeder for her own children; yet, she often raised the white children on the plantation. The white woman was oppressed, but she also became an oppressor of her black slave. Although both women were victims of this Southern belief, the fear of rape or the threat of being sold made the black woman more of a victim. This sisterhood was evident in times of slavery and is depicted in the writings of Grau, Godwin, and Walker.

Elizabeth Fox-Genovese argues that women who lived and worked together often formed bonds of friendship and mutual dependence across the color lines. Fox-Genovese also mentions that, although both the plantation mistress and her female slaves were submissive to the male head of the household, it was the black female slave who was most victimized by the double burden of patriarchy and slavery (47). Many of the old-fashioned traditions about man's superiority and woman's inferiority still do exist in the twenty-first century, and the Southern daughter is often influenced by that belief. It is this belief that Grau, Godwin, and Walker try to deconstruct in their writings in forming a more inclusive community of women who have formed their own families and identities. No submission is evident in these new families, but respect for differences is.

The peculiar sisterhood of black and white women also provided contradictions for the mistress of the plantation. In Tomorrow Is Another Day: The Woman Writer in the South, 1859-1936, Anne Goodwyn Jones observes several of them: nurturing, clothing, and nursing slaves as well as supervising them; raising children by slave women who served as mother surrogates and role models; accepting overvaluation and devaluation; and the revering of white women while depriving them of individual identity (29). In the South, especially in this time period, Carby notes great concerns with social

equality, heritage, and inheritance (105). Many of these concerns continued in the twentieth century, and Southern daughters had to learn to make their own decisions.

Although this term usually refers to the sisterhood between white mistress and black slave, Grau, Godwin, and Walker express "peculiar sisterhood" in different ways in their twentieth-century writings. Although the white townspeople violently object to this union of a black woman to a white man of influence and importance, Margaret, the black housekeeper in Grau's The Keepers of the House, becomes more than a sister as she, through marriage, becomes a mother substitute to both Abigail Howland and her mother. The patriarch maintains appearances but also tries to benefit his family. It is ironic that the town would have more readily accepted the sexual union between the two if marriage had not been involved.

Often Godwin's characters, especially Theodora, a white matriarch, and Azalea, her black housekeeper, in A Mother and Two Daughters, form a peculiar sisterhood by taking care of each other, sharing clothes, and swapping jewelry. Lydia also establishes a lasting friendship with her black instructor, Renee. Godwin's examples are reminiscent of the original intention of the idea of peculiar sisterhood without the specter of ownership of one friend over another. As a member of the Old Guard of Southern propriety, it is possible that father Leonard would not approve of Lydia's going back to school, her divorce from Max, and her friendship with Renee. Lydia is finding her own identity by rebelling against the father-force of limitations.

Shug and Celie in Walker's The Color Purple form a peculiar sisterhood in their lesbian union. Up to this point, men have pronounced Celie as unlovable; however, someone has to love her before she can love herself. Celie and Sofia become sisters even

though Sofia is working for Celie by the end of the novel. No submission on behalf of either partner is evident in these modern examples. Destructive elements of the father-force are in existence because of the absence of Celie's biological father and the rapes by her stepfather, Alphonso. In By the Light of My Father's Smile, Susannah forms a peculiar sisterhood with Irene, the Greek dwarf, and Pauline, her sometimes lover. These relationships come about because Susannah can no longer trust her father.

Violence between races is another idea that has stemmed from the system of slavery, Reconstruction, and guilt. In the plantation system, a fear of the whites about slave rebellion, possible miscegenation between white women and black men, and rape of white women by black men created a hatred that was often enforced by violence. Irony existed because no questions were raised when the slave owner raped his black female slaves. Flora argues that violence was often directed against the economically unsuccessful and those accused of sexual assault against white women in an effort to force African-Americans into a derogatory image of themselves that had existed for centuries. In the twentieth century, Flora feels that the 1960's Civil Rights Movement has forced a change in behavior and belief (707). Carby notes that for the American Negro, manhood and citizenship is incorporated in the right to vote, and whites formed such organizations as the Ku Klux Klan and Regulators to prevent voting by the Negro. These organizations often resorted to lynching and murder of the black man. She also notes that hatred occurred when Northern white women broke the chivalric code when they went south after the war to educate blacks (113). Too often, black and white women are seen in what Carby calls "opposing definitions of motherhood and womanhood" (20)

and only in the figures of slave and mistress. However, there are other possibilities for women's abilities.

Both rape and lynching become symbols of black oppression. Carby notes that both seem to be used by whites to maintain subordination of the black man. In addition, she cites a patriarchal idea that suggests that black women are not entirely unwilling accomplices and may even invite sexual attack (39). This notion appears to be another way of the white race not accepting blame for the system of slavery.

Although the black man would like to take some action to prevent abuse to mother, daughter, sister, or wife and to stop brutal treatment for his race, the society in which he lives does not allow him to protect the women within his environment. Both white women and blacks are slaves to the traditions set in this time period, and in some areas of the South, these ideas are still prevalent. Gwin notes that "violence born of repression, frustration, fear . . . deny self-determination by a refusal to recognize the humanity of others" (51). Gwin also sees a connection between feminism and abolitionism and between similar repressions and submissive virtues of both women and blacks (27). In spite of what Gwin sees as "antipathy, bitterness, and guilt," the women of both races bond through suffering. To recognize order and power in the South, Gwin shows the connection between race, gender, and power (4). No matter how similar the situations are, the fact still remains that the white woman on a pedestal, who appeared to be weak, still had power over her black slave who had to endure hard labor and personal humiliation. This connection appeared to be obvious to someone living at the time; however, a person living in later centuries may try to improve upon the destructive ramifications caused by these connections.

The idea of rape may often appear in father-daughter relationships because of the father's desire for power. In Daughters, Fathers, and the Novel: The Sentimental Romance of Heterosexuality, Lynda Zwinger notes that the daughter's love and approval is quite often seen as a form of complicity. Since the daughter looks to the father for love, attention, and approval, Zwinger notes that her vulnerability increases his perception and desire for a "damsel in distress" (9). In "The Father's House and the Daughter in It: The Structures of Western Culture's Daughter-Father Relationships," Lynda Boose observes that studies of incest-abused daughters show that the first daughter was often the one "chosen" by her father. Since he was the authority figure in her life and her primary role model for male relationships, Boose notes that the daughter's future relationships with men might be affected (38). In "The Daughter's Seduction: Sexual Violence and Literary History," Christine Froula notes that the abusive, seductive father harms both the daughter's mind and body while damaging her sense of identity and voice of authority. She observes that literature usually favor's the father's voice and story over that of his daughter who usually remains silent because of her feelings of guilt (121). Although only Walker's novels include rape for major characters, Grau and Godwin also show examples of race and violence in their works.

Literary Connections to the Burden of the Past and Racial Themes

Quite often, literature does appear to be written from a male point of view. H. Aram Vesser notes that New Historicism allows writers to focus on elements of politics and power that affect people's practical lives. Vesser argues that the boundaries of time and space need to be crossed as a means to maintain order and stability (ix). Writing about the elements of the past and the racial tensions that affect daily activities of living

in the twentieth and twenty-first century is one way to show order because of patriarchal control. However, there is no need to carry past traditions and views into the following centuries.

For the South, the past includes the early period, the plantation society, the Civil War, and Reconstruction. Flora notes that the South is aware of the historical consciousness of the past which must be confronted and then either embraced or rejected (619). Although the good order of the Southern past was built on the backs of slaves, critics often use "the myth of the glorious past" to show the evils of modern industrialism according to C. Hugh Holman in The Roots of Southern Writing: Essays on the Literature of the American South. One of the admirable qualities about the plantation South was the systematized order of the society. It would not necessarily be required to totally embrace or reject every idea of the past. One may pick the best of these ideas and maintain them.

Both black and white women have different stories about the South that need to be told. In "Towards a Poetics of Culture," Stephen Greenblatt notes that books document social forces that inform and establish history and society by the telling of various stories about the area. He feels that these social processes help to form individual identity and a sociohistorical situation (1). The telling of their stories help these black and white women to document history and society as it happens to them. It is this past that seems definitely to have formed the identities of the Southern people of that particular time. Evidence of this past still exists in twentieth and twenty-first century attitudes about women and Southern race relations and contributes to the writings of Grau, Godwin, and Walker.

In literature, depictions of the illicit sexual charms of the black female slaves seem not to be equal to the presentations of the virtuous, chaste, pious, pure white mistress. Carby notes that these black women seem to lack a "physical evidence of pure soul" (25). Carby also observes that, when compared to the sentimental domestic heroine, the black woman fails because she survived institutionalized rape since a true heroine would rather die than be sexually abused. That survival, according to Carby, makes the slave woman appear to be less sensitive and spiritually inferior (34). Quite often, the literary depiction is more easily accepted than the cruel reality of rapes and beatings.

As women's writing begin to depict true-to-life incidents far beyond domestic fiction, critics recognize the need for women to find their own voice. While white men cannot appear to always recognize the problems of white women, black men cannot always recognize the degradation suffered by black women. Patricia Yaeger notes three ways of thinking about race: (1) totally "forgetting" (2) remaining racist and shamed-faced (This South may not deserve to survive.) (3) demanding new methods of action. Yaeger feels that Southern women's writing looks at all three methods (93). Grau, Godwin, and Walker appear to use the third method as their characters establish their own means of acceptance of the past. The South's ambiguous racial experiences, thus far, seem to be resolved only in fiction. After all, it seems that most people would like to be treated as human beings. The Southern daughter observes other females, both black and white, being mistreated by her father and often has concerns about her own fate.

If the daughter wishes to make any choices at all, she might fear disappointing her father. In "The Permanent Obliquity of an In[pha]llibly Straight: In the Time of the

Daughters and Fathers," Hortense Spillers notes that daughters who have wants or desires pose a threat because they might disgrace their fathers before the exchange of marriage (172). In The Sacred and the Feminine: Towards a Theology of Housework, Kathryn Rabuzzi notes Simone DeBeauvior's use of "Otherness" to describe women who have been named, defined, and told exactly what to do by men. She mentions two possible choices for the writing woman: (1) make degrading statements about herself or (2) simply say nothing (176). Such choices appear to be unacceptable for Grau, Godwin, and Walker.

Many writers, both black and white, create stereotypes of black women in fiction. Like all stereotypes, none of the images are 100% true. The strongest, most respected black figure for whites is that of the black mammy, who, according to Minrose Gwin, could be the black counterpart of "true womanhood" because of her association with home and mother and her power over and respect of other slaves (93). Many white Southern daughters were raised by black mammies. Gwin also observes that sexually-alluring black women are often prostitutes, thieves, and murderesses that become, for some, living "proof" that white racism and a slave society could be justified (92). Carby notes the special functions of the mulatto who could be used to explore and to express relationships between races. This female can also demonstrate relationships between the white privileged class and the black lack-of-privilege class (89). Similar labels occur when white women label mulattos as either good or bad.

A Southern writer should be aware of the past of the South in order to write about its present and its future. Flora notes that Southern African-American writers were not recognized until the last part of the twentieth century, and their views complimented and

corrected some of the myths (620). Contemporary Southern African-American writers are, according to Fred Hobson, "the most authentic inheritors of rigorous examination of a southern sense of past in the present" (620). Such studies must be reviewed, reconstructed, and renewed in order to make more sense out of the problems of racial tensions in the South.

Burden of the Past and Racial Themes Seen in Grau, Godwin, and Walker

The effect of the father-force that maintains Southern traditions of patriarchy, race, family, and violence is an example that Grau, Godwin, and Walker use to deconstruct the traditional myths surrounding each of these elements. Family and race are dominant as Grau depicts a Southern dynasty with the Howland family in The Keepers of the House. However, the marriage of Grandfather William Howland to the black housekeeper, Margaret, is a situation that Abigail Howland's 1950's South could not tolerate. What appears shocking and offensive to the white society of this time is not the sexual relations and the children, but the fact that Howland actually marries Margaret to legitimatize the children. Howland's love for Margaret gives her a real identity. For Abigail, Margaret, like William, is an integral part of her life. After their meeting, Margaret

> lived with him all the rest of his life, the next thirty years. Living with him, she lived with us all, all the Howlands, and her life got mixed up with ours. Her face was black and ours were white, but we were together anyhow. Her life and his. And ours. (Grau Keepers 65)

In the household, Margaret's black children and Howland's white children are raised as equals. The burden of the past becomes too much for Abigail to overcome, but Abigail's

successful revenge against the town still does not help her to become an independent woman.

The secrecy of the "scandal" leads to the ultimate attempt to destroy the Howland house. In Moving On: The Heroines of Shirley Ann Grau, Anne Tyler, and Gail Godwin, Susan Kissel notes that the Howland marriage perpetuates a morally-wrong system and damages the children who must be sent away from their parents, their home, and the South (48). In Shirley Ann Grau, Paul Schlueter notes that the aim of the story is to tell of the "evil" that good men do while he considers the "color problem" as an aspect of evil even though the end of the novel appears to reject both the segregationist and anti-segregationist perspective (54). The three children of the Howland marriage are surnamed Carmichael and are raised and educated in the North and spend their adult lives reacting against their burden of color. Robert, the son, seems to represent a rejection of blackness and segregation by marrying a white woman, passing for white, and living in the state of Washington. Nina, the daughter nearest in age to Abigail, has married a black man and lives in Philadelphia. Crissy, the youngest, "the gentlest and the nicest of Margaret's children," (190) wants to avoid making trouble for Abigail. Although all three children had the same advantages in the North, only Crissy seems accepting of her own self-identity because her color does not seem to be a problem for her. Howland has good intentions, but his father image has created father wounds, especially for Robert.

Preservation of family honor is important to the Howlands. William Howland causes a family split from Alabama relatives when his first marriage to a New Orleans woman brings French Catholicism and Yankee war profits into a Protestant and Confederate family. Abigail exacts vengeance against Robert, not because he's black,

but because he betrayed the family to its political enemies. The pride of the family name causes Abigail "to take back" the "Howland country" in an effort to keep the house that the Howlands built.

Grau's white women seek to maintain the traditions of their fathers, grandfathers and husbands before them no matter how cumbersome those traditions might be. In The Southern Belle in the American Novel, Kathryn Seidel observes that Grau's aim is to show a sympathetic treatment of race and to show the belle in relation to blacks on the land and whites as well (167). Kissel notes that, even with less power than their dying white patriarchs, the women and black servants become the "victims, inheritors, perpetrators and maintainers as 'keepers of the house' of a soiled southern past" (40). Schlueter observes that Grau appears "too sympathetic" in her portrayal of both blacks and whites (23). Grau is able to convey her understanding of the black viewpoint in her depictions of Margaret in The Keepers of the House and Stanley in The Condor Passes.

Grau's novels often depict problems with race. After living in the South where things "have improved . . . enormously," Grau makes this statement about race:

> Race is the only issue in the South really. The pressure has forced people to one side or the other, and the poor old South, it is exactly like someone's poor relation. It is so touchy, so easily insulted, so infuriating . . . . I think the South got itself into the mess it's in, so now it's all coming back home." (Schlueter 22)

The South of the 1960s spent some time getting out of its racial mess and some of those struggles are depicted in Grau's novels.

According to Grau's The Keepers of the House, generations of Howlands have established the Howland dynasty, preserving the family name, its financial influence, and

its patriarchal qualities. Schleuter observes that the Howlands must preserve what is worth preserving while also enduring any attacks on the Howland dynasty. He notes many Old Testament parallels that illustrate William Howland as an example of the Old Testament patriarch (66-7). The Old Testament echoes "the day when the keepers of the house shall tremble, and the strong men shall bow themselves, and the grinders shall cease because they are few, and those that look out of the windows be darkened" (Ecc.12:3). Abigail does have problems guarding her house and name, and eventually she causes the leaders of the town to question their own power.

Quite often during the 1960 time frame of The Keepers of the House, the Negro in the South exists but remains unseen, performing menial jobs for whites. However, in most instances, the two races do not have social interactions with each other outside of work. Abigail and other Southerners "knew a Negro and dealt with him for years, and never found out his name. Never got curious about who he was and what he was called. As if Negroes didn't need identities . . . ." (Grau Keepers 183). Grau herself says of her novel: "If there is a moral, it is the self-destructiveness of hatred" (Kissel 49). Abigail's desire to punish the townspeople is a perpetuation of a Howland family tradition to "uphold the family honor and to repay hurt with hurt" (Keepers 46). Past memories represented by a charred handrail or a burned fence are kept by the Howlands in an effort "to remember" (10) the injustices against them. Abigail feels that the people of the past have "left a weaving of invisible threads in the air of this house, of this town, of this country. And I stumbled and fell into them" (11). Although Abigail displays courage by defending her grandfather's house, she appears unable to change the tradition of revenge and use her power and wealth to make changes in regard to racial issues. The need to

maintain the tradition illustrates the hold of a powerful father-force. Since there appears to be no one in town who can envision a society of two equal races, the burden of the past is again repeated.

In the South, Southern women were able to tell Negro blood because "it was a thing they prided themselves on, this ability to tell Negro blood . . . . Blood and birth—these were two concerns . . . ." (Grau Keepers 113). According to Schleuter, Abigail learned to accept Southern attitudes about racial relations and a biblical justification for prejudice because of tradition (56). Abigail notes, "They taught me Bible lessons the same way. And to this day, I am very good at spotting signs of Negro blood and at reciting the endless list of genealogies in the Bible. It's a southern talent, you might say" (Grau TKOH 113). Abigail is confident in her own power base in the white society as a member of the Howland family. This knowledge is important to a Southern daughter in order to help maintain pure blood lines in a Southern family.

In Grau's The Roadwalkers, it appears that Mary and Nanda Woods, who are black, are able to create a world where Kissel notes that "black and white were reversing themselves" (234). These two women affect a change in the South's view of racism by becoming successful in business and education without the guiding influence of a father image. They, along with Lucy Roundtree Evans Henley in Evidence of Love, have a strength and independence which allow them to keep houses which share "partnership with their husbands." These three women appear to be freed from the Southern patriarchal position that Kissel says enslaves them (65). Black Mary, Nanda, and northern Lucy become what Kissel calls the new "inheritors and keepers of the house of the southern past, along with the patriarchs' passive, white southern daughters" (67). In

contrast, the black butler, Stanley, in The Condor Passes finds it difficult to stand on his own after years of servitude to white masters. The new inheritors and keepers may not be perfect, but the responsibility is eventually passed down for a possible new beginning.

Although Grau's heroines challenge some of the South's traditional values about race, marriage, and female responsibility, they seem only to be able to challenge these views without making substantial changes, even as they begin to recognize and accept their black counterparts. Gail Godwin's characters go even further and often accept black characters as a part of their own extended family. Although the patriarchal white South and the "Old Guard" of A Mother and Two Daughters would frown on this acceptance, it allows what Flora calls a "'revision' of the past and present—and therefore the future" seen through and transformed by the eyes and voice of both black and white women (991). Their fathers may not approve of these changes, but self-identity allows the daughters to advocate acceptance. In "Gail Godwin, the South, and the Canons," Mary Ann Wimsatt notes that Godwin's fiction of the late 1980s focuses on racial tensions and interracial friendships in a contemporary South and how various generations deal with these issues (92). Kissel notes that, for Godwin, racial tolerance must be integrated into the extended family (130). Such acceptance is seen in A Mother and Two Daughters as the Northerner, Jerrigan, is accepted by Cate's family and "Old Guard" member, Theodora Blount, befriends her long-time housekeeper, Azalea. These two women now "dressed outrageously alike, especially since Azalea had taken to wearing a brooch Theodora had given her exactly as Theodora wore her brooch pinned dead center in the décolletage" (Godwin Mother Two Daughters 513). Ironically, at the beginning of the novel, "Theodora would give her beloved Azalea everything in the world but the

minimum wage" (19). Theodora and Azalea have developed a peculiar sisterhood, as Renee and Lydia also do, based on mutual interests and acceptance of each other. Cate's dead father, Leonard, whose "ideals of freedom and equality were bigger than his passions when it came to acting on those ideas" (73), would have questions and tensions about all the changes that his daughters have engineered. Perhaps it takes time for racial acceptance to grow.

Godwin's fathers are conspicuously absent. Although he is dead, Leonard Strickland is another character who uses a veil of guilt to cover some of the truths of Southern life as he maintains older customs in his own life and that of his family. Leonard would also not approve of Lydia's black friend, Renee Peverall Watson, and her companion, Calvin Edwards, the television producer, who is so threatened by the Ku Klux Klan in Winston-Salem for speaking his mind that he goes back to New York to work. Renee is Lydia's friend and teacher and Camilla's mother, who has a Harvard Ph.D. and is now working on a law degree in order to fight racial injustice in the South. Leonard would also have trouble accepting his new granddaughter-in-law, Camilla, an accomplished young black woman educated in England. Camilla's marriage to Lydia's son Leo symbolizes, according to Wimsatt, "ties among enlightened people of each race" (Wimsatt 93). By the end of A Mother and Two Daughters, the Strickland women have created a more open environment that includes companions, not couples, mixed race marriages, and acceptance of foreigners into the Southern environment. Both of Leonard's daughters have become more accepting of differences than Leonard's "Old Guard" as they make extended families who illustrate different viewpoints. Both Cate and Lydia are reconstructing the views of their father.

Although awareness of racial differences is found in Godwin, she doesn't emphasize the violent aspect as much as Grau and Walker do. Godwin's characters accept the past in order that ancestors "were remembered" and that current characters become "capable of finding a place in a chronologically ordered sequence," according to Joanne Frye. Frye also notes that the characters are following Hayden White's idea of searching the past to find different ways of dealing with the past and the future (56). Although the past should not be forgotten, the memory should not become a burden that cannot be improved in some way. In The Odd Woman, Jane Clifford's student, Portia, feels that she deserves inflated grades because she is black. Portia is trying to exploit her instructors just as she feels her race has been exploited. Perhaps she remembers a struggling father from her childhood as she uses unjustified anger to continue victimization of the past, but in the opposite direction.

Evidence of changing views of relations between black and whites is found in Godwin's A Southern Family. One of the good friends of Julia's father, Neville Richardson, is Mrs. Evan, the wife of the black doctor. Lily Quick has her own relationships with Negroes. Lily's library board bans Robert Jones from the library for looking up a white woman's dress. Although she feels that books shouldn't be denied to anyone, she realizes that in earlier times, Robert would have been lynched. Lily recalls the black orderly who holds her hand while she prays for Theo, her son, as he lies dying in the hospital. Lily also has a good relationship with her black masseuse, Thalia Thompson. Clare remembers riding with Ralph on a bus, asking a black woman to move to the back, and watching the woman immediately get off the bus. Even Alicia Gallant, a wealthy white friend of Ralph, has sat near the front of the colored section next to a clean

colored man. These instances show that, since the South is gradually changing, Godwin's heroines can too. Clare notes that the South has "a peculiar brand of snobbery based on its invincible assumption that what had happened yesterday (or what it would like to *think* had happened yesterday) would always cancel out the upstart of today" (Godwin Southern Family 434). Parents' acceptance of change can influence their Southern daughters. In order to exist in the modern world, one must see the realities of past events.

In her writing, Alice Walker emphasizes the importance of communities of women, their nurturing qualities, and the violence of racial and sexual discrimination faced by African-American women. Walker uses specific historical events and persons to represent experiences of Blacks as an oppressed people. In "History and Genealogy in Walker's *The Third Life of Grange Copeland* and *Meridian*," Elliott Butler-Evans notes that Walker is using Hayden White's strategy of emplotment by using a series of historical events to develop a plot for the story (106). Walker writes of black victimization and oppression, much of which is based on actual Walker family history. In the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, quite often it is the black maid, factory worker, or field hand exploited by a white society. In anticipation of an interview with Eudora Welty, Walker expresses her view of differences between blacks and whites:

> For this is Mississippi, U.S.A., and black, white, old, young, Southern black and Southern white—all these labels have meaning for a very good reason; they have effectively kept us apart, sometimes brutally. So that, although we live in the same town, we inhabit different worlds. This interview itself is an accidental meeting. Though we are both writers, writing in some cases from similar

> experiences, and certainly from the same territory, we are more strangers, because the past will always separate us, and because she is white and not young, and I am black and not old. Still, I am undaunted, unafraid of discovering whatever I can. (Walker, "Eudora Welty" 132)

Ironically, both Walker and Welty seem to write about outcasts, oppression, and injustice in the South even though their worlds do not appear to be similar.

Walker states that her writings deal with the "spiritual survival" of black women as they deal with "oppressions, insanities, loyalties, and triumphs" (O'Brian 62). Walker's stories and novels detail much mistreatment of women and how the effects of that mistreatment change the way those women view the whole world. Many times these women, either out of love or out of sociological conditioning, try to maintain their loyalties to the men that beat them. In many cases, these women came from homes with either absent or abusive fathers.

Quite often, Walker begins her novels with an unfavorable portrayal of black men and a "black noncommunity" as she strives for change which Fred Hobson, in The Southern Writer in the Postmodern World, sees as "the world that slavery made" (94). The typical role of a father in any family is to take care of himself and his family. In "History, the Feminist Discourse and Alice Walker's *The Third Life of Grange Copeland*," W. Lawrence Hogue sees the role of a father as a model that has no chance to develop for measuring the worth and value of the Afro-American male (55). Unable to show his anger and frustration at the white people in power and the social system that promotes injustice, he vents hatred on his wife and children, "who, as he does in the master-servant relation remain[s] loyal and submissive" (62). Hogue argues that the

book depicts the historical oppression of black women and promotes a 1960's psychological rationale that the killing of one's master is the first requirement for an oppressed person's psychological liberation (Winchell 108). Grange's hatred for the white man allows him no room to love his own family. Ironically, it is Brownfield's hatred for Grange that prevents his love for his family, thus setting up the daughter/grandfather relationship between Ruth and Grange. Grange Copeland, as grandfather, appears to be one of the likeable father figures in Walker's works. However, Grange does not become likeable until his third life of taking care of his granddaughter Ruth. His first two lives hide many secrets dealing with the past and with race relations. Ruth, not Brownfield, has a positive father-force.

Grange is able to follow Walker's idea of "surviving whole" because, as Barbara Christian notes, he has love for his granddaughter, reverence for the land, and an African-American Southern heritage. Christian says that the book shows relationships between poverty, racism, and gender oppression (5). Grange finally learns that, in order to survive, he must replace his hatred for whites with love for his granddaughter. Grange's great love for Ruth allows him to fulfill "his one duty in the world to prepare Ruth for some great and Herculean task, some magnificent and deadly struggle, some harsh and foreboding reality" (Walker Third Life 279). This love has allowed Grange to make himself capable of change when he accepts responsibility and care of Ruth instead of blaming others for his condition.

Margaret Copeland, Grange's first wife, responds to racism and violence by destroying herself and her mixed-race child. Her psychological and economic oppression cause her to abandon her oldest child, Brownfield, because she must work to feed him.

Margaret and Mem, Brownfield's wife, represent many black Southern daughters who are victimized by the unfair conditions of Southern sharecropping. The Southern black men are also victims of the same system and are barely able to keep their family above starvation. Mem is able to understand what Margaret could not: racial oppression has harmed both Brownfield and Grange, who are both victims and perpetrators. Mem's search for freedom is from sexual oppression by Brownfield, racial oppression from society, and economic oppression from poverty.

Grange views moving North as his answer to racial oppression while other blacks think that involvement in the Civil Rights Movement might help these problems. According to Maria Lauret, in Modern Novelists: Alice Walker, modernity and migration replace racial oppression and violence (34). However, Grange had to return to the South to help Ruth's advancement through education and political action. Since he is unable to gain vengeance on all whites, Grange will "withdraw completely from them" (Walker TLGC 221). Using Josie's money, he buys a farm that, he hopes, protects both Ruth and him from white racism and black self-destructiveness.

Grange's third life and newly-created world for Ruth must rid itself of hatred of whites and dependence on violence and oppression to gain satisfaction. According to C.W.E. Bigsby in "Judgement Day Is Coming: The Apocalyptic Dream in Recent African-American Fiction," violence is only redemptive when it serves a purpose beyond self (169). In "Three Black Women Writers and Humanism," Trudier Harris observes that both Grange and Brownfield must search for truth even when they are made uncomfortable by it. Harris also notes that the black man becomes part of a dehumanizing force when he consistently hates whites and tries to set them up as Gods

by blaming his troubles on them. Grange goes beyond that hatred and willingly sacrifices himself for Ruth's happiness.

On the other hand, Brownfield becomes both the victim and the perpetrator of domestic violence in the novel. While his family members are no longer slaves, he still has the psychological bondage to his white employer. Economically, he still has to depend on the white man for his financial existence. Since Brownfield sees manhood as a power to dominate and enslave women, he primarily tries to get Ruth back because he doesn't want Grange to have her. Brownfield represents a bad father while Grange represents an absent father, but a good grandfather.

In "The Child Who Favored Daughter," the father, after his wife's suicide, is left with "a child, a girl, a daughter; a replica of Daughter, his dead sister. A replica in every way" (Walker, "A Child Who Favored Daughter" 40). In his mind, the father already believes that his daughter will betray him with a white man just as his sister did. He learns by reading her mail that this child also has a white lover. In a confrontation, she refuses his demands to deny her white lover. In rage and repressed desire, he slices off her breasts and "flings what he finds in his hands to the yelping dogs" (45). His memories are haunted by his actions, but he might see the "perfection of an ancient dream, his own nightmares, the answer to the question still whispered about, undefined" (45). Since he cannot fight the "evil and deception" (40) of the white world, he feels that he has saved his daughter from the evil of that same world. Tormented by his incestuous love for his sister and feeling abandoned by her when she leaves him for his white boss, the narrator often blurs the lines between his sister and his own daughter. Evidence of this blurring occurs when, at the end, he thinks he sees Daughter, or his own child, or his

own nightmare. His jealousy is complicated by the interracial sex of his sister and his daughter.

This father, like Brownfield Copeland, becomes a victim of the violence and racism evident in the South. In contrast to Walker's "A Sudden Trip Home in the Spring," the above short story does not have a positive ending. Since she breaks society's rules with her affair and he cannot retaliate against her white lover, the father punishes his daughter instead. The father lives in "a world where innocence and guilt become further complicated by questions of color and rape," causing him to feel "hesitant and weary of living as though all the world were out to trick him" (40). The father contains much rage against the white world that abuses him. He has love for his child and his sister who both choose white lovers. His violence is a form of control and helps him to gain order in his own world. He distrusts and hates the women around him, especially his wife and daughter who love him. His fear is that they will repeat his sister's betrayal.

The father becomes judge, jury, and executioner when he demands that his daughter deny her white lover. In the mutilation scene, thinking his daughter is his sister, he avenges "a hurt throughout his life that slowly poisoned him" (40). He becomes his own father, and his own daughter becomes his sister named Daughter. At this meeting, she is more fearful of his desire for her which ultimately causes her death. Race provides him with what Hortense Spiller sees as an "alibi" (171). He plans to burn the paper wasp "houses down, singeing the wings of the young wasps before they get a chance to fly or sting him as he sits in the cool of the evening reading his Bible" (Walker, "The Child Who Favored Daughter" 37). By preventing the young wasps' flight, he thinks he can

thwart any betrayal of the young, hoping to change the course of action in his own life. Spillers notes that the daughter has no rights in the typical patriarchal household, and her becoming a substitute for her aunt leads to her murder (170). In "An Essay on Alice Walker," Mary Helen Washington notes that the death of his daughter helps him to shut out the image of his sister, allows him to murder his own incest, and eliminates the last woman who has the power to hurt him. Washington believes that suicide for the women seems to be a result of punishment by the family after an affair with a white man (93). Both the narrator's wife and sister used suicide as a means to escape their oppression. The narrator's childhood memory of his sister's supposed betrayal and his desire for her causes his daughter's death and his mental breakdown.

Parents who abuse their children were often mistreated themselves as children. Many times these parents have high expectations for their children, but they do little to help the children reach the goals that they have set for them. In Human Development: A Lifespan View, Robert Kail notes that physical punishment is often a means of control of the children in abusive relationships (281). This short story illustrates many characteristics of an abused child, especially in Daughter's suicide and the violent death at the end of the story.

History and fiction have often recorded the disadvantaged and psychologically restrained women's struggle against oppression and dominance. In Walker's The Color Purple, her stepfather exchanges Celie for payment so that Albert could have someone to maintain his household and care for his children. Her children, the result of rape by her stepfather, are sold to a preacher and his wife in order to cover his act of rape. Celie's stepfather wishes to maintain woman's silence. In this episode, Walker is arguing against

the unfairness of man's oppression of the weaker female. In this instance, Celie has no male role model to guide her. Celie's rape by the father-figure (stepfather) illustrates another bad example of the father-force.

Celie, like the narrator's daughter in "The Child Who Favored Daughter," also becomes a substitute wife for her stepfather. Both women have husbands/fathers who have enough finances to dominate their families and mothers who are unable to protect their children. Both women become victims in a male-dominated society. Tuzyline Jita Allan notes that Walker writes of "physically and psychically" battered women victimized as much by self-hate as by oppressive racists and a sexist social system (120). For Walker, it appears that the idea of white feminism works too slowly to achieve emancipation from male ideas. Her womanist views allow freedom for both black males and black females.

Violence exists in the novel since Celie is treated like a slave by Alphonso and her husband Albert. Slaves are raped, have their children sold, and have no rights of ownership. Alphonso did these things to Celie in addition to denying Nettie and Celie their childhood home and their father's store. Celie is vindicated in her abuse when she learns in a letter from Nettie that "Pa is not our pa!" (Walker TCP 176). When Mister evaluates Celie for his new wife, her position as a slave on the auction block is reinforced. In "Nonfelicitous Space and Survivor Discourse: Reading the Incest Story in Southern Woman's Fiction," Minrose Gwin notes that Celie's black father/stepfather represents a father figure to her while he also is similar to a plantation master. In Way Down South: A History of Southern Identity, James Cobb notes that black masculinity is repressed in front of whites, often by brutalizing and exploiting black women (271).

Race often becomes an excuse for an oppressor's cultural persecution. It is Shug Avery who forces Albert to stop victimizing Celie while Celie's affair with Shug is the first loving relationship outside of Nettie that she has ever experienced. According to Frank McGill in Great Women Writers, the community helps Celie learn about her body, her self-worth, the existence of God, relations between men and women, and the power of forgiveness in uniting family and friends (564). Racism and sexism exist at the beginning of the novel. By the end of the novel, the black characters find fulfillment in a community of their own making.

Walker is able to bring the past into the present by basing the story on some of her own family heritage. The story of Celie's actual father is based on the story of Walker's paternal great-grandfather Albert, who also lost his inherited farm to boll weevils and "envious" white men who felt he was "rising above his place," according to Evelyn White in Alice Walker. White also notes that Walker's great-grandmother was a slave who was raped at the age of twelve by her owner just as Celie is raped by her step-father (27). Thus, poverty and dispossession of land affected Willie Lee, Alice's own father, and his children born of a share-cropper's family. Just as Harpo witnesses his mother, Annie Julia's death, Willie Lee watched the murder of his mother by a man who was supposed to love her, according to Yvonne Johnson in The Voices of African-American Women: the Use of Narrative and Authorial Voice in the Works of Harriet Jacobs, Zora Neale Hurston, and Alice Walker. Part of Willie Lee's gift to Alice is the family stories of oppression and victimization that she is able to later use in her own writing.

The African world of the Olinka tribe that Nettie describes in her letters is similar to Celie's world of racial and sexual oppression in Georgia. Tashi suffers from the male

effects of the patriarchal society by following the female initiation of having her face cut. Although she could become a good teacher, her parents object because women do not need an education. White imperialists destroy the village by cutting a road through it to enhance rubber manufacturing without regard for the land or the Africans. Through various examples, Walker illustrates that victimization of blacks occurs by various races, including its own. Although the violence of racism and sexism strongly affects her, Celie is able to rise above these elements to discover herself, build an extended family, and establish a successful business. Froula notes that The Color Purple "undoes patriarchal cultural order and builds upon new ground" (Allan 130). The father-force of her step-father degraded her, but Celie was able to forgive his humiliation and claim her rightful inheritance, thus ending a cycle of slavery when Nettie's African family and Celie's American family come together at the end of the novel.

A peculiar sisterhood exists here between Celie and Shug. Shug's acceptance of Celie as a lover marks the first time that Celie has been happy in a sexual relationship. In "Somebody I Can Talk To: Teaching Feminism Through *The Color Purple*," Carla Kaplan quotes Walker when she writes about "Crazy Saints . . . our mothers and grandmothers . . . who died with their real gifts stifled within them" (182). Walker emphasizes the importance of breaking silence and telling the stories of victimization and oppression. A patriarchal society accepts Celie's victimization and requires her silence. Guilt over her rape blocks Celie's voice and the growth of her own self-esteem. Although she obediently follows her step-father's instructions of talking only to God, Celie's telling the story to Shug breaks her step-father's rule and begins her healing.

Walker's By the Light of My Father's Smile also illustrates violence in the father-daughter relationship. Neither Susannah nor Magdalena can forgive her father for his brutal beating of Magdalena. Younger sister, Susannah, witnesses her "gentle, compassionate father turn into Godzilla" (Walker By Light 27) and no longer trusts or respects him. Since, on his part, Robinson "would never again be permitted to really know or enjoy his favorite little tree," (27) Magdalena is able to gain her own revenge on her father. Both daughters are deprived of a loving father and are victims of a destructive father-force.

In The Difference Place Makes: Gender, Sexuality and Diaspora Identity, Angeletta Gourdine notes that Magdalena's beating marks her as a ruined woman since her father is no longer able to indulge her, and her mother is no longer able to protect her against the power of men (98-100). Gourdine observes that national attitudes towards female sexuality can damage, men, women, and nations (99). Although she threatened to leave him because of his violence, the mother never did. The Mundos view the white world as putting too much emphasis on the mind and being unable to accept the "Changing Woman" that Magdalena represents.

The Mundo culture allows the dead to return to deal with the mistakes made during life on earth—"to spy on the confusion they have left" (149). Similar to the return of Jesus after the crucifixion, according to the Indian culture, "The Mundo's Story likewise was created to help us heal the wounds we make while we are alive" (150). Mr. Robinson does this with the help of his spiritual guide, Manuelito, his daughter's former lover. Robinson witnesses the weaknesses of his daughters, their insecurity in life, their sexual behavior, and the future that he had fashioned for them. Magdalena

chooses excesses of eating and drinking and emotional repression since the beating has hindered her sexual growth while Susannah, ironically, chooses sexual experimentation, such as marriage with Petros, the Greek, and a lesbian relationship with Pauline. Although both have always needed his love, Robinson observes that Magdalena allows her obesity to hide the fact that she, although the strongest as a child, is the frailer of the two daughters. Susannah writes novels but is unable to include sex because of her memory of her sister's beating and her vision of her father's brutality. Using Robinson's response to Magdalena as an example of appropriate behavior, Susannah becomes sexually silenced. Both daughters become victims of a destructive father-force.

Two peculiar sisterhoods exist in this story. Quite often, one or both partners grow as a result of the relationship. While Manuelito serves as a spiritual guide to Robinson, Irene, the Greek Dwarf, serves as a spiritual guide to Susannah. When the two first see each other, Susannah explains it as "a deep gazing into each other's eyes. A joining." (Walker BLMFS 50). At their meeting, Irene explains to Susannah: "I never leave this place. What is there to do but to know everything that goes on in the world? To know everything, I had to learn other peoples's languages, and with television, learn to read their weary faces" (55). After hearing about Irene's sad life when she was not even wanted by her own family, Susannah shares with Pauline the attraction that Irene holds: "It is her intelligence, her will. It is also her courage. She has managed to live by herself, *with* herself, for two-thirds of a century without losing her mind" (175). She fathoms Susanna's separation from her family without being told the story; makes comparisons with the mistreatment of gypsies in Greece and the blacks in America; and enlightens Susanna about problems in Europe. She even has the courage to visit Pygmy

tribes in Africa. Irene shares knowledge with Susanna and causes a stirring within her to re-unite with her family. This family connection, forgiveness of her father, and peace with her sister would help Susannah accept the unfortunate consequences of watching Robinson's beating of Magdalena.

Susannah's lesbian lover, Pauline, teaches her about love but also shows her that her childhood was more desirable than she actually thought it was. Susannah says to Pauline: "You have been my teacher, ... You have taught me a freer and much deeper expression of sex. I am your student" (189). Perhaps Pauline learns more from the relationship as she makes this statement: "And what I have learned from our years of mutual cramming is that I can neither have you or be you. Nor can I have your childhood instead of my own. I'm stuck with who I am, ... I'm trying to learn that's not so bad" (189). Both women were dissatisfied with their childhoods. Pauline disliked her poverty while Susannah disliked the estrangement from her father. In this example, Walker uses Pauline's absent father and Susannah's abusive father to demonstrate destructive elements of the father-force.

In this story, Walker recognizes that parents need to accept the sexual behaviors of their daughters as, according to Gourdine, "natural and self-directed" while "compulsory heterosexuality violates men's and women's freedoms" (101). Walker herself says that the book is "A Story of Requited Love, Crossing Over, and the Sexual Healing of the Soul" (fly page). The story ends with a reconciled father who finally allows his daughters to express their sexual identity. Robinson can finally use his father-force as an agent for change and healing.

The burdens of the past and racial themes have existed in the South for a long time. Grau, Godwin, and Walker have their characters take the best of these traditions, creating second chances in rectifying the mistakes of the past. Heritage can be accepted and learned from, but it does not have to be adhered to. Parents set examples for their children, and fathers have a great influence on their daughters. Various fathers in this chapter have provided both positive and negative impacts on their daughters. These daughters can either be defeated by the past or make an effort to change. Although Grau's characters begin a change, Godwin and Walker's characters work to better opportunities for Southern daughters.

CHAPTER 5

GENDER, CLASS, AND RELIGIOUS EXPECTATIONS

Woman has a specified role as a representative of her class while adhering to society's religious views in the South. Stephen Greenblatt's "Culture" discusses the fact that society's expectations often restrict its members to follow certain acceptable standards of behaviors, beliefs, and practices (225). Gender, class and religion are three of these restraints. In the South, a woman's place is in the home. Traditionally, she keeps the household running smoothly following her husband's or her father's rules; however, she breaks tradition when she is forced outside the home to become the family breadwinner. Class in the Old South became linked with property and slaves. In The Mind of the South, W. J. Cash notes that the Virginia planter represented the aristocracy, with the yeoman farmer, the merchant, the poor white, and the slave composing the other classes. The class society began with the overwhelming pride in the possession of rich land and slaves and a dislike for those who lacked them (35). During this time, people began to associate primarily with their own class. Each class expected certain standards of behavior. In order to maintain class distinctions, fathers prevented their daughters from social associations outside their own class. Therefore, the choice of female friends and potential mates was limited. Similar friendships with other ethnic groups were also discouraged. However, poetry, folklore, and literature contain many examples of the daughter's marriage to men of different classes who have completed unusual feats that might save a tribe or a kingdom.

Religion provides punishment, solace, and redemption. The slave owner could congratulate himself on bringing Christian religion to the slave, while he used religion to justify his dominance over his wife and children. He could use religion to sooth his guilty conscience over owning slaves and committing adultery with other partners. The Southern father uses the example of the Old Testament to establish his role as a patriarch whose daughter finds solace in religious ceremonies and rituals.

For Scout Finch of Harper Lee's To Kill a Mockingbird, religion was a custom since church attendance was expected. Scout's awareness was more about class and gender, which was discussed in chapter three, "The Dutiful Daughter and the Southern Lady." She knew about the importance of being a lady. For Boo Radley, Scout's neighbor, getting involved with the wrong crowd

> formed the nearest thing to a gang ever seen in Maycomb . . . . discussed by the town and publicly warned from three pulpits: they hung around the barbershop; they rode the bus to Abbottsville on Sundays and went to the picture show; they attended dances at the county's riverside gambling Hall. The Dew-Drop Inn & Fishing Camp; they experimented with stumphole whiskey. (Lee 10)

Even though Boo is technically in a higher class, his activities are deemed unsatisfactory for his status, and he suffers the consequences.

Walter Cunningham, another one of Scout's friends, comes from a family who "never took anything they can't pay back—no church baskets and no scrip stamps. They never took anything off anybody, they get along on what they have. They don't have much, but they get along on it" (22). Calpurnia, the Finch cook is more concerned with manners than class when she warns Scout: "Don't matter who they are, anybody

sets foot in this house's yo' comp'ny, and don't you let me catch you remarkin' on their ways like you was so high and mighty! Yo' folks might be better'n the Cunninghams but it don't count for nothin' the way you're disgracin' 'em— (27). For Calpurnia, respect for your guests is a sign of good breeding.

Aunt Alexandra and Scout both see heredity in different ways. Scout expresses her views and Alexandra's differences: "Somewhere, I had received the impression that Fine Folks were people who did the best they could with the sense they had, but Aunt Alexandra was of the opinion, obliquely expressed, that the longer a family had been squatting on one patch of land, the finer it was (147). Alexandra is using an older view of class by associating it with wealth and the amount of land owned. She even notes that Scout and Jem, her brother, "are not from run-of-the mill people" and "are the product of several generations' gentle breeding—. . . ." Atticus asks them both to "try to live up to your name. . . . must try to behave like the little lady and gentleman that you are." (151). These requests illustrate the importance of the family name and a good reputation.

It appears that everyone in Maycomb understands different interpretations for definitions of class. Scout tries to explain the class system in Maycomb this way:

> There was indeed a caste system in Maycomb, but to my mind it worked this way: the old citizens, the present generation of people who had lived side by side for years and years were utterly predictable to one another: they took for granted attitudes, character shadings, even gestures as having been repeated in each generation and refined by time. (149)

Perhaps this version of class describes the various idiosyncrasies that we find in Southern families today. However, Jem's definition of class seems more appropriate in defining the South's view of class: "There's four kinds of folks in the world. There's the ordinary kind like us and the neighbors, there's the kind like the Cunninghams out in the woods, the kind like the Ewells down at the dump, and the Negroes" (258). According to Jem, each class dislikes the one below it. The big question for Jem, Scout, and the South is why all the classes can't get along.

Although much of the novel deals with the issue of class, little is said about Scout's gender until Jem, and even Dill, starts labeling her as a girl, like others of her kind who "always imagined things, that's why people hated them so if I [Scout] started behaving like one I could just go off and find some to play with" (41). Scout, in some cases, tries to warn them that some of their ideas will get them in trouble. Scout is able to keep herself from the "foolhardy schemes of Jem and Dill," and "on pain of being called a g-irl, she spent most twilight evenings with Miss Maudie on her front porch" (46). This female label puts a separation between Scout, Jem, and Dill. Awareness of her gender allows Scout to dream ultimately of being a lawyer (not acceptable for her time period) and, like Scarlett O'Hara, "just a lady" (263). However, she is told that she "won't get very far until you start wearing dresses more often" (263). Scout realizes that, even if she is a girl and "ladies seemed to live in faint horror of men, seemed unwillingly to approve wholeheartedly of them" (267), her gender preference is for men since "they weren't---'Hypocrites, . . . born hypocrites'" (267). Scout prefers the honesty of men to the pretenses of women.

Religion in To Kill a Mockingbird is not as pronounced as it is in some other Southern novels, but it does have impact on the characters even though Scout explains that going to church is Maycomb's "principal recreation" (10). To further define Scout's religious education, neighbor Miss Maudie Atkinson explains that, like the Radleys, "foot –washing Baptists . . . . believe that anything that is a pleasure is a sin" (49). She also adds that "foot-washers think women are a sin by definition" (50). Another religious teaching that Scout learns from her own church, the Maycomb, Alabama Methodist Episcopal Church South, and Calpurnia's First Purchase African M. E. Church is that of the "Impurity of Women doctrine that seemed to preoccupy all clergymen" (138). Although her father does not share this view, religion teaches Scout that, because she is a woman, she is a second-class citizen.

Class, gender, and religion are also important to Scarlett O'Hara in Margaret Mitchell's Gone With the Wind. Scarlett is of the upper class in the Old South time period in which she lives. The O'Hara overseer, Jonas Wilkerson,

> was a Yankee and a bachelor, and the fact that he was an overseer forever barred him from contact with the County social life. There was no family of any standing into which he could marry, no people with whom he could associate except the Slatterys and riffraff like them. As he was several cuts above the Slatterys in education, it was only natural that he should not want to marry Emmie, no matter how often he might walk with her in the twilight. (Mitchell 43-4)

Quite often, overseers were needed to run the plantations, but this description illustrates the fact that these groups of men were second class citizens. For his part, Jonas "hated

all Southerners. He hated their cool courtesy to him and their contempt for his social status, so inadequately covered by their courtesy" (54). Another class represented in the novel is the "trashy folks," "dem trashy, no-good, low down po' white Slatterys" (275). For Scarlett, the poor whites are only a little above the Negroes.

Besides overseers and poor whites, Scarlett recognizes another class in her description of Will Benteen: "He was not of the planter class at all, though he was not poor white. He was just plain Cracker, a small farmer, half-educated, prone to grammatical errors and ignorant of some of the finer manners the O'Haras were accustomed to in gentlemen" (339). Even though he is not like all the other men that Scarlett knows, she does recognize his good qualities and respects the work that he can do to make Tara more productive.

The one other class that Scarlett recognizes is the Negro. While aware that they are definitely even lower than the poor whites, she admires this quality that she observes in Pork, Gerald's butler: "Negroes were provoking sometimes and stupid and lazy, but there was loyalty in them that money couldn't buy, a sense of oneness with their white folks which made them risk their lives to keep food on the table" (312). For Scarlett, class is seen in people like herself, in small farmers, in overseers, poor whites, and Negroes. She realizes the role that these different classes play in her life.

Since women were considered the weaker sex, Scarlett has little sympathy for maintaining the generic roles that are prescribed for them since she does not consider herself weaker. Although she does not understand how to be a lady, Scarlett has always wanted to be considered a great lady and as much like her mother as possible. Ellen O'Hara "had been reared in the tradition of great ladies, which had taught her

how to carry her burden and still retain her charm, and she intended that her three daughters should be great ladies also" (39). To Scarlett,

> all women, including her two sisters, were natural enemies in pursuit of the same prey—man. All women with the one exception of her mother. . . . To her Ellen represented the utter security that only Heaven or a mother can give. Her mother was the embodiment of justice, truth, loving tenderness and profound wisdom—a great lady. (40)

Scarlett sees all women her own age as a threat to her Southern belle image in the attraction of men; yet, she hopes to be considered a "lady" like her mother. Thus, her two views of gender are contradictions.

The prevailing idea in this time was that women need to be protected and should seem weaker, even if they were not. There is a rule in Southern life that "families always made room gladly for indigent or unmarried female relatives" (486). Scarlett is told by her neighbor, Grandma Fontaine, that "God intended women to be timid frightened creatures and there's something unnatural about a woman who isn't afraid. . . ." (299). Scarlett observes that, even during the Civil War, the Southern men did their best to shelter "their woman from all that was harsh and unfit for feminine eyes" (402). Frank Kennedy, Scarlett's second husband, also has opinions on gender. Franks feels "there was something unbecoming about a woman understanding fractions and business matters and he believed that, if a woman should be so unfortunate as to have such unladylike comprehensions, she should pretend not to" (408). After the war, the young men of Atlanta find occupations unsuited for them because they need "Something of their own that they'd rather do than work for a woman" (441).

Contradicting the idea of the weaker sex, Scarlett is a strong woman who does understand business matters and does everything she can do to work for and save Tara, the O'Hara plantation. She mixes her views of religion and gender when she states her opinion on women's strength. "I believe women could manage everything in the world without man's help—except having babies, and God knows no woman in her right mind would have babies if she could help it" (411). Scarlett is a liberated woman in a time period when it is not ladylike to be liberated.

Scarlett has religious views, but she is not a devout Catholic. Scarlett connects her views of religion with her views of her mother. Religion for Scarlett went "no more than lip deep with her. It was the sight of her mother's serene face upturned to the throne of God and His saints and angels, praying for blessings on those whom she loved. When Ellen intervened with Heaven, Scarlett felt certain Heaven heard" (46). Scarlett can see how strongly Ellen is affected by her faith, but she bargains with God for favors after the War. In Scarlett's opinion,

> If God had seen fit to punish them so, then God could very well do without prayers. Religion had always been a bargaining process with Scarlett. She promised God good behavior in exchange for favors. God had broken the bargain time and time again to her way of thinking, and she felt she owed Him nothing at all now. (337)

Since Scarlett is self-serving, she has difficulty in waiting for answers to prayer, but she also sees no advantage to religion, especially if her goals are not met. Thus, her respect for religion is lessened. Class, gender, and religion have influences on <u>To Kill a</u>

Mockingbird and Gone with the Wind. Grau, Godwin, and Walker depict their own versions of these elements.

History

Earlier chapters about the Southern daughter's class in society have emphasized her dependence upon her father and other surrounding males. In Away Down South: A History of Southern Identity, James Cobb notes that cultural differences in the South are often caused by lower incomes and educational levels and concentration in agriculture and low-level industrial occupations. Cobb also believes that the South's experience of "frustration, embarrassment, and defeat" adds to these differences (220). According to Joseph Flora, in The Companion to Southern Literature: Themes. Genres, Places, Movements, and Motifs, the South exaggerates representations of class differences among Southern whites by large contrasts: planter/poor white; Southern belle/white trash prostitute; house slave/field hand; patrician lawyer/redneck; and the poor white as a victim of social forces/country bumpkin with no restraint. Flora also notes that although the yeoman farmer and middle class is the largest class of Southerners, this class usually play a minor role in the fiction of the region. Flora observes that the racial privileges caused by slavery served as a buffer for friction between upper- and lower-class whites, who each possess attributes that make existing disparities both "inevitable and desirable" (162). These disparities are quite often used as a symbol of each class in the South.

It appears that views of class, woman's position, sex, and race are connected in various ways. In The Creation of Patriarchy, Gilda Lerner notes that, while all women are under sexual dominance, their degree of unfreedom varies by class. Lerner also

observes that, while a white upper class woman is in a subordinate position, she has economic rights that allow her to own slaves and profit from slave labor. Lerner discusses the fact that a bride's virginity is a condition for her marriage, and she owes complete fidelity to her husband (112-3). In Daughters of Time: Creating Woman's Voice in Southern Story, Lucinda MacKethan acknowledges that both white and black women serve a master who defines them differently and maintains his authority as master and/or father (16). Since the idea of class designates a woman's position, she remains in the subordinate position under the dominant male of her family.

The use of class is one way for the male to maintain a balance of power between the sexes. In "The Work of Gender in the Southern Renaissance," Anne Goodwyn Jones observes that dividing women into categories such as black and white, lady and woman, is one way for the male to maintain a sense of control. Often the woman's fragility guaranteed her exclusion from strenuous daily activities and allowed the man to define his manhood by protecting her (50). Hazel Carby, in Reconstructing Womanhood: The Emergence of the Afro-American Woman Novelist, observes that men liked "the idea of female softness and delicacy with correspondent delicacy of constitution" and disliked it when women spoke of their "great strength, extraordinary appetite or ability to bear excessive fatigue" (25). It is more appropriate for a slave to possess the latter characteristics than for a white woman since, according to Carby, "her delicate constitution" is an indicator of class and racial position (25). In his essay "Class," Daniel T. O'Hara notes these signs of privileged class position and of power—the right clothing, a good house, a luxury car. However, these items are only signs of

power, not power itself (416). The weak, defenseless, submissive woman needs a strong male authority figure for her safety.

Since ante-bellum women were confined primarily to the plantation and submissive to their husbands, little opportunity existed to have a social life outside of their class. Since the Southern plantation mistress was aware of her agrarian society and what Joan Friedman, in The Enclosed Garden: Woman and Community in the Evangelical South, 1830-1900, calls a "family-oriented structural pattern," little need existed for much development of "same sex interaction" and "homosocial networks" (6). Friedman also notes that, since women associated primarily with relatives, there seemed to be little or no formation of independent women's groups that could develop reform goals or networks, and even the church emphasized women's goals as developing family unity and remaining under the husband's control (xl). Friedman observes that even black women formed relationships with kin to learn skills as they worked together in the house and the fields and oriented newly arrived slaves (84-5). Friedman's opinion seems to be that the importance of community superseded women's group consciousness, and family identification weakened women's gender identity and made it difficult to form female solidarity (79). Lerner notes that women have participated in their own subordination because they have been psychologically shaped to see their own inferiority (218). In Southern Honor: Ethics and Behavior in the Old South, Bertram Wyatt-Brown observes that both male and female relied on a conventional community to let them know how they should feel about all things, with the family always providing love and protection (174). Disagreements occurred with these community standards since they were very restrictive. In The Southern Lady,

From Pedestal to Politics 1830-1930, Anne Firor Scott notes two dilemmas faced by the Southern matron: limited opportunities for learning and the peculiar sisterhood with her female slaves. Providing for her slaves limited her privacy, while a close working relationship and mutual dependency on the white slave master created friendship bonds (46-7). Society, the church, and family unity seemed to provide most people with opinions that were accepted and condoned by the regions in which they lived.

Therefore, the Southern woman is a product of her environment. She represents her family, domesticity, maternity, and self-sacrifice. She is expected to be religious and submissive to authority. She is under a double standard of patriarchal church discipline and patriarchal control, both of which limit her ability to gain self-definition. In Tomorrow Is Another Day: the Woman Writer in the South, 1859-1936, Jones notes that religion emphasizes the point that woman is inferior, and she can find salvation by accepting her inferiority and denying herself (23). According to Jones, religion provides consolation for the woman and reinforces what both God and men say about women—that they are inferior to men (28). According to Wyatt-Brown, both women and slaves were told from the pulpit about the necessity to obey and defer to male authority (231). Scott observes that clergymen used the teaching of Paul that women should "content themselves with their humble household duties," should be silent in the church, and should probably need religion more to bear life's struggles while trying to obtain the perfection and submissiveness demanded by God and man (7). Society, the church, and the patriarchal husband all stressed women's inferiority. Any unfeminine demand or action was usually opposed from the pulpit.

Literary Applications

Women are imprisoned by attitudes of society, by the belief of their own inferiority, and by male critics who determine what acceptable material for the reading public is. Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar in The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth Century Literary Imagination argue that the system of patriarchy and subsequent male writing subordinates and imprisons women. Gilbert and Gubar also assert that, when writing, women must make an effort to escape such male terminology that limits their opportunity to challenge male authority (12). With the exception of Walker's Grange Copeland, it is the women of Grau, Godwin, and Walker who challenge women's traditional, subservient role. Many of these views of women from Gilbert and Gubar's work still exist in the earliest part of the twentieth century. Later in this chapter, evidence from the work of Grau, Godwin, and Walker will show how the three work to deconstruct the ideas of class, race, and gender.

Class, gender, and religion are a part of what Louis Althusser describes as "Ideological State Apparatuses" that contribute to the development of a ruling class that maintains the power of the state (171). These factors designate certain beliefs attributed to each of the above ideas. According to Vesser, New Historicism allows us to look at the "exchanges between culture and power" (xl). A look at class, gender, and religion in the works of Grau, Godwin, and Walker shows differing aspects of the father-daughter relationships expressed in their works. These three writers create what Frye calls a "redefined collective conscience" (31) that uses class, gender, and race to illustrate symbols of power in father-daughter relationships.

Gender is a cultural idea where a certain character is assigned definite characteristics that signify that idea. In "Gender," Myra Jehlen notes that the term refers to a set of concerns and vocabulary that ascribes its own meanings to everything that is said or written (273). In "Nonfelicitous Space and Survivor Discourse: Reading the Incest Story in Southern Women's Fiction," Minrose Gwin notes that the South is a culture built on the shared knowledge of male disempowerment at the hands of other men through class and race privilege or through loss caused by a major war that destroyed a way of life (418). Usually the male lashes out against what he cannot control, the weak female or his even weaker daughter. Gwin also notes that the daughter is usually a product or a "daughter of her culture" (422), and hearing her stories informs the reader about Southern gender. If the father's power is threatened in some way, the victimized woman remains silent.

Southern writers, clergy, and religious leaders have often debated the issues between absolute and individual rights. Flora notes many comparisons between Biblical patriarchs and their tribes, kings and their subjects, and fathers and their families. According to Flora, patriarchal justifications condone colonization, slavery, and subordination of women often found in fundamentalist Southern Christian churches (622). Using examples of Old Testament patriarchs allows some of those older practices to continue in today's society.

The daughter is placed in a situation where her religious goals and her duties as a daughter may not necessarily be similar. According to Gilbert and Gubar in No Man's Land: The Place of the Woman Writer in the Twentieth Century: Sex Changes, the Christian emphasis on "woman's subjection and man's right of domination" causes

antagonism between the sexes which must change (69). In Growing Up Female, Barbara White notes that, while religion could be a justification of submission to a heavenly father, it could also be a means of rebelling against an earthly father. White notes that a daughter must obey her guardian's every rule except when it might conflict with religious principles. White considers that a daughter's first allegiance to God could be a means of revenge against the father. Heavenly rule could be another means of oppression, or it may serve as an ally for a needful daughter (28-9). Religion has the possibility of serving as a source of comfort; yet, it can also create problems for a daughter if it conflicts with what the father desires.

Class, Gender, Religion in Grau, Godwin, and Walker

Perhaps Shirley Ann Grau's use of class in her own writings stems from the views of her own family who, as Paul Schlueter notes in Shirley Ann Grau, had a "cavalier attitude about money" (16). Grau realized that her family was not poor or rich, but she was never aware that anyone actually worked (16). In contrast, Grau's characters do work at some occupation; however, quite often money was made and the family name was often established before the novels themselves began. Many of her novels depict class, race, and prejudice in the South; therefore, the living conditions, good and bad, of whites, blacks, poor, servants, fishing villages, servants, and road walkers are all illustrated in her various novels. In Renaissance in the South: A Critical History of the Literature 1920-1960, John Bradbury notes that Grau's characters are a balance of wealthy aristocrats/older generation and the newly rich/ experimental youth (43). Even as these women maintain tradition and conventions, they may deviate in some sexual

preferences, and they have to live in a more modern world where past traditions may not always work. Quite often, in Grau, class and gender are the same.

Maintaining the family name is another way that Grau signifies the importance of family and class. Part of the family code, through generations of the Howland family in Grau's The Keepers of the House, is what Flora calls an exact vengeance on those who betray or injure the family in some way (248). Each generation names a son William Howland; if there are no sons, generations of daughters are named Abigail. A family feud develops between the Alabama and Louisiana Howlands because one William Howland after the Civil War marries a French Catholic woman from New Orleans and brings her Catholicism and her father's "carpetbagger" war profits into a Protestant and Confederate family. Abigail herself exacts vengeance against her half-black family member, not because he is black, but because he betrayed family to political enemies.

In Grau's The Keepers of the House, John Tolliver feels that his marriage to Abigail Howland would place the prominence of her family name behind him and help further his political ambitions. In Grau's The Condor Passes, Anna's planned wedding arouses the anger and jealousy of Margaret. Oliver, the old man, chooses and manipulates Robert, the bridegroom, in order to maintain the family business. Oliver feels that his two daughters are not capable of running the family business because they are women. Although society requires marriage for women and businesses run by men, Grau shows that society's mandates and requirements are not always successful and should not be maintained.

Telling her story and that of the Howlands, Abigail realizes that neither her grandfather and closest father-figure, William Howland, nor her husband, John Tolliver,

felt that women were capable of strength or even deep thought. By accepting her bad choice of a marriage partner who enhanced his political future through the Howland name, she understands Margaret's claim about John that "He's not like us" (Grau, Keepers 175). John is unable to appreciate the importance of family. She finally understands her grandfather's beliefs about the inferiority of women:

> He'd protected and cared for so many females in his life that he just looked on us as responsibilities and burdens. Loved, but still burdens. There'd been his wife, the vague little bumbling girl who had been so lovely and who died so young. There'd been my mother, who'd read poetry in a summerhouse and married a handsome Englishman, who'd come scurrying home, heartbroken with another girl. She'd lingered around the house and around the bed until she died. And there was me, the orphan, and my two daughters. Sometimes he must have felt that he was smothered in dependents….All those clinging female arms….And then there was Margaret….Who bore him a son….Margaret, who was strong and black. And who had no claim on him. (375)

William Howland seems to be the true benevolent patriarch who cared and provided for his family and benefited the town through his vast timber holdings and lumber yard and his large cattle industry and slaughter yards, packing plant, and ice cream plant. Abigail gains her revenge for the town's attempt to destroy the Howland land by symbolically "burning their own homes" (238) and "seeing Madison City go back to what it was thirty years ago" (237). Abigail sees the events of the story as the consequences of the Howland dynasty and their upper class status.

Abigail eventually understands that her patriarchal grandfather is actually human in his wants, needs, and desires for a successful family; thus he married black Margaret to legitimatize their children and to allow them to grow in a Northern world where they would have additional opportunities not available in the South. However, even though Abigail had the courage to do what was necessary to protect the Howland home and her children's legacy, she remains a prisoner in her "own sob-wracked echoing world, and [she] was locked into it" (240). She is able to assert her independence from the patriarchal world as she protects her land and gains her divorce from John, but she is bound by the past and is unable to bring about a more productive change for herself, her children, and her community. Because men have always provided for her, Abigail does not know what to do with her new found freedom and power except to gain revenge, as her male counterpart would do. Grau's characters, descendants of Old South aristocratic ideals, try to break away from gender expectations but are often not strong enough or knowledgeable enough since women have always been the weaker sex.

Class and race are also represented in Grau's The Roadwalkers. Mary and Nanda Wood, as black business women, struggle for acceptance in a white world. Nanda is the first black in "St Catherine's, a boarding school run by the Ursaline nuns" (Grau The Roadwalkers 182). She is not affected by the "disease called black flight" that affects many of the other black students (242). Nanda succeeds as a student while her mother, Mary, is able to go beyond class and race by opening two dress shops—the original shop is for the black community and "the most ambitious one of all" (234) is "exclusively white" (235). According to Nanda, Mary "had conquered the black kingdom. She had triumphed in her own land; now she was entering neighboring territory. And she was—I

remembered Melissa's pale blondness—using enemy troops, mercenaries, to invade it" (236). In the South, it is unusual for black women to succeed in any undertaking, so these two characters are exceptions to southern traditions.

Religion is important to the deeply devout Anna in The Condor Passes, not so much as a spiritual solace, but as her own masochistic version of Catholicism evident in the bites of red ants under her clothing unseen by the public eye. She bargains with God to allow Anthony, her son with Robert, to live. After Anthony's death, she appears to have no love left, not even for her husband. Schlueter notes that she seems to engage in her various activities such as remodeling old houses, building various residences, and establishing a foundation to aid in the economic revival of her hometown in order to forget the harsh realities of her life. He notes that she has always lived in the past because she has nothing to which to look forward (75). It is ironic that Margaret's son, Joshua, is drawn to religion because of his aunt's outward goodness and what he considers his mother's sinful life. Perhaps if their father, Thomas Oliver, had been more accepting of their abilities as females, Anna and Margaret would not have had to look elsewhere to find acceptance.

Another version of the absent father is seen in Grau's The Roadwalkers, where religion also plays an important role in the novel. The church tried, but was unsuccessful, serving as a father-figure for Mary Woods. Although a kind, white man becomes her benefactor, Mary started her life as a roadwalker, one of the homeless people of the South in 1934 that went from place to place, seemingly with no past and no future. Eventually deserted by her family, Mary is raised in a Catholic orphanage school where she "only wanted to draw and paint and sew" (Grau The Roadwalkers 220). However, Mary, a

child close to nature, has "never looked for protection to the Christian Gods. She had her own, along with her spells and sorceries. . . ." (220). In school, Mary's first drawing includes "a crowded tangle of colors and shapes . . . . The images were pressed together, so that the line of a tree trunk was also the back of a rabbit; the line of a river was the blade of a knife; the moon held a curled cat's tail." (154). The drawings represent Mary's version of God gained from vaguely remembered stories from her grandparents and sister and from her close observance of nature. Her explanation about her religious views and her drawings allow no room for a Christian God: "I don't need your prayers. . . . I bring my Gods with me. From before. You should know them. I've painted their picture for you a hundred times. But you didn't see" (164). Since the pictures contain various combinations of colors, do not contain religious events, and are painted by a very young child, most of the nuns dismiss the pictures as a waste of time and material. Since it did recognize her gods, the Catholic religious example was not adequate for Mary.

Gail Godwin often represents class in her novels while observing several generations of Southern families confronting class and race divisions. In "Gail Godwin. The South, and the Canons," Mary Ann Wimsatt notes that Godwin's fiction of the 1980s rejects, or partially rejects, older aristocratic traditions by middle class Southern women and men in order to establish connections with members of the rural class (91). The aristocratic families were "the last generation to believe in their stories and feel no modern self-consciousness or guilt about the reasons for all those self-serving myths and legends, the highly embroidered tapestry of the sacred Old Locale" (Godwin A Southern Family 416). Although she has money and fame now, Clare Campion often wonders what would happen if she had been born into one of those families "whose belief in the

divine right of their clan exempted her from having to strive for anything more" (417). Clare and her family have had to work to gain the advantages that they currently enjoy and appear to be examples of the newly-rich class.

A Southern Family presents aristocrats Anthony Gallant, Alicia Gallant, and Neville Richardson contrasting with Ralph Quick, Clare's partially sympathetic step-father who is a self-made Mountain City man and descendent from an Appalachian family with some Cherokee blood. Theo and Snow reflect connections between the middle-class South and Appalachia. A Mother and Two Daughters contrasts the aristocratic Theodora Blount with the unwed, pregnant mountain girl, Wickie Lee Blount. Godwin portrays middle, upper middle, and professional-class women through Sonia Marks, Jane Clifford's friend, colleague, and successful author; Gerda Mulnaney, a feminist magazine editor, both in The Odd Woman; and Justin Stokes, an actress, in The Finishing School. Godwin's characters are very concerned about class, are members of various classes, and have to ultimately form their own ideas about acceptance of different classes of people.

Quite often, Godwin's step-fathers are from different classes than the protagonist daughter, thus adding another area of father-daughter conflict. While Ralph Quick is more kindly portrayed, Ray Sparks in The Odd Woman is not. Conflicts come from strong disagreements and sometimes beatings by the figure-figure. Ralph actually beats Clare as a child to thwart his sexual attraction toward her and her friends, while Ray's big problem is that he wishes to keep Kitty for himself and not share her with her daughter, Jane. Although Clare once had a close relationship with Ralph, she cannot forgive him for losing money in his business which causes her to have to change schools in her teen

years, and she remembers the bad times more than the good ones. Ralph and Ray are negative elements of the father-force.

Ultimately, Clare escapes the problematic Quick family by moving in with her father's family when she is sixteen. In "Gail Godwin," Anne Cheney notes that in A Southern Family, Godwin "wanted to explore but not explain" both the "class system of the South and the actual death of her half-brother Tommy Cole, who died in the same manner as Theo Quick in 1983" (232). Since A Southern Family seems to indict Southern traditions and the whole Quick family for Theo's death, one wonders if Godwin considers dysfunctional families, divorce, class, lack of forward movement in life, and Southern traditions as the cause of Tommy's death. In Heart: A Natural History of the Heart-Filled Life, Godwin, giving herself the name Clare in A Southern Family because she "hoped for more clarity," says that the family knew that Tommy (Theo) was unhappy because he "felt things more than most" (150). Tommy's stories usually star "a knight errant with a penchant for pratfalls and setbacks, but with also a knight errant with missions to complete, a knight errant with a future" (150). Godwin recalls Tommy's stories on the day before his death with "no longer any knight errant starring in my brother's story. There was no sense of progression, no sense of any more missions" (151). Living up to family expectations can be encouraging or damaging.

Unsuccessful in the world's eyes at age 28 and unhappy with his occupation of accountant which offers no challenge, Theo made it "his goal to shock the bourgeoisie every change he got" (Godwin SF 286). He also fails to live up to his family's expectations in choice of a marriage partner as he chooses Snow, "a foulmouthed hillbilly girl" (219), with an "incompatible" (170) background, who has the need to have her

grammar “launder[ed]” (216). In an appointment with Student Health psychiatrist, Dr. Blake, Theo’s brother, Rafe, explains his view of class and his family pulling him down as it relates to Theo, Snow, and him as he describes their wedding:

> When he married Snow. I mean, it was embarrassing at the wedding seeing how Mom’s friends were trying to keep their faces from showing how horrified they were when the bride’s side of the family started filling up. But they were also amused. They could afford to be. It was just a spectacle for them. I hated them. I don’t know which ones I hated the most, Snow’s awful tribe or all the snobs enjoying themselves at our family’s expense. . . . I’m not a snob. But neither do I go around advertising the fact I’m one generation removed from a redneck. (285)

Even though many people think that class can be measured with a ruler and Snow’s marriage moves her to a “seven-inch” line (117), another Quick family concern about Snow is that she has no ambition. Many members of the Quick family felt that Snow’s different background put her beneath them in class rank.

The story of class in Godwin is frequently one of keeping up appearances. Violet Clay and her uncle, Ambrose, are able to use Southern gestures and manners as a way of escaping the world of reality in which they lived. The characters hope to succeed, but never actually do. Southern sense of family, Southern charm, and the Southern idea of tradition cause Grandmother Edith to give up her piano career because she might not succeed. Selling off pieces of the family estate to support herself and Violet allows her to keep up appearances in Charleston in hopes that after writing his great war novel, Ambrose will return to be a Southern gentleman. Both Violet and her father-figure, Ambrose, are squandering their talents in New York: he, talking about, but never writing

his war novel; she as an illustrator for book covers. They appear to use the idea of heritage as a right not to expect more of themselves.

Women are distinctive from men in the way that various images of women form their own self-identities. In "The Odd Woman and Literary Feminism," Rachel Brownstein notes that women measure themselves against one another and against the various conceptions of "women" (177). In Escaping the Castle of Patriarchy: Patterns of Development in the Novels of Gail Godwin, Kerstin Westerlund notes that quite often in their relationships with men, Godwin's heroines are searching more for father-figures or mentors rather than sex partners. Westerlund also observes that controlling sexual favors becomes a way to control men since a patriarchal society keeps women and their sexuality subordinate to men. Her refusal of sex may be a means of control over her own life (154). In this case, the use of gender becomes part of the search for self-identity.

Religion, in many of Godwin's novels, provides intellectual rather than emotional power. Some religious ideas are present in Godwin's novels such as the lighting of candles in church for Grandmother Edith in Violet Clay, and Theo in A Southern Family. Usually, the lighting of candles symbolizes a person's need for prayer, especially for the dead souls of Edith and Theo. The strong friendship between Lily Quick and Sister Patrick in A Southern Family develops because Sister Patrick had been a teacher of both Clare and Theo, but the women both have strong religious convictions. Lily substitutes good works for the emptiness that she feels from her marriage to Ralph. Cheney notes that abortion, for Godwin's women, is based on intellectual reservations, not religious ones. She also observes that many of Godwin's heroines are raised and confirmed in the

Episcopal church while none go to regular services as an adult (210). Much like Godwin herself, at least four of her heroines went to Catholic schools.

Godwin's Father Melancholy's Daughter is the best example of how religion affects the father-daughter relationship in her work. In this case, the natural love between father and daughter is influenced by a spiritual power beyond the secular world. Margaret grows as a Christian as she grows as a woman. While Margaret is Walter's caretaker and emotional mainstay, he is her spiritual teacher and guide, sharing his religious experiences with her. In The Evolving Self in the Novels of Gail Godwin, Lihong Xie notes that Margaret's nurturing role is her means of achieving redemption through "grace of daily obligations" through day-to-day task of aiding her father in both his ministerial duties and his medical and psychological needs (216). Adrian Bonner, a pastoral counselor from another church and Margaret's future husband who is discussed more fully in Godwin's Evensong, says of Walter Gower:

> His sermons have real substance; you can tell he wrestled them into shape with his whole mind—and he delivers them with conviction. He makes his services beautiful, he reminds you that the whole purpose of the liturgy is to put you in touch with the great rhythms of life. He's a dedicated man, your father. He's lonely and bedeviled like the rest of us, but he has time for it and tries to do it right. He lives by the grace of daily obligation. He's what the priests in books used to be like, but today he is a rarity. (Godwin 199).

Margaret learns from her father and, in aiding him, she becomes more aware of her own possibilities and ambitions.

Godwin uses the Easter story to unite Walter and Margaret in their search for salvation and identity. Margaret has many responsibilities in the parish community with her role as the rector's daughter. Xie notes that the Easter promise of redemption reminds her of the equality of all humankind before God, and the care of her father and the reconnection with her mother make her more aware of feminine difference and female equality (218). Learning from the "grace of daily obligation" (Godwin Father Melancholy's Daughter 199), Margaret is able to use the Easter promise of redemption in her own search for self-identity. Although she is devastated at Walter's death, it is "redemptive and liberating" (Xie 219). By the end of Father Melancholy's Daughter, Margaret realizes Walter's clerical influence by the following statement: "It was the twenty-fifth of May, Feast of the Venerable Bede. As Father Gower's daughter, whatever else I was on my way to becoming, I guess I would always be aware of who was being celebrated, or mourned, or remembered, in the Church Calendar for that day" (Godwin Father Melancholy 380). Even though her faith may be a form of Walter's faith, Margaret has to make that faith her own. She also has to find her own identity outside that of the rector's daughter. Walter's father-force influence is definitely beneficial for Margaret.

The Women's Liberation Movement of the 1960s and 1970s and its search for similarities in women through politics, social class, and careers had an effect on both Gail Godwin and Alice Walker. Flora notes that each author creates protagonists who make an effort to discover the similarities and individualities in women of different races (712). The previous chapter spoke of the peculiar sisterhood between black and white women and the sisterhood of "genteel" white Lydia who finds herself in the sociology class of a

black professor, Renee Peverall-Watson, in Godwin's A Mother and Two Daughters. Walker's Meridian in the book of the same title learns that the Jewish Lynn is just as hardworking and committed to the civil rights movement as she is. The father force in the South has not allowed for the recognition of similarities between women of different races. Awareness of similarities is an example of change and a discovery of self-identity by the female protagonists. In "Dismantling Stereotypes: Interracial Friendships in Meridian and A Mother and Two Daughters," Suzanne W. Jones notes that, although the 1960s civil rights movement brings the races together, Godwin and Walker imply that only after the races discover similarities will they understand racial differences (157). Racial differences have been emphasized in the South for many generations, and it is hard for many Southerners to see beyond traditional stereotypes.

Perhaps Alice Walker's view of class stems from her own background as the daughter of a share-cropper and a maid to the white families in town. She was a member of the lower class and could identify with the oppression and poverty of the black women she depicts in her writing. In "Generational Connections and Black Women Novelists," Deborah McDowell notes that Walker depicts examples of what Raymond Williams calls "key words, a generic vocabulary of critical terms to describe African-Americans such as color, class, stereotype, and sexuality as representative of black womanhood" (176). Various stereotypes exist, such as that of the mulatto and the black mammy, which are used to describe all black women. As an example of class, Walker allows Meridian's theory of "One Life" to change the barriers of class and education between herself and the black community. Lauren Berlant, in "Race, Gender, and Nation in *The Color Purple*," believes that locating "personal problems" of sexism within the nationalist

project seems to depoliticize the struggle within the movement's patriarchal values (6). The movement itself was to establish equal rights for black citizens of the United States; women's rights were also included since women of the 1960s did not have equal rights either.

In The Color Purple, the story of Celie's real father is representative of race and class:

> Well, his store did so well that he talked two of his brothers into helping him run it, and as the months went by, they were doing better and better. Then the white merchants began to get together and complain that this store was taking all the black business away from them, and the man's blacksmith shop that he set up behind the store, was taking some of the white. This would not do. (174)

Although class relations motivate the lynching, Berlant observes that the white men perform this violence to prove black inferiority and subhumanity (10). The lynching of Celie's biological father illustrates that the family once had social status. But his successful store makes him the victim of racial violence. However, Celie learns through this story that her birth father is not abusive since her rapes and the stealing of her children are committed by her step-father, a father substitute. Rape by her step-father reinforces Celie's inferiority as a woman, and, at this time, she has no one to protect her from the abuses that she suffers. For Walker and the black community, rape is a strong example of oppression that emphasizes racial and gender bias. In the same novel, Sofia bridges a class and racial gap between the mayor, his wife, Miss Millie, and their daughter, Eleanor Jane, who desires Sofia's approval for her actions, her marriage, and

her own children. Walker's world seeks a peaceful existence with a settling of differences.

Gender and sexism are present in Walker's own life. In In Search of Our Mother's Gardens, Walker addresses sexism. She notes that her father "expected all of his sons to have sex with women" (328) and is very relieved "to know that his sexist behavior was something not uniquely his own, but, rather, an imitation of the behavior of the society around us" (330). Walker's father was a product of his environment, and she feels that "my father failed because he copied the hypocrisy and my brothers—except for one—never understood they must represent half the world to me, as I must represent the other half to them" (331). Many of Walker's male characters depict this unequal representation between the sexes and the lack of respect for women.

In the patriarchal white world of Alice Walker, gender is evident since the black women are frequently victims of both white and black men. In "*The Color Purple*: A Study of Walker's Womanist Gospel," Jita Allan notes that Walker's womanist theory originates from a resistance to patriarchal control. Walker uses the word "womanist" to describe her fiction. In Alice Walker: Author of the Color Purple, Barbara Kramer explains that in the African-American culture, if a girl is active, "womanish," she is being assertive or as Walker says, "she is being who she is" by speaking out or saying what is on her mind (82). When she is finally able to speak for herself, Celie becomes "womanish." Celie is a victim of gender oppression when her step-father threatens her mother's life if she tells about the rapes, and she has to "git used to it" (Walker TCP 1). Berlant notes that the father/step-father's control of the family's "private" resources gives him the right to violate his women (8). Quite often the men in Walker's stories use their

families as a substitute for aggression against the white men whom they consider the cause of their problems. However, retaliation against the white man by blacks is not accepted by society.

Ultimately, the women of The Color Purple form a caring, nurturing community almost exclusively of women who have shared experiences and shared hurts. Men like Albert and Harpo are accepted if they are willing to change their patriarchal views about women. In "Writing the Subject: Reading The Color Purple," bell hooks observes that Celie's sexual encounter with Shug is the beginning of her coming to power and resisting male domination (217). Celie finally learns that she can be liked as an individual, not merely for the various female services that she renders. In "Alice Walker's Womanist Magic: The Conjure Women as Rhetor," Catherine Colton notes that The Color Purple concludes that "gender roles and stereotypes are meaningless" (43). Although people have different careers, abilities, beliefs, and sexual orientation, Walker emphasizes acceptance of these differences rather than the occlusion of them.

Many of Alice Walker's novels depict the consequences of a double standard between male and female. In The Color Purple, Celie's stepfather rapes her, gives her children away, and breaks society's taboo of rape of a daughter. One double standard that daughters experience is the idea of incest and rape. Levi-Strauss points out man's "deep-rooted horror" of incest that biologically limited the possible number of unions that a man could have. He continues with the idea that culture and society made rules that distinguish between men's biological existence and social existence (24). He mentioned rules that prohibited marriage with a mother, sister, or daughter and required that a mother, sister, or daughter be given to others (481). According to Lerner, if the men in a

patriarchal society cannot protect the sexual purity of their wives, children, or sisters, they are considered impotent or dishonored. She also notes that since the uses of physical terror and coercion subdued the woman physically, a pregnancy might cause her to become psychologically attached to her master or rapist (Lerner 80-1). Celie's sadness at the loss of her sister and children emphasizes to her an inferior status for women.

Gender, racism, and sexism are also evident in Walker's The Third Life of Grange Copeland. Both the male and female characters are caught in the oppressive white world, but often the female characters do not survive. Allan observes that these women live in a world that devalues blackness but privileges maleness, and their punishment appears to be atonement for the guilt they feel about being partly responsible for society's degradation of black men; therefore, their self-sacrifice demands total submission to the demands of all males (121). Mem's death is a good example of the total victimization of black women by the males around them. Jealous because she is the family provider and makes more money than he ever did, Brownfield gets drunk and shoots Mem on a Christmas Eve return from work. She seems to accept the inevitable as she continues to walk toward home even after she sees the gun. In the description of her mother's death, Ruth Copeland explains that "Mem had not even slowed her steps as she approached her husband. After her first cheerful, tired greeting she had not even said a word, and her bloody repose had struck them instantly as a grotesque attitude of profound, inevitable rest" (Walker TLGC 173). Although Grange, Margaret, and Brownfield all have affairs, Margaret's affair is with a white man with whom she has a baby. For Grange, this act is an ultimate betrayal since he has no means

of retaliation against the white man. A double standard exists since the husband had only moral standards to uphold that he often broke, and he was free to commit adultery.

Although she has strong spiritual beliefs, both good and bad effects of religion exist in Alice Walker. The following statement that Walker makes about religion manifests itself in some of Celie's views in The Color Purple:

> Although I am constantly involved, internally with religious questions and I seem to have spent all of my life rebelling against the church and other people's interpretations of what religion is—the truth is probably that I don't believe there is a God, although I would like to believe it. Certainly I don't believe there is a God beyond nature. The world is God: Man is God. So is a leaf or a snake. . . . (O'Brian 75)

Shug gives Celie a similar explanation when she learns that Celie has given up on God because "the God I been praying and writing to is a man and acts like all the other mens I know. Trifling, forgetful and lowdown" (Walker Color Purple 192). Celie writes to God because she is too ashamed to speak about her rape to anyone she knows and cannot understand her betrayal by the person she believes to be her father. Since she has been victimized by men, Celie has problems praying to a male God.

It is ironic that the prayers are Pa's suggestions. In the patriarchal world, even an abusive, guilty father has a bond with his white God. In "'Trying To Do Without God:' the Revision of Epistolary Address in *The Color Purple,*" Carolyn Williams notes that the black female is excluded from and implicated within a male network of power (79). It is no surprise that Celie has difficulty praying to a male God. Although it is a revision of the Judeo-Christian view, Shug shares her own belief about God with Celie:

> The thing I believe. God is inside you and inside everybody else. You come into the world with God. But them that search for it inside find it. And sometimes it just manifest itself even if you not be looking, or don't know what you are looking for. Trouble do it for most folks, I think. Sorrow lord. Feeling like shit. . . . Yeah, It. God ain't a he or a she, but a It. . . . I believe God is everything. . . . Everything that is or ever was or ever will be. And when you can feel that, and be happy to feel that, you've found It. (Walker TCP 195)

Using this belief, Celie learns to accept and love God. By the end of the novel, Celie is able to address her last letter in this way: "Dear God. Dear stars, dear trees, dear sky, dear peoples, Dear Everything. Dear God" (285). Celie's view of religion changes from the white male authority figure to a loving and merciful God that celebrates life. Gaining knowledge of her real father, observing change in the males around her, overcoming the difficulties of a destructive father-force, Celie is now able to be more tolerant of men.

Before her actual view of God changes, Celie needs something in which to believe. For Celie, Shug becomes god-like for several reasons. In Great Women Writers, Frank McGill makes the following observations: Shug appears in the first photograph that Celie has ever seen, and the pose and dress show a sense of pride and freedom. Shug has been able to control the evil around her and has the power to change the bleakness of Celie's life. Shug provides a source of hope for Celie. The use of her name has the power to control Albert (564). Shug is the first person outside of Nettie who recognizes Celie's talents. Celie begins to become a new and a whole person because of this recognition.

Another irony in Walker's depiction of religion is that, although the missionaries in her stories have good intentions, their messages are often destructive to the cultures they are trying to help, and they try to keep those cultures at a distance. In The Color Purple, Samuel lectures the Olinka women about the values of monogamy over polygamy, but these women feel more powerful than Corrine, Samuel's wife, feels in her relation to Nettie. Berlant notes that while Nettie tries to teach the Olinka women about liberation from patriarchal oppression, these women see her limitations since, to them, she is merely a second wife with little authority. The Olinka women see Nettie as the "missionary's drudge" (Walker TCP 156), and Berlant says as an object of pity and contempt because she is not married (17). In By the Light of My Father's Smile, the Robinsons pretend to be missionaries to study the Mundo culture (a mixed race of blacks and Indians), but they refuse to learn anything from that culture at the time they are living there. So instead of acting as Christian witness to this culture, the Robinsons live a lie. It is easy to understand why a father's irresponsibility creates a dilemma for his daughter as she looks to him as a role model. In spite of her father, Magdalena/June absorbs the Mondo culture and constantly sings the initiation song about the moon and love. Robinson constantly interprets the words as "the father's eyes" envisioning a need for surveillance of his daughter's sexuality. Manuelito explains that both girls and boys go "by the light of my father's smile" because "Mundo fathers are happy that their children, the girls as well as the boys, enjoy what your culture calls sex" (Walker BLFS 210). If the father can accept the fact that his daughter is maturing, then he can accept whatever her future destiny might be. Robinson was never able to make this adjustment, so bad elements of the father-force contribute to his daughters' adult problems.

Quite often, missionaries seem to think their belief is the only correct one; therefore, old tribal beliefs are definitely misinformed, especially if the sexes are equal. In an interview with Alice Walker, Evelyn White quotes Walker's views of organized religion:

> I was also thinking how organized religion has systematically undermined the sexual and spiritual beliefs of millions of indigenous people. There have been people on earth who didn't think about sex the way white, Western men do. It is very painful to think that the "missionary position," which reinforces patriarchal, male dominance over woman, was forced upon people who once loved having women freely express their sexuality, whether they were on the top or bottom. (White "Bliss)

Susannah, in By the Light of My Father's Smile, further adds to Walker's point when she explains her view of the Mundo belief about women:

> They had never understood how woman could be considered evil, either, since they considered her the mother of corn. When hearing of her original sin of eating the forbidden fruit, they scratched their chins again and said even more gravely, Perhaps this is the one biggest lie that has unraveled your world. The men had not wanted the women to hear what they were accused of; they tried to persuade our father not to divulge this horrible secret, even if he claimed he knew. And when the women found out, they were so hurt. That they could be considered not good had never entered their minds. (81-2)

Women must start the change in outlook by respecting themselves; however, they are being told by religion and society that they are inferior beings. It is no wonder that women have constantly struggled to escape their submissive role.

By the Light of My Father's Smile is similar to The Color Purple in that patriarchal dominance or the father-wound affects the childhood and even adult lives of two sisters (Nettie and Celie; Susannah and Magdalena.) Both stories have missionaries/ anthropologists who go to a foreign land and fail to convert or try to understand the tribes (Olinka, Mundo) that they are trying to help. Both stories have lesbian relationships in which the partners feel fully loved (Celie and Shug; Susannah and Pauline.) In addition to depicting class, gender, and religion, these episodes illustrate a negative effect of the father-force.

Class, gender, and religion, like the father-force, can be beneficial and aid the daughter in her growth to maturity or be destructive in hindering her development. The father-force is a form of power that uses the constructs of class, gender, and religion to keep daughters in a subordinate place. As an established part of culture, these ideas are difficult to change. However, for the Southern daughter to discover her own self-identity, these views need to be challenged.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION: A CLEARER DILEMMA

In the South, the Southern daughter, because of her gender, has been placed on a pedestal. Her dilemma occurs when she tries to uphold society's traditions while striving to be an autonomous woman in the modern world. Part of society's traditions include the social constructs of patriarchal father, dutiful daughter, Southern lady, burden of the past, race, gender, class, and religious expectations. These elements have impacted the depiction of the relationship between fathers and daughters in the works of Shirley Ann Grau, Gail Godwin, and Alice Walker.

Although these constructs are no longer as dominant as they were in the nineteenth century, the literature of the period suggests that women growing up in the South in the 1950s and 1960s were very much aware of these ideas. Southern institutions and customs set certain guidelines for the behavior of the proper young lady. Grau, Godwin and Walker show a strong awareness of these constructs and illustrate, through the portrayal of their characters, an effort to liberate themselves from these constructs. The destructive elements of the "father-force" affect the characters' understanding and revision of the power of their fathers over their lives while they discover their own view of womanhood and self-identity rather than accepting one prescribed by society. The constructive elements of the father-force can be beneficial to the daughter.

Although the idea of the "Cult of True Womanhood" began in the plantation era, Grau, Godwin, and Walker and their characters are affected by trying to live up to that nineteenth-century Southern ideal of the woman. All three writers share the characteristics of female characters that connect with their fathers through race and the

burden of the past, gender, class, and religious expectations. Even though the role of the dutiful daughter and the Southern lady can be rewarding, the other womanly characteristics can be too restrictive and damaging to a woman's individual identity, and the female characters often try to form more diverse connections away from that restrictive environment.

Traditionally, in the South, a woman is defined by her role as a dutiful daughter and a Southern lady. These constructs, along with that of the patriarchal father, are part of Louis Althusser's ideological state apparatuses that are used by the culture to keep these women under its power. These elements are used as a force to prescribe women's behavior. However, the main protagonists in the works of Grau, Godwin, and Walker begin to evolve as people and fashion their own identities, not one prescribed by their culture. The characters are able to achieve their goals and establish new customs. Today's reality requires that the woman participate in a society that is more than just a domestic environment. Another part of the daughter's dilemma is that she has to break with the conformity of being exactly like everyone else upholding the same traditions, not searching for her own individuality. Having no power at all, she often puts the needs of family and others before herself.

One of the ways of forming self-identity is to break the silence writing about women's issues. The southern writer has several distinctive characteristics. In The Companion to Southern Literature: Themes, Genres, Places, People, Movements, and Motifs, Joseph Flora makes several statements about Southern writers in general that also apply to Grau, Godwin, and Walker. He argues that the stories usually come from personal memories of a Southern childhood. He feels that tragedy, defeat, guilt, and

yesterday's ancestors are no longer a primary focus because these writers emphasize families of today and the many problems found within average homes and ordinary families (990). He also states that modern Southern writers are more optimistic, more life affirming, and more hopeful about the future of family and self in their stories. Hope exists in the "preservation of self, the continuation of family and strength in community. Focusing on present and future instead of the past, they see possibilities rather than constraints" (991). Even though the past and its ideas still exist to a degree in the South, Walker, Godwin, and Grau create characters that rebel against these traditions. Although Godwin and Walker may live outside the South, their hearts and minds remain in the setting that is the usual location of their works. Instead of romanticizing the southern family and its stereotypes of typical images and melodrama, these writers replace those images with real people.

In the South, myths such as the Lost Cause, the southern lady or belle, and the dutiful daughter have perfect images and encourage certain groups, especially Southern women, to behave in certain ways. Men help to establish and perpetuate the myths as a form of power to keep women in their submissive place. It is also hard for daughters to live up to the perfect image, and their imperfection makes them feel inadequate. There are many Southern stereotypes, a popular belief about a specific social group or individual types, that are evident in fiction, and quite often these stereotypes, based on myths, are accepted as truth. Stereotypes focus on and exaggerate differences between groups. Even though stereotyping is inexact, the categories help to simplify, predict, and organize the world. By designating one's own group as standard or normal and assigning others to be inferior or abnormal, one is provided with a sense of worth and power. The

South uses stereotypes of race, gender, class, and religion to establish a normal group dynamic. One who is not a part of the select group feels inferior, submissive, and isolated from the rest of society. The tendency to perpetuate the exaggerated stereotype has become more important than revering the myth from which it originates. Both myths and stereotypes have become forms of entrapment for actual women and women characters in ante-bellum, twentieth, and twenty-first century literature and life.

The old institutions rely too much on stereotypes of southern women. Frequently, satire shows stereotypes of the Southern lady, belle, and black mammy and the impracticality of maintaining these old images. Flora observes that more modern writers share a sense of optimism, affirmation and hope in "preservation of self, the continuation of family, and strength in community. By focusing on present and future, instead of the past, they [writers] see possibilities rather than constraints" (990-1). One of the purposes of this dissertation is to show some of the possibilities illustrated by Grau, Godwin, and Walker. Although the South has been resistant to change, revision allows the South to evaluate its history and culture, choose its best aspects for continuation, and forge a newer, better identity.

The South is different from the rest of the country for various reasons. In The Southern Lady, From Pedestal to Politics, 1830-1930, Anne Firor Scott notes that changing economic conditions allowed movement of women into the world of employment. Scott mentions textile mill workers, secretaries, and teachers as acceptable jobs for women (129). If they are not satisfied with any of these jobs, the women then have a problem. Quite often, there is no difference between life on a farm and life in a factory. Some differences that are evident are the former system of slavery and guilt

because of it; second class citizenship of both blacks and women; the historical experience of military defeat, military occupation, and reconstruction; and the predominately agricultural economy. In The Roots of Southern Writing: Essays of the Literature of the American South, C. Hugh Holman notes that even with the differences, there is still room for literature which can focus on social situations and individual development and identity (107). However, when these problems are brought into the open by "breaking the silence," solutions for some of the South's problems might be found. The characters of Godwin and Walker begin to find their own place, to accept those people that they like in spite of differences, and to make their own standards.

After the Civil War, the Southern matron had to deal with the problems of a changing, modernizing, urbanizing economy although she still had limited opportunities for change herself. In Southern Groves and Ravanged Gardens: The Fiction of Eudora Welty, Carson McCullers, and Flannery O'Connor, Louise Westling notes that what distinguishes Southern attitudes from others is the complicated relationship of Southern white women to Southern black women. (This peculiar sisterhood is discussed in Chapter Four, "The Burden of the Past and Racial Themes.") Westling acknowledges that although traditional defenses of slavery were intertwined with declarations about praise and protection of white women, "these same women shared inferiority and powerlessness with blacks as subjects of the ruling patriarch" (21-2). In The Southern Writer in the Postmodern World, Fred Hobson states that, after the 1960s, the South had endured the modern crisis of Civil Rights and survived, and he notes that a newer South was more optimistic, forward-looking, moral, and prosperous (4-8). Even though the South has endured many struggles, certain traditions remain intact. The traditions are not

necessarily wrong if one has a choice to maintain them, rather than be forced to, as women and minorities were.

A problem in father-daughter relationships which creates alienation and confusion focuses on differences and power control. In The Father-Daughter Dance: Insight, Inspiration, and Understanding for Every Woman and Her Father, Barbara Goulter notes that since the father has greater physical and social power, he can enforce whatever relationship he pleases with his daughter, and she has to make the best of it (31). Goulter notes that ideas about what a girl should be and how a father should raise her have changed more over the last 50 years than the previous 150 years (27). Daughters, like sons, now need survival skills and family structures that use egalitarian principles. In "Making Peace with the (M)other," Barbara Bennett notes that, in order to grow to maturity, daughters need to observe strengths and weaknesses of both parents. By observing both mothers and fathers and their characteristics, daughters can then decide their futures by modeling the good behavior they learn.

In ante-bellum times, little effort was needed for the father to perform his duties to his daughter since he merely provided food, clothing, shelter, and rules to live by. In addition to basic survival needs, in Relative Intimacy: Fathers, Adolescent Daughters, and Postwar American Culture, Rachel Devlin notes that the psychological health of the daughter is dependent on a good relationship with her father as she looks to him first for approval (10). The characters of Grau, Godwin, and Walker desire acceptance and approval from absent, neglectful, and abusive fathers. Not finding that solidarity, these characters create their own families apart from society's approval. It is important for a daughter to have her father visible in her life.

One reason that Grau, Godwin, and Walker try to deconstruct these old ideas is that many of the men around them have either failed them by death, divorce or abandonment or compromised their views by maintaining society's outdated standards. While these writers and their characters still had respect, and even love, for their fathers, there was still a sense of estrangement from them. This respect allowed Grau, Godwin, and Walker to study their place of birth, to learn from their experiences, to write of its vulnerabilities and imperfections, and to grow through change rather than remain in stagnation.

Not all of the various cultural changes listed above had occurred at the time that Grau was writing her major works. Her characters made advances for themselves but also seem stifled by past expectations and experiences. It was these changes and the more positive view that allowed Godwin and Walker and their characters to question and reconstruct the influence of their fathers. Grau's women try to resist traditional cultural constructs, while Godwin and Walker's women revise them by either escaping from them or reworking the constructs to conform to their own views of life. Even though she had a patriarchal father, Walker's works represent a total deconstruction of the beliefs of the patriarchal father, the dutiful daughter and the Southern lady. In contrast to the views of Grau and Godwin, Walker shows the effects of these constructs from the viewpoint of the black woman writer. Grau's, Godwin's and Walker's works illustrate a historical perspective in showing changes that occurred in father-daughter relationships from 1950-2000.

Grau, Godwin, and Walker create heroines who arrive at maturity after experiencing problems that may be caused by the men around them. These adult lives

contain men not married to the protagonists, but who continue to interact with them. Therefore, the women in the stories gain their independence from male patriarchy. These protagonists also create their own sense of community. In the case of Godwin, the communities often include mixed-race couples. The newly-created community is an indication that some of the older traditions have died for these characters. By creating community, Grau, Godwin, and Walker honor their foremother, Hurston.

A sense of community is very strong in Grau, Godwin and Walker. For Grau, the community is usually a traditional one consisting of family and people of similar classes. In this community, the protagonists are still searching for themselves. Godwin and Walker create their own communities which may not necessarily include related family members but people of similar attitudes and beliefs. Men who have changes in their views about women's submissiveness and treatment of women are welcome. By the time this community is formed, the heroines have discovered their own self identities.

In The Voices of African-American Women: The Use of Narrative and Authorial Voice in the Works of Harriet Jacobs, Zora Neale Hurston, and Alice Walker, Yvonne Johnson argues that both Hurston and Walker create women who eventually change themselves from objects into speaking subjects within the African-American community and gradually appear through their stories as independent women who ultimately gain control over their own lives. Johnson also states that these black writers look at the indirect effects that racism has on their main characters and emphasizes that both black and white cultures use patriarchy to assign positions that emphasize differences (91-2). Godwin's characters also eventually gain control over their own lives, while the majority of Grau's characters gain control but don't always know what to do with that control.

The standards of patriarchy and social class in many of the works of these writers have limited the independence of the female protagonists. Walker uses the idea of racism more than Grau or Godwin.

The idea of failure is also a similar characteristic of the protagonists in Grau, Godwin, and Walker. However, these characters are measuring themselves by society's standards of womanhood, not their own. Therefore, if they are not happy housewives mothering several children, society considers them failures. The heroines must rescue themselves from their own sense of defeat by discovering ways to begin new starts for themselves and their families. These protagonists must define success and failure for themselves.

In many of her novels, Grau writes of a dying white aristocratic patriarchy. These families usually have money, but often there is little evidence of love between the family members. Traditionally, the requirement of these families is to honor and perpetuate the family name; however, Grau's inheritors are daughters who were never fully accepted by their patriarchal fathers. Frequently, these daughters are followers who cannot lead because they have never been taught to do so. Both Annie in The Hard Blue Sky and Joan in The House on Coliseum Street are content to let others determine their lives because they are unable to make decisions for themselves.

Grau depicts race and violence as learning tools for her heroines. Margaret's rape in The Condor Passes further enhances her desire to be in control of her own life without having to depend on her father to rescue her from her mistakes. His continuing intervention does not allow her to learn any lessons for herself since she solely depends on his money to thwart any problems she might have. Issues of race create the

destruction of cattle and the barn burning in The Keepers of the House. Although Abigail has the opportunity to learn from this hatred, her past training does not allow her to do so. Racial hatred motivates Grau to depict Negroes as silent servers even though they are often instrumental in keeping the family together. Stanley, the black butler in The Condor Passes, plays a major role in the care of the wealthy, but ailing Oliver, while black Margaret in The Keepers of the House is legally a member of the Howland family. Margaret's marriage to William is not accepted in the South and causes the racial tensions in the novel. Race is not always the primary theme of Grau's novels, but its presence is secondary. Grau does have a desire to alert the reader as to why the characters do what they do, and a knowledge of the racism of the South is important in that depiction.

Abigail Howland in The Keepers of the House is one character who has the opportunity to make constructive changes in her environment and take responsibility for the future. However, her desire for revenge on the town and on Robert, the Howland's half-white son, takes precedence over any desire for improvement. Abigail, like many of Grau's heroines, remains her father/grandfather's daughter even without his control. When she is finally in charge of her destiny and inheritance, she imitates the men before. Her desire for revenge and preservation of the family name is more important than the idea of change. At this point, Abigail displays a destructive element of the father-force. Grau's protagonists have the opportunity of second chances, but no knowledge of ways to accomplish them; therefore, these Southern daughters are frozen in a time warp that they cannot escape.

In contrast to Grau, Godwin writes about what she cares about and shows how women can change. Her protagonists must develop their own strengths and talents. Many of her heroines are educated English majors, just as she is. Although many of her characters are typical Southern stereotypes, the characters do have the ability to change the view of that stereotype. Inclusion of differences and connection through similar interests is one way of change. Her heroines often have to leave the South, as Godwin did, in order to test Southern values. Many of them can be steel magnolias as they defend ideas they consider to be right.

The protagonists of A Mother and Two Daughters do not have to leave the South in order to test their own values because they are able to follow their own instincts, often within society's constraints. Daring to break society's rules, each of the three fashion their own identities different from traditional views. After being a member of the old guard, Nell is able to continue her nursing career and succeed in a second marriage. Both Cate and Lydia create their own type of family including a vast array of different personalities. Although filled with good intentions, Leonard Strickland could not deviate from the old traditions where his daughters should be married to acceptable young men that have the ability to continue their previous life style. His inability to change is a destructive element of the father-force.

A good example of the father-force is Walter Gower, of Father Melancholy's Daughter. Although he had his bouts with depression, Walter never forces daughter, Margaret, to give up her identity. Margaret's problem is discovering her identity outside her father's shadow. Walter is her spiritual advisor, and she must distinguish between her duties as church hostess, daughter, and religious inquiry. She must fully examine her

desire to become a preacher, like Walter. This decision is her own even though various friends feel that she is forced into it. Walter's good qualities depict the father that Godwin never had.

The matter of choice is important. In A Southern Family, Lessie, the daughter of Clare's companion, Felix, chooses to place herself in a Jewish environment of a patriarchal society. For Godwin, the freedom of choice is more important than the choice made. While all Godwin's other characters are trying to escape from restrictions, Lessie makes her educated, informed choice out of love. Marriage, children, and restrictions are not necessarily bad if those choices are made by the protagonist rather than society. Godwin promotes taking the best of Southern traditions and restructuring them to benefit the heroine.

Godwin's characters are more involved in a contemporary world of business where it is becoming more acceptable for women to deal with their own problems. In "Gail Godwin, the South, and the Canons," Mary Ann Wimsatt notes that Godwin's works show distinctive cultural traditions expressed through conflicts among different generations, races, and social classes. According to Wimsatt, Godwin is concerned with the problems that time, change, industrialization, and rapid progress have caused inhabitants of late twentieth and twenty-first century South (90). While Walker's characters struggle to break the silence of violence and oppression, Godwin's characters struggle more with traditional mindsets of "Southern lady" expectations. Once freedom is gained, the heroines must learn to create their own worlds.

Walker often tries to give her characters second chances in her effort to create a new community. Walker's Grange Copeland learns from his mistakes with his son

Brownfield and makes great efforts to improve the life of his granddaughter, Ruth. Mr. Robinson, in By the Light of My Father's Smile, searches for his second chance to be a good influence in the lives of his two daughters. Grau and Godwin show oppression through society's limitations on the achievements of women.

If the men are willing to change, the patriarchal system of male dominance can also change. According to Maria Lauret in Modern Novelists: Alice Walker transformation and self-healing can occur and can help to improve the situation for black families who suffer abuse and violence (38). The men in The Color Purple also have many of the same problems in relationships. Grange could represent an earlier version of Albert in The Color Purple (Lauret 31). In The Third Life of Grange Copeland, Grange undergoes a change in his third life. Grange's hatred for the white man allows him no space to love his own family. The abusive lives of Margaret and Mem could represent the life of the younger Celie in The Color Purple. Ruth could be a younger version of Meridian Hill (Lauret 31). Ruth, like Meridian, lives with what Lauret calls "resistance without resentment" (62). Walker's characters live in the poverty-stricken South and seem to come of age in the mid-1960s. They eventually overcome their lives of domestic violence and emotional abuse. Walker says that the "potential for change lies in writing, in the power of art." It should "make us better." (Flora 991). While Walker's men and women change their attitudes, the women in Grau and Godwin undergo the most change. Grau, Godwin, and Walker help to break the silence of various forms of oppression to "make us better" (Flora 991).

While Grau and Godwin did not consider themselves feminists, they did write about women's issues and rewrote traditions doing so. In "*The Color Purple*: A Study of

Walker's Womanist Gospel," Jita Allan notes that in Walker's womanist universe there must be a collapse of male erected boundaries that separate women from themselves. She observes that women need to be whole before they can be a part of wholeness (133). Allan also notes that, for Walker, the battle against a patriarchal society and sins of sexism, classism, and homophobia needs the womanist spirit of defiance and a desire for social interaction (120). Grau and Godwin also help to collapse male boundaries in the works by questioning traditional ideas.

Most people like the right to make decisions for themselves and to be treated with respect. Women probably desire freedom to be individuals more since that right has long been denied them. Rebecca Walker, Alice Walker's half-white Jewish daughter, exemplifies many of the struggles of the protagonists of Grau, Godwin, and Walker since she spends her youth searching for her identity in one of her three worlds. The heroines just want to belong somewhere even if they have to create their own world. Rebecca Walker speaks of Alice Walker's views on options: "It isn't that my mother wasn't feminist before, but now she is surrounded by the Feminism she is helping to create. This historical moment is about options, about formulating a life defined not by male desire but by female courage" (R. Walker Black, White, and Jewish: Autobiography of a Shifting Self 60).

Grau, Godwin, Walker, and all their characters are searching for options, but it takes courage to defy the rules of society and break with traditional women's roles. A woman does not have to be labeled a feminist to desire a better, more egalitarian life for her sex. For a long period of time, women have lived in fear of being denied. Rebecca Walker shares the view of many women when she makes this statement about herself:

> My parents raised me to believe I am entitled to whatever is available. There is no question as to whether or not my birth or my breeding merits it. This, to counteract the idea that being black or being a woman, or being Jewish, means having to settle for less, for the thing that is not the best, for whatever it is they are trying to give you rather than what you want. (187)

For centuries, society, traditions, fathers and husbands have been telling women what they need or want, which may not actually be their desire. However, women, blacks, Jews, and other minorities have the right to expect admittance, service, and respect in whatever endeavor they try. The women protagonists of Grau, Godwin and Walker want to be recognized for their abilities and accomplishments.

The father-force has a strong influence on the depiction of fathers in the works of Grau, Godwin, and Walker. Often, Grau's characters remain more static in their fight with the father-force because they are not strong enough to fight the combination of their fathers, their cultural mind sets, and their own self-doubts. Godwin's characters are able to revise their self-doubts to form their own version of a society that is more accepting of change. Walker's characters basically destroy all of the old restrictions of society in order to create a totally new way of viewing fathers and the customs of society. Grau, Godwin, and Walker discover acceptable means of dealing with their female characters' relationships with their fathers within the requirements of a society that has established clear roles for both father and daughter.

The impact of father-daughter relationships is an important aspect for understanding the contributions of Grau, Godwin, and Walker to American literature. Race, the burden of the past, gender, class, religious expectations, the dutiful daughter,

the Southern lady, and the patriarchal father all have a connection with Southern daughters and fathers. These social constructs also reflect the vision of the father figures that Grau, Godwin, and Walker depict in their works. Greenblatt notes the "cultural exchange" in which the "past" can have as strong an influence as the author deems necessary to create a new interpretation ("Culture 231). Some of these influences help to constrain the writers' relationships with their own fathers. The relationship of the female world to the patriarchal view of an ideal marriage that determines the Southern woman's social position and her happiness is unsatisfactory for most women. Grau, Godwin, and Walker show their characters often becoming successful in the world outside the home in an effort to gain their father's recognition of their accomplishments, his acceptance of their individuality and differences from him, and his approval of their methods of gaining success.

Quite often in the South, writers and characters try to maintain out-dated power structures and social customs that provide a superficial form of civility. Many characters lie to themselves or others in an effort to maintain a pretense of family solidarity or responsibility. Many of the old illusions have to end. However, Grau, Godwin, and Walker take the best of those ideas and fashion them into a world that gives their characters freedom of choice. Any woman growing up in the South in the 1950s and 1960s was very much aware of these restrictions, and these ideas influenced the authors vision of themselves since it was the period of their childhood and adolescence. In her autobiography, Rebecca Walker asks this question about a woman's role: "What do we become when we put down the scripts written by history and memory when each person before us can be seen free of the cultural or personal narrative we've inherited or

devised?" (307). The past is important to learn from, take the best of, and use to form our own self-identity. William Faulkner states: "It is himself that every Southerner writes about" (Cobb 337). Using their past experiences in depictions of their characters, Grau, Godwin, and Walker write about themselves, their experiences, and their relationship with their fathers as portrayed in their characters' lives. Southern women who grew up in the same time period can relate to the same problems while others can have a better understanding of Grau, Godwin, and Walker's relationships to their fathers.

Although the southern daughter's dilemma may not be completely solved, she does have a better understanding of the authors' depictions of the reasons why she is the way she is.

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