A WORLD WITHIN HERSELF:
THE SOUTHERN MOUNTAIN WOMAN IN THE NOVELS OF
HARRIETTE SIMPSON ARNOW

An abstract of a Thesis by
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The thesis concerns itself with major female characters in the four novels of Harriette Arnow. The women, all built upon the prototype of the Southern mountain woman, possess the same qualities, though a definite pattern of refinement in construction can be followed from the first novel through the latest, reflecting both Arnow's development as a novelist and the various phases of the Southern mountain pioneer prototype.

The methods used in the thesis consisted of analysis of primary materials to note the pattern of development of characters, supported by analysis and definition of the prototype from secondary materials dealing with Southern Appalachian regionalism, geographical, sociological, and literary, from the early eighteenth century to the present.

Arnow's South Central Kentucky background has strongly influenced her work, letting the greater portion of it be set in that area and giving all of it the hardy, Pelagianistic philosophy of the once-pioneering southern mountaineer. Her novels have as their central figures women who are personifications of this mountaineer philosophy. Strong-willed, independent, imaginative, and agrarian, they achieve their stature in the novels because they understand the implications of their circumstances and because they question those circumstances that can be changed.

As Arnow has completed each novel, the central figure pattern has undergone another phase in the process of evolution. Louisa, the central figure in Mountain Path is less refined and less complex than Suse of Hunter's Horn. Gertie of The Dollmaker is more refined than Suse. The process of evolution has its culmination in Susie of The Weedkiller's Daughter, who, though Arnow has moved her from the hills to the suburbs, is still Louisa and Suse in quiet perception and Suse and Gertie in independence and in affinity with the land. The evolution and the order of the novels parallels the pioneer experience. Louisa goes into a new territory but retreats; Suse and Gertie struggle with the territory to make it liveable; Susie manages to reach the point of establishing a settlement that is in peaceful co-existence with the surroundings.
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A Thesis
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Master of Arts

by
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Chapter I

INTRODUCTION: THE ROADS

A Southern writer obsessed with roads is not an anomaly to readers of twentieth century novels. William Faulkner lets the hot, dry dusty road run through several of his novels, perhaps most noticeably in Light in August and in the Quentin section of The Sound and the Fury. John Ehle, in his novel The Road, uses a variation of the road motif as he chronicles the construction of a railroad through, literally, the mountains of North Carolina. Few Southern writers, however, have employed the road motif to the extent that Harriette Simpson Arnow, a so-called minor member of the Southern Literary Renaissance, has employed it. The road, in all its variant forms—paths, graded gravel, highways, railroads, and rivers—has been a part of her life always. In the introduction to the paperback edition of her first novel, Mountain Path, published in 1936, Arnow writes:

At a very early age I saw much of life in terms of roads. Possibly this was because of the very poor road to the family home on the hill... Mountain Path I originally called "Path"; editorial opinion insisted on the other title. My next work on the hills, roughly planned at the time, but never finished until many years later when I was settled again in the city—this time Detroit—was the story of a hill community near the end of a graveled road where the outside world was bringing change to the home community and at the same time taking men and families away. This manuscript known as End of the Gravel was by editorial opinion changed to Hunter's Horn.
The last fiction centered on a hill family began where the graveled road led onto the highway, and ended in a war-time housing development in Detroit. The title, The Dollmaker, was of my choosing. The hill community near the highway was gone. Thus, Highway seemed no fit title.  

For Arnow the road is both real and symbolic. Literal roads lead out to new places such as cities where life seems to offer more than it does in the rural areas. Figurative roads lead from the present into the future; sometimes roads both literal and figurative, like those that Arnow knows, are anachronistic and lead merely from the past into the present. The people of the hill country of the Cumberland Plateau in south central Kentucky, Arnow's native territory, often found that the primitive wagon tracks that they had for roads led them into a future that was in actuality a present.  

One could go by train, and soon by automobile from Somerset to Cincinnati--180 miles away--more quickly and with far greater ease than from Somerset to many one-room schools in the county. Many of the men often took the time-consuming trip to the county seat; sometimes it meant a walk or mule ride of many miles to the nearest railroad station where the northbound local stopped; other times from places where the Cumberland had to be crossed by skiff, the whole of a fifteen or twenty-mile trip was done on foot. Few of the women and children had ever been in the county-seat town, separated from them not only by distance, but also, one could quite truthfully say, by two hundred years of time.  


2 Ibid.
The both literal and figurative road runs through more than Arnow's formative years. She herself followed the road out of the hill country in a manner paralleling the development of the road from path to graded gravel to highway. A product of the country of paths but determined to follow the gravel to higher academic education, Arnow moved from her home on the hill above Burnside in Somerset County, Kentucky, to Berea College. From there she followed the highway to Louisville and the University of Louisville. A highway linked Louisville to Cincinnati and eventually another highway linked Cincinnati with Detroit. Concurrent with her literal movement along the road to literary achievement. According to Wilton Eckley, author of the critical biography, Harriette Arnow, to be published by the Twayne United States Authors series, she began to move down the path toward the graded gravel as a young child when her mother promised her a second-hand typewriter if Harriette would learn to milk a cow newly added to the family menagerie. Almost by default the acquired husbandry skill helped Arnow continue down the path onto the gravel with a first novel, Mountain Path, published in 1936; and onto the highway with a second novel, Hunter's Horn, published in 1949; with a third novel, The

1 Wilton Eckley, "Harriette Arnow" (MS. to be published by Twayne United States Authors Series), pp. 1-62.

2 Ibid., pp. ii-iii.
Dollmaker, published in 1954; with two works of social history, Seedtime on the Cumberland and The Flowering of the Cumberland, published in 1960 and 1963 respectively; and with the latest novel, The Weedkiller's Daughter, published in 1970. Arnow has made a successful journey toward literary recognition, though not without finding a few rough places in the road, among these being the unpublished novel, Between the Flowers, and the loss of the 1955 National Book Award for The Dollmaker to William Faulkner's A Fable.¹ In spite of possible pitfalls and unknown difficulties Arnow chose to travel the path, the gravel, and the highway—which she did with a determination and a spirit that are not surprising in view of her heritage.

Arnow, born Harriette Louisa Simpson in 1908, is of pioneer stock. Such ancestry is not unusual in itself, for almost every native of a country as young as the United States is of pioneer stock; the Long Hunters and frontier scouts who explored and settled the Cumberland River Basin and surrounding highlands, however, were a distinct civilization, indeed a distinct race, if Mary Austin's 1932 article, "Regionalism in American Fiction," carries any credibility, for in it she defines race as "... a pattern of responses common to a group of people who have lived together under a

¹Eckley, pp. 2-14.
given environment long enough to take a recognizable pattern."¹

This race of frontiersmen, a mingling of Scots, Lowland Scots, those Scots from Northern Ireland called Scotch-Irish, some English dissenters and a smattering of Germans and French,² blazed trails or followed those paths already cut by the few scouts who had preceded them into The Old Boot. This land, a boot-shaped river basin whose toe touches the Ohio River in the northwest, whose heel reaches deep into south central Tennessee, the front of whose high top reaches into the high-lands of south central Kentucky and the back of whose high top forms the southern half of the western border of Virginia,³ was a land of steep hillsides, ridges, mountains, narrow valleys, plenteous hardwood and evergreen trees, wild animals, and Indians. It was a land whose settlers had to learn to live with the forest or die from its wrath.

Across this Old boot, in both north-south and east-west directions, ran more paths or roads studied later as Indian trails, which might have caused many of Arnow's

¹Mary Austin, "Regionalism in American Fiction," English Journal, 21 (Feb. 1932), 97.


ancestors, too, to see their lives in terms of roads. The Great War Path ran north and south through Cumberland Gap. The Middle Chickasaw Path, "worn two feet deep when the white man found it," ran south from Nashville, Tennessee. Out of this grew an east-west trail called Natchez Trace, part of which at times was called Tollunteeskee's Trail. Still obsessed with roads, aware of their importance to the pioneers, Arnow comments in a Seedtime on the Cumberland chapter entitled "The First Settlers":

It is hard to overestimate the importance of these trails in the exploration and settlement of the country by men who as a rule traveled by horseback instead of by canoe. . . . True, even the first roads of the white man did not exactly follow any given trail; originally made by animals and modified by men who walked, there was some change for the horseman; more change when the pack-horse trace became a wagon road, and still more when the wagon road became a highway for automobiles. Yes, at many points as at Cumberland Gap the very old and the very new know the same pass, and stranger still the white man built a very great many of his towns at the intersections of the old trails.2

The race of men whose lives were controlled by these trails and by the trails they chose to open themselves was a group predominantly Scotch and Scotch-Irish. They are described by Weatherford and Brewer as being set apart from other men because of the combination of four basic traits that they possessed: independence, self-reliance, clan

1Arnow, Seedtime, p. 54.

2Ibid., p. 55.
loyalty, and a sense of honor. The independence and self-reliance created by the naturally isolating terrain and by the sparse settlements were prerequisites for the use of the ax and the rifle, two of the frontiersman’s four basic possessions, the other two being the frying pan and the Bible.¹ Even with the ax and the rifle, the Southern Appalachian frontiersman was not deliberately destructive. Being forced to live close to nature, he developed a Pantheistic or transcendental philosophy about his environment. From the cradle he was steeped in the caprices and whims of nature and could, by sniffing the air or by listening to the sound of the river tumbling over the falls, predict with astonishing accuracy the next day’s weather. Arnow, in Seedtime on the Cumberland, adds that the mountain settlers “... were forever cautious; they respected the woods, the caves, and the river as one respects honorable enemies.”² Such respect coupled with fabled Scotch frugality led the self-reliant early Cumberlander to extreme efficiency rather than destructiveness, as in the following example:

Young John Buchanan, out with his felling ax, was, as he brought down a cedar four feet through and forty feet to the first limb, doing three things: preparing a field for planting, clearing an area around the fort free of trees and hence making it safer from hiding Indians, and getting timber for house wall, piggen, or firewood. Underbrush and

¹Weatherford and Brewer, pp. 4-8.

²Arnow, Seedtime, pp. 141-142.
many of the trees were good only for makeshift fence, firewood, and sometimes they were merely dragged into piles and burned, but usually the felling of a tree was more than an act of destruction, done solely to be rid of the tree.¹

This same closeness to nature that led the highlander not to waste timber made him an expert marksman as his precious rifle was both a source of food and a means of self-defense. The highlander did not hunt for the mere sport. Because time was a precious commodity, the hours he spent tracking deer, squirrels, and other game needed to result in meat for the other essential, the frying pan.

Clearly the highlander was well aware of the environment and of the possibilities it offered for survival as well as the possibilities for destruction. He was a cautious dweller-in-the-woods who used without waste whatever was available from the land around him and who respected the power of that land. The sense of fearlessness attributed to the Southern Appalachian inhabitant is, according to Weatherford and Brewer, actually indifference to danger, but it is an indifference that comes from knowing that he has not interfered with the operations of nature, that he has done what he can to protect himself against the ire of nature, and that whatever catastrophes may occur would have occurred regardless of his efforts to avoid them. Such men as these frontiersmen left strong impressions upon those to follow

¹Ibid., p. 256.
them, whether they were to follow by trail or by generation.

Arnow is one who has followed by generation literally and by trail figuratively. A descendant of pioneers, she, