UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL OKLAHOMA

JOE C. JACKSON COLLEGE OF GRADUATE STUDIES

Edmond, Oklahoma

E.D.E.N. Southworth: A Little Learning is a Dangerous Thing

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS IN ENGLISH

By

Rose Ann Neal

Edmond, Oklahoma

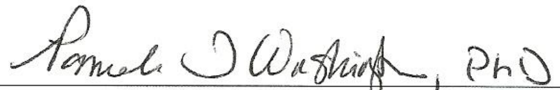
2012

E.D.E.N. Southworth: A Little Learning is a Dangerous Thing

A THESIS

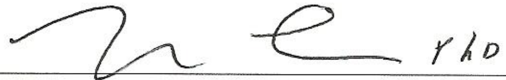
APPROVED FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

March 2, 2012



Dr. Pamela Washington
Chair

Dr. Kevin Hayes



Dr. Timothy Petete

Table of Contents

Chapters Page Number

Introduction……………………………………………………………………………..…………1

Chapter 1: 19th Century Female Education ……………………………………………….………9

Home Schooling and Dame Schools …………………………………………………14

Tutors – Education for the Upper Class ………………………………………………15

Female Academies ……………………………………………………………………16

Advice Books for Mothers ……………………………………………………………22

Women Colleges ……………………………………………………………………...23

Teaching: Occupation Suitable for Women ………………………….………………26

Chapter 2: What Southworth Learned and Taught ………………………….……………..29

Childhood and Early Years …………………………………………….……………..29

Education from Henshaw ....…....35

Marriage and Teaching Career ……………………..……………………..………..37

Writing Career ………………………………………………………….……………40

Chapter 3: The Angel and the Demon in the House …………………………………………48

Angels: Hester and Veronica …………………………..…………………………...51

Demons: Juliette and Sina…………………………………………………………… 60

Chapter 4: Reeducating the Angel in the House ………………………………...………………69

Imogene: Transition from Death to Life ……………………………………………71

India and Rosalie: A Step toward Independence ……………………………………..76

Alice and Winny: Educating a New Generation …………………...……………………81

Chapter 5: A New Education is a Dangerous Thing ……………………………………………….90

Hagar vs. Sophie and Rosalia in *The Deserted Wife*……..…92

Nettie vs. Alice and Elsie in *The Discarded Daughter*……………………..…………97

Jacquelina vs. Marian in *The Missing Bride* ……………………………..…..………101

Capitola vs. Clara in *The Hidden Hand* ……………………………………..………105

Conclusion……………………………………………………………………………...109

Works Cited…………………………………………………………………………….113

Introduction

I first became acquainted and intrigued with E.D.E.N. Southworth when I read *The Hidden Hand* and was enchanted by Capitola Black. Southworth tells her readers in *The Hidden Hand*, "I do not defend, far less approve, poor Cap! I only tell her story and describe her as I have seen her, leaving her to your charitable interpretation" (121). Yet, I somehow could not believe Southworth had any less love and admiration for her fair heroine than I did myself. Readers of her time felt much the same. According to Joanne Dobson, this novel was republished into the twentieth century and even "boats and race horses were named after Cap" (xl). Amy Hudock also notes that women began wearing hats, boots and clothing like that of Southworth's tomboy (10), and Regis Boyle states that mothers even began naming their daughters after the beloved Capitola (13). How could a woman writer of the nineteenth century write a novel in which her heroine so robustly and intelligently overcame desperate situations and defeated evil villains but was so widely accepted by a public that expected women to behave so passively submissive? What were her other novels like? Were there more Capitola's waiting to be rediscovered? My research revealed that Southworth not only created other fascinating heroines but also portrayed other types of female characters that represented a wide range of how women in Southworth's time may have responded to patriarchal control. Southworth's female characters also seem to evolve over the first ten years of her writing career from women who are subservient and dominated by patriarchy into women who challenge traditional societal views that teach women that their only roles are to serve men.

Besides my own fascination with Southworth, recent critics have rediscovered her novels as well. Joanne Dobson contends that Southworth's heroines "provide us with a vigorous sense of women's feelings about their existence" (xiii). Also, Amy Hudock's dissertation *No Mere*

Mercenary (1993) focuses on the ways in which Southworth creates women characters that deviate from the standard norms of the True Woman and become what she calls “Real Women.” While Hudock’s evidence does show specific characteristics of True Womanhood versus Real Womanhood, I found that further investigation was needed that focused on the ways in which her characters are educated to show that the ways a female character responds to her education causes her to develop into either the True Woman who withers and dies or into a Real Woman who becomes strong and self-actualized. Southworth herself noted in the introduction to *The Deserted Wife* that “defective moral and physical education” caused unhappy marriages (24). This study focuses on Southworth’s earlier works, namely *Retribution*, *The Deserted Wife*, *The Three Beauties*, *The Discarded Daughter*, *India*, *The Missing Bride*, and *The Hidden Hand*, which were written between 1849 and 1859. When looking at the development of female characters in a chronological order, an evolutionary pattern emerges that shows how Southworth creates 1) female characters that are taught through either formal institutions or by their own mothers to follow the patriarchal status quo and die; 2) types who are traditionally educated but realize the tragic consequences of following this status quo and learn through their life lessons how to loosen the chains of patriarchal control; and 3) female heroines who are self-taught and learn through nature how to become independent and challenge societal norms.

In order to understand the complexity of the debate about how women should be educated during the time in which Southworth wrote, Chapter 1 focuses on a history of female education in nineteenth-century America and the significant changes that happened in women’s education during that century. Since female education was a controversial issue in Southworth’s day, the fact that educational issues show up repeatedly in her novels is not surprising and indicates that Southworth participated in this debate through the characters she portrays. Some

of the sources examined are Thomas Woody's *A History of Women's Education in the United States* (1929), Barbara Welter's article "The Cult of True Womanhood" (1966), Virginia Kemp Fish's article "The Struggle over Women's Education in the Nineteenth Century: A Social Movement and Countermovement" (1990), and Catherine Clinton and Christine Lunardini's introduction in *The Columbia Guide to American Women in the Nineteenth Century* (2000). These sources reveal problems women like Southworth faced in their efforts to move away from traditional norms that placed value on domesticity as the purpose for female education.

What were Southworth's views on education? Chapter 2 focuses on a biographical narrative of Southworth's life, particularly as it relates to her own education as a child and later in her participation as a teacher in Washington D.C. public schools. Sources reviewed include John Hart's autobiographical sketches of Southworth in *Female Prose Writers of America: With Portraits, Biographical Notices and Specimens of Their Writings* (1855), T.H.Y.'s "Biographical Sketch of the Author" in *The Haunted Homestead: And Other Novellettes, with an Autobiography of the Author* (1860), Regis Louise Boyle's dissertation *Mrs. E.D.E.N. Southworth*, *Novelist* (1939), Mary Kelley's *Private Woman, Public Stage* (1984), Susan Coultrap-McQuin's *Doing Literary Business* (1990) and Amy Hudock's dissertation *No Mere Mercenary: The Early Life and Fiction of E.D.E.N. Southworth* (1993). Southworth's education as a child and her experiences as a teacher influenced her writing, particularly in development of her female characters.

The following three chapters of this thesis expand on research done by critics who have examined from a feminist perspective the subversive ideas Southworth gives of a new independent and self-actualized woman. Until recently, not much had been done by modern critics in analyzing her work. In *Woman's Fiction* (1978), Nina Baym explores how Southworth

had, by and large, escaped harsher criticism from reviewers of her day because of the humorous light in which she portrayed her characters; and in *Novels, Readers and Reviewers* (1984), Baym asserts that Southworth empowered her female readers to believe they could become more independent. Also in 1984, Annette Kolodny in *The Land Before Her* discusses how in Southworth's novel *India*, the movement of Rosalie from the South to the West represents a return to a utopia garden of Eden and a movement away from a fallen garden in the South that was supported by slave labor. Furthermore, Joanne Dobson's introduction to the 1988 publication of *The Hidden Hand*, discusses how Southworth's character Capitola challenges the ideas of gender-roles that confine women to that of the weak and passive victim.

During the following decade, interest in Southworth's novels increased. In *19th-Century American Women's Novels: Interpretative Strategies* (1990), Susan Harris discusses how Southworth subversively portrays women who submit to traditional marriage roles while at the same time overcome adversity and take charge of the kind of life they will live. Then, in 1993, Amy Hudock's dissertation *No Mere Mercenary* addresses the dichotomy between Southworth's True and Real Women characters. Additionally, Emily Miller Budick in *Engendering Romance: Women Writers and the Hawthorne Tradition* (1994) contends that Southworth portrays independent female characters that exhibit strong Christian values and function as a moral guide for their families. Then, in 1999, Ann Ingram published an article called "Melodrama and the Moral Economy of E.D.E.N. Southworth's *The Deserted Wife*" in which she asserts that Southworth's female characters model for women readers how to behave as a heroine.

Even more research has followed in the twenty-first century. Lyde Cullen Sizer in *The Political Work of Northern Women Writers and the Civil War* (2000) contends that Southworth leans towards advocating women's rights while being sympathetic toward the more traditional

woman. This double-life is also discussed by Karen Tracey in *Plots and Proposals: American Women's Fiction, 1850-90* (2000). Tracey asserts that Southworth does not abandon the traditional values of the nineteenth-century woman but rather adds another dimension to the independent roles in which women may participate. However, Janet Gabler-Hover in *Dreaming Black/Writing White* (2000) argues that Hagar in *The Deserted Wife* symbolizes the Southerner's need to wash away their guilt over the way they had used Black slave labor. On the other hand, in *The Belle Gone Bad* (2002), Betina Entzminger suggests Southworth's dark seductress represents societal problems of the South. Similarly, Paul Jones in *Unwelcome Voices: Subversive Fiction in the Antebellum South* (2005) feels Southworth challenges the South's traditional way of life regarding both slavery and women's rights. Joyce Warren also addresses the issues of women's rights in *Women, Money and the Law* (2005), but she discusses how Southworth uses Hagar in *The Deserted Wife* to show female readers that they can become more economically independent. Likewise, in *Tomboys: A Literary and Cultural History* (2008), Michelle Ann Abate addresses how Southworth changed the status quo of appropriate behavior by introducing "tomboyism" into the American culture and giving women a way to become more physically empowered. In a 2010 article "'What Did You Mean?' Marriage in E.D.E.N. Southworth's Novels," Cindy Weinstein contends that language barriers of women in Southworth's novels often leads to confusion in her marriage proposals, and in *Against the Gallows* (2011) Jones argues that Southworth advocates for an end to capital punishment.

While I agree with the positions of many of these critics, none of the research thus far has discussed how Southworth addresses problems of traditional female education that both formally and informally teach young women to passively accept patriarchal dominance even at the expense of their own physical health and wellbeing. When we look at Southworth's first novel

Retribution, her views on education seem vague; however, when we compare it with subsequent novels like *The Three Beauties*, a pattern emerges in which a traditional education that focuses on being subservient to men is a fundamental cause of the unhappy outcome of her female characters. Chapter 3 examines female characters that learn by abused or absent mothers as well as at traditional boarding schools that their role in nineteenth century American society is to be submissive in order to please their husbands and create the appearance of domestic harmony. Out of this educational system, two types of women emerge in Southworth's novels: the angel and the demon in the house. The angel in the house has learned to believe in the tenants of True Womanhood and seeks to implement them fully even at the expense of her own life. Examples of this character type are Hester Grey in *Retribution* and Father Burleigh's sister Veronica Joy in *The Three Beauties*. Because they have learned from an educational system that values patriarchy and teaches submissiveness, they are incapable of either understanding or seeing the hardships they encounter in life, and this ignorance leads to their deaths.

A second type of traditionally-educated woman that works within the system is the demon in the house. This woman understands and implements the tenants of piety and submissiveness from the education she has received both at home and at school; however, she is manipulative and works this system for her own personal gain. Examples of this character type are Juliette Summers in *Retribution* and Sina Hinton in *The Three Beauties*. Both seek to manipulate and control the men they pursue by using the skills they have learned about submissiveness and domesticity, but underneath, they plan ways they can twist the patriarchal system into getting what they want. Even though this character type differs from the compliant woman, her education is similar in that it teaches her that obedience to men's wishes is valued, and, like the woman who submits to these virtues, she also succumbs to the same fate and dies

when her deceit is discovered. Thus, the conventionally-educated woman, who cannot change from either being or pretending to be the appropriately submissive woman, succumbs to a bad end.

Therefore, Southworth creates an evolved female character that has also been conventionally educated but later must learn new life lessons as hardships come her way, and through this learning process, she is able to survive and at least make some decisions for herself. Chapter 4 shows how these characters are educated similarly by being sent to a boarding or convent school but then face a challenging situation and change in order to handle these unexpected problems. Examples of this character type include: Imogene Summerfield in *The Three Beauties* who functions as a transitional character who does make the decision not to marry the man chosen for her even though she remains tied to a patriarchal system that would demand her confinement to a convent; India Sutherland in *India* who changes from a self-absorbed elitist into a more compassionate and understanding woman; Rosalie Vivian who courageously moves to the West to become a teacher but is limited by her physical stamina; and Elsie Chester in *The Discarded Daughter* who functions as the new generation that will make different decisions than her mother Alice Chester. Each character is sent away to boarding school, and when they return, they confront an oppressive patriarchal force that requires them to submit and die or refuse to comply and face becoming outcast but live. Likewise, the second type in this conventionally-educated category is the character who is given the same lessons of submissiveness and domesticity, but she is taught from home by a male tutor. Examples of this character type are Winny Darling in *The Three Beauties* and Alice Chester in *The Discarded Daughter*. Both of these women are taught by male teachers; however, these men are new thinkers and give these women new ideas along with the traditional views of patriarchy. Thus,

these women are given the opportunity to challenge their fathers and move into less submissive relationships where their husbands value what they think.

As Southworth continues to develop female characters, they move from passivity to independence, and Southworth has them leave the realm of traditional education. In Chapter 5, Southworth's heroines are self-taught, learn lessons in nature, and gain more physical strength and endurance. Alongside of these heroines, Southworth juxtaposes traditionally-educated women that are able to learn lessons from these new-thinking women. Examples of this New Woman character and her True Woman counterpart include: Hagar Withers compared to Sophie Churchill and Rosalia Aguilar in *The Deserted Wife* (1849), Nettie Hutton compared to Alice and Elsie Chester in *The Discarded Daughter* (1851), Jacquelina L'Oiseau compared to Marian Mayfield in *The Missing Bride* (1854) and Capitola Black compared to Clara Day in *The Hidden Hand* (1859). When examining these non-traditionally educated women characters in chronological order, we see that with each successive novel, Southworth creates women who push the boundaries of patriarchal norms further and also help their traditionally-educated counterparts learn from them how to become more empowered. Likewise, each successive heroine develops into a woman who is wilder and more untamable not because of her "incorrect" education, but because she is not educated by the same patriarchal system. She is self-taught in a nature which allows her to move beyond societal norms of submissiveness and domesticity. Since this movement leads to women who become self-actualized and independent, Southworth suggests that the traditional methods of educating women are incorrect and should be reexamined.

Chapter 1: 19th Century Female Education

E.D.E.N. Southworth was one of the most popular and prolific American women writers of the nineteenth century and lived in an age in which the Woman Question was much debated. Part of this question involved how women should be educated. Should they be taught solely to become better wives and mothers, or should they be able to function outside the home to provide financial support for their families? Were women even capable of operating in the economic sphere? Magazine articles and letters throughout the nineteenth century suggest this question was an ongoing one. An article in the *American Universal Magazine* published in 1797 raises the question: "Are literary and scientific pursuits suited to the female character?" ("The Enquirer" 166). The author known as "The Enquirer" invents a debate between two cousins, Eliza and Sophia, in which they discuss the ideologies of Mary Wollstonecraft's *Vindication on the Rights of Women*. Eliza's point of view is that she knows "no better object of ambition than to rival [men] in knowledge" to which Sophia objects that Eliza's position is "a strange unnatural system" (166). The debate between the two shows the conflicting emotions women of the nineteenth century faced – the struggle between heart and head or emotion and reason. Finally, in the Enquirer's story, their aunt Margaretta steps in as mediator and favors Sophia's side by saying she "would not advise a young woman to aim at universal knowledge" but prefers "a narrower field of learning" (166). Therefore, the general thinking was that a little knowledge was good but too much would deny them access into mainstream society. But, how much education was too much? Thus, female education became a public debate that centered on how women were expected to function in society. Even though women agreed that girls needed an education, they argued whether the purpose was to teach them to be good homemakers or if it

should be broad enough to allow women to step outside the boundaries of women's domestic sphere.

At the forefront of the journalistic argument, Sarah Hale, editor of *Godey's Ladies Journal* and Fanny Fern, writer for the *New York Ledger*, showed differing opinions on women's education. Both were first in their fields; both were thrust into professional careers by financial necessity, but each had her own public view on female education. Hale was an advocate for female education but also tried to work within the patriarchal system of nineteenth-century America. In an 1833 editorial on boarding schools, she writes that if women were given the correct moral education by their mothers, they would have the best influence over the moral behavior of their husbands. She emphasizes that women must be taught "every department of 'household good'" in addition to cultivated skills such as drawing or playing the piano. She asserts that while "Infant Schools" might be appropriate for educating the poor because these mothers must work, education should be the responsibilities of mothers, and "no boarding school education should *finish* the young lady." She states that while boarding schools might be "necessary as auxiliaries in instruction," they were too expensive and improvements needed to be made such as the addition of physical education to the regular curriculum that generally included language, math and religious instruction ("Boarding Schools"). Hale felt that the purpose of female education was primarily to help them teach their husbands and children how to behave.

However, her contemporary Fanny Fern only agreed in part with Hale's position. About physical education, Fern writes that she does not like the word "tomboy" to be applied to a girl who is "taking healthy and innocent exercise" because she will likely grow up to be a healthy mother even if doctors do not like her (*Ginger Snaps* 120). Fern's comment not only shows her sarcastic wit but also the feeling held by both Hale and herself that physical education was

critical for girls' development. Fern also agreed to some extent about the importance of maternal influence. In "Two Kinds of Women," Fern creates two characters named Mrs. Jones and Mrs. Smith who fall at opposite extremes of the women's education debate. At one end, Mrs. Jones is consumed by her domestic role and has no use in education. At the other, Mrs. Smith is engrossed in making public speeches on women's reform and ignores her family. Fern argues that if forced to choose between these extremes, she would prefer Mrs. Jones because she takes care of her family; however, she adds that a man "can't damn up a woman's feelings as you would a village stream" because he will have a woman who is "headless" and "docile" (125-128). In fact, Fern supported a woman's right to make her own decisions.

While in school at Hartford Seminary, Fern wrote a sarcastic speech that revealed her feelings about boarding schools and showed a contrasting view from Hale's. She states that she felt like a "persecuted girl" when her family decided to send her to school in order to "curb her imagination [and] demolish her airy castles, and she became "perfectly passive in the hands of [her] tormentors" (Parton 38). Even though she disguises her remarks by poking fun at her dislike for arithmetic, her experience with boarding school education was not positive as it tried to stifle her creativity. Her third husband James Parton remarked that after she left Hartford, "she never saw [it] again for thirty-five years" (42). Fern's objection to her education is that the focus of the boarding school was to restrict and limit what was acceptable and appropriate for a woman to learn instead of offering her subjects that would enrich and expand her mind.

Like Hale and Fern, E.D.E.N. Southworth participated in the women's education debate. She wrote in the same time period as these women and published her serialized novels in the *New York Ledger* as did Fern. The female characters in her novels reflect the struggle that women faced between a desire to be good homemakers and the desire to become more

economically independent. In 1850, with the release of her second novel *The Deserted Wife*, Southworth writes an introduction to her novel in which she addresses the topic of education by stating that "defective moral and physical education causes unhappy marriages" (24). Even though she works within the confines of domesticity as she addresses the issue of marriage, she also supports the other side of the debate by her admonition that girls were receiving incorrect education, especially physical education, which was either rare or non-existent in the early part of the nineteenth century. Thus, Southworth, not only through her own words in the introduction of *The Deserted Wife* but also through the ways in which women are educated in many of her other novels becomes a voice for change in the way women were educated.

Even though Southworth was not born until 1819, many of Southworth's novels were set in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, and, therefore, her female characters reflect the educational opportunities of that era as well as the later decades in which Southworth lived and wrote. Post-Revolutionary America was intent on making a new country that operated independently from its former British rule. Thus, as P. Joy Rouse asserts, one of the problems that existed for early founders was "how to foster and define the 'pursuit of happiness' in a way that simultaneously challenged British governmental tyranny and kept intact the patriarchal power base in the family" (231). Benjamin Franklin argues in *Reflections of Courtship and Marriage* that "the solution was to make women rationally convinced that their happiness lay in marriage and the home" (Rouse 231). By making women feel that homemaking was their patriotic duty, the founding fathers established a patriarchal dominance in the newly burgeoning country.[1] Thus, the earliest form of education in the United States for women was done in the

---

[1] The term for the patriotic education in Post-Revolutionary America came to be known as Republican Motherhood. Ruth Bloch notes that encouraging this role for women in a new country gave women "political purpose in relation to their families but at the same time kept them out of real politics" (155). Linda Kerber adds that women embraced the idea of Republican Motherhood as it allowed them to "invent their own political character" (269).

home by mothers who taught their daughters every skill necessary in running their homes from cooking and sewing to soap-making and child-rearing (Clinton and Lunardini 40). Literacy was not considered important for girls in the latter part of the eighteenth century. Nancy Cott points out that while 80 percent of men could write their own names, only 40 to 45 percent of women could do the same (103). Since women saw homemaking as their patriotic contribution to the development of a new and independent country, domesticity became the expected norm for Post-Revolutionary women, and the best place to accomplish domestic education was in the home.

Furthermore, these early American women were taught that too much formal education was harmful to themselves and their families. According to Thomas Woody, early nineteenth century men felt that a woman was desirable to a man if she could perform household duties, "but the 'learned wife' was not sought after" (1: 107). A woman feared that she would not be desirable as a mate if she were too educated, and other than becoming a wife and mother, few financial options were available for women of the eighteenth century. Women became increasingly fearful because of stories such as one about the wife of Governor Hopkins of Hartford who had lost "her understanding and reason" because she had given "herself wholly to reading and writing" (Cott 102). As both men and women accepted women's role in the home as the social norm, the idea of what Barbara Welter calls "the cult of True Womanhood" was born. Welter contends that the attributes of True Womanhood contained four "virtues" by which women were judged: "piety, purity, submissiveness and domesticity" (152). Only by following these virtues could women of the nineteenth century hope to find happiness and love. Welter asserts that "any form of social change was tantamount to an attack on woman's virtue" and that if women "tampered with this quality, they tampered with the order of the Universe" (157, 159). This belief deeply ingrained in women that to step outside the realm of True Womanhood meant

isolation not only from man but from God. Southworth was influenced by these early beliefs which taught women that the only acceptable place for them was the home and that anything outside that sphere was to be feared.[2] However, in spite of the emphasis on the importance of home and family, as America became settled and communities formed, young women did move beyond the education of the home into what came to be known as "dame schools."

Home Schooling and Dame Schools

Primarily formed in the New England states, these early schools were often taught by widows and were intended for young children (Sellers xvii). The curriculum for these early schools focused on teaching young children to read and write. For girls, learning to read meant they could dedicate themselves to religious scripture so that they "would be able to raise morally sound children and maintain a morally redemptive household for their men" (Rouse 237). Additionally, the dames could teach girls the fine art of knitting and sewing (Woody 1: 140). While little evidence documenting specific examples of dame schools exists, James Fraser notes that in Northwood, Massachusetts, Miss Mary Hiddes and Miss Caroline Boynton taught a school for young ladies, which in 1828 contained "24 pupils studying geography and writing and learning to work lace" (19). Fraser adds that these schools emphasized women's roles in the home and became the "backbone of the educational system" (19). Thus, early forms of education in the United States focused on skills that would help young women become better wives and mothers and little else.

Tutors – Education for the Upper Class

While dame schools in the New England states focused on developing domestic skills, young women in well-to-do families in both Northern and Southern states were also taught to

---

[2] In Southworth's first novel *Retribution*, both female characters were products of True Womanhood values. Hester Grey was the model of the True Woman who became the "angel in the house." Her foil Juliette rebelled against these values; however, both suffered terrible outcomes and reflect the flaws of the True Woman model.

develop skills that would make them desirable wives and were primarily educated by hired tutors. The curriculum's focus was to educate girls in finer skills such as "dance, needlepoint, drawing, music, and, occasionally, conversational French" (Clinton and Lunardini 40). Tutors primarily concentrated on teaching activities to occupy wealthy white women's leisure time since they had servants to do household chores. Reading and writing were considered secondary issues and only taught as a way for women to "teach scripture to their children" (40). Thomas Woody concurs with Clinton and Lunardini's research that "the chief elements of this social education were music and dancing" (1: 271). Furthermore, he contends that this type of education "was designed to satisfy – the gentlemen, with few exceptions" (1: 274). Tutors in the South often educated both boys and girls; however, the kind of the instruction they received differed. Woody recounts a story of an eighteenth century tutor Philip Vickers Fithian who recorded evidence of tutoring two boys and three girls of the Carter family of Virginia. While Fithian taught both sexes the rudiments of music and dancing, he encouraged the girls to become more accomplished in these arts. Also, he gave the boys advanced lessons in grammar, writing and mathematics while the girls only received the basics (1:277-278). While both sexes were employed as tutors for wealthy children, jobs tended to be temporary since they were low-paying and only intended to serve until the woman got married or the man found a more prestigious and acceptable position.[3]

Female Academies

While tutors often taught wealthy young women in early America, female academies, also called female seminaries, emerged in America in the early eighteenth century as a popular method of preparing women to step into their duties as wife and mother. According to Thomas

---

[3] Tutors were especially important in women's education in the South. Southworth often set her novels in Maryland and Virginia, and tutors are important if imperfect tools in providing education for female characters in novels such as *The Three Beauties* and *India*.

Woody, the female academy was the most common form of education for women from 1750 to 1865 (1: 108). One of the earliest academies in the United States was the convent of the Ursuline Sisters in New Orleans and was established in 1727. The curriculum of the school covered the basics of reading and writing but was valued for its religious education and grew from 20 students in 1728 to 170 students by 1803 (I: 330). Another early female academy was the Philadelphia Young Ladies Academy founded in 1787. The curriculum included the basics of reading, writing, arithmetic, and geography (I: 337). Male teachers taught these subjects but excluded classes in the classics and science. The Young Ladies Academy's emphasis was "to imbue them with the 'rational, well-informed piety' necessary to successful wife-and motherhood" (Clinton and Lunardini 39). However, even within the confines of these early institutions, women were pushing beyond the boundaries of the domestic sphere.

Even though the outward appearance of the female academy focused on preparing women for their roles as wives and mothers, the very act of educating them set the stage for a conflict between using what they had learned only toward their duties within the home or taking their education into what had been considered all-male occupations such as law, medicine and politics. E.D.E.N. Southworth was born into this conflicted educational world which would have influenced her writing.[4] In fact, in 1818, the year before Southworth was born; Emma Willard wrote a letter to New York's governor proposing a "Plan for Improving Female Education…which called for public money to be specifically allotted for the education of women" (Fraser 30). Even though New York did not give her any money, her letter got the attention of the leaders of Troy, New York who wanted to launch a school in their city. Willard opened the first advanced educational school for women, Troy Female Seminary, in 1821.

[4] All of the Southworth novels in this study include female characters that have been taught at female academies and seminaries, and what they learn in these institutions play an important role in how her characters function and participate in their families and communities.

While the school carried with it the name *seminary*, it functioned much like all-male colleges. For instance, Willard expanded the basic curriculum of religious instruction, language, and basic arithmetic by using college textbooks and incorporating several new subjects such as natural philosophy, human psychology and physical education (Cott 122). She departed from the traditional male instruction by incorporating student discussions into lectures, an experimental deviation from the standard college curriculum (Fraser 31). Even though Willard promoted very different types of educational opportunities for her female students than had previously been offered in America before, according to Clinton and Lunardini, she remained a staunch supporter of traditional values that demanded women to function as caretakers in the home. However, her students were “stamped for life with a sense of women’s equal ability” (42). Furthermore, Willard’s ‘Troy ideal’ became the foundational structure for over 200 female schools over the remaining century (42). Therefore, Emma Willard held to the traditional beliefs of women as homemakers while advocating the advancement of female education that operated outside the boundaries of the roles of wife and mother. Troy women were being educated in subjects that would allow them to be equally competent with their male counterparts in fields such as law, medicine and social reform – fields in which women had earlier been denied access.

Another early advocate of advanced education for women was Emma Willard’s sister Almira Phelps. Like her sister, she claimed to be a proponent of traditional women’s roles while advocating the teaching of the sciences, a controversial subject in the early part of the nineteenth century. An anonymous article published in 1812 edition of *Sketches of the History, Genius and Disposition of the Fair Sex*, a “friend of the sex” said that educating women in the area of science “takes them away from the simplicity of their domestic duties, and from general society, of which they are the loveliest ornament” (Woody 1: 107). Even when female academies

introduced sciences into the curriculum, the focus and purpose of the subject was to make the home environment a better place. Dr. E. Thompson wrote an article in *The Saturday Evening Post* in 1849 in which he "insist[ed] that young ladies be taught chemistry" in order to "guard against many accidents to which households are subject, and perhaps be instrumental in saving life" (4). Phelps seemed to share the mindset that implementing sciences into the curriculum for young women would benefit their work as wives and mothers.

In 1829, Phelps began her teaching career in the school her sister started, Troy Female Seminary. That same year, she published her first textbook called *Familiar Lectures on Botany*. At the time, some educators felt that science education for women was a highly controversial subject and even held the belief that teaching such subjects "held great potential for permanent physical and psychological damage such as causing undeveloped ovaries, fits of hysteria, diluted blood, fainting spells and even premature death" (Hendrick 295). Phelps overcame these fears by writing a text that showed how women could become better homemakers by learning the basic rules of science. Furthermore, Phelps capitalized on the popular belief that botany helped women learn to be more pious since they were studying God's natural creation and that God would reveal Himself to them in nature. The plus side of Phelps' work is that it encouraged women to be outdoors which helped in improving women's poor health (296). Another advantage of Phelps' teaching is that she presented information in a new and innovative way. Instead of merely looking at the illustrations in the text, Phelps believed that students should have a hands-on approach to learning, and she placed various plants at her students' desks to use during lecture and student discussions (299). Other schools and teachers considered Phelps' methods revolutionary and began introducing the sciences into women's education.

In spite of Phelps' tightly held beliefs that a woman's place was in the home, her work led to women who challenged and broke free from traditional ideals that only valued a woman's place in the home. According to Robert Hendrick, her textbook on botany was so popular that she wrote an abridged version called *Botany for Beginners* and the two combined had sold 650,000 copies by the 1890's (290). Even though Phelps was a leading organizer of the Anti-Suffrage Committee of Washington in 1870, her earlier efforts in teaching at Troy produced students like Elizabeth Cady who was her student in 1830 and later was on the opposing side of the women's suffrage movement (304). Phelps' intent may have been to show women that they could find the greatness of God through a study of the natural sciences; however, she did much to show that women could compete equally in occupations of science that were traditionally held by men.[5] Furthermore, her hands-on approach to education showed that women could even move beyond what male educators had been offering and provide opportunities for greater depth and understanding of the sciences.

Much like Phelps and Willard, another leading educator of the early nineteenth century was Catharine Beecher who also demonstrated an internal struggle between holding on to traditional beliefs and values and broadening the scope of female education. In 1823, Beecher opened the Hartford Female Seminary, and it quickly grew to have over 100 students. The editor of the *American Journal of Education* said Beecher's school was "one of the most liberal arrangements for the education of females" (Woody 1: 354). Beecher's curriculum emphasized and advocated careers in teaching, which she claimed was an "extension of motherhood" and one that women were, therefore, well-suited (Fraser 30). Beecher believed that teaching was the

[5] Even though E.D.E.N. Southworth was not one of Phelps' students at Troy, some of Southworth's female characters exhibit the importance of studying nature and what it could teach them about life in such novels as *The Deserted Wife* and *The Hidden Hand*, and these characters became more independent and physically stronger by studying outdoors in the natural world.

perfect career for women who chose to remain single and for those who needed an occupation before they settled into being wives and mothers. Beecher was such an advocate for education that she left Hartford Female Seminary in 1833 in order to open a new school in Cincinnati called the Western Female Institute. In 1835 she wrote an *Essay on the Education of Female Teachers* in order to promote funding for public education for women teachers (37). Partly because of Beecher's work in opening up the fields of education, young, middle-class women could gain a new form of independence that was previously unavailable to them (Clinton and Lunardini 43). Because of Beecher's efforts in promoting education and teaching careers for women, by the mid-nineteenth century, teaching had shifted from an all-male occupation to a female one (Fraser 41). In 1844, E.D.E.N. Southworth was forced to return to the field of teaching after her husband abandoned her; Beecher's advocacy for women in this field helped make Southworth's teaching career a possibility which became the only support she had for taking care of herself and two small children. Thus, Beecher operated both within the scope of domesticity while at the same time advocating and supporting educational opportunities for women that helped them function outside of it.

In addition to opening up teaching careers for women, Beecher also supported physical education for young women and offered more classes to promote health and exercise at her schools. Because the failing health of young women was a predominant concern in the first half of the century, in 1852, Elizabeth Blackwell published her lectures on *The Laws of Life in Reference to the Physical Education of Girls*. Blackwell acknowledged that girls in nineteenth century boarding schools were given little opportunity for physical exercise and that the lack of it caused "prolonged suffering and incapacity" (Woody 2: 100). Likewise, Beecher published a book in 1856 called *Physiology and Calisthenics* which demonstrated exercises, many of which

she had learned from Dr. Dio Lewis (2: 111). Dr. Lewis first criticized women's fashion and claimed that the tight-laced waists of the dresses and heavy fabrics were a leading cause in women's illness. He designed new physical fitness outfits for women which were lighter and looser so that women could perform callisthenic exercises more easily (2: 104). However, even though Beecher as well as Willard advocated physical education in their schools, it was the exception and not the rule, and the lack of exercise for young women was a topic that Southworth also addressed in her novels.

Catharine Beecher's work in education played an important role in the literary circles as well as in the development of her schools. Catharine Beecher was eleven years older than her younger sister Harriet Beecher Stowe who later wrote *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, a novel advocating equality and freedom for African Americans. Stowe was a student at her sister's school in Hartford, and while there studied subjects ranging from geography and chemistry to sewing. She learned from Catharine "lifelong beliefs not only in women's intellectual capabilities and the worth of a female perspective on the world, but also in the importance of family and home" (Coultrap-McQuin 82). Stowe also became a teacher at her sister's new school in Cincinnati called the Western Female Institute (Hedrick 74). Southworth and Stowe were literary contemporaries, and Southworth would have been familiar with Stowe and her sister's work in the field of education.[6] Therefore, Catharine Beecher's ideas regarding female education would have, at least indirectly, influenced female writers of the nineteenth century. Additionally, Catharine Beecher wrote not only textbooks but coauthored advice books for mothers with her sister Harriet.

---

[6] Southworth met Stowe when she came to Washington to discuss publication in *The National Era*, and she stayed with Southworth in her home Prospect Cottage (Boyle 10). Stowe also introduced Southworth to important Londoners when she went to England such as Lady Byron (15).

Advice Books for Mothers

The fact that Catharine Beecher functioned not only as an educator who advocated domesticity but also as a writer of advice books that would influence generations of housewives and mothers is ironic considering that she never married or had children. In 1841, she wrote *Domestic Economy*, "the housewife's Bible for the antebellum period" (Clinton and Lunardini 42). Another self-help book that gained similar fame was *American Woman's Home* published in 1869 that she coauthored with her sister Harriet Beecher Stowe. While the book emphasizes Beecher's view that women should be the moral leaders and teachers of the home, it also introduces modern ideas on nutrition as well as physical and mental health. Beecher and Stowe suggest that "there is an intimate connection between the body and mind that the health of one cannot be preserved without a proper care of the other" (254). Thus, they blend traditional values in teaching Christian morality in the home along with introducing ideas involving modern science so that mothers can learn how to best care for their families.

Another woman who was popular in publishing self-help domestic books was Lydia Maria Child. Not only was Child a leading advocate of the abolitionist movement, she was a forerunner in developing the genre of domestic advice books such as *The Mother's Book* published in 1831, which gives advice to mothers on educating their children. Even though Child gives much traditional advice, she also peppers within this advice hints that suggest she feels women should also strive toward greater independence and self-thinking. She tells mothers that "if a girl feels interested in nothing but books, she will in all probability be useless…[but] if…she gives all her attention to household matters, she will become a mere drudge" (21). Again, Child poses the same question raised in the 1797 *American Universal Magazine* article: What is the right amount of education for a girl? Child answers that although "every girl should

learn how to sew, and knit, and mend, and cook…there is no necessity that gaining of such information should interfere with intellectual acquirement" (146). Ronald Butchart asserts that "a budding feminism betrayed the advice she gave women" and that her intent was "to encourage greater female independence" (112). Child reflects many of the early female educators who stay loyal to traditional educational beliefs while at the same time helping women learn to use their intellect to better understand the world in which they live.

Women's Colleges

As women became more educated, they searched for better opportunities to learn a wider variety of subjects. Nancy Cott asserts that "as some opponents had correctly feared, education led many women to look beyond their domestic duties (125). By 1837, the next generation of female academies began, and a shift from the realm of domesticity to the workforce appeared. Mary Lyon who was a former student at Troy Female Seminary opened Mount Holyoke Seminary in Massachusetts, and even though the school did not hold the official title of college until 1888, it is recognized as the first women's college in America. Lyon was different than her predecessors in that she believed in preparing women "for greater social roles than would be demanded of them" (Clinton and Lunardini 44). At Mount Holyoke, the curriculum included not only the basics of previous schools but also training in the classics as well as human anatomy. Lyons believed that all students should participate in domestic duties, but according to an early circular describing the school: "It is no part of our design to teach young ladies domestic work. This branch of education is important, but a literary institution is not the place to gain it. Home is the proper place for this instruction and the mother is the appropriate teacher" (Woody 1: 360). Lyon advocated women going into the world to make a positive difference in it. In an 1839 catalogue, Mount Holyoke charged its students with the "great task of renovating the world"

(Clinton and Lunardini 44). Many of Mount Holyoke's graduates went on to become teachers; however, Lyon did not recommend that her students go to Beecher's school to teach because Beecher would not ensure them a set salary. Lyon proposed that her students insist on an agreed salary before beginning a position, and because she had trained her students well, they were still highly sought and had no trouble finding jobs (Fraser 35). Lyon also did much to open the field of medicine and missionary work to women as well. Through the efforts of these early women educators, women were proving they were equally competent to work in fields traditionally held by men.

In spite of critics who felt that higher education was wrong for women, during the latter half of the century, institutions were increasing in number and expanding the curriculum offered to young women. The first school to officially call itself a college was Georgia Female College which opened in 1836 in Macon, Georgia. Even though earlier schools like Willard's Troy Female Seminary and Lyons' Mount Holyoke Female Seminary offered similar courses as men's colleges, the term *college* for women's education was considered controversial. The term *seminary* was synonymous with an education which prepared women to function as wives and mothers in the home. Colleges were schools which prepared young men to step out into the world of work. Family and friends often treated women who were college-educated differently. Martha Carey Thomas, president of Bryn Mawr, wrote that after she went away to study in Germany, "her name was never mentioned to her mother by women of her acquaintance" and Marion Talbot felt "ostracized by her friends and was welcome nowhere" (Woody 2: 152-153). However, by 1860, at least 50 schools called themselves colleges for women (2: 160-167). Even in the face of discrimination, more women chose to continue their education and wanted to increase the classes and the schools that were available to them.

One still hotly debated issue was whether a woman's body could endure the rigors of a college education. The key to improving women's health was adding more physical education courses, and once again Dr. Dio Lewis proved to be a leader in implementing change. At the founding of Vassar College in 1863, trustees decided that Dr. Lewis' physical education would be a standard part of the curriculum at no extra charge to the student, even adding riding classes to promote young women being outdoors (Woody 2: 118). By 1875, some schools began offering classes such as tennis and boating. By 1895, women's colleges were even allowing girls to come to gym classes dressed in bloomers (2: 101-104). Dr. Lewis was instrumental in the development of a regular physical education program for young women which he called New Gymnastics. As more colleges incorporated physical education into their curriculum in the mid-nineteenth century, young women's health improved and debunked the myth that women could not stand the physical rigor of a higher education.

Women's next step away from traditional values that promoted patriarchal dominance into an realm of increasing independence was taken by seeking admittance into what were once all-male colleges. The movement to join all-male universities was born out of the Seneca Falls Convention of 1848 as a "form of social protest in which they sought to redefine and expand their roles" (Fish 264). Even though Oberlin College started accepting female students as early as 1833, women really began entering into previous all-male universities during the 1870's (265). Elizabeth Brown Blackwell was the first female to seek a degree from Oberlin College in 1847. She had finished all the requirements for a "ladies literary" degree; however, the university refused to grant her access to a theology degree when she requested to do so. The university finally allowed her to take the theology course but still refused her request to pursue a degree. Yet, by the 1860's more than 300 women graduated from Oberlin including Blackwell

(Clinton and Lunardini 44). However, these women often met opposition even after they began attending these universities, which included prohibiting women from taking certain classes or acquiring certain degrees. Male students and teachers ignored and ridiculed them, and female students had a hard time finding living arrangements (45). In 1881, a writer for the Michigan *Chronicle* notes that "the word coed" was a "synonym for ignominy" (Fish 266). In spite of fierce opposition into traditionally all-male universities, women continued to seek admittance, and women's entry into higher education continued to grow.

Not all university professionals were opposed to women's admittance into collegiate life. In 1873, Wendell Phillips, a former Harvard University graduate, defended a woman's right to enter the university and claimed that "Harvard University belonged to the public, not to a small group of men" (Woody 2: 306). Also, at the University of Michigan in 1870, acting president of the university Henry Frieze said that the women at the university "show themselves entirely competent to master any of the studies of the course, and without injury to their health" (2: 245). By 1879, women at the University of Michigan were studying in every department, and the number of women students had risen from 34 in 1871 to 129 in 1879 (2: 246). Women during the latter half of the nineteenth century repeatedly demonstrated that they could compete at the same level and achieve the same type of education as men.

Teaching: Occupation Suitable for Women

Coeducation became increasingly popular not only at the collegiate level but also gained momentum in the elementary and high school levels as well, and single, unmarried women found that public schools offered them job opportunities outside the home. After the Civil War, Reconstruction in the South and settlement in the West prompted a huge need to hire large numbers of teachers to work in these coed public schools. These teachers needed to be willing to

work cheaply in order to meet the demand to educate a more diverse population such as African and Native Americans (Fraser 40). Women who had fought so hard to become educated themselves found teaching a field that was readily available to them, largely because of the groundwork that had been laid by Catharine Beecher. By the end of the century, the overwhelming majority of teachers were women (41). While the demand for teachers offered opportunity for employment, it did not offer much in way of economic security. Women were horrifically underpaid when compared to male teachers. Between 1840 and 1860, female teachers were paid anywhere from half to a third less than the average male teacher's salary (Woody 1: 493). For writers like Southworth, who was forced to return to the teaching field after her husband left her, this unequal salary was simply not enough to care for herself and her two children. However, the common view at the time was that women should accept their role as a teacher as one of "self-sacrifice in order to remain molders of the nation's youth" (Clinton and Lunardini 46). From the beginning of the century to its end, women had struggled down a long road to gain entry into the work force and have opportunities outside the home only to find that they were in poorly paid positions and still at the mercy of a patriarchal system.

Education for women changed dramatically over the course of the nineteenth century. At the beginning of the century, young women were confined to only receiving education from their mothers. Then, they moved to dame schools, tutors and the female academy and finally into colleges. The types of courses women were taught changed from ones that promoted cooking, sewing, music and dancing to ones that taught the classics, sciences, and physical education. Ironically, the innovators like Willard, Phelps and Beecher who advocated broadening the scope of subjects taught were also the ones still clinging to the old ideologies that confined women's roles to raising children and caring for their husbands. Yet, the women they educated like Lyon

and Stanton broke free from these traditional constraints and sought equal admittance into traditional male fields in the workforce. Still, the majority of job opportunities for women lay in the field of teaching which offered little advancement and even less pay.

As the values women held regarding their role in society changed, the change could be seen in women's writing as well. In 1895, Helen Watterson wrote a letter in *Century* magazine in which she notes that "there is no point of observation which [woman] is not questioned; there is no voice or language where the note of interrogation is not heard" (796). As Watterson also observed, this Woman Question was twofold: does woman have the same rights to be treated equally in law, medicine, politics, theology and social reforms and, more importantly, is woman competent enough to be treated equally within these domains. The most important question for Watterson was the latter, and she contends that the biggest problem with women competing equally with men was that most of the debate "has been offered by women themselves" (796). Southworth joined in that debate by creating female characters in her novels that operated on both sides of the Woman Question, and through the ways they were educated, Southworth shows the struggle women faced as they tried to answer the question of where women belonged. These characters were a reflection of Southworth herself who was not only taught within the nineteenth century educational system but later participated in it as a teacher, and, thus, would have been very familiar with the question surrounding how women should be educated and the types of women that education would produce.

Chapter 2: What Southworth Learned and Taught

Much like the women who functioned within the educational system of the nineteenth century, E.D.E.N. Southworth worked within a societal norm that expected women to behave in the subservient role of wife and mother. Through both her formal education as well as what she was taught at home, Southworth learned many lessons throughout her life that must have made her realize that conforming to these traditional beliefs might not always work in a world where women often found themselves deserted either by a man's death or abandonment. Southworth used these life lessons to teach others through her novels. Amy Hudock asserts that "she desired above all else to instruct through entertainment…and shaped the thinking of a generation" (3). Publically, she was much like the leading women educators of the nineteenth century in that she functioned as a model of the domestic and submissive woman and "sought to present a carefully constructed image of herself to the public" (Hudock 31). However, in the same ways that Willard, Beecher and Phelps were pushing the boundaries of education by instilling a broader range of subjects for women to learn and new ways in which to learn them, Southworth created women characters that were eager to explore beyond the confines of domesticity. On one hand, she created female characters that would be accepted by a culture that held to traditional beliefs of wife and motherhood, but on the other hand, she invented heroines who pushed the boundaries of that confinement. The dual nature of female characters reflects lessons Southworth learned throughout her life.

Childhood and Early Years

Born on December 26, 1819 in Washington D.C. Southworth's father Captain Charles Le Compte Nevitte christened her Emma Dorothy Eliza Nevitte. Captain Nevitte owned a fleet of ships that imported and exported goods from the United States to the West Indies and Europe,

but he lost everything as a result of the war of 1812. Her mother was Susannah Wailes from St. Mary's County, Maryland, the only daughter of Dorothy Wailes who was a widow. When Southworth's parents were married in 1816, her mother was only fifteen and her father was forty-five. After their marriage, Susannah's mother came to live with them at the Hillman House in Washington D.C. (Boyle 3). While the disparity in their ages was not atypical for the nineteenth century, the thirty-year age gap between the two and the fact that Susannah Wailes and her mother were trying to support themselves alone suggests that the marriage may have been a financial arrangement.

Even though Susannah's mother Dorothy had a small income from some property left after her husband's death, they could now live more comfortably because of Susannah's marriage to Nevitte. Amy Hudock suggests that Susannah's marriage "taught Southworth how precarious a woman's financial dependence on men can be" (32). The influence of her mother's marriage and her grandmother's financial dependence on her son-in-law might be seen in the characters of Jacquelina and her mother Mary L'Oiseau in the novel *The Missing Bride*. Jacquelina feels pressured into marrying the much older Professor Grimsby because her mother tells her that if she does not marry him, her uncle the Commodore will kick them out of his house, and they will have nowhere to go and be financially destitute (Southworth 265-266). Whether or not Susannah's mother pressured her into marrying Captain Nevitte is not known, but considering the few employment opportunities available to Susannah or her mother in 1816, she must have at least felt some financial motivations for marrying him. Thus, Southworth's earliest memories of her parents and her grandmother may have instilled in her the importance of becoming a wife and mother in order to gain financial security.

Southworth's early memories of her father and his relationship to her and her sister Charlotte also taught her that women were valued for their beauty and charm. When Southworth was only a year old, she suffered from temporary blindness that lasted for two years. Southworth wrote that she felt herself plain and unattractive compared to her sister Charlotte and was treated differently because of the level of care required of her when she was blind. Southworth said that Charlotte "was of a lively, social, loving nature…[who] won all hearts around her" and her parents were "wearied to death with two years' attendance on such a weird little elf as [herself]" (Hart 212). Whether Southworth's account is accurate or as Amy Hudock asserts a "carefully constructed image of herself" is debatable (31). Southworth would have only been around three years old and her sister an infant at the time of her recollection. However, what Southworth does reflect is the feeling that her parents valued beauty and social graces which would have taught Southworth the importance of a woman being beautiful and charming.

Southworth also shows that she carried those feelings about her physical inferiority to her sister into adulthood when she wrote her second novel *The Deserted Wife*, which Susan Harris calls her "spiritual autobiography" (128). In this novel, Rosalie is described as being full of "gentleness and sweetness" which is much the same way she describes her sister Charlotte, while Hagar is ignored much in the same way that Southworth had described herself as ignored by her parents. When Hagar becomes jealous of Rosalie, Southworth considers her jealous feelings a result of this neglect and terms it "the evils of her mal-education" (156).[7] Thus, Southworth shows both through her own autobiographical sketch as well as through her characters that

[7] In nineteenth century America, the emphasis was for girls to be educated in order "to satisfy – the gentlemen, with few exceptions" (Woody 1: 274). The "mal-education" that Southworth implies is twofold. First, Charlotte and Rosalie learn that the way to earn love is to please and be pleasing to those in authority. Second, those like Hagar and Southworth who are perceived as plain and unable to please are ignored and denied love, which leads to the girls feeling jealousy of the pretty girls who get attention. Southworth's use of the phrase "evils of her mal-education" suggests that she does not agree with children being taught these lessons by their parents.

women who behaved with beauty and charm were valued while women who were by nature shy, withdrawn or physically marred were ignored and that the resulting jealousy could be a learned behavior that no one would want.

However, even when a woman was socially charming and beautiful, her position in her home was still a precarious one, which was also a lesson Southworth learned through the early death of her father. Captain Nevitte died in 1823 when Southworth was only four, but she said that she felt his loss deeply. Southworth recollected that she and her sister were at her father's deathbed, and when she was told that he had died she "felt as if [she] had received a stunning blow upon the brow" and remembered the funeral as a "hideous dream" (Hart 212). However, the real loss for Southworth, her mother, grandmother and sister would come during the next several years when they did not have the financial support of her father. Although they could fall back on Grandmother Dorothy's property that brought them a small income, they lived a meager life without the assistance of Captain Nevitte.

Southworth's grandmother is portrayed in her biographies as the model of what Welter calls a True Woman, whom Southworth seems to both admire and reject when we see similar characters written in her novels. At one point after Captain Nevitte died, Dorothy attempted to run a boarding house, but she "never could learn to present a bill," and the venture only lasted about a year (T.H.Y. 84). Southworth referred to her grandmother as "a lady of the lofty old school" (Hart 213) and must have learned from her the values and behaviors of a traditional woman. Her biographer, whom many scholars believe to be Southworth herself, in the introduction of *The Haunted Homestead* said that her grandmother "made the earliest and deepest personal impression" on her (T.H.Y. 81). Southworth creates a female character who appears much like her own grandmother in *The Three Beauties*. Winny Darling's grandmother is

a widow who is totally dependent upon her son and daughter to take care of her. When her son Squire Darling chases after Winny and her new husband because they have eloped without his permission, the grandmother cannot take the shock, and as she lays near supposed death, her last words were to forgive Winny (147). This portrayal suggests that while Southworth views the grandmother's character in a positive light as a loving and devoted woman, she is also viewed negatively because she is unable to handle her granddaughter's departure from her role as dutiful child. She is also unable to confront her son directly and withers on the verge of death. Much like Winny Darling's grandmother, Southworth's own grandmother is so passive she is unable to ask her boarders to pay their bill, which indicates her dependence on others, and Southworth teaches her readers that the result of this submissiveness is like facing death.

Alongside what she saw in her grandmother, Southworth was also often left alone and learned stories from her grandmother's servant Old Biggs as well as from the Church. Southworth's father was Roman Catholic and her mother was Episcopalian, but Southworth notes that "there was an absolute toleration and respect for each other's opinions" (T.H.Y. 31) which helped her to question her beliefs. After her father's death, Southworth had many questions about life and death, and when Father Lucas tried to teach her the catechism, she turned out to be a "perplexing pupil" who needed to have "a satisfactory reason for everything which she was called upon to believe" (32). She also loved to hear Uncle Biggs' ghost stories, and he would amuse her and her sister Charlotte for hours while her mother and grandmother were out for an evening. However, what interested Southworth the most was that Uncle Biggs "professed frequently to see and speak with the spirit of her father" (33). Southworth's interest in a world she did not understand demonstrated early that she was an eager student.

Southworth not only learned from the stories told to her by Uncle Biggs but also from the old Negroes who served her extended family. Southworth often made trips with her family to St. Mary's, Maryland and the ancestral home of her grandmother. Southworth described that while in St. Mary's, she found herself alone there as well as at home, but her sister Charlotte was a "parlour favorite [who] was better pleased with the happy faces of our young country cousins, some of whom were always with us on long visits" (Hart 213). Because of the isolation she felt from family members, Southworth preferred to spend her time in the kitchen with the old Negroes and "listened with open ears and mind to ghost-stories, old legends, and tales of the times" (T.H.Y. 34). This early informal schooling would become the foundation for her later writing career. Southworth's time with the old Negroes and what she learned from them helped pull her outside her social class and outside of the traditional values of a society controlled by patriarchy, which later is what helped her to become financially secure based on her own abilities – something her mother and grandmother were never able to do.

While she was in the countryside surrounding St. Mary's, Southworth discovered the beauty of nature in the forests and rivers near her ancestral home and learned to find inspiration and health during her jaunts and adventures through the woods. Southworth claimed that she would have been happy if her family relations would have accepted her, but from the time she spent in the woods, she found herself "rejoicing in the light and liberty and gladness of nature" (Hart 213). She fondly remembered that they would sail down the Potomac to St. Clement's Isle and then went "through the grand old forest between the District of Columbia and the shores of the Chesapeake" (213). Southworth also enjoyed numerous physical activities while in the country "particularly that of horseback riding" in which "she gained the health and vigor to which her childhood had been a stranger" (T.H.Y. 36). Southworth was an advocate of physical

education for young girls, and she wrote about its importance in the introduction to *The Deserted Wife*. She also makes two of her most active characters, Hagar in *The Deserted Wife* and Capitola Black in *The Hidden Hand*, experienced horsewomen. The time Southworth spent outdoors while visiting St. Mary's is important because she learned that she could find a sense of freedom and physical well-being in nature, and her female characters like Hagar and Capitola use what they learn in nature to become more confident and independent.

While Southworth was learning through nature and the stories told by her grandmother's servant, her mother married Joshua Henshaw in 1826 when Southworth was six years old (Boyle 4). This union did not prove to better the isolation and loneliness Southworth had felt because of the partiality shown towards her sister. She said, "Year after year, from my eighth to my sixteenth year, I grew more lonely, retired more into myself, until, notwithstanding a strong, ardent, demonstrative temperament, I became cold, reserved, and abstracted" (Hart 213). After their marriage, Henshaw and Susannah began to add to their own family and had four children of their own.[8] Additionally, her grandmother Dorothy continued to live with the family after her mother's remarriage (T.H.Y. 35). Yet, Dorothy's presence may have been Southworth's biggest blessing. Joanne Dobson says that Southworth "remembered her grandmother far more than her mother as the dearest friend of her childhood" (xiv). Likely then, Dorothy continued to teach Southworth the qualities of "a Maryland woman of the old school" and seems to have made a lasting impression on Southworth's understanding of a True Woman.

Education from Henshaw

However, Southworth was now to have another source for her education: Joshua Henshaw, who had previously served as secretary to Daniel Webster. Henshaw and his wife

[8] "Joshua Laurens Henshaw." *The Hinshaw Family Association*. 1997-2011. The Hinshaw Family Association. 20 Oct. 2011. Web.

Susannah opened a school on the first floor of their home, and Emma and Charlotte were its first students. Southworth claimed that she “was indebted” to Henshaw for her education (Boyle 4). While the exact curriculum used is unknown, an 1860 census of Washington, D.C. listed Joshua Henshaw’s occupation as a “teacher of languages” (“Joshua”). His influence on her formal education is apparent because it was during this time in her life that she “first discovered that she possessed some mental power,” and she soon “made rapid and easy progress” (T.H.Y. 35). Additionally, she loved reading the classics and would spend hours reading everything she could find. However, Amy Huddock also notes that because Henshaw was a tyrant and her mother neglectful, she also learned the necessary “tools to break free of any man’s control” (42-43). While Huddock does not specify what “tools” she learned, in 1935 when she was sixteen, Southworth graduated from Henshaw’s school and began a career as a teacher, which she continued for five years until her marriage (Boyle 5). Southworth could do what her mother and grandmother before her could not – work in a job outside the realm of domestic duties. Her formal education at her parents’ school not only prepared her to work as a teacher but also laid the foundation for the success she would later find as an author.

Henshaw also played a pivotal role in teaching Southworth what her acceptable role was to be when she married. Sometime shortly after her marriage in 1840, Henshaw wrote a letter to Southworth in which he clearly outlined the way she was expected to behave as a new wife. He told her that her “first consideration is to find out his temper and disposition so that [she] may conform to it” (Hudock 44). His lesson continued when he emphasized that “it is highly reprehensible in a wife to do or say anything offensive to her husband” (44-45). Thus, Southworth learned that if she stepped outside the boundaries of submission to her husband, she would likely be shunned by her mother and her stepfather, and that if her husband turned away

from her, she would be the one at fault. Amy Hudock adds that Henshaw was "teaching his stepdaughter the best lesson for a happy marriage" (44). It is not surprising then that after Southworth's husband left her, he refused to support her financially. Thus, Southworth learned from Henshaw two very different lessons. She first learned about the world in which she lived and discovered a love and a need to use her own mind, yet at the same time, she learned that the only acceptable place to use the knowledge she had acquired is the very small space of the home as a wife and mother.[9]

Marriage and Teaching Career

As Southworth entered into her marriage with Frederick Hamilton Southworth at the age of 21, she must have questioned how to live a life in which she was both empowered by her knowledge and limited in the ways that she could use it. Southworth says of her married life that she wished to "pass over in silence the stormy and disastrous days of [her] wretched girlhood and womanhood – days that stamped upon [her] brow of youth the furrows of fifty years" (Hart 213). What we do know about these disastrous days is that after her marriage, she would have been expected to leave her teaching profession in order to devote her entire time and energy to taking care of her husband and her home. Southworth, however, did not quit teaching. She and her husband moved to Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin, and she continued teaching in Plattville, Wisconsin for the three years they were living in that area. Also during this period in Wisconsin, Southworth gave birth to a son Richmond and was pregnant with her daughter Charlotte Emma (Boyle 8). Mary Kelley asserts that while her husband's employment during

[9] Interestingly, two of the male teachers that Southworth creates function both like and unlike Henshaw. Winny Darling's tutor Edgar Ardenne in *The Three Beauties* and Alice Chester's minister Milton Sincliar in *The Discarded Daughter* give their pupils an enlightened education. On the one hand, they offer their students a formal education and encourage them to read and understand a wide variety of subjects, much like Southworth said that Henshaw had done for her. However, these male tutors encourage their students' independence, which is very different from Henshaw, and, thus, these women begin to challenge the status quo of the patriarchal system. They seem to represent the kind of male teachers Southworth wishes she had. I will include more about these characters in Chapter 4.

this time is not known, "there are indications that at the very least he did not have steady employment" (159). Then, with the addition of a second child, Southworth's meager income as a teacher was not enough to support a growing family, and they moved back to Washington D.C. in 1844 and briefly lived with her stepfather and mother. In a letter Southworth wrote to her sister Charlotte in 1895, her husband "had no mind for supporting wife and child" (Hudock 46). Southworth must have learned from her disastrous time in Wisconsin that her stepfather's advice was far from satisfying or accurate. Much like her mother before her, Southworth was alone after her husband left to seek his fortune in Brazil. She had to financially support herself and two children in a world that did not provide many opportunities for women to care for themselves, let alone a family.

Southworth was without her husband soon after her return to Washington D.C. Her grandmother had died, and her sister Charlotte had moved to Mississippi to live with her uncle J.B. Nevitte (Boyle 7). Southworth told her sister in a letter she wrote in 1894 that she would go to the post office every day hoping for a letter from her husband but came home "crushed and disappointed" (Hudock 46). While Southworth remained married to Frederick for the remainder of his life, she felt as though she was "a widow in fate, though not a widow in fact" (Boyle 7). She went to her stepfather for assistance, but given the nature and advice of his earlier letter, Southworth must not have been surprised by his refusal to financially help her. With no husband to take care of the finances, she had to manage the total care and support of her two young children all on her own. Southworth is very much like her character Hagar in *The Deserted Wife*. After Hagar's husband Raymond leaves her virtually penniless, she travels to New Orleans where she begins a successful career as a singer in order to support herself and her two daughters (499-502). Southworth's character Hagar demonstrates that women who are put in desperate

situations can participate in the realm of man's financial domain when they are forced to do so because of a husband's abandonment.

Like her character Hagar, Southworth finally overcame the struggle to find employment when she secured a position as a teacher. In 1844 with the help of Reverend William Matthews, she was hired to work as an assistant teacher in the Washington Public School system's fourth district. She worked in this position for three years and was paid a salary of $250 a year (Boyle 7). Although this salary helped to keep her family from starvation, it was barely enough to keep the bills paid and food on the table.[10] Plus, Southworth was still conflicted between her role as a mother and homemaker and that of financial provider. She wrote to her granddaughter Mary in 1895, "I had to teach school to get money to buy our food and clothes and fuel and to pay our rent. And so I had to leave my poor sick child everyday" (Hudock 48-49). By 1847, Southworth worked in the girls' grammar department and was then promoted to principal of the new Primary Department School in 1848 (Boyle 7). Southworth used two rooms in her own home for classrooms of this school in which she was responsible for eighty male and female students (T.H.Y. 39-40). In a 1937 article in the *Washington Star* over the history of Washington's school buildings, John Proctor recognizes Southworth as "an early Washington school teacher who became later a celebrated novelist" (F2). Even though Southworth was regarded for her work in education, the low wages would eventually compel her to try her hand at writing stories.

Southworth's work as a teacher also became important in the development of her female characters when she later became a writer. In her novel *India*, two of her characters teach.

[10] Thomas Woody notes that female teachers "served society for a miserable sum" and that in the 1840's, women were paid anywhere from one-half to three-fourths less than men (I: 488-491). While teachers across the U.S. were paid more in larger cities like Washington D.C. than in rural areas and salaries varied greatly depending on region, this salary discrepancy based on sex was true from state to state. On average, in New Hampshire, men were paid $13.50 per month compared to $4.80 paid to women; in Pennsylvania, $17.50 per month for men compared to $6.69 to women; and in Massachusetts, $24.51 per month to men versus $8.07 to women (I: 492-493). Since Southworth was the sole financial provider for herself and two small children, the amount she was paid compared to men would have been significantly less and, thus, difficult for her to make ends meet.

Rosalie teaches at a school she started after arriving in the West. Although physically portrayed as a frail woman, Rosalie exhibits a strong and determined spirit and believes that she can plant "good seeds" when "American women will have more influence upon the destinies of the nation than they dream now" (374). India also becomes a teacher later in the novel as a way to pay off her father's debts and to become financially independent. Another character who reflects the same determination to succeed as Southworth does in her own teaching career is Marian in *The Missing Bride*. In this novel, the town of St. Mary's decides to start "an academy for young ladies" that would provide a similar curriculum to the one they have for young men (383). Because Marian has done so much already for the community, the leaders want her to run the school. She is successful and the school grows so fast that she has to hire assistants and, like Southworth herself, is promoted to principal. Therefore, even though her female characters are limited to a profession that restricts the amount of financial freedom they can attain, she still shows how they become more empowered and independent because they break out of the confines of domesticity. As Joanne Dobson argues, "While reflective of popular attitudes, she also reflected upon them. As a talented writer and a woman passionate about the injustices perpetuated upon women in a society that allowed them little other than symbolic power, she inevitably helped shape the popular perception of women's status" (xxi). Thus, her career as a teacher, even though it was limiting because of low pay, became an important tool she would later use to show how women could expand the boundaries of woman's sphere.

Writing Career

However, at the time Southworth was transitioning from teacher to writer, she could probably never dream how she was going to influence a generation of women through the stories she would write. She said, "It was in the darkest days of my *woman's life*, that my *author's life*

commenced" (Hart 213). She added that "up to this time the latent powers as a writer had not begun to be developed" (37). Southworth, nonetheless, learned through her real-life lessons that in order to survive in a husbandless world, she would have to step outside the boundaries of the lessons she had learned from her parents and grandmother which emphasized being subservient to men. Southworth said that one lonely evening during the Christmas season in 1845, she remembered the stories she had heard at St. Mary's and from old Uncle Biggs and thought about whether others would want to read the stories she had found so interesting herself (T.H.Y. 37). At first, her only hope was that by publishing a story, she could supplement her small and insufficient teacher's salary. She sent her first story "The Irish Refugee" to the *Baltimore Saturday Visitor*, and the story was accepted and published. She even received a note from the editor Doctor J.E. Snodgrass that "encouraged the author to persevere" (T.H.Y. 37). The publication of her first attempt at writing was the boost that Southworth needed to truly understand her ability to write and educate beyond a small classroom of students. She said that she felt at the time that if this story had been rejected, she "should never have had the heart to write another one – so broken in spirit, so despairing of life was she at this time" (37). The publication of this first story made such an impact on Southworth that she continued the tradition of publishing a short story every Christmas season even after she had made the transition to serialized novels later in her career (Hudock 49). Southworth would use her experience in overcoming adversity as a positive trait in many of her strong female characters that she would later write such as Hagar Withers in *The Deserted Wife* and Capitola Black in *The Hidden Hand*. Even though she may have begun her writing career as a desperate attempt to provide additional financial support for her family, she soon realized her talent as a writer and the success and financial security it could bring her.

However, before the money came, Southworth went through another struggle, how to keep up with being a mother, teacher, writer and (in her spare time) seamstress. After the publication of her second story "The Wife's Victory" in 1847, the *National Era* bought *The Baltimore Saturday Visitor*. For a time, the editor Gamaliel Bailey published a series of her short stories, which *National Era* readers read with enthusiasm, but in spite of Southworth's popularity, she was slow in receiving compensation for these stories. Plus, the funds of her school were so low that she was not even being paid her teacher's salary. Therefore, she turned to sewing in the evenings for other people in order to pay the bills (T.H.Y. 38-39). Southworth said, "I did my best by my house, my school, my sick child, and my publisher. Yet neither child, nor school, nor publisher received justice" (Hart 214). Southworth learned a hard lesson; she could not continue to juggle each responsibility at the same time. Something was going to have to change, both in the way she managed her time and the types of writing she would produce.

That change came in the form of a new relationship between Southworth, John Greenleaf Whittier and Gamaliel Bailey in 1847. After a brief lapse in the publication of her short stories, Bailey told her that her readers missed her appearance in the *Era* (T.H.Y. 39). He took her to a political party where she met leading anti-slavery advocates including John Greenleaf Whittier. In an article about her life published in 1893, she later described Whittier as "an illustrious poet" and "a rising star of the first magnitude" (Hudock 52). Whittier not only encouraged Southworth to keep writing but also asked Bailey to secure a weekly contribution of her writing in the *National Era* (Boyle 8). Thus, Southworth's regular submissions to the magazine provided a stable income for her and must have been a great relief to a struggling mother that was trying so hard to support her family. Her agreement with Bailey also marked a transition in her writing from short stories to the novel. Her first longer work was *The Temptation*, which was begun as a

short story but soon developed into one that would run through seven editions of the *Era* (T.H.Y. 39). She was paid ten dollars per column for this work (Boyle 8) and the serial was later published along with several other short stories in 1879 as *Sybil Brotherton* (Hudock 60). Southworth discovered that writing longer pieces was better for both time management as well as financial security.

Southworth began her first full-length serialized novel *Retribution* for the *National Era* in June of 1849, and both readers as well as critics gave the novel high praise. She said that the idea for this novel "called up several subjects of a profoundly moral and philosophical nature upon which the very trials and sufferings of my own life had led me to reflect, and from among them selected that of *moral retribution*, as I understood it" (Hart 213-214). In an article in *The Saturday Evening Post* written in 1853, Southworth also said that in spite of her continued effort to keep up with her school and her home, "not once were her readers disappointed of their chapter" (Boyle 9). Also, one critic wrote in the *National Era* in 1856 that her "writings indicate genius powers of invention, and a graphic ability; but she deals too much, we think, in the passionate."[11] In spite of the negative addition to such a positive beginning, the critic acknowledges something that Southworth would not deny – her passion toward her subject of teaching her readers about morality and behavior. The didactic nature of *Retribution* is clear from the first page when she outlines the "intangible crimes – sins against mind, heart, or happiness" and "the retribution that pursues crime" (19). However, when given the scope of not only how she had been harmed by her husband's misbehavior but also how she had learned how to overcome that adversity, Southworth's goal for what she hoped to teach seemed deeper than just the moral retribution of the husband and lover in her novel.

[11] "Retribution; A Tale of Passion." *National Era* 10.507 (18 Sept. 1856): 150.

In *Retribution*, Southworth also gives her main character Hester such a submissive nature that she is harmed by her inability to adapt to the moral misbehavior of her husband. Amy Hudock asserts that "being viewed as a didactic writer provided Southworth with respectability, power and a voice – and significantly, she used these to teach more than one moral" (76). Even though this first novel does not have female characters like herself who overcome adversity, she does show through both Hester and her rival Juliette the negative outcomes of remaining confined to a space of submission and domesticity. Southworth uses these two characters as a springboard for later women characters that emerge as more assertive and independent and operate successfully outside the traditional confines of an educational system that supports patriarchal control. Susan Harris contends that Southworth is "a writer committed to shifting popular images of women from the nineteenth century's valorization of the 'Angel in the House' – passive, obedient, and happy to be defined by others – to a recognition of women's talents for active self-determination" (130). With the publication and success of *Retribution*, which was later republished in book form by T.B. Peterson and Brother in 1856, Southworth began the process of metaphorically opening the schoolhouse door and letting her women readers learn that women can overcome hardships and become self-actualized and independent.

Southworth began a vigorous and full-time writing career after the publication of *Retribution*, and with each successive novel, she became bolder in portraying the assertiveness of her female heroines as her popularity increased. Between 1849 and 1859, Southworth would serialize at least one and oftentimes two novels per year in addition to her yearly Christmas short story and several other short stories as well. By 1874 the editor for the *Ohio Farmer* wrote that according to the records kept in Boston's public school libraries, Southworth's novels were more

widely read than any other books of that time.[12] In spite of her popularity, her early critics were bothered not only by her wild plots and zealous religious overtones but specifically by her "vigorous sketches of character."[13] Some critics seemed unable, either because they had not read the books or because they could not broach the topic of her non-traditional characters, to give an accurate criticism of her work. For example, a critic in an 1856 edition of *Spirit of the Times* wrote that her novel *India* was "well-written" but, instead of giving even one account of the novel's characters, he seemed to digress into the story of Adam being tempted by Eve into eating apples. He adds that "both men and women have eaten apples ever since and all seem very fond of them."[14] Other critics were more direct in their criticism of Southworth. One critic noted in an 1851 review published in *The Southern Literary Messenger* that "it is almost impossible to convey a distinct idea of the nature of the immorality" in her works.[15] While he does not seem to be able to "go into particulars," he feels that even though "the fault lies not in indelicate scenes but in highly indelicate allusions and incidents."[16] Another critic said of *The Deserted Wife* in an 1855 article from *Spirit of the Times* that "it is monstrous and should not be printed."[17] However, Southworth was immensely popular; she kept writing her stories and publishers kept printing them because her books made them money.

In spite of her popularity, Southworth's publishers often did not agree with her on what she should write, and this conflict caused her to switch publishers. In 1849, not only was she submitting to the *National Era,* but she also began selling her stories to the *Saturday Evening Post* and formed a business relationship with Henry Peterson. The stories she sold to the *Post*

[12] "Editor's Table." *Ohio Farmer* 46.23 (5 Dec. 1874): 361.
[13] "Retribution; A Tale of Passion." *National Era* 10.507 (18 Sept. 1856): 150.
[14] "New Publications." *Spirit of the Times* 26.8 (5 Apr. 1856): 11.
[15] "Notices of New Works: The Mother-in-Law; or the Isle of Rays. A Tale." *The Southern Literary Messenger; Devoted to Every Department of Literature, and the Fine Arts* 17.6 (June 1851): 390.
[16] Ibid.
[17] "New Publications." *Spirit of the Times* 25.39 (10 Nov. 1855): 457.

help to raise subscriptions to 80,000 by 1855 (Coultrap-McQuin 57). In spite of the success brought to his magazine because of Southworth's stories, he disagreed with her about the morality of her work. He was also unwilling to give her as much freedom to write about the subjects she wanted; however, her connection to Henry Peterson would later put her into contact with his cousin T.B. Peterson who became a publisher of her books and that relationship continued until her death (57). Even though T.B. Peterson kept a working relationship with Southworth, she thought he was "miserly," and she was often unhappy about creating a controversy over the authorship of her books in order to boost sales (77). After much disagreement with Henry Peterson over what she could write, by 1857 she had stopped sending stories to him and started sending her stories instead to Robert Bonner who was the editor of the *New York Ledger* (68-69). Even though she had a good working relationship with Bonner, she was not afraid to stand up to him in defense of her work. When he wrote to her about an "unimportant detail" he wanted her to remove from one of her stories, she responded by adamantly defending her work and refusing to remove the material (62). In another incident, a publisher of *The Columbian* attempted to publish one of her novels, but she had not given him permission to do so, and she demanded publication stopped (Boyle 28). Southworth demonstrated that she could not only create more self-assertive women characters in her novels but also that she could deal with her publishers and be in charge over what she wrote. She refused to be controlled, and as her novels continued over the next ten years, her female heroines refused to be controlled as well.

Southworth challenges the status quo of nineteenth century patriarchy by the ways in which she portrays her women heroines. During the first ten years of her writing career, Southworth's women characters evolve from being prototypes of submissiveness and

domesticity into women who break out of traditional norms into women who are more independent and self-actualized. In the novels covered by this study, Southworth incrementally increases the level in which her female characters push societal norms with each novel, and sometimes these novels were being published in rapid succession. Southworth's critics are bothered not because she outwardly violates patriarchal norms but because she subversively pushes the boundaries of commonly held beliefs of acceptable female behavior, and this subversive style caused critics the anxiety they express in their reviews of her works. Building on Amy Hudock's work which focuses on the ways in which Southworth creates women characters that deviate from the standard norms of the True Woman and become what she calls "Real Women," the following chapters will further investigate the ways in which Southworth's characters are educated and show that the ways a female character responds to her education causes her to develop into either the True Woman who withers and dies or into a Real Woman who becomes strong and self-actualized. Southworth lived and wrote during a time when ideas of women's roles in society were changing, particularly about the ways in which young women should be educated. The debate between True Woman and New Woman was at the forefront, and Southworth participates and expresses her concerns in this debate in the ways she educates her female characters in her novels, namely *Retribution*, *The Deserted Wife*, *The Three Beauties*, *The Discarded Daughter*, *India*, *The Missing Bride*, and *The Hidden Hand*, which were written between 1849 and 1859.

Chapter 3: The Angel and the Demon in the House

Although E.D.E.N. Southworth's popularity as a writer began by writing a series of short stories, her first full-length novel *Retribution* propelled her into the spotlight of nineteenth century American fiction.[18] At least part of her success can be attributed to a glowing review in the *National Era* by John Greenleaf Whittier, a leading poet and corresponding editor of the magazine. Whittier compares Southworth's novel to *Jane Eyre* and praises its "strength and sustained intensity, while it embodies, as they can scarcely be said to do, an important moral lesson."[19] Linda Naranjo-Huebl agrees that Whittier's praise "would have influenced readers in Southworth's favor" (126). Nina Baym also credits "reader interest" as a major component in Southworth's success (79). Helen Papashvily argues that she fit into "a new school of domestic novelists…who veiled …calculating aims and techniques under misty clouds of pious sentiment, fragile innocence, artless gaiety and heroic martyrdom" (58). While scholars agree that praise from Whittier and a reading audience that enjoyed Southworth's sentimental style may have sparked her popularity, one of the techniques that may have further sparked readers' interest is how Southworth portrays female education as a tool which contributes to her characters' failure or success in achieving happiness. Whatever Southworth's aim, her readers hungered for more, and in the next year, she wrote three more novels as well as three additional short stories.

One of these was *The Three Beauties*[20], and reviews of this work were brutal. *The Southern Literary Messenger* called it "flat, stupid and absurd" and proclaimed that "it [was] high time that respectable publishers should unite in suppressing this demoralizing sort of

---

[18] Southworth's novel was first published in 1849 in the *National Era* as *Retribution*. It was published that same year in novel form as *Retribution; or, The Vale of the Shadows* and republished in 1856 as *Retribution: A Tale of Passion*. For the purposes of this thesis, the novel will be referred to as *Retribution*.

[19] "Retribution; or, The Vale of the Shadows." *National Era (1847-1860)* 3.38 (20 Sept. 1849): 150.

[20] First published as *Shannondale; or, The Nun of Mt. Carmel* in 1850 as a serial novel, it was also released that same year as *Shannondale*. Then, in 1850, it was republished as *The Three Beauties; or, Shannondale*. It will be referred to in this thesis as *The Three Beauties*.

literature."[21] What could have caused such an outrage by the critics? Naranjo-Huebl notes that even though Southworth's previous novels had included "vivid portraits of abusive, immoral males, scheming women and their longsuffering counterparts" (130), reviewers' attack of this novel was a result of them becoming increasingly "resentful of her popularity…and vexed by their own inability to restrain her and thus retain their role as literary gatekeepers and cultural arbiters of taste" (124). Nina Baym agrees that the critics felt their "first responsibility…is to determine whether a novel is immoral; only after that determination is made may one proceed to examine the work's literary merits and demerits" (174). But, what moral story is Southworth trying to tell? Amy Hudock feels that "being viewed as a didactic writer provided Southworth with respectability, power and a voice – and significantly, she used these to teach more than one moral" (76). One of the moral lessons Southworth seems to address is the importance of female education and how the kind of education a woman receives influences the outcome of the life she lives. Catherine Hobbs notes that most novels of this era "discuss women's education along with the subject of marriage, both topics of importance to women" (18). Therefore, we need to closely examine how Southworth portrays the ways her female characters are educated and the decisions they make based on what they have been taught formally and informally to believe about their role in a patriarchal society.

On the surface, *Retribution* and *The Three Beauties* both seem to be about what happens when a woman betrays those who trust her. In *Retribution*, Hester Grey is pious, pure, submissive and domestic and functions as the angel in the house. Because of her acceptance of her passive and compliant role, she should have been "promised happiness and power" (Welter 152). However, she is thwarted by her nemesis Juliette Summers who uses her beauty and charm

---

[21] Unsigned review of Shannondale, by E.D.E.N. Southworth. *Southern Literary Messenger* 7.2 (February 1851): 128.

to turn the head of Hester's husband Ernest Dent. Even though Juliette steps outside the realm of traditional behavior that we call True Womanhood, she pretends to uphold the virtues and, thus, remains tied to the domestic realm. Likewise, in *The Three Beauties*, Sina Hinton functions as the deceptive villain or a demon in the house; she too works hard to uphold a façade of traditional womanhood as she cajoles Squire Darling into making her a part of the family and manipulates his daughter Winny and her tutor Ardenne into leaving the house. On the surface, she seems to be the opposite of Father Burleigh's sister Veronica Joy, who naively believes the lies of Frank Joy and leaves the safety of the convent to become his wife. She, like Hester Grey, functions as the angel in the house.

Yet, all four women characters are trapped by a patriarchal system that has taught them to believe that the way to be valued is through their submission to their fathers and husbands. Joy Rouse contends that "the ideal of True Womanhood was reinforced through educational institutions" that promoted not only the benefits of taking care of their homes but also "the moral and intellectual character and physical well-being of the community at large" by virtue of the woman becoming an appropriate role model (233-234). Both Hester and Veronica believe they must emulate the model of a moral and intellectual woman. On the other hand, characters like Juliette and Sina work to create only an appearance of the virtuous woman because they have been educated by mothers mistreated by their husbands. Sara Hale advocated that if women were given the correct moral education by their mothers, they would have the best influence over the moral behavior of their husbands ("Boarding Schools"). However, Southworth creates mothers who have been embittered by their relationships with abusive husbands, and they give their daughters what Southworth terms a "mal-education," which means that instead of learning to stand up for themselves, they learn to create the appearance of domestic harmony in order to

manipulate their male-dominated worlds so that they can avoid the same fate as their mothers. Thus, educated by both female institutions and abused mothers, these traditional Southworth characters in her earliest novels emerge as women who portray the ideal of the moral and intellectual woman; however, they become trapped by the limitations of male patriarchy and succumb to a bad end.

Angels: Hester and Veronica

One traditional female character, Hester Grey in *Retribution*, is portrayed as an idyllic angel betrayed by her husband and best friend. However, is her betrayal caused by Juliette and Ernest, or could the root of her problem be how she had been educated? Hester is orphaned at eight and sent to a northern female academy,[22] which typically taught girls to be pious, pure, submissive to authority and domestic—the characteristics we now call True Womanhood. At first Hester is not like the other girls who dream about who their husbands will be. They acknowledge Hester as a "dreamer of dreams" and avoid her because she does not dream of "gay company and dress, of parties and balls, of courtship and marriage, but to luxuriate in the idea of a perfect friendship" (22-23). She stands apart because of the seriousness with which she takes the idea of submission in marriage. She imagines a husband who is "strong in mind and body, lofty in intellect and in morality…in whose wisdom [she] could find a perfect guide" (25). As Hobbs and Hale have noted, the virtuous woman is supposed to have already learned to be moral so that she can model this behavior for her husband. Since Hester is an orphan though, she has not had any mother who can teach her this lesson, and she incorrectly assumes she will be able to learn what she has missed from her husband.

[22] As asserted in Chapter 1, the main emphasis for female academies like the Young Ladies Academy founded in 1787 was "to imbue them with the 'rational, well-informed piety' necessary to successful wife-and motherhood" (Clinton and Lunardini 39). Southworth is alluding here to an institution like Philadelphia's Young Ladies Academy.

She needs to be taught that piety should be towards God and not her future husband, which her teacher Mrs. Nichols tries to do, but even in that Hester gets the wrong idea that will lead her toward destruction. Mrs. Nichols tells Hester that she understands the need "to love and to be loved," but she tries to teach Hester that her love needs to be directed to "God, the father of thy spirit" (25). Mrs. Nichols promises Hester that she will be the "physician" for her "young brain-sickness" (26). While Mrs. Nichols has the right intentions for Hester, she is not her mother and cannot give her a mother's love. Sara Hale asserted that education should be the responsibility of mothers, and "no boarding school education should *finish* the young lady" ("Boarding Schools"). Mrs. Nichols tries to teach Hester to be pious only to God, but Hester's lack of a mother's education limits her understanding of Mrs. Nichol's moral lessons. After eight years at the boarding school, Hester comes away with "a vast amount of crude undigested learning" (26). Hester cannot put together what she has learned with practical application. She hears great music and sees great art, but since she cannot produce something of equal value, she gives up trying to produce anything because she cannot match the greatness of what she has seen (26). Hester does not understand that her role as a proper woman is not to be great but to do her best in order to please her husband. To make matters worse, because Hester does not have her parents but an "indifferent and absent" guardian, her teachers allow her to "abandon her studies" (26). Hester understands these skills are considered valuable, but she is allowed to give up. Her boarding school education has not been able to teach her how to be morally superior to her husband, and what she comes to believe is that submission to him will be the virtue he will value.

Mrs. Nichols continues in her effort to teach Hester to be a proper woman and introduces her to a new student Juliette Summers. She "sought out the natural bent of her pupil's intellectual faculties, and assisted her to develop them" (26-27). What Mrs. Nichols fails to

understand as Hester's teacher is that Hester's natural inclination is a need to be loved and accepted. When Mrs. Nichols introduces Hester to Juliette, Hester imagines Juliette to be like a "sister" (30). She sees Juliette like herself because both have been orphaned, but Hester also sees in Juliette what she feels she is not: beautiful and talented. She advises Juliette that her beauty has "infinite powers of eloquence" and "should be enlisted on the side of right" (34). Hester does not see that the advice she is giving Juliette is what she should be applying to her own life if she is to perform her domestic duty toward her husband and family. Hester tells Juliette, "I can better teach twenty what were *good* to be done than be one of the twenty to follow mine own teaching" (34). Hester's formal education should teach her to work on her intellectual abilities in order to please her husband. She fails to recognize she should be following her own advice when she tells Juliette to become "accomplished…on the piano and harp and perfect her knowledge of French and Italian" (38). Hester needs to learn these skills herself because her husband will expect her to entertain and be his helpmate, but because Hester is unsure of her own talents, the school fails to maximize Hester's abilities to be what her husband will expect.

Therefore, when Hester leaves school at sixteen to be taken "home" by her guardian Ernest Dent, she has not learned how to be a proper woman and depends on her husband to teach her how to please him. She mistakenly believes that Ernest can help her make sense of what she has learned from boarding school. Hester's incorrect assumption, however, will cause her problems as she tries to establish a home with Dent since according to Catherine Clinton and Christine Lunardini, the main emphasis for the female academy was "to imbue them with the 'rational, well-informed piety' necessary to successful wife-and motherhood" (39). Although Mrs. Nichols has attempted to teach Hester this lesson, she has not learned it. She feels as Colonel Dent's "pupil," she "could sit at his feet forever and learn" and is "happiest of all when

[her] compliance wins his grave, beautiful smile of approval" (48). While Hester demonstrates purity and submission in her behavior toward Dent, she is so absorbed by her need for his approval that she fails to see what Mrs. Nichols has warned her against: the idolatry of her beloved. Amy Hudock notes that Hester "links Ernest with her god, confusing them, blind to Ernest's faults" (78). While Hudock's assertion is correct that Hester sees Ernest in a god-like way, a big problem is her inability to understand that Ernest's approval will only come when she demonstrates her moral and intellectual abilities that she should have already learned at school.

Hester's worship of what Ernest can teach her leads to a total absence of self, and she becomes an empty shell waiting to be filled. Hester has some innate desire to learn housekeeping, but she cannot understand that "*someone else* had an opinion about the propriety of my spending evenings in the still room" (51). While she has some vague notion that she should concern herself with domestic affairs, she has not learned that as a woman of higher social position, her duty is to entertain Dent, not to perform the common tasks of the hired help. What Dent wants is for her to "let [her] will be the executive of [her] moral government, but let it be a limited monarch, subject to the laws of the parliament of conscience" (57-58). In other words, he tries to tell her to think for herself, but since Hester has not learned to have a mind of her own, she struggles to understand what Dent wants from her. She tells him that she has "never had such a mental debate about right and wrong" to which he replies that "the government of [her] mind is sustained now by…old statute laws of education" (58). Although he tries to teach her how to think on her own, she is so engrained in what she has come to believe, she remains lost as to how to become the more independent thinker that he wants her to be.

Hester makes her biggest mistake in trying to understand how to please Dent by believing that if Juliette comes to live with them, she can make Ernest happy through the beauty and

talents of her friend. Hester naively believes that since she sees Juliette as her protégé, Dent will value her through the talents of her friend. When Ernest buys Hester a piano, she regrets "neglecting [her] musical studies at school" and incorrectly assumes that when Juliette comes, her "fine voice and finished touch may supply [her] deficiency" (77). Hester's belief that Dent will value her as a result of Juliette's accomplishments causes Hester to lavish Juliette with gifts, and when Dent gives Hester $5,000 to spend on clothes and jewelry for herself so that she can present herself fashionably as a senator's wife, she foolishly spends it on Juliette and erroneously thinks that because Juliette does not have a husband, her presents will make Juliette happy (133-134). She is so entrenched in her need to please others that she fails to develop any sense of self which is what her husband really wants from her. When Dent asks her to transcribe his notes, she does "not comprehend the subject a whit more after he had ended than before he commenced" (140). Because her boarding school teachers allowed Hester to give up her studies, she cannot be the intellectual wife Dent expects. Even though she appears to be what Barbara Welter calls "the innocent victim, suffering without sin, too pure and good for this world but too weak and passive to resist its evil forces" (162), her failure is a result of her inability to balance being submissive yet intellectual. Thus, with Hester's death, Southworth shows that the submissiveness she has learned does not lead to her happiness but only to her death.

When seeing Hester only as the good and dutiful victim of the lust between Dent and Juliette, Southworth's lesson seems to be one of moral retribution for Hester; however, another moral lesson is that Hester's passivity stems from not being able to correctly learn from her formal education. She is too trusting and literally embraces her role as the submissive domestic wife who is left alone by Dent while he seeks a prestigious position in Washington. Her physical blindness in the story symbolically represents her inability to adapt to the new role she will have

to fulfill as a senator's wife. Betina Entzminger asserts that "the hidden implication is that Hester closed her eyes to what was going on around her" (39). While Entzminger suggests she is blind to the potential affair between Dent and Juliette, Hester is also symbolically blind about what she needs learn in order to function as a senator's wife. Hester's illness could also represent the only hope for the next generation, her infant daughter Julie, to break free from the oppressive lessons that her mother will surely teach her. Hester tells Juliette that she will have great "pleasure…in carrying on [Julie's] education" (168-169). The potential catastrophe for Julie is that if she were raised by Hester, she may grow up to be as passive as Hester who cannot see the devious nature in Juliette or her desire to be the next Mrs. Dent.

Looking at Hester in this light shows a moral lesson that women need to become independent thinkers and be able to make decisions on their own. Southworth has only one option left for her heroine – death, and she writes that "Hester Dent, the loving, but unloved…was dead – *and out of the way*" (187). Her italicized emphasis on Hester being out of the way implies that Hester cannot continue down the path of her incorrect education and survive. Amy Hudock asserts that because Hester has made Dent into a god and is blind to the feelings her husband has for another woman, Southworth is suggesting that Hester's philosophy is flawed and, thus, the concept of True Womanhood is also flawed (79). Even though Hudock's point has merit, the cause of Hester's flaw is that her boarding school education has failed to teach her to worship God above others, and she puts her faith in Dent and Juliette instead. Southworth moves Hester "out of the way" in order to show that Hester's inability to learn to cope with real-life problems in her marriage leads to a dead end. Her death becomes her only salvation from the devastation of an adulterous scandal and the only salvation that her daughter Julie will not be drawn down that same path.

Another character that functions in much the same way as Hester Grey is Father Burleigh's sister Veronica Joy in *The Three Beauties*. Like Hester, Veronica is orphaned and left at a convent to be educated by the nuns.[23] Veronica's education, like Hester's would have emphasized purity, piety, submissiveness and domesticity. Unlike Hester, Veronica is beautiful, but Father Burliegh notes that he notices a problem that develops in Veronica as the years of her convent education pass. He says that while she does "mature in beauty…another change besides maturing of her loveliness was coming on her" (416). He notices that her "expression became elevated, rapt, inspired," and she even grows "to resemble some pictures of the Virgin Mary" (416). Veronica's education by the church causes her to become so overly pious that she becomes distant and cold to a brother she once loved so dearly, and she totally devotes herself to the Church, eventually deciding to become a nun. Even the nuns who had taught her to believe in this virtue try to dissuade her from taking the veil too soon, but their lessons about devotion to God are engrained in Veronica. Father Burleigh notes that "they [the nuns] wished, in fact, to take no unfair advantage of her ignorance and inexperience" (417). Veronica refuses to believe that she may need to learn about the world outside the walls of the convent, and she proceeds with her plans to take the White Veil. Her education leaves her unprepared for the evils that lurk in the world, and she is left exposed to naively believe the lies of Frank Joy.

Veronica is unable to recognize the evil intent of the charming and sinister Frank Joy because the education provided her by the church emphasized her own moral purity and did not educate her about evils in the world. Father Burleigh recalls how he had seen Frank Joy in his parents' home when Veronica was only fifteen and how Frank had "paid the beautiful child

[23] As stated in Chapter 1, one of the earliest academies in the United States was the convent of the Ursuline Sisters in New Orleans and was established in 1727. According to Thomas Woody, the curriculum of the school covered the basics of reading and writing but was valued for its "industrial" and religious education and grew from 20 students in 1728 to 170 students by 1803 (I: 330). Southworth's convent would have educated Veronica similarly.

marked attention" (426). Because Veronica has no parents to protect her and the church has only taught her to trust in God, she cannot understand that Frank's motives are for his own selfish gain. Therefore, after their marriage, she allows the church to yield "the considerable property she had brought to the institution" (426). So, by marrying Veronica, Frank becomes wealthier and is able to live comfortably because of his marriage to her.[24] Yet, at first, Veronica is unable and then later unwilling to see Frank's greediness.

Because Veronica has lived her life confined within the Church, she remains innocent about the real world and learns too late the truth about her husband. After their marriage, Frank gives "gentlemen only" parties from which she is excluded, and she begins to hear the words "cheat, swindler and gambler" used to describe her husband (428). This realization is a harsh lesson for Veronica and one that she is totally unprepared to learn. Veronica "had been religiously…educated in a spirit of love, charity, and forgiveness" (429). However, this education leaves her unable to deal with the swindling nature of her husband because she has been taught to submit to authority figures -- first the church and then her husband. Even though she tries to confront him, he patronizes her by calling her "an impulsive little creature" and teasing her about her "red hair" that gives makes her "fiery-tempered" (430). She does not have the tools to stand up to him, and her naïve beliefs in love and forgiveness keep her tied to a man who leads her down a path of law-breaking and destructive behavior.

The fact that her husband is a cheat and a swindler is not the only harsh lesson Veronica must face though; she also must confront the mistakes she has made that are much like those of Hester in the worshipping of a false god. She realizes too late that by marrying the handsome

[24] Joyce Warren identifies the gain in Frank's wealth as "feme-covert," citing from William Blackstone who in 1765 stated that by law a woman no longer had her own identity but was "covered" under her husband's protection. Although the wife may technically still own her property, the husband had the right to control and manage any profit from it. She could also not sell anything that belonged to her without his permission (45).

and charming Frank, she has succumbed to "blind idolatry" and she has "abandoned her convent and her religion" and allowed Frank to take the place "between her soul and God" (435). Yet, even when Veronica faces the ugly truth of her idolatry, she cannot force herself away from being submissive to her husband. She acknowledges that "she might have evaded all this [suffering], by leaving him; but she would not do that…only she was determined not to second, but to oppose his evil doings" (436). Even though she knows Frank is wrong, she believes by remaining loyal and faithful to him, her morally superior values will be enough to convert her husband and turn him from his evil ways. However, Veronica must face once again even worse abuses to come, and she learns too late that her ideals will never be enough to change him from the man he has become. Another problem for Veronica is that by adhering so tightly to her belief that she remains faithful to Frank, her purity is corrupted by the vulgarity of his actions. As Father Burleigh recounts her story, he advises that "the lesson should teach us this: -- Great pity for the criminal; strict watchfulness over our own dangerous passions" (439). Because Veronica has been so overprotected by the Church who taught her piety and blind faith instead of how to confront evil temptations of the world, she violates the tenant of purity and becomes corrupt in her attempt to be forgiving and submissive to her husband.

While Veronica realizes this conflict in her own values, she does not learn it in time nor does she have the tools to change the circumstances in which she must live; therefore, like Hester, she must die. When her brother finds her, she is about to give birth to one last child and she asks Father Burleigh for his help. She realizes that she is not strong enough to survive her daughter's birth and understands that her husband is unable to take care of her. Thus, she asks him to "educate" her in the Catholic faith (455). However, what she does not realize is that the Church has also failed to educate her to live in the world into which her daughter has now been

born. Her death provides a way for the infant daughter Harriet Joy to learn different lessons that will not leave her as innocent and naïve as her mother since her brother does not send her to the convent but chooses instead to raise and educate her himself.

Demons: Juliette and Sina

Hester's and Veronica's inability to learn how to step outside of their education proves to be destructive. They follow what they have been taught and are unable to adapt when the men in their lives betray them. Interestingly, Southworth creates yet another type of character who functions within the same tenants of True Womanhood, but this character only pretends to model these virtues in an attempt to control the men in their lives and attain power over them. Both Juliette Summers and Sina Hinton are raised and educated by mothers who have been abused by the men who were supposed to protect them. These daughters learn that conforming to male authority leads to their mother's suffering. But, what are they to do differently? They come to believe that they must portray the image of a dutiful and submissive woman as a way to deceive the men in their lives so that they can get what they need. Through this deception, they mistakenly think they can trick these men into relationships that they secretly control and manipulate to gain power and wealth. They are not truly outside woman's sphere, but rather function within it by trying to pretend to be the image of a virtuous woman. They become the demons in the house, and because they learn too late that their deception will be discovered, they suffer the same fate as the women characters that epitomize the dutiful woman.

In spite of Juliette's outward appearance as the villain of *Retribution*, Southworth seems to have trouble in portraying her actions in a more horrific manner than she has Hester's since the outcome for both characters is death and destruction of the home they cherished. Betina Entzminger believes that "Southworth warns the reader away from Juliette with one hand while

enticing the reader toward her with the other" (41). She continues by asserting that "if Southworth had allowed Juliette to exit more nobly, she herself ran the risk of the community's moral censure" (44). Nina Baym would agree with Entzminger by adding that "Southworth's women want to make a place for themselves where men can be distanced and controlled" and furthermore "the defective male nature makes the ideal of the separate sphere generally unrealizable" (116). Juliette seems to be stepping outside woman's sphere; however, she has learned by watching her mother's inability to cope with life's difficulties that she must have a stronger will than her mother had. After an uprising of the slaves in St. Domingo, she is left with a mother who cannot cope with the horrors of being thrust into a world without her husband to protect her.[25] Juliette remembers she had "a maniac mother, with dark brow, fierce eye, and streaming hair, whose very caresses were a terror," and this mother was "that early, horrible initiation into all" (277). By the time Hester meets Juliette at the boarding school, she has already learned to adopt a deceptive façade by virtue of what she remembers from her childhood. What Juliette has learned is that a woman left alone unprepared to face unknown circumstances and unable to financially care for herself is to face certain insanity and death.

Juliette has no one except an insane mother to teach her how to deal with circumstances of being abandoned, and she learns by watching how men react to her mother's beauty that she can use her own looks in order to get a man's attention. She also learns that a man is necessary to ensure her safety and financial security when she and her mother Guillietta are saved by a wealthy merchant named Mr. Summers who takes both Juliette and her mother into his home and cares for them. He finds Guillietta in a quite helpless state "where no one expected or desired

[25] As Nancy Cott notes, the fear that was instilled in women was that she would not be desirable as a mate if she were too educated, and other than becoming a wife and mother, few financial options were available for women of the eighteenth century (102). Thus, Juliette's mother would have been in this situation and virtually unprepared to deal with the horrors of the St. Domingo rebellion and the murder of her husband and children.

her" (27). Why, then, would Mr. Summers take her into his home? She is beautiful, and even though Guillietta has lost her mind, the family gives her a private room and provides for her every need. She is described as a woman who walks "the floor, with her long, black hair streaming down in strong relief against her white dress. She had beautiful hair! Indeed, she had been a very beautiful woman" (28). What Juliette observes is that utmost care is given to her very beautiful mother and that the Summers' family admires her mother for her beauty.

Therefore, when Juliette comes to the boarding school, she has already learned that her beauty will be a tool she can use to manipulate and charm a man into believing she has appropriate virtues. After Mr. Summers' death, Juliette is sent to the same boarding school as Hester, and she finds herself abandoned like her mother. She is to "complete her education to prepare her for becoming a governess; her school bills to be paid out of her salary after she shall have obtained employment" (30). Juliette is suddenly thrust into a world in which she is expected to care for herself. Her life as a governess would be one in which she would be valued for her ability to care for children, but she has become accustomed in Summers' home to being cared for by others and valued for her beauty. She is like Hester in that she wants a man to take care of her. As she becomes frustrated with her school work, Juliette plots how she "shall vanquish hearts, and, from the number, select one in a golden case" (33). What Juliette believes is that she needs a man to make her happy, which is not unlike Hester who expects Dent to be a father-figure as well as her husband. The real difference is that Hester believes in being submissive to her husband whereas Juliette only plans to use her beauty to create the illusion of a submissive woman.

Unfortunately for Hester, she cannot see this deceptive side of Juliette and incorrectly assumes that she and Juliette are soul sisters, which Juliette uses to her advantage by pretending

to befriend Hester in order to get at her wealth. When Hester gives Juliette "that coveted diamond ring…to encircle her pretty snowy finger" (38), Juliette realizes she can use Hester's wealth as a way to keep her from having to become a governess which would lower her social standing in society. Juliette also uses Hester's wealth when she agrees to stay one more year at school until she becomes "accomplished…on the piano and harp, and perfected her knowledge of French and Italian" and then she "should come to her to share her home and fortune" (38). What Juliette does in that year is to plot how she will gain access to Hester's wealth in order to use it to find a man to care for her. In Hester, she has found a woman who will provide all the means she needs in order to become a fashionable and accomplished woman that a man will find desirable. Juliette has learned to use her natural beauty and accomplishments to create the appearance of a virtuous woman; however, at her heart she is devious and conniving and does not believe in really being pious or submissive.

When Hester petitions her husband to bring Juliette home, Juliette uses what she has learned about the value of her beauty to plot how to get into Dent's favor and, thus, win acceptance into his home. She uses the letters between herself and Hester as a way to learn what kind of man Dent really is so that she can put on her best pretense of a virtuous woman. As she combs through Hester's letters, she learns that "the weak point in his character is his self-confidence," and she plans to "pique his self-love first by indifference" and will use her beauty in order to make him believe he has to have her (116). When she is first introduced to him at school, she puts on a simple white dress which contrasts her dark hair and eyes (117). Juliette remembers her mother being at her most beautiful when her dark hair and eyes were brought out by being offset by a white background, and she understands that doing that for herself will make her appear even more beautiful to Dent. She has seen it work with her mother, and it works with

Dent as well. Dent leaves with the image of "a form of exquisite beauty, and motions of exceeding grace were haunting his imagination" (117). Juliette learns how her mother's beauty gained her favor with Summers and uses the knowledge she gains about Dent's weakness for her personal gain. She also uses her formal education as a tool to manipulate others and get what she wants instead of learning to use it to please her husband and build a morally strong home.

Juliette puts her informal education into action when she uses not only her beauty but also her accomplishments from boarding school in order to entrap Dent. She takes over the duties he had given Hester in transcribing his notes, a task which proves too difficult for Hester who cannot understand how to do it.[26] Dent discovers Juliette's handwriting and realizes "she had accomplished the task admirably, bringing all her astute intellect and brilliant wit into the service of the subject" (146). Juliette is able to appear helpful to Dent by manipulating Hester into allowing her to do the task that Dent has asked his wife to do. While Hester understands that transcribing Dent's notes will please him, she is distraught at her inability to do it.[27] Although Hester desires to help Dent, she has not learned how to put into practice useful applications like transcribing Dent's notes. Juliette, on the other hand, uses her education to not only gain Dent's favor, but she has also bewildered him with "falsehood [which] flashed down into his soul, inflaming his passions, and blinding his intellect" (147). Juliette believes she has been successful in her deception as a virtuous woman; however, she does not understand what her manipulation has unleashed. She intends "to win his heart in time," but she has "no idea of

---

[26] Thomas Woody notes that curriculum of the Philadelphia Young Ladies Academy founded in 1787 included the basics of reading, writing and arithmetic, geography (I: 337). The boarding school Juliette and Hester attend would have likely offered similar subjects, but as mentioned earlier, Hester refuses to continue her studies and her teachers allow her to abandon her studies. Juliette, however, is encouraged by Hester to become an accomplished woman.
[27] Thomas Woody contends that traditional boarding school education "was designed to satisfy – the gentlemen, with few exceptions" (1: 274). Juliette understands her purpose of satisfying Dent whereas Hester does not.

the fury of the wild beast she was rousing from his lair" (148). She has "yet to learn" that she is going to have to pay a price for trying to gain control over the patriarchal system.

She continues down a manipulative path to get Dent to marry her because she believes she can use her beauty and charm in order to be valued as a woman and thus gain social position and wealth. She tells Dent that she has "learned from [him] to quote and moralize as well as to forecast and speculate" (282). Even though her tone is bitter, she is like Hester in that she should not be learning moral lessons from her husband but rather modeling for him how to be morally good. Another problem is that she is still learning incorrectly how to protect herself, and she still seeks a man to validate her authenticity. She has "yet to learn what exquisite torture can be invented for [her] within the limits of civilized law" (283). During her disastrous marriage to Dent, she attempts to manipulate the Grand Duke Augustus William into being her lover. Yet, she fails to understand her deception this time has gone too far, and discovery of her self-serving tactics leads to humiliation and death.

A problematic condition exists for Hester and Juliette in that ultimately it does not matter whether they have tried being virtuous or whether they have only pretended to be. The outcome is the same; women like Hester and Juliette cannot survive in a patriarchal world that so values submission to male authority that they have no room to learn who they really are. Both are educated to believe that if they participate as traditional women in patriarchal society, they will find love and happiness. Even when they discover the values they have learned will suffocate them, they are unable to adapt to the realities of the male-dominated world and are snuffed out.

Another character that functions much like Juliette is Sina Hinton in *The Three Beauties*. She is the villainess in this novel, and she has been educated by a bitter mother who has been abandoned by her husband. As she watches her mother's reaction to his abandonment, she

incorrectly learns how to manipulate men by feigning submissiveness in order to gain acceptance. Vellemont explains that Sina's mother "was not naturally a good woman, and wrong had made her worse. She evidently had brought up her daughter badly" (465). Thus, Sina's conniving proves to be a product of what she has been taught to believe by her mother.[28] Entzminger suggests that "Southworth links the madwoman and the femme fatale as two possible feminine responses to society's abuses" (49). Sina responds to her mother's abandonment by believing that she needs to put on a mask and pretend to be what a man would find desirable and appealing.

Sina is unlike the other characters in this novel because she is too poor to get a formal education, and, instead has learned false virtuosity from a bad mother who sends her to a distant relative named Squire Darling to begin her life. She is introduced as a companion to Squire Darling's daughter Winny, but what Sina really wants is to replace Winny as a daughter-figure for the Squire. Her first deceptive decision is to convince Winny and Ardenne to elope and then to coyly reveal to the Squire that his daughter has betrayed him. She manipulates her beauty and charm by speaking "with her eloquent eyes fixed on him, her glorious eyes glowing into his…and continued with her soft and pleading, or her high, authoritative and inspiring tones" (78). Like Dent, Darling is drawn into Sina's charm and his passion for her is unleashed. Betina Entzminger notes that Sina "has learned her role as belle too well" (47). She wants to be accepted as his daughter to gain the love her own father does not provide, but her conniving backfires as the Squire gets the idea that he wants her for his wife, and she ultimately stabs him in an effort to escape his attempted rape of her. She becomes ill and dies from guilt because she

[28] Since Barbara Welter asserts that "any form of social change was tantamount to an attack on woman's virtue" and that if women "tampered with this quality, they tampered with the order of the Universe" (157, 159), Sina's mother, even though she was bitter about being abandoned, would have believed that women must behave in this socially correct way even if they only behaved this way on the surface.

believes she has killed him. Vellemont tells Burleigh that Sina has confessed her sins which must have been many considering she manipulated Winny and Ardenne, blackmailed Father Burleigh, and seduced both the Squire and Dangerfield. However, Southworth is not content to allow readers to think of her as the villainess but a product of her poor upbringing and education.

Once Vellemont reveals Sina's underlying motivations for her deception and manipulative actions, we finally discover the lessons Sina has learned that make her behave the way she does. He tells Father Burleigh that while Burleigh "saw her wickedness…[he] does not know all that made her wicked" (464). Thus, Southworth reveals that Sina's bad education is to blame for her actions because she has been raised by her mother to believe that her manipulative actions will protect her from further abandonment. Vellemont tells Father Burleigh that he "will feel less hatred of poor Sina when you know all her dreadful wrongs – her mal-education" (464). She portrays herself as loyal and trustworthy in order to gain love and acceptance by the Squire whom she looks to as a father-figure, and through Vellemont's explanation of Sina's upbringing by her mother, Southworth suggests that Sina is not to blame for being taught that taking care of herself is more important than taking care of others. The problem is not that Sina cannot think for herself but that she cannot act outside of a patriarchy that demands submission and at least the appearance of virtuous behavior.

Through Vellemont's forgiving nature of Sina, Southworth suggests that she does not want society to view Sina negatively. Vellemont petitions Father Burleigh to be merciful because "what good example did she ever hear?...With a good moral training, she would have made a very superior woman" (466-467). Ironically, Vellemont and Father Burleigh are both men who would protect virtuous women; however, men like Squire Darling and Frank Joy take advantage of women's appropriate behavior. Sina reacts against a patriarchy that demands

submission even in the face of abandonment in much the same way as Juliette. After all, good moral training does not protect Hester or Veronica. However, Sina and Juliette's pretense has not protected them either. Southworth may be suggesting that good moral training is flawed in its demands that women be so submissive.

Both Juliette and Sina learn too late that holding to traditional values leads to misery, and death. They remain tied to a system that would not value independent women. Entzminger feels that "this bad belle, herself a visual representation of unnamable patriarchal sins, exposes the weakness of the patriarchal system by attacking its supposed strengths" (46). While Entzminger's point is correct, the real starting point of these unnamed sins is the lesson they have learned from watching their mothers who have been abused by an unfair patriarchal system. When they try to avoid suffering the same fate as their mothers, they mistakenly believe they can use beauty and charm to manipulate the patriarchy in order to protect themselves. Hester and Veronica also receive similar boarding school educations that teach the only way to be accepted by the men who have all the power is to please them and submit to their control. However, they are not rewarded for their virtues because the consequences of their submission restrict them. Their submission leads them down a similar path to the villains who wear deceptive masks. They have no ability to adapt to life's problems; instead, they stick to what they have learned even though it leads to their deaths. A new kind of woman character is needed: one that can adapt to the oppressive control of male patriarchy and learn lessons of survival, and Southworth begins to create female characters that function in this capacity as well.

Chapter 4: Reeducating the Angel in the House

After her first novel *Retribution,* Southworth went on to create characters that could do more than remain trapped in a submissive and controlling relationship that would lead to their deaths.[29] Amy Hudock asserts that Southworth "provided concrete evidence that women can do more than bear trials in patient acquiescence" (173). Perhaps, the evidence Southworth provides of women who stand up for themselves in her next novels like *The Three Beauties*, *The Discarded Daughter* and *India* is specifically what causes critics to condemn her as immoral and improper. One reviewer said that *The Three Beauties* was "offensive to good taste and conversational propriety" and that she was "now at the perilous moment in her career."[30] Another critic wrote that while Southworth was recognizably one of "the most popular of our female novelists," he doubted the "morality of her works."[31] Two of her next novels received much of the same type of criticism; most of the reviews acknowledging that her first novel was by far her best. Upon its publication, a reviewer said the problem with *The Discarded Daughter*[32] was that Southworth "makes her men too uniformly bad or silly, savage or stupid, malignant and mean or mulish." [33] Similar criticism was given to *India*[34]. A reviewer said that Southworth had "uncommon faculties for making fiction appear like truth; for nobody who reads 'Mark Sutherland' will think of it as a mere tale that is told, or, while reading it, convince

---

[29] Southworth's second novel *The Deserted Wife* has female characters who function much more independently than those *in Retribution* and will be discussed further in Chapter 5.
[30] "Art X – Critical Notices." *The Southern Quarterly Review* 3.6 (April 1851): 566.
[31] "Review 18 – No Title." *The International Monthly Magazine of Literature, Science and Art* 2.2 (Jan. 1851): 181.
[32] *The Saturday Evening Post* published *The Discarded Daughter, or the Children of the Isle* in serialized form between October of 1851 to April of 1852, and this work was also published in book form by A. Hart, Late Carey & Hart in two volumes in 1852. It will be referred to in this chapter as *The Discarded Daugther*.
[33] "Art XI – Critical Notices. *The Southern Quarterly Review* 6.12 (Oct. 1852): 530-531.
[34] *Mark Sutherland; or, Power and Principle* was published in serial form by the *National Era* from January to August of 1853 and republished in book form as *India: The Pearl of Pearl River* in 1856 by T.B. Peterson and Brothers. It will be referred to in this chapter as *India*.

himself that it is fiction and not a fact."[35] When published in book form, a reviewer for *Peterson's Magazine* said it was "a very superior fiction," and he criticized other reviewers who had been judging her novels "on other grounds," saying that as "long as a fiction is not immoral," it should only be judged "as a work of art, and not otherwise."[36] Of course, this reviewer's opinion could be considered questionable since the editor of the magazine was Charles J. Peterson, the brother of T.B. Peterson who had published the book that same year. At any rate, the critics overwhelmingly condemned Southworth for the way she portrayed her characters even though her popularity was evident by the huge demand for both her serialized and hardback books. What was it about her characters that was so admired by her readers yet so publicly criticized by reviewers? What did these critics see as immoral about these novels? One answer lies in an examination of the female characters' traditional education that tightly confines them to patriarchal social customs and their rebellion against it when they are controlled too tightly by their fathers and husbands.

While characters like Hester Grey and Veronica Joy were considered acceptable because they modeled appropriate and acceptable virtues whereas those like Juliette Summers and Sina Hinton did not, the consequences for all four characters is problematic since they suffer the same fate by operating within a controlling patriarchal society. These female characters are educated to behave by certain standards that do not prove to work in their favor. To solve that problem, Southworth creates female characters that begin to push the boundaries of a male-dominated society and question what they have learned in traditional educational systems. One early female character is Imogene Sutherland in *The Three Beauties* who appears to remain tied to patriarchal authority throughout the novel but makes several choices that lead to a new beginning instead of

---

[35] "Literary Miscellanies." *The Eclectic Magazine of Foreign Literature* 30.3 (Nov. 1853): 430.
[36] "Review 1 – No Title." *Peterson's Magazine* 24.4 (April 1856): 330.

death. Thus, she can be seen as a transition between female characters who remain tied to patriarchy and those who struggle to move outside of it. Another evolutionary character is India Sutherland in *India* who is also educated at boarding schools but later learns to meet the challenges of patriarchy. Southworth also reinvents the ideas of traditional views on education by using male tutors to help characters like Winny Darling in *Three Beauties* and Alice Chester in *The Discarded Daughter*. While the fact that both Winny and Alice fall in love with their teachers may have seemed inappropriate, the idea that they gain equality in the romantic relationship makes the situation also desirable to a female audience. Thus, Southworth creates characters that are still educated traditionally yet learn to question oppressive patriarchal forces and gain a new sense of independence and self-awareness. Additionally, Southworth addresses how the lack of physical education that characters such as Rosalie Vivian and Winny Darling receive causes limitations in what they are able to accomplish.

Imogene: Transition from Death to Life

Outwardly, Imogene Summerfield appears as the epitome of a pious and pure woman; however, she also quietly questions her own education. Imogene is the last surviving heiress of the large Virginian estate of Redstone Hall, which means that the man she marries will inherit her wealth. Imogene receives "her education at the convent school of Georgetown" and as the novel opens, she is "finishing her education…and great preparations [are] being made for her reception" (38). Her education would have focused not only on instilling the traditional teachings of the Catholic Church but also on emphasizing the importance of Imogene becoming the moral guide for her husband and family. However, later in the novel, when she is interrupted by Harry Joy, she is reading Fénelon. While Southworth does not refer to a specific work, Imogene wants to continue what she is studying. As she addresses Harry, she closes her book

but is “still holding her fingers between its leaves” (209-210). The act of Imogene being so interested in Fénelon, a controversial figure in the Church, is a subversive clue that suggests Imogene’s inner longing to know more than what she has been taught while at the convent.

François Fénelon was a seventeenth-century French archbishop in the Roman Catholic Church who became a royal tutor to the kings. He taught the future kings to exercise restraint in using absolute power and to question the idea of divine rights of the monarchy until King Louis XIV discovered his teaching and removed him from his position (“François Fénelon”). This is interesting since Imogene’s position in Virginian society marks her in an almost royal position of authority, not only over her slaves but also over citizens in her community that were in lower social positions. Her reading Fénelon indicates that she is aware of the responsibility of the power she will have but questions how she should use it. Furthermore, Fénelon was also reprimanded by the Church for his views on quietism, which advocated inward reflection as a means towards perfection. This doctrine conflicted with the Church’s views that the way to salvation involved confession and absolution (“François Fénelon”). Imogene exhibits a sense of reflective and inward thinking when Harry asks, “Have you, Miss Summerfield, no power with Squire Darling?” But, “before her slow reply was formed,” her mother answers for her that “Miss Summerfield must not expose herself to her uncle’s violence of temper” (210). Southworth demonstrates how controlled Imogene is at this point by her mother who is also guided by the controlling force of her brother Squire Darling.

This controlling force of what she has been taught and what is expected of her is also revealed in her relationship with Colonel Dangerfield. When Imogene comes home from school, she is already engaged to Colonel Dangerfield; however, he notices that she seems aloof. When he asks her about her feelings toward him, she replies submissively that she has understood since

she was five and he fifteen that they are betrothed and that she "was early taught, along with the Catechism of the Council of Nice, the Lord's Prayer, the Apostles' Creed, and the Ten Commandments, a love and veneration for [him], as one older, wiser, more enlightened and more accomplished than [herself], and above all, as one who was destined to be my husband" (227). The problem for Imogene which causes her noticeable aloofness to Dangerfield is that Imogene has secretly fallen in love with Vellemont while at the convent school. Her mother notices how troubled Imogene seems and notices this "dark secret" is "blighting [her] health" and "darkening [her] youth (223-225). Imogene knows her inner turmoil is the struggle between what she has been taught is expected of her and the love she feels for a man she can never have. Because Imogene's mother reminds her that she is "betrothed to the most distinguished young man in the State," Imogene keeps her secret and will only admit to being "heart-sick and brain-sick" (225). Perhaps, Imogene is trying to put into practice what she has been reading of Fénelon's controversial view of inward reflection as a way to perfection. She is trying to resolve for herself the struggle within her and spare her mother from the shame in revealing her inappropriate feelings for a priest. In this way, Imogene reflects a woman different from Hester who hangs on everything Dent tells her and from Veronica who marries too quickly the sweet-talking con artist Frank Joy. A problem for Imogene is that her health is failing, and if she continues being haunted by her horrible dreams and keeping her secret to herself, she would certainly have suffered the same fate as Hester and Veronica and die.

Imogene's inner struggle over her feelings for Vellemont seems to be outwardly portrayed in her advice to Winny and reveals her desire to break free from her expected duty to marry Dangerfield. When Winny elopes with Ardenne, Imogene advises Winny that "the past is irreparable" and that "fidelity to present duties is possible and pressing" (236). Imogene must

also see on some level that she too needs to live in the present and leave the past commitments behind her, and as she tries to help Winny see the truth, we see that this is also advice that is good for Imogene. When Ardenne leaves Winny and she is heartbroken, Imogene once again advises Winny to let her heart "teach thee …that God wills not thy destruction, thy suffering for its own sake; will thee not – cannot will thee any evil; how can that thought come from the bosom of Infinite love?" (269). Again, Imogene needs to learn the same lesson she tries to teach Winny which is that God does not want her to be miserable because she submits to a marriage that she does not want. Imogene's support of Winny's marriage to Ardenne and her advice to Winny to remain true to what God is telling her heart foreshadows the inner struggle that Imogene also faces as she is forced to reveal her deepest secret to her mother.

As Imogene's inner turmoil becomes increasingly evident to her mother, Imogene must decide whether she will stick with the traditional teaching of the Church to obey her family's will or whether to stand up for what her inner heart has taught her is the right choice for her. She has learned informally by watching what Winny has done that she can also make decisions for herself that are different from what she has been taught by her mother and the Church. Her mother Margaret notices that while Imogene seems "steeped to the lips in guilt" during the day, she is "flooded with the glory of some celestial vision" while she sleeps (295). Imogene finally confesses that not only does she not love Dangerfield but that she met Vellemont while recovering from typhus at the convent and is in love with him (316-322). Imogene represents a woman who has pushed beyond the confines of woman's sphere because she has violated her piety to the Church by falling in love with a priest. Even though she seems similar to Veronica because both step outside boundaries of piety and purity, Imogene is different because she finally tells the truth and is willing to accept the consequences for her own decisions. She would rather

be forced to go to a convent than marry a man she knows is wrong for her before it is too late. On the other hand, Veronica has erroneously and naïvely married Frank too quickly. Then, she must keep quiet about his bad behavior and innocently believes that she can reform him. She makes bad decisions and hides behind her role as Frank's wife in order to not be responsible for going along with his devious behavior in the first place. Imogene could have submitted to society's expectations by marrying Dangerfield and assuming her role as the wife and heiress of Redstone Hall, but the outcome would have been a continued decline in her health and certain death just like Hester and Veronica. Even though her confession to her mother leads to more confessions to priests and possible expulsion from her social position into a convent, her confession frees her enough to not be confined to a marriage that would cause her misery.

Because Imogene finally speaks the truth about what she wants, she is able to at least loosen the chains which has lead her to submit to the wishes of others over the needs of her own. Once Imogene is finally united with Vellemont, she becomes triumphant over long-held beliefs that she must conform to traditional beliefs which require her to follow a path chosen for her by her mother and Dangerfield. Revealing her feelings to Vellemont prompts his own confession that he is actually a wealthy heir himself and has recently been restored to his fortune that had been taken from his father during the Reign of Terror.[37] He further proclaims his love for Imogene, leaves the priesthood and asks Imogene to marry him (485-491). Even though the love between the two on the surface seems improbable, the act that makes a happy life for Claude Vellemont and Imogene is her courage to break her silence and tell the truth. Otherwise,

---

[37] Southworth's reference to the Reign of Terror ties in with Imogene's reading of Fénelon, who tries to teach the monarchy to rule with benevolence to its people. When they do not follow his advice, chaos erupts in the country. The Reign occurred in the latter part of the seventeenth-century after the French Revolution. As the government tried to reorganize itself, it needed to control a resurgence of the nobility; thus, more bloodshed and violence. Only after the Terror comes to an end is democracy and freedom possible, so Vellement, who comes from nobility, is able to return home with his fortune restored. It is interesting that Southworth appears to choose the idea of the Terror which takes Vellemont's wealth and power from him and ties it to Imogene, who is likewise held in bondage by a patriarchal system that demands her obedience and submission in return for her wealth.

Vellemont would likely have remained in the Church and Imogene would have grieved herself to death. Only by pushing against the confines of her traditional education and speaking the truth does Imogene realize her dreams and find happiness.

India and Rosalie: A Step toward Independence

Another character that must learn to question the established social structure is India Sutherland in *India*. She is a southern belle who is betrothed to her cousin Mark Sutherland in order to keep the wealth in the family. India accepts her role much like Imogene Summerfield does; both have grown up knowing whom they will marry and what their life will be. In childhood, India and Mark are both educated by his mother and given "the same school-room, nay the same book, with their heads together" (40). Thomas Woody notes that while both sexes were taught the rudiments of music and dancing, girls were encouraged to become more accomplished in these arts. Also, the boys were given advanced lessons in grammar, writing and mathematics while the girls were only given the basics (1:277-278). Therefore, India getting the same early education as Mark indicates that she is also given advanced lessons beyond those normally given to girls in the South. They have not only been raised to be like-minded, but more importantly, they have been raised to have the traditional Southern views and opinions of Mark's mother, specifically the values of plantation life that uses slave labor as a means of production. However, a time comes when they need more education than she can provide, and Mark is sent to the northern college Yale where he finished a "brilliant collegiate course with distinguished honor" (26) and where he has studied law. The problem for Mark is that he has learned to question the slave labor used to produce their crops when he goes with his friend Lauderdale to the antislavery meetings in New York and comes with a new way of looking at slavery (36). India receives a very different formal education than her intended husband. She is sent to a

"fashionable boarding school" (40) where she will likely learn music, art and dancing. This discrepancy in the type of education each has received after their early years together creates a problem when they return to resume their expected roles.

When Mark lays out his ideas to free the slaves and begin a new life in the West, India's education, as well as her love for the good life, has led her to believe her role is to be heiress to Cashmere and she is unable to accept what Mark suggests. The first glimpse of the much talked about India is of her reclining in her plush and royal bedroom and reading Alexander Pope's "Essay on Man;" however, unlike Imogene who seems to be absorbing the ideas of Fénelon, India struggles to understand the lines, "And binding nature fast in fate,/Left free the human will" (51). Joanne Cutting-Gray and James Swearington note that "nothing more clearly marks the character of the eighteenth century than the extreme differences with which persons of serious and judicious minds responded to Pope's 'Essay on Man'" (479). In an age in which theories in math and science challenged man's traditional views, Pope "gives voice to an unstable duality not only in Pope's day," but as Cutting-Gray and Swearington assert, "in our time as well" (480). The deep philosophical nature of India's reading is ironic since her world view is so limited. It is no wonder that Southworth would portray her as being so confused by the poem. This juxtaposition between fate and free will leaves India puzzled, and she cannot see the possibility that through nature, man could discover God's will and choose it himself. Her experience of the world has been confined to her boarding school education and life at Cashmere, and her life is so full of wealth and ease that she simply does not want to comprehend that she could choose a different life for herself and follow Mark to the West. Thus, Pope's complex duality is both intriguing and puzzling to India. She has received an early informal schooling with Mark's mother that encouraged her toward advanced studies in reading which

contrasts with her boarding school education which taught her to assume her role as the wealthy heiress of Cashmere.

Therefore, when Mark approaches India with his new ideas and plans for an adventurous life in the West, she does not have the intellectual knowledge or desire to understand why he wants to do something so radical. Mark mistakenly believes that since he and India have grown up with one mind, she will understand the vision he has. He imagines that they can use their wealth for good and that India will be able "to confer the blessing of liberty and education upon hundreds of beings and their descendants to numberless generations" (80). However, Mark has it all wrong. India has not received the same liberating education that Mark has while at Yale nor has she been around friends like Lauderdale who have shown Mark that not everyone has the kind of money he has or the way of life he has, and she pleads with him to not follow through with his plans. She tells him that she is not strong enough to endure the hardships of the West. When she realizes that her pleas to stop him will not work, she sees that the only way for her to keep the only way of life she knows is to break off their engagement (131). Because Mark and India have learned very different lessons, they must go down diverse paths – India's is the traditional path of wealth and comfort which will ultimately keep her enslaved; Mark's is a newer enlightened path in which hard work and perseverance leads to success and happiness.

Because India holds tightly to her traditional education, Mark chooses a wife who will be able to value his hard work ethics. Rosalie Vivian proves to be a foil to India and is the kind of woman Mark has dreamed will be with him in the West. Mark questions how she has become so wise when she is only seventeen, and she tells him that she has "read with deep interest the lives of distinguished statesmen and heroes, particularly those who have struggled up from poverty and obscurity" (194). Like the heroes Rosalie reads about, she has not grown up with the kind of

wealth to which India has grown accustomed. Only one problem exists for Rosalie. Because Valeria has treated her as a delicate flower, she is a fragile and sickly young woman. Yet, because of Rosalie's frailty, she has also been self-taught and has learned different lessons from India. She tells her friend Robert that she has learned from observing flowers in nature that a flower that is cared for too much will wither but left to grow in the wild will thrive and that she is like that plant (204-205). When Mark asks her to marry him and go West, she tells him that she will "flourish and thrive in the wilderness" (240). For a time, Rosalie does flourish in her new environment and she helps Mark create a good life.

When she realizes that their western town does not have a school for girls, she starts one in their home. She tells Mark that she "must cultivate their intellects" and "sow good seeds" (348-349). Based on Rosalie's own education in which she read of heroes who overcome adversity, she portrays the kind of woman who exemplifies what she has learned and seeks to overcome her own adversities of living life in a wild and untamed land. All seems well for them except that Rosalie's health is still failing; she cannot overcome an upbringing that limited her physical education. Since Rosalie's only shortcoming is in her lack of physical exercise in youth, Southworth suggests here that physical education is also important for young girls to receive. Still, Rosalie is resourceful and willing to take chances in an unknown land, and she is eager to give a good education to the girls who have not had the opportunities she has had. She portrays the kind of woman Mark had wanted India to be.

Unlike Rosalie, India has not fared well in her decision to hold on to her traditional education, and she remains steeped in her expected role as southern belle. She marries St. Gerald Ashley, a wealthy politician in Washington D.C., and as India prepares to marry him, Southworth uses the same flower imagery as she has done with Rosalie except India's beauty is

described as "withering, withering, as you have seen some richly-blooming flower wither suddenly without apparent cause" (246-247). Because of her boarding school education that has taught her to play a social role – one that India does not want to give up – India makes a mistake by marrying for wealth and social position. India's mistake becomes apparent when India finds herself alone and uncertain what she should do when her husband and father fail to provide the comfortable life she has known. Mark tells her he wants Rosalie to come stay with her because she could "teach [her] to live; she would teach her truth" (366). However, Rosalie is much too ill to be a teacher to India, and Mark finally advises India that her only hope is to clean up her husband and her father's debts and start a new life. Thus, India learns hard lessons beyond her formal education that taught her to value her beauty and ladylike accomplishments. She cannot merely be an object to be admired because her husband and father have squandered their wealth. India must learn how to become self-sufficient and make her own way in the world.

India goes in search of a new path for herself, one in which she will learn to take care of herself and others as Rosalie has done. After Rosalie dies, Mark stumbles upon India again in New York where he learns that she has paid off her family's debt and is living virtually penniless. Even though she could have been "considered a great acquisition in the drawing room of any country house," India has learned that she "much preferred the honest independence of labour," and she chooses instead to work "as a teacher of music and drawing" (390). While the subject matter she teaches may indicate that she is perpetuating the same bad education she received, she also is exhibiting the best way she knows how to put her formal education to use in a way that allows her to financially provide for herself instead of depending on others to admire her for those same accomplishments. When given the choice between living with those who will care for her and working on her own, she chooses the latter, and this decision shows how India

has moved beyond depending on a patriarchal society to care for all her needs into one in which she claims some independence for herself.

Alice and Winny: Educating a New Generation

Mark Sutherland tries to be the one to reeducate India about how she can reclaim her family's honor, but because they have been raised more like brother and sister and because they were once betrothed, she cannot see the lessons he tries to teach because he cannot also function as her tutor. However, Southworth does use the male tutor in her novels as a way to broaden the minds of her female characters and act as an agent of change in their understanding of the world and their place in it. Even though these characters eventually fall in love with their teachers, readers would have appreciated that these male teachers move beyond patriarchal control by valuing the women they love for the intellect and insight they bring into the romantic relationship. One such novel is *The Discarded Daughter*. Alice Chester is the 17-year-old heiress of the large estate Mount Calm. While her father and brothers are away fighting in the American Revolution, Alice's mother invites the handsome, young minister Milton Sinclair to stay with them. He becomes Alice's teacher and "directed and superintended the reading of Alice: introducing gradually, as her opening mind could bear, all the beauties and glories of science, history, philosophy, and poetry" (23). This curriculum deviates from traditional tutors of the South who, as Catherine Clinton and Christine Lunardini note, focused on "dance, needlepoint, drawing, music, and, occasionally, conversational French" (40). This change in the curriculum gives Alice the tools she needs to see the world in a more intellectual and challenging way and opens her mind to introspective thinking instead of a mind focused on pleasing others. Sinclair further deviates from a curriculum which focuses on pleasing male authority figures when he tells Alice that God has given her "the tremendous trust of the ten talents…and of

whom, therefore, doubly would be required" (23). While the "talents" might refer to her material wealth, her talents could also be what Sinclair sees in her intellectual ability to understand the various new subjects he is teaching her. In other words, Sinclair suggests to Alice that she is worth far more than an object to be admired and controlled.

Sinclair's teaching conflicts with what Alice's father has taught her about her role in his home. She "had been taught to love and venerate her father above all earthly beings, and next to God" (43-44). Because Alice is not strong enough to stand up to her father when he tries to make her marry a man she does not love, Sinclair tries to intervene on her behalf. However, Chester becomes enraged and tells Sinclair that Alice will have to "learn from experience the lesson, that, with all [Sinclair's] teaching, [he] should have taught her – the duty of filial obedience" (54). Chester suggests that Sinclair has violated the patriarchal system by not teaching Alice that her duty above all else is to obey her father. Sinclair further violates Chester's patriarchal control by insisting that Chester allow Alice to marry the man she chooses instead of the one Chester wants for her. Colonel Chester is angry at Sinclair and blames what he has taught Alice when she expresses any feelings or desires that conflicts with what he wants.

Even though Colonel Chester seems to have won because Alice is forced to marry General Garnet, Alice does not totally submit to being a compliant wife, and she teaches her daughter Elsie what she has learned from Sinclair. When Garnet tells Alice that he does not "approve the loose, irregular manner in which her education is conducted at home," Alice explains to him that she has spent time "cultivating her mind" in order to give Elsie a good education (109). Thus, Alice still works to read and learn on her own, and even though Southworth does not specify what she learns, the implication is that she continues with her studies in science, history and philosophy, subjects that Garnet would not approve of her

teaching to their daughter. Furthermore, she tells Garnet she has not occupied her life "exclusively with the eating, drinking and wearing interests of our family" (109). She fails to understand that Garnet does not want either her or Elsie's mind cultivated but passive and compliant to his wishes and desires. Thus, he warns his wife that "a little learning is a dangerous thing" because "it makes one conceited – especially…a woman who has few opportunities of comparing her ignorance with other people's knowledge" (109). He wants Alice to know that her role is to function as his servant, and he implies that her self-education is not only pointless but dangerous since he controls her and their daughter. He tells Alice that "there should be a systematic course of study [for Elsie]" which he feels that she is "not quite competent to direct" (109). When Alice pleads with him to hire a tutor instead, he insists that he does not trust tutors. Considering the battle he had to marry Alice because of her involvement with Sinclair, he would not want to place his daughter in a similar situation for fear that another tutor may also challenge his patriarchal authority. Garnet tells Alice that "there was no boarding school in the country which I could care to trust our daughter…[and regrets] the limited means of female education afforded by our country" and he sends Elsie away to a boarding school in England where she will stay for the next six or seven years (110). His refusal to allow Alice to teach Elsie as well as his insistence that she go abroad for her education suggests that his goal seems to be to separate Elsie from the unwanted influence of her mother's intellectual teachings, and he hopes the distance and the rigor of an English boarding school will return an appropriately behaved young woman who will obey him. Southworth suggests a double meaning then to Garnet's warning. The "little learning" that his wife has acquired seems to be dangerous for him because it threatens the control he has over his wife and daughter as Alice has learned to think for herself.

When Elsie returns from her boarding school education in England, Garnet's plan to have a compliant daughter seems to have triumphed over what Alice had attempted. Elsie at first appears to be submissive to her father's wishes. He pretends to give a ball to celebrate his daughter's return; however, he really is only using it for his own political gain in order to "forward his electioneering projects" (147). Another act of Elsie's submission is her expected marriage to Magnus Hardcastle. Garnet is in favor of the union since Magnus' estate Hemlock Hollow is the land next to Mount Calm and joining the two pieces of property would increase Garnet's wealth and power. Elsie, who has grown up with Magnus and loves him agrees to the union because "didn't their lands join?" (148). She does not question her father and accepts the arrangement since it already coincides with what she wants as well. Yet, Elsie's reformation at boarding school proves to be only temporary and the lessons she has learned from Alice come back to her when the marriage plans change and she is suddenly expected to marry Lionel who reappears to claim Hemlock Hollow. When Elsie refuses the new marriage plans, Garnet is surprised that "a little girl of seventeen years of age, with positively her own notions of right and wrong, of faith and fidelity, of honor and dishonor – and telling him, with a high, unblenching cheek, and a clear, unfaltering voice, that she meant to abide by right and eschew wrong!" (161). When Magnus also tries to explain to Elsie the poverty she will suffer after Garnet disowns her, she replies that he can take off all the fine jewelry she wears and "under this soft, white cushion of flesh are nerves and sinews of steel" (171). Even though a comparison can be made to India because of the similarity in the wealth they have always known, Elsie is proving that she is made of tougher resolve and that she has learned from her mother the early lessons she taught her – much is expected of her and she is ready to use her talents as the wife of Magnus, the one she chooses, not the one her father chooses for her. The early education Elsie receives from Alice in

which she has cultivated her daughter's mind allows her to make her own decisions. Likewise, the education that Alice receives from Sinclair also enables her to help Elsie marry Magnus. Both women act in ways that show their strength in making their own decisions, and their rebellion against Garnet's control demonstrates that they have the ability to think for themselves.

Another character who is greatly influenced by a tutor is Winny Darling in *The Three Beauties*. Edgar Ardenne is much like Milton Sinclair. He is young, handsome and teaches Winny more about love than about music and dancing, and these romantic feelings (in addition to the Sina's meddling interference) allow her to push the boundaries of her father Squire Darling's control. Since Winny's mother died, neither her grandmother nor her father have been able to part with her so that she could receive an education. Southworth notes, however, that "in those days in Virginia and Maryland tutors were employed for the private instruction of young ladies who were educated at home" (39). The problem is that her father makes the mistake of hiring "a youth of humble parentage, who became a tutor in order to make money to complete his collegiate education, eighteen years old, handsome, intellectual, ardent, earnest…made the constant companion of a girl of fifteen" (40). Apparently, Squire Darling's choices were few, and he hires a young man barely older than his daughter, and while Ardenne might have had formal education, he has had no life experience. His youth and inexperience as a tutor sets the stage for romance and Winny and Ardenne fall in love. With the help of the not-so-good intentioned Sina Hinton, they decide to run away to be married. Because neither Winny nor Ardenne ask Squire Darling for his permission or blessing, her act of elopement functions as her first step in to rebelling against her father's wishes to keep her tied to him and in his control.

While Ardenne's position as Winny's tutor creates the avenue for Winny to escape the patriarchal confines of Squire Darling's home, her real education begins after she runs away

from home. Ardenne may have functioned as her formal educator, but informally he has only taught her about love, and Winny still has much to learn about how to live an independent life. As Winny runs through the woods on her way to elope with Ardenne, she has time to ponder her decision. Winny's decision to elope with Ardenne is not tempered with any wisdom about how to live in the world, and because of her youthfulness and inexperience as well as her being raised in a wealthy patriarchal world that does not support independence, she is rushing into decisions for which she is not prepared. Southworth foreshadows what lesson are to come for Winny when she advises that only when we have been beaten by our mistakes are "we willing to learn of Nature…and those that learn the lesson 'ponder these things' in their hearts, lest, revealing them – but ten to one my young readers have skipped, as usual, all this description" (137). Like Southworth's young readers, Winny has skipped "pondering" the decision she has just made, and she and Ardenne are married before Squire Darling can get to Harper's Ferry to stop them. Thus, Winny's real education will have to come from the informal lessons she will learn as she begins her new life with Ardenne.

Winny has been the prized object of not only her father but her grandmother as well, and Winny must learn how to think and act for herself, and Ardenne teaches Winny she is more capable than she realizes. Much like India and Elsie, Winny has also been brought up in wealth and has been so cared for in Squire Darling's home that her every whim and need, from dressing and bathing to feeding herself, is provided to her by servants (162-163). She is more of a doll than a person. However, as she and Ardenne make a new home together, they must make decisions on how they are going to get money to live. Ardenne is not like Squire Darling and he wants input from Winny on the kind of life they will live together. He asks her what she thinks about spending some time in the cabin they have found and then going West, and she responds

with "my judgment is not good" to which he tells her, "You have been told so, my dear, until you believe it! Whoever could have taught you so, dear?" (168). Thus, Ardenne tries to teach Winny that she is capable of using her own mind and that what she has been taught by her father and grandmother is not true.

Not only does Ardenne teach Winny that she can think for herself, but he, along with Hettie Smilie, also steps in to show her how to work and take care of a home. Because he had been raised by a widowed mother, he "knew more of domestic economy than Winny…and had received the education both of a girl and a boy" (187).[38] Because of Winny's elevated social status, she has not had any kind of physical education and has been so coddled that she is not used to the harsh environment of her new home and quickly becomes ill. However, Ardenne uses the informal education he received from his mother to gather the wood as well as cook the food and clean the house, and by doing the chores, he models for Winny how to care for their new home. Additionally, Hettie Smilie, the innkeeper's daughter at Harper's Ferry, comes to teach Winny how to sew and put up preserves for the winter (192). Winnie then begins to emulate what she learns from watching Ardenne and Hettie. Even though her health still suffers because she has never had to do any domestic work before, "she had learned from Hettie all that was necessary to know…and now assumed the whole charge of the cooking, washing, house-cleaning and needlework upon herself" (230). Winny is able to learn what Hester Grey only wishes she could learn because she has Ardenne and Hettie to model how to care for her home.

Not only has Winny learned to cook and clean, but because Ardenne treats her as his equal and not as a toy the way that her father and grandmother have done, Winny learns to think for herself and have her own opinions. They have honest and frank conversations with each

---

[38] Southworth's comments about Edgar being raised by a widowed mother are interesting since she called herself ""a widow in fate, though not a widow in fact" (Boyle 7). Edgar seems to represent the type of man Southworth believes should be the prototype – one that can function both inside and outside of the home.

other and at times “imbibed opposite opinions, or prejudices; and when their opposing prejudices struck, a spar of truth, as from the meeting of flint and steel, would be elicited that would sometimes throw a ray of light into both souls never more to be extinguished” (232). Thus, Ardenne encourages his wife to have thoughts that differ from his own, and he helps her learn how to be more confident in her opinions. Even Winny’s cousin Imogene notices that she is a more confident woman. She tells Winny that she “needed this very schooling” that she has gotten from her marriage and living away from home (237). A new Winny is emerging that is inwardly stronger and more confident, and this new independence is a result of what she has learned from her husband, who also functions as her friend and teacher.

When Squire Darling does come to take Winny to his house, he finds a different daughter than the one he had before she left. She tells him, “I know more, father; and oh, listen, lest I should forget to tell you, for I know so many new things; for knowledge comes so fast. It flows on and on, and the new drives out the old; and I want you to remember this” (288). She understands all the knowledge he has kept from her – the ability to physically care for herself as well as the ability to think and have opinions for herself. She understands how her father has tried to control her by refusing to help her and Ardenne which forces her husband to leave her. Squire Darling, however, cannot understand his daughter’s newfound knowledge and blames Ardenne for her ill health as well as her refusal to come home with him. After Winny explains to him all that she now has learned about life and how she suffers because of his refusal to accept her husband, he seizes “her hand hoping – yes hoping – to find fever there to account for this fearful wandering of the mind; but no, her pulse was even and rather slow” (288). Her father cannot comprehend his daughter’s new way of thinking, and she will have to endure and patiently wait until family, friends and servants all plead with him to find Edgar and restore the

couple's marriage. The reason that Winny can endure the hardships that follow as she suffers from ill health, the birth of the baby and a separation from her husband is that she has learned much about how to think and care for herself. These are lessons she would have never learned from either her grandmother or her father. In true Southworthian fashion, Squire Darling finally does come to accept Edgar Ardenne, and Squire eventually brings Edgar back to Winny, but the important lesson Winny has learned is how to be more independent and self-sufficient.

Winny is different than Hester or Veronica because she is forced to informally learn how to take care of herself whereas Hester and Veronica are tied to domineering husbands who will not allow them to make choices for themselves. Winny -- like India, Alice and even Imogene – represents a different kind of female character than those portrayed in the last chapter. For these more evolved female characters, Southworth uses life experiences as lessons they can use to learn how to break free from the teachings of their former traditional educations that serve patriarchy. These female characters refuse to accept the status quo that passivity is expected and demanded of them. Southworth creates stronger characters that begin to challenge the belief that women are educated to bow to male authority. While they still remain within a patriarchal society, they have at least learned that they do not have to remain quiet and submit to an authority that threatens their very lives. Yet, Southworth's next novels challenge the status quo of patriarchy even further, and she develops characters that are educated in ways that lie outside the scope of traditional norms and societal expectations to show how much more women can dream and hope to become.

Chapter 5: A New Education is a Dangerous Thing

When Southworth released her second novel *The Deserted Wife*[39], she did not receive the same reception as she had months earlier with *Retribution*. The reviews were divided. One critic in *Godey's Lady's Book* said, "We greatly approve of her views in the introductory chapter on the subject of 'marriage and divorce,' believing, as we do, that there is something radically wrong in American female education."[40] However, another reviewer was outraged by her creation of Raymond as "a character in this work that should never have been portrayed – it is unnatural."[41] Early critical reviews of other novels are also harsh. One reviewer of *The Discarded Daughter*[42] said that there was "too little regard to the propriety of her characterization."[43] A critic of *The Missing Bride*[44] said, "For ourselves, we never sup on horrors with any satisfaction nor can we approve that class of fiction to which the previous works of this lady belong."[45] What horrors did the critics see in Southworth's works? What could make critics have such diverse reactions even to the same novel?

Modern critics have offered some answers to these questions. Karen Tracey asserts that Southworth creates what she calls double-proposal novels in which "writers hold on to conservative notions with one hand while trying to reform women's roles with the other" (176). Tracey suggests two important points that the purpose of the double-proposal plot was to "distract the attention of gatekeeper audiences from their more radical counterattacks" and that

---

[39] *The Deserted Wife* was first released as a serial novel in August 1849 in *The Saturday Evening Post*; the serialized version of *Retribution* had finished its run in the *National Era* in April of the same year. *The Deserted Wife* was published as a novel first in 1850 and then in 1855 – all with the same title.

[40] "Literary Notices." *Godey's Lady's Book and Magazine* 51 (Dec. 1855): 560.

[41] "New Publications." *Spirit of the Times* 25.39 (10 Nov. 1855): 457.

[42] The *Saturday Evening Post* first serialized *The Discarded Daughter, or the Children of the Isle* in October 1852. It was later published as a novel under the same title in 1852 but then republished as simply *The Discarded Daughter* in 1855. It will be referred to in this thesis as *The Discarded Daughter*.

[43] "Art XI – Critical Notices." *The Southern Quarterly Review* 6.12 (Oct. 1852): 530-531.

[44] In 1854, the *Saturday Evening Post* serialized *Miriam, the Avenger; or, the Fatal Vow,* but the novel was later published in 1855 as *The Missing Bride; or, Miriam the Avenger*. It will be referred to in this work as *The Missing Bride*.

[45] "The Missing Bride, or Miriam the Avenger." *Southern Literary Messenger* 21.7 (July 1855): 467.

"each active, self-determining heroine maintains a tight grip on some traditional feminine ideal" (177). Tracey's idea of a heroine maintaining a grip on feminine ideals can be seen in Southworth's novels. Michelle Abate further believes Southworth creates a "new code of conduct" for her heroines that are "emotionally, physically and intellectually strong and self-sufficient," and she "calls into question codes that required women to be passive, submissive and accepting" (7). Additionally, Joanne Dobson notes that Southworth manipulates the "cultural stereotypes of the masculine and feminine" and "presents a sweeping critique of the limiting nature of codified gender roles" (xxvii). Susan Harris also observes that "unimaginative women are not villains in Southworth's novels, but they remain among the lower orders of humankind. The heroine challenges her fate, conquers herself, creates and controls her world" (151). All of these critics note correctly that Southworth creates a pattern in which she juxtaposes submissive female characters next to heroines who challenge traditional roles that support patriarchy. However, none have written on how Southworth uses the different ways in which her heroines have been educated to show that this new education is what allows her heroines to function more independently from her submissive female characters.

In *The Deserted Wife*, *The Discarded Daughter*, *The Missing Bride* and *The Hidden Hand*[46], Southworth develops female characters who represent both the traditionally educated woman that behave appropriately as well as a more radically independent and feisty heroine who has been largely educated on her own by her observations in nature. In *The Deserted Wife*, Southworth uses Hagar's lack of a traditional education as a means to allow her to behave as a more self-determined heroine. Hagar is outcast and spends much time in the woods which allows

[46] *The Hidden Hand* was simultaneously published in 1859 by the *New York Ledger* as *The Hidden Hand* and as *The Masked Mother; or, the Hidden Hand* by *Guide to Literature, Science, Art and General Information*. It was later published as a novel in 1888 as *The Hidden Hand; or, Capitola the Madcap*. It will be referred to in this thesis as *The Hidden Hand*.

her to learn differently than Sophie Churchill or Rosalia Aguilar. Similarly, Nettie Hutton in *The Discarded Daughter* and Jacquelina L'Oiseau in *The Missing Bride* deviate from the way in which characters like Alice and Elsie Chester and Marian Mayfield are educated. Perhaps the novel that is most striking in this comparison of educations is Southworth's *The Hidden Hand*. However, Southworth does not portray Clara negatively but in a way that sheds light on the differences in the way she and Capitola have been educated. When examining these non-traditionally educated women in chronological order, we see in each successive novel, women who are wilder and more independent and self-actualized. Because they are not educated by the same patriarchal system as their more traditional counterparts, they are also not only able to move beyond societal norms of submissiveness but also work to help female characters who are bound by patriarchal control. By juxtaposing traditionally educated women next to non-traditionally educated ones, Southworth questions the value of a traditional education that confines women to male authority and control.

Hagar vs. Sophie and Rosalia in *The Deserted Wife*

In *The Deserted Wife*, the influence of patriarch control and the negative impact it can have is seen in the way Sophie Churchill is educated by John Withers who assumes an informal role as her tutor because she has been left alone. Withers functions differently in the role of tutor than Ardenne or Sinclair since Withers has not actually been hired to teach Sophie. Plus, he does not offer Sophie a new way of thinking but rather seeks to control her, and he uses his authoritative position as the new minister and her lack of parental guardianship in order to take advantage of her. Even though she is taking care of her infant niece Hagar and running her ancestral home Heath Hall at the young age of seventeen, he tells her that "idleness" is the cause of her "discontent" (74). Because Sophie is so inexperienced, she listens to his ideas about the

cause of her discontent "with interest – these thoughts were to the unopened mind of the young girl new and striking" (74). Sophie's lack of worldly knowledge allows Withers to convince her that he knows her better than she knows herself. He realizes his opportunity to influence her, and he promises "to teach her by-and-by" how to be more like Mrs. May whose "whole soul is her house and family" (76). The problem with this teacher/student relationship is that Withers' intention is to isolate Sophie so that he can manipulate her and use his position of authority as minister in order to take control of her home Heath Hall.

Sophie's innocence and inexperience allows Withers to isolate Sophie which leaves her further exposed to Withers' ill-intentioned plans to possess her. Before Withers begins Sophie's so-called education, he sees her "teaching [Hagar] to read, and her whole countenance was irradiated with the love of her work" (79). Withers recognizes Sophie's natural talent to teach, but he manipulates her inexperience and lack of confidence in herself to convince her that she needs his help. When he suggests she start a school in her home, she feels incapable of being an effective teacher, and instead of encouraging her, he tells her that a part of his plan in operating the school is to be her "teacher," and he takes over with the details of opening the school (82). He uses her innocence to put her in a position that allows him un-chaperoned access to her as her tutor, and he forces her into an unwilling marriage to him. Thus, Sophie functions as the female character who succumbs to the teachings of a controlling male authority and represents the woman who lives to serve her husband.

As Sophie becomes further controlled by Withers, she neglects Hagar, and through this neglect, Hagar learns jealousy, but Hagar's neglect is also what allows her the opportunity to become different from Sophie and grow into a more independent woman. While on the surface Southworth portrays Hagar's neglect and lack of education from Sophie negatively, underneath

she leaves clues that her “mal-education” allows her to become strong enough to overcome adversity. For example, when Rosalia Aguilar comes to live with them, she is portrayed as a beautiful child who is “loved” and “petted” but becomes “vain” and “selfish” whereas Hagar’s neglect causes her to be “jealous and suspicious” which Southworth refers to as “the evil fruits of her mal-education” (156). Southworth’s use of the term *mal-education* in this context is bad and is similar to the mal-education Sina received from a mother that taught her to be selfish. However, Southworth also indicates that Hagar benefits from her neglect by becoming more independent. When Rosalia is shown favor in the kitchen by old Cumbo and Hagar is sent to the cold attic, Southworth remarks that Hagar is being molded by these informal lessons and “when finished [she will be] hardened into rock” (166). Even though Hagar is increasingly portrayed as a wild child, these lessons of neglect teach her to act with strength that is not typical of nineteenth century women’s behavior. When Raymond’s boat capsizes as he returns from school, Hagar rescues him (187-188). Hagar’s brave action is a result of her informal education of neglect that allows her to have the strength to think on her own as well as a strong physical body, and she is able to step outside of the traditional roles of helplessness and act bravely.

Only when Sophie steps back into Hagar’s life as her advisor does Hagar make decisions that harm her. After Withers’ death, Sophie admits to Hagar that she has neglected her and advises Hagar to read the Bible more in order for her to learn to think correctly, but Hagar explains to Sophie her theory of transmigration and that “the Bible itself is my commentary on nature; it interprets myself and the universe to me” (196). Hagar has learned very different lessons than what Sophie believes. She cannot not understand Hagar’s views and thinks she is “an untrimmed vine,” and she hopes God will “remove all this bad over-growth” (197). Sophie continues to try to correct her neglect of Hagar when Raymond wants to marry Hagar. Hagar’s

instinct warns her not to trust Raymond, and she tells Sophie that "experience has schooled" her, and she hesitates "to launch [her] happiness in the uncertain seas of other hearts" (226). In spite of Hagar's uncertainty, Sophie still persuades Hagar to marry Raymond by convincing her to have faith in Raymond's love for her. Yet, when Hagar begins acting the way that Sophie and Raymond expect her to behave, she discovers that her compliance only leads to greater misery.

After their marriage, Raymond assumes an informal role of teacher and takes over where Sophie left off. He tells Hagar that he will not tolerate her independent nature. He reminds Hagar of a pet monkey she had as a child and explains that he was "amused with its antics" both by what Hagar has taught it as well as its own nature until it displeased him and he killed it. Then, he refers to Hagar as a "monkey" (286). The lesson for Hagar is clear; she must obey him or be destroyed. Raymond is able to further his abuse by hiding behind his formal education. Sophie tells Hagar that Raymond cannot be at fault for their marital problems because he "has been educated among the refinements of cultivated city society" (309). Hagar's behavior has been outside of the expected norms of compliance, and she learns that she must change her behavior and please her husband or risk being shunned or harmed by those she loves.

In spite of Hagar's efforts to please Raymond and fit into her expected role, Southworth alludes again to the effects of the mal-education of not only Hagar but also Rosalia and Raymond. Southworth points out that "the low vice of jealously" and "the mean sin of indolence" are not natural behaviors for Hagar and Rosalia but have been taught to them by the way they have been raised (368). This learned behavior allows a wedge to develop between the cousins as Raymond flirts with Rosalia who is unable to resist him because she has been taught that attention given by others equates with her value as a woman. Southworth wants this point to be obvious even if she "has been tedious upon this subject" that "the utmost perdition of men and

women may sometimes be traced to the smallest, seemingly the most harmless mistake in the education of boys and girls" (392). She spells out again the harmless mistakes: "Hagar's jealousy," "Rosalia's tenderness," and Raymond's "self-indulgence" (392-393). Her repetition of their incorrect education suggests that what they have been informally taught about themselves will lead to betrayal and abandonment.

Even though Southworth portrays Hagar's jealousy negatively, she also once again shows how Hagar's neglect allows her to function independently outside of the approval of others unlike Rosalia who has come to believe she is only valid through the approval of others. After Raymond and Rosalia's betrayal, Hagar eventually returns to her courageous self. She reads the letter in which Raymond asks for a divorce, and instead of the news destroying her, she becomes "resolved" to care for herself and her children, but what can she do for money? She contemplates teaching but realizes "her intellect was like her own favorite forest haunts, strong, vigorous and brilliant, but wild, tangled and uncultivated" (500-501). Hagar understands that her beliefs will not be valued in a society that expects compliance and submission that exemplify the way Rosalia has been taught. Hagar opts instead to pursue a singing career and becomes famous in New Orleans and then Europe (506). The reemergence of a strong Hagar shows that what she has learned about being on her own runs deep and has stuck with her from her early informal education of neglect.

While Hagar still wants to be married to Raymond, she no longer needs his approval or financial support. Susan Harris contends Hagar's need to remain married to the abusive Raymond reflects "a viable way [for a woman] to cope with a man who could not or would not rise to his wife's level of intelligence" (208). What Harris does not acknowledge though is that Hagar's intelligence is a result of her self-education that leads to her courageous actions. Unlike

Sophie and Rosalie who have been taught to believe that their role is to be subservient to male authority, Hagar learns through her own observations how to think for herself and depend on her own intuitions instead of on what others think of her. Hagar's placement outside of the scope of traditional teaching suggests Southworth's view of a flawed educational system that both formally and informally teaches women their only value comes from approval they receive from a male-dominated society.

Nettie vs. Alice and Elsie in *The Discarded Daughter*

Another character that lacks early formal education but triumphs as a strong heroine is Nettie Starbright in *The Discarded Daughter*. Like Hagar, Nettie is different from Alice and Elsie in that she does not begin her education under the confines of these nineteenth century standards of appropriate female behavior and, therefore, she is able to gain and keep her independent spirit much earlier and triumph over adversity more confidently than her more traditionally educated counterparts. When Nettie's mother is on her deathbed, she confesses to Miss Joe that Nettie "is a wild, untamed, *untameable* child," and she asks Joe to "teach her to pray, send her to school or to church" (140). Nettie's mother is different from Alice's mother by virtue of their social class; Nettie's mother is the daughter of a poor sea captain whereas Alice's mother is the wife of a wealthy landowner. Nettie's mother admits while she knows how to read, she lacks a Christian education and she pleads with Miss Joe to "let her learn of God" (140). Because Nettie's mother has lacked a formal Christian education, she has not been able to teach Nettie about piety. More importantly, her mother's illness has led to the neglect of her daughter, and much like Hagar, Nettie has been left to roam the woods and learn her lessons in the wilds of nature. Southworth's emphasis on the word *untameable* foreshadows that what Nettie has

learned on her own is not changeable, and she will not be able to conform to the traditional expectations of an appropriate woman.

As Miss Joe takes over Nettie's education, she tries to teach her how to be economically frugal as well as industrious, and while Nettie is able to adopt these principles; she is still wild and untamed. When Miss Joe's health begins to fail, Hugh and Nettie must take over more of the work in taking care of the island. At first Hugh does all of the wood-gathering himself, but because Nettie has learned Miss Joe's teaching of hard work, she throws "herself into a violent paroxysm of excitement" and demands to go to the woods with Hugh to collect the firewood (249). Her behavior shows that even though Miss Joe is able to teach Nettie domestic skills such as taking care of the housework, she cannot keep Nettie from doing what would be outside of woman's sphere and running with Hugh in the woods. Miss Joe is also unable to give Nettie books that would teach piety. Her collection of books consists of *Tooke's Pantheon*[47] which contained tales of heathen mythology and the *Fairy Book*[48]. Nettie is particularly fond of the first book and believes "every syllable of the Pantheon most devoutly" (251). The literature Miss Joe teaches Nettie only further encourages Nettie to remain a wild and free spirit. Miss Joe finally talks to Parson Wilson about a more formal education for Nettie, but her lower social class prohibits her from being accepted by the other girls. Because Nettie is made fun of by the wealthier girls, she vows that "she will never go back to that school again," and she "scorns" the idea of formal education (256). Even though Nettie rejects formal schooling because she is ridiculed for her poverty, this denial works in her favor because she is able to grow as a free and

[47] *The Pantheon of the Heathen Gods* was written by Jesuit François Pomey but was translated and republished by Andrew Tooke in 1698 under the title *Tooke's Pantheon of the Heathen Gods and Illustrious Heroes*. It contained a collection of Greek mythological tales and contained the within the title "revised for a classical course of education and adapted for the use of students of every age and of either sex." This byline is interesting considering girls were not given access to classical literature in American education until the latter half of the nineteenth century.

[48] Southworth is most likely referring to a collection of fairy tales published in 1836 called the *Fairy Book*. It contained a collection of eighty-one engravings by the well-known artist Joseph Alexander Adams.

independent woman who can think on her own and push beyond the limiting confines of traditional women roles.

The early lessons Nettie has learned from her mother and Miss Joe help her gain strength to refuse General Garnet's insistence that she obtain an appropriate education for a woman of a higher social standing. When he comes to take her away from Miss Joe, he is clear that he plans to take over her "education" and that she should be "brought into proper restraint and training" (275). General Garnet tries to get Nettie to forget all that she has previously learned so that she can be a "young lady," but she tells him that she thinks forgetting her past life that she has enjoyed so much would be "wicked" (282). Garnet tries to manipulate Nettie by distracting her with a picture book, but as she looks through the places she has never seen, she picks one that indicates she will never abandon her love of nature. She chooses "a view on the coast of Greece" and "listens eagerly" as Garnet describes its history (282). Her choice of the sea indicates that her inner wild nature will not allow her to be confined, and in spite of Garnet's attempt to conform her to the status of a proper lady, she remains tied to her early informal lessons that she has learned in the woods.

Lionel Hardcastle is the next to assume an informal role of teacher for Nettie, much like Withers and Raymond do for Sophie and Hagar. Like those before him, his goal is to transform her from a wild and untamable free spirit into an appropriately submissive wife; however, Nettie holds to her early lessons and refuses to be controlled. General Garnet has made Nettie the heiress of Mount Calm and wants Lionel to become her husband because by joining Hemlock Hollow with Mount Calm, they will have greater wealth and power. Nettie is the pawn in their game, but she refuses to bend to their will. Nettie continues to hold fast to the education she has gained in nature when Lionel sends her to a convent school to be educated by the nuns. She

leaves "with the same inflexibility of will with which she had entered its walls" (315). Once Nettie understands Lionel's plan to marry her, she refuses because she has always been in love with Hugh Hutton, and she stands firm in her refusal to marry Lionel. Lionel finally resorts to calling her a "masculine woman" and tells her she will become an "outcast" if she continues to refuse him (320). Nettie still refuses to be beaten down by Lionel's name-calling, and even when he attempts to rape her, she tells him, "it is not likely that *you* can teach [fear] to me" (337). Nettie refuses to be manipulated or controlled by Lionel and stands firm in her decision on whom she will marry and to whom she will give her body.

Nettie has grown up poor, and her poverty works in her favor because it allows her to gain her education outside of the conventions of female education that control characters like Alice and Elsie Garnet. Even though they do break free to some extent from the controlling Garnet as discussed in chapter 4, they still function to some extent within the same patriarchal system. They learn to rebel against Garnet's unfair control, but they lose their wealth in the process. Nettie finally understands her control of that wealth has been a result of attempt to control Alice and Elsie when Alice tells her that "it is not justice that one educated in luxury and in the boundless wealth should be suddenly bereft of everything and reduced to a position for which she is totally unfit" (394). Even though Alice is speaking about Nettie and is trying to get her to keep part of Mount Calm, Nettie understands that Alice and Elsie are the ones who have been reduced to poverty, and she must give up what is not rightfully hers. Because she is strong and self-assured, she is able to give up the wealth she has come to love. Even though all three women become stronger characters, Nettie is the strongest and most independent character by virtue of an early informal education in nature that operates outside of patriarchal control and gives Nettie the strength and perseverance to stand up to the men who try to control her.

Jacquelina vs. Marian in *The Missing Bride*

Jacquelina L'Oiseau is much like Nettie in that she lives with her poor mother and is, thus, denied a traditional formal education that is the expected norm for wealthy young women. When Commodore Waugh asks Jacquelina and her mother to come live in the mansion, Mary hopes that this will mean a financial improvement for herself and her daughter. She tells Jacquelina that she must try to please Waugh in order to become his heiress, and she hopes that he "will send [her] to school or get a teacher for [her]" (98). Additionally, Waugh plans to "raise and educate a wife for Grim" (99). Grim is Waugh's close friend that Waugh wants to inherit his estate since he has no male heirs. Both Mary and Waugh have ulterior motives in their plans to educate her. The problem is that Jacquelina is a willful child who has "courage and candor and honesty" (98). Jacquelina's strong will reacts negatively to their selfish desires to control her. As she becomes more uncontrollable, Southworth asks, "Who had been Jacquelina's educators?" (195). Southworth answers that her mother, uncle and intended husband all want to educate her to behave as their puppet and bend to their will so that they can use her for their selfish gain; however, Jacquelina rebels against this so-called education.

The harder they try to teach Jacquelina their form of correct behavior, the further she hides in nature where she learns strength and courage. As she spends more and more time in the woods, "feats of agility became a passion with her," and "everything that she read of in that way, which could possibly be imitated, was attempted" (198). Thus, Jacquelina learns through her own discovery how to hone her natural tendencies of courage and she also grows physically stronger because of the outdoor exercise. She becomes "an excellent markswoman…and in feats of agility alone she excelled" (198). Jacquelina learns to be quick on her feet, which she might use to dodge those like her mother, uncle and the supposedly good teacher Grim from taking

control of her. She understands the selfish desires of Waugh and Grim to control her so that Grim can take over his estate after Waugh dies, and when Waugh commands her to "love and respect" Grim as not only her teacher but as her future husband, she tells him that she "loathes, abhors, and abominates professors!" (200). Because of Jacquelina's time practicing to be a good horsewoman and markswoman, she emerges as a new kind of female character who shows that physical education is important in building skills of strength. Jacquelina rebels against patriarchal control and learns to become more agile in her ability to escape their control, but she also learns to push beyond the confines of a limited woman's sphere.

Because Jacquelina has spent so much time outdoors practicing and learning horseback riding and marksmanship, her behavior becomes more masculine, and Waugh and Grim react by becoming more vigorous in trying to controlling her though the formal education system. Jacquelina performs her first masculine and heroic act when the manor catches on fire and she rushes into the burning house to save her uncle (206-208). Jacquelina's subsequent illness foreshadows that while Jacquelina has a desire to help those in need, her good heart can lead to a negative outcome, but once she recovers, she returns to her former behavior. In order to rebel against Waugh's control over her, she becomes Prince Ariel of Fairyland and dresses as a man so that she can show her skills as a horsewoman, and she embarrasses Waugh when she places the crown she has won at his feet (219). Her unwomanly behavior finally causes Waugh and Grim to send her to a convent school. Yet, even being sent away to be educated by the nuns will not subdue Jacquelina, and Southworth reminds us to "remember her educators" (233). She has learned how to be independent and how to rebel against those who behave selfishly. Therefore, when Sister Agnes refuses to allow the girls to hug each other, Jacquelina retaliates by putting on Cloudesly's uniform and pretending to be a man in order to frighten the sisters (240-242). Her

goal is to fight the injustice of the way the nuns are treating the girls, and she is sent home. Jacquelina reacts differently to the nuns than either Veronica Joy or Imogene Summerfield who both comply with the rules and behave appropriately. Like Waugh and Grim, the nuns fail miserably and cannot teach her to become submissive. She tells Waugh she is "truly sorry that [he] risked [her] support and education upon the hazardous chance of my liking or disliking the man of [his] choice" (258). Yet, Waugh manipulates her good heart and desire to help her mother in order to finally make her marry Grim. While Jacquelina has learned to be self-assertive and independent on one hand, she is ultimately controlled by her desire to protect and help those in need.

Marian's nature is different than Jacquelina's in that she desires to help everyone who needs her and will sacrifice her own desires to make others happy. She understands that nature has much to teach her, but she struggles to learn the same lessons of independence that Jacquelina gets so easily. Marian's virtuous behavior and her ability to teach girls indicate that she has received lessons in being a proper woman. However, she seems to struggle with what she has learned when she and Thurstan Willcoxen meet in the woods. He wants to know how she reconciles nature with the needs of man and she admits that she cannot show "one of twenty how to follow her own teaching" (305). She continues to struggle with nature's lessons that shows man how to be in harmony with nature and later explains to Thurstan that "nature holds me enthralled until I have heard the story and learned the lesson it has to tell and teach" (329). She feels that nature has something to teach her, but she does not know how she can pass that knowledge on to others or even that she has fully understood the lesson since her desire to please Thurston causes her to finally submit to his insistence that they marry secretly (376). Now, Marian begins living a double life. She pretends to be the pure and beloved teacher of the new

academy for young ladies that would rival the one they have for young men (383). Because she teaches young women subjects like men receive, this school seems to be one which would offer young women to be more independent thinkers. Yet in her personal life, she is being manipulated by Thurstan who wants her to go to Paris so that they can start a secret life together, which shows that Marian needs to learn to stand up for her own needs and desires. He tells her it is her duty as his wife to follow him, and he uses his “power and eloquence that love and logic could inspire and teach” to convince her to submit to his will (430). Marian is the opposite of Jacquelina who refuses to submit to men who try to control her.

Marian’s involvement in the teaching profession is interesting since Southworth portrays Jacquelina as the feisty and free-spirited heroine and Marian as a woman torn between what she believes is right and what her husband tells her to do. Southworth may be subversively questioning the power a teacher has over those she is charged to teach. What lessons would Jacquelina teach compared to Marian? Southworth leaves no clues as to exactly what Marian teaches her students, but Marian does say, “If you educate a child, you may benefit in time his children and his children’s children down countless generations” (520). Thus, Southworth suggests that the education children receive is extremely important because what they learn will establish the cultural norms for a long time.

Jacquelina does eventually function in the role of teacher to the son she and Cloudy have, and Southworth portrays two differing sides of her heroine. On the one hand, she returns to her willful and independent self. When Cloudy has to return to sea, Jacquelina dresses as a man so that she can hide on board the ship so that they can be together in spite of Cloudy’s objections (633). Jacquelina’s rebellious act is reminiscent of her time at the convent when she tricked the nuns into believing a man had invaded their bedrooms. She is independent and self-reliant; a

trait which her son would certainly observe and learn from her. However, on the other hand, Jacquelina vows "to reform her own manners that she might form those of her little children. And Mrs. Waugh and dear Marian aided her and encouraged her in her uncertain efforts" (633). Since Southworth ends the novel here, we can wonder how much reform Jacquelina will or should do, and Southworth's participation in the question of how to educate children remains largely for her readers to decide. Karen Tracy notes writers like Southworth creates an "active, self-determining heroine [who] maintains a tight grip on some traditional feminine ideal" (177). Jacquelina may have a grip on a traditional feminine ideal, but her feisty spirit and free-thinking ideas have benefitted her much more than when she has bowed to the will of others. Likewise, Marian's real troubles stem from her submission to Thurstan and desire to pleas others at her own expense. Even the nature of Southworth ending the novel with unanswered questions seems to suggest that her views on women's education is that it should teach women how to think for themselves, the way they were naturally created to be and not molded into what men what them to be.

Capitola vs. Clara in *The Hidden Hand*

Jacquelina is the most rebellious and feisty character Southworth has created, but Jacquelina still must struggle through much adversity in order to come out triumphant. Southworth finally creates her most daring and outrageous character to date when she writes *The Hidden Hand* and invents Capitola Black. Like Jacquelina and Nettie, Capitola is poor and unable to receive a formal education; however, unlike her predecessors, this Southworth heroine is never coerced or forced into the confines of traditional schooling. Because she lies outside the space of traditional female education, she emerges as the most independent and courageous of Southworth's characters. As a young girl, Capitola finds herself alone and unable to find food or

shelter, but by observing what the other male street urchins do, she understands that if she were only a boy, she would be able to get work like they do. A clothing dealer swaps her girl's clothes for boys and gives her "a penny roll and a six-pence for [her] black ringlets" (46). Michelle Abate asserts that "Cap has been schooled in the tomboyish qualities of street-smarts and savvy rather than the bourgeois Southern traits of sentimentality and submissiveness" (10). Thus, Capitola learns how to take care of herself in a world that rewards men and limits women. Even when Capitola is taken before the Recorder, she is still in control of her legal affairs. While Old Hurricane is there to take charge as her legal guardian, Capitola is the decision maker. Old Hurricane asks if she is "willing to go" with him to which she responds, "Jolly willing, governor" (49). Capitola does not succumb to her poor circumstances on the street nor is she forced to go with Old Hurricane when he "rescues" her. In addition to learning how to take advantage of a good opportunity, Capitola's time on the streets has taught her how to be independent and headstrong.

Capitola's street smarts also keep her from being victimized by either Craven Le Noir or Black Donald and his gang. When she is riding alone in the woods, Craven Le Noir tries to seduce her into getting off her horse, but she is too smart to be tricked and instead tricks him and rides away to safety (114-118). She proves again that she will not be victimized when Black Donald's gang tries to kidnap her. She sees them hiding under her bed and coaxes Pitapat out of her room, locks the door and calls the authorities to arrest the criminals (192-199). Later, she tricks Craven again when he has soiled her name. She shoots him in the face with a shot of peas, and when he thinks he is dying, he confesses all that he has done to Capitola (371-374). She also captures Black Donald himself when he tries to kidnap her. She tricks him into sitting in the chair that is on top of the trap door, and when she realizes that she cannot save him from his evil

ways, she pulls the lever and sends him plunging into the depths of the hole below (384-393). Much in the same way that Capitola learned to wear boy's clothing in order to make money, her street-smart education has once again allowed her to be entirely in control of herself and her situations. Because she has not been educated in a system that supports traditional women behavior, she is not typical of other women in the novel, most notably Clara Day.

Although Clara Day does have a kind and benevolent father, Dr. Day still teaches Clara to be a virtuous and obedient woman, which allows her to be controlled by Gabriel LeNoir. Since Clara is the daughter of the town's doctor, she has been raised in a much higher social position than Capitola and she has been sent away to boarding school (101). Upon her return, she behaves as an obedient and submissive daughter. Clara's formal education has taught her that she has no power or authority over herself which allows her to be controlled by Le Noir after her father suddenly dies. Because Clara has a large fortune, Le Noir intends for her to marry his son Craven so that he can have her money. When she refuses, he tells her, "You are in my power, and I intend to coerce you to my will!" (303). She is unlike Capitola who refuses to allow Warfield to tell her what to do in spite of him taking guardianship over her. Warfield objects time and time again to Capitola's wild adventures, but Capitola stands up to him and looks "him directly in the face" which makes Old Hurricane "splutter and stutter before he could get words out" (288). Therefore, unlike Capitola, Clara becomes victimized by Le Noir because she does not stand up to him but plays the part of the submissive woman who can be dominated.

Because Capitola is not taught to believe she must passively accept a man assuming responsibility over her, she becomes the agent to save Clara and show her that she does not have to blindly accept male authority. Capitola rescues Clara when Le Noir kidnaps her and threatens to force her to marry Craven by switching clothes with Clara and pretending to be her (307).

Because of Capitola's quick thinking and resourcefulness that she has learned from being on the streets, she is able to thwart Le Noir's plans to trap Clara into marriage and force her to give up control of her fortune. Later when Clara goes to court to ask for freedom from Le Noir, Capitola not only tells the facts but "expresses her opinions as to the motives of Le Noir and give her judgment as to what should be the decision of the court" (333). Capitola's rescue of Clara allows Clara to become free to marry Traverse and live the life she has wanted for herself. Capitola, by virtue of not having social position or traditional female education, is not bound by the same expectations of appropriate behavior to which Clara seems bound as a result of the way she has been taught to believe both by her father as well as her boarding school education. Thus, the juxtaposition between the free-thinking and unconventional Capitola next to the traditionally submissive Clara shows that an education that supports a woman's independence leads to women who are capable of far more than compliance to a male-dominated society. The idea of a new way of educating women would have dangerously threatened the status quo of patriarchal control, but by the 1850's women's education was changing. Southworth's views in *The Hidden Hand* reflect that changing face of American female education which was expanding not only the types of subjects women could learn but was also giving women the idea that they could do more with their lives than follow the traditional role of wife and motherhood.

Conclusion

As Southworth's novels progressed through the first ten years of her writing career, her characters became stronger and more empowered. As Michelle Abate observes, Southworth questions a code of conduct in True Womanhood that "considered physical strength, emotional fortitude and constitutional vigor unwomanly" (6). One of the codes that made women so compliant was embedded in a female education that was given to women through both formal institutions as well as informal training by mothers who has also been brought up with these same beliefs. This patriarchal system of education taught women they would only be valued and loved if they allowed themselves to be controlled by male authority figures.

Southworth points out that the problem with this type of education is that if the fathers and husbands neglect or abandon the women they are supposed to care for, women are left unprepared to face a world which requires them to think for themselves. In her earliest novels, characters like Hester and Veronica have been so acculturated by educations that teach submissiveness that they are unable to stand up for themselves when put in abusive situations, and they wither and die. Likewise, characters like Juliette and Sina are taught that the way to overcome adversity is to manipulate the manipulators, but this strategy too proves ineffective since they continue to work within a system far more powerful than they are. Southworth needs a new kind of character that can adapt to the challenges of unfair male patriarchy and learn to assert authority over their abusers.

Her second character type emerges in which women are still educated by the same female institutions that teach submissiveness, but they are about to at least loosen the control that is harmful to them even though they are still left to work within that system. Characters like India, Imogene and Elsie all come from the social upper class and are thus sent to boarding schools so

that they will come back with refined skills to entertain their fathers and husbands and be used to gain more wealth and power. However, when this power struggle threatens even their choices about whom they will marry, they rebel against being forced into an unwanted relationship. Winny and Alice are also given tutor educations that are supposed to teach traditionally-based subjects except that these male tutors teach them to think for themselves, which allows them to later fight their abusers. Even though this second character type is more assertive than the first type, these women are still caught in the trap of a traditional educational system that teaches them their appropriate role is submission.

As Southworth gains popularity, her confidence in what she writes becomes bolder and we see female characters evolve into different kind of women that lies outside of the space of the socially wealthy and, thus, outside the space of traditional female education. Characters like Hagar, Nettie, Jacquelina and Capitola all come from impoverished beginnings, and none of them are taught early that their place is one of obedience to male dominance. Because they learn lessons on their own and through the laws of the natural world, they question authority and are able to step outside the traditional expectations of domesticity. They also demonstrate the importance of physical education, and through their time practicing horsemanship and marksmanship, they are much stronger and healthier than the traditionally educated female character, which reflects how Southworth was opposed to the lack of physical education in traditional education models. Within these same novels, the heroines are paired opposite females who do still operate within a traditional education that teaches compliance to male authority. By putting her heroines next to these traditional female characters, Southworth shows the problems that exist with teaching women their only role is to passively submit even in the face of abusive male authority. By the time Southworth creates Capitola the Madcap, Capitola emerges as a

woman who is no longer afraid to challenge male patriarchy. But, Cap is only able to be this strong and courageous because she has not had any influence of traditional female education. She has literally grown up on the streets. While the warning that General Garnet gives to his wife Alice that "A little learning is a dangerous thing" (109) implies that he means for her to be careful about an education that teaches her to think on her own, it is also ironically a warning to the patriarchal status quo that the real danger for men is that women are learning and challenging a system that controls them. Change in the way women see themselves is coming – a change that threatens to upset traditions of male authority.

Thus, the way women are educated in Southworth's novels plays an important role in how they develop as either compliant women devoted to serving their husbands and fathers or as independent women that push beyond male dominance and work toward more control over their own lives. Other critics like Amy Hudock, Michelle Ann Abate, and Joanne Dobson have noted how Southworth does create both True and Real Women characters that serve as a juxtaposition between the ways women of the nineteenth century lived and the way women dreamed they could become. Southworth also does not condemn the traditional woman but rather shows in an empathetic way the trials and obstacles she faces as a result of the societal expectations for her to behave as a caretaker and nurturer of the home. She shows women another option and offers them a new way to view themselves as rational and intelligent beings. Southworth suggests the methods in which her female characters are educated play a pivotal role in what they come to believe about themselves. While women may be naturally inclined toward passivity, Southworth shows that women can be more independent and still maintain their femininity. Furthermore, while Southworth does not imply that women should not adhere to strong religious values, she does seem to object to piety and submission being valued above other traits like courage and

independence. She also shows through her strong heroines that she values physical fitness and indicates that a traditional education that denied women access to physical education was flawed.

Education impacts Southworth's female characters within the scope of the research of the seven novels addressed in this thesis; however, more research is still left to do. Changes in female education occurred rapidly during this century. At the beginning of the century, women were mostly educated at home by their mothers to perform domestic duties of the home. They may have been able to read and write but only for the purpose of teaching the bible to their children. By the end of the century, women were beginning to demand education that equaled their male counterparts and were attending colleges and looking for ways to enter the workforce. Southworth lived and wrote in the middle of this age, and the topic of education was a debated issue. My thesis focuses on seven novels written in the first ten years of her career. However, this number only represents a fraction of the novels she wrote during her lifetime, and her other novels could be researched to see if this same pattern of education appears in her other novels and how or if her characters continued to evolve as a result of their education. Also, after writing *The Hidden Hand*, Southworth spent two years living and writing in England. Hence, researching novels after this period can provide evidence to see if her views have changed from her time abroad. Finally, her writing could also be compared to other women writers of this era, not only in America but in Britain as well, to see how these writers addressed the challenges of the rapid changes occurring in the field of female education. The research of female education and what women were saying about it in the nineteenth century helps us to understand not only who we as a society were but also to see ourselves now and what we can become.

Works Cited

Abate, Michelle Ann. *Tomboys: A Literary and Cultural History*. Philadelphia: Temple UP, 2008. Print.

"Art X – Critical Notices." *The Southern Quarterly Review* 3.6 (April 1851): 566. Print.

"Art XI – Critical Notices. *The Southern Quarterly Review* 6.12 (Oct. 1852): 530-531. Print.

Baym, Nina. *Novels, Readers, and Reviewers: Responses to Fiction in Antebellum America*. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1984. Print.

---. *Woman's Fiction: A Guide to Novels by and about Women in America, 1820-1870*. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1978. Print.

Beecher, Catharine and Harriet Beecher Stowe. *The American Woman's Home*. Hartford: Harriet Beecher Stowe Center, 1975. Print.

Bloch, Ruth. *Gender and Morality in Anglo-American Culture, 1650-1800*. Berkeley: U of California P, 2003. E-book.

"Boarding Schools." *Ladies' Magazine and Literary Gazette* 4.4 (April 1831): 145. Print.

Boyle, Regis Louise. *Mrs. E.D.E.N. Southworth, Novelist*. Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1939. Print.

Budick, Emily Miller. *Engendering Romance: Women Writers and the Hawthorne Tradition, 1850-1990*. New Haven: Yale UP, 1994. Print.

Butchart, Ronald. "Lydia Maria Child." *Women Educators in the United States (1820-1993): A Bio-Bibliographical Sourcebook.* Ed. Maxine Schwartz Seller. Westport: Greenwood Press, 1994, 111-118. Print.

Child, Lydia Maria. *The Mother's Book*. Eds. David J. Rothman and Sheila M. Rothman. New York: Arno Press & The New York Times, 1972. Print.

Clinton, Catherine and Christine Lunardini. *The Columbia Guide to American Women in the Nineteenth Century.* New York: Columbia UP, 2000. Print.

Cott, Nancy. *The Bonds of Womanhood: Woman's Sphere in New England, 1780-1835*. New Haven: Yale UP, 1977. Print.

Coultrap-McQuin, Susan. *Doing Literary Business: American Women Writers in the Nineteenth Century*. Chapel Hill: The U of North Carolina P, 1990. Print.

Cutting-Gray, Joanne and James E. Swearington. "System, the Divided Mind, and the Essay on Man." *Studies in English Literature* 32.3 (1992): 479-494.Print.

Dobson, Joanne. Introduction. *The Hidden Hand, or Capitola the Madcap*. By E.D.E.N. Southworth. New Jersey: Rutgers UP, 2009. xi-xlvi. Print.

"Editor's Table." *Ohio Farmer (1856-1906)* 46.23 (5 Dec. 1874): 361. Print.

"The Enquirer – No. III." *The American Universal Magazine* 1.5 (6 Feb. 1797): 166. Print.

Entzminger, Betina. *The Belle Gone Bad: White Southern Women Writers and the Dark Seductress*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State UP, 2002. Print.

Fern, Fanny. *Ginger-Snaps*. New York: Carleton Publisher, 1870. *Google Books*. Pdf File.

Fish, Virginia Kemp. "The Struggle over Women's Education in the Nineteenth Century: A Social Movement and Countermovement." *Women and Social Protest*. Eds. Guida West and Rhoda Lois Blumberg. New York: Oxford UP, 1990, 263-276. Print.

"François Fénelon." *Touchstone: A Journal of Mere Christianity* 19.2 (March 2006): 40.Print.

Fraser, James W. *Preparing America's Teachers: A History*. New York: Teachers College Press, 2007. Print.

Gabler-Hover, Janet. *Dreaming Black/Writing White: The Hagar Myth in American Cultural History*. Lexington: UP of Kentucky, 2000. Print.

Harris, Susan K. *Nineteenth Century American Women's Novels: Interpretative Strategies.* New York: Cambridge UP, 1990. Print.

Hart, John. *Female Prose Writers of America: With Portraits, Biographical Notices and Specimens of Their Writings*. Philadelphia: E.H. Butler and Company, 1855. Print.

Hedrick, Joan D. *Harriet Beecher Stowe: A Life*. New York: Oxford UP, 1995. Print.

Hendrick, Robert. "Ever-widening Circle or Mask of Oppression?: Almira Phelps's Role in Nineteenth-century American Female Education." *History of Education* 24.4 (1995):293-304. Print.

Hobbs, Catherine. Introduction to *Nineteenth Century Women Learn to Write*. Charlottesville: UP of Virginia, 1995, 1-33. Print.

Hudock, Amy E. *No Mere Mercenary: The Early Life and Fiction of E.D.E.N. Southworth*. Diss. U of South Carolina, 1993. Print.

Ingram, Ann M. "Melodrama and the Moral Economy of E.D.E.N. Southworth's *The Deserted Wife*." *American Transcendental Quarterly* 13.4 (Dec.1999): 269-386. Print.

Jones, Paul. *Against the Gallows: Antebellum American Writers and the Movement to Abolish Capital Punishment*. Iowa City: U of Iowa P, 2011. Print.

---. *Unwelcome Voices: Subversive Fiction in the Antebellum South*. Knoxville: U of Tennessee P, 2005. Print.

"Joshua Laurens Henshaw." *The Hinshaw Family Association*. 1997-2011. The Hinshaw Family Association. 20 Oct. 2011. Web.

Kelley, Mary. *Private Woman, Public Stage: Literary Domesticity in Nineteenth-Century America*. New York: Oxford UP, 1984. Print.

Kerber, Linda. *Women of the Republic: Intellect and Ideology in Revolutionary America*. Chapel Hill: U of North Carolina P, 1980. Print.

Kolodny, Annette. *The Land Before Her: Fantasy and Experience of the American Frontiers, 1630-1860*. Chapel Hill: U of North Carolina P, 1984. Print.

"Literary Miscellanies." *The Eclectic Magazine of Foreign Literature* 30.3 (Nov. 1853): 430. Print.

"Literary Notices." *Godey's Lady's Book and Magazine* 51 (Dec. 1855): 560. Print.

"The Missing Bride, or Miriam the Avenger." *Southern Literary Messenger* 21.7 (July 1855): 467. Print.

Naranjo-Huebl, Linda. "The Road to Perdition: E.D.E.N. Southworth and the Critics." *American Periodicals: A Journal of History, Criticism, and Bibliography*. 16.2 (2006): 123-150. Print.

"New Publications." *Spirit of the Times; A Chronicle of the Turf, Agriculture, Field Sports, Literature and the Stage* 25.39 (10 Nov. 1855): 457. Print.

---. *Spirit of the Times; A Chronicle of the Turf, Agriculture, Field Sports, Literature and the Stage* 26.8 (5 Apr. 1856): 11. Print.

"Notices of New Works: The Mother-in-Law; or the Isle of Rays. A Tale." *The Southern Literary Messenger; Devoted to Every Department of Literature, and the Fine Arts* 17.6 (June 1851): 390. Print.

Papashvily, Helen Waite. *All the Happy Endings: A Study of the Domestic Novel in America, the Women Who Wrote It, the Women Who Read It, in the Nineteenth Century*. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1956. Print.

Parton, James. *Fanny Fern: A Memorial Volume*. New York: G.W. Carleton & Co., 1873. Print.

Proctor, John Clagett. “History of School Housing: Modern Structures Introduced at Period of Educational Development under Noted Teachers Whose Names Have Permanent Place.” *The Washington Star* 26 Sept. 1937, Sunday ed.: F2. Microfilm.

“Retribution; A Tale of Passion.” *National Era (1847-1860)* 10.507 (18 Sept. 1856): 150. Print.

“Retribution; or, The Vale of the Shadows.” *National Era* 3.38 (20 Sept. 1849): 150. Print.

“Review 1 – No Title.” *Peterson’s Magazine* 24.4 (April 1856): 330.Print.

“Review 18 – No Title.” *The International Monthly Magazine of Literature, Science and Art* 2.2 (Jan. 1851): 181. Print.

Rouse, P. Joy. “Cultural Models of Womanhood and Female Education: Practices of Colonization and Resistance.” *Nineteenth Century Women Learn to Write*. Ed. Catherine Hobbs. Charlottesville: UP of Virginia, 1995, 230-247. Print.

Seller, Maxine Schwartz, Ed. *Women Educators in the United States (1820-1993): A Bio-Bibliographical Sourcebook.* Westport: Greenwood Press, 1994. Print.

Sizer, Lyde Cullen. *The Political Work of Northern Women Writers and the Civil War, 1850-1872*. Chapel Hill: U of North Carolina P, 2000. Print.

Southworth, E.D.E.N. *The Deserted Wife*. New York: F.M. Lupton Publishing Co., 1886. Print.

---. *The Discarded Daughter or, The Children of the Isle*. New York: F.M. Lupton Publishing Co., 1876. Print.

---. *The Hidden Hand, or Capitola the Madcap*. Ed. Joanne Dobson. New Jersey: Rutgers UP, 2009. Print.

---. *India; or, The Pearl of Pearl River*. Philadelphia: T.B. Peterson & Brothers, 1875. Print.

---. *Miriam, the Avenger; or, The Missing Bride*. Philadelphia: T.B. Peterson & Brothers, 1874. Print.

---. *The Three Beauties; or, Shannondale*. New York: F.M. Lupton Publishing Co., 1878. Print.

---. *Retribution: A Tale of Passion*. Philadelphia: T.B. Peterson & Brothers, 1856. Print.

Thompson, E. "Chemistry for Girls." *Saturday Evening Post* 24.1466 (1 Sept. 1849): 4.Print.

T.H.Y. "Biographical Sketch of the Author." *The Haunted Homestead: And Other Novellettes, with an Autobiography of the Author*. By E.D.E.N. Southworth. Philadelphia: T.B. Peterson and Brothers, 1860. Print.

Tracey, Karen. *Plots and Proposals: American Women's Fiction, 1850-90*. Chicago: U of Illinois Press, 2000. Print.

Warren, Joyce. *Women, Money and the Law: Nineteenth Century Fiction, Gender and the Courts*. Iowa City: U of Iowa P, 2005. Print.

Watterson, Helen. "Letter 7 – No Title." *Century Illustrated Magazine* 49.5 (Mar. 1895): 796. Print.

Weinstein, Cindy. "'What Did You Mean?' Marriage in E.D.E.N. Southworth's Novels." *Legacy: A Journal of American Women Writers*. 27.1 (2010): 43-60. Print.

Welter, Barbara. "The Cult of True Womanhood: 1820-1860." *American Quarterly* 18 (Summer 1966): 151-175. Print.

Woody, Thomas. *A History of Women's Education in the United States*. 2 Vols. New York: The Science Press, 1929. Print.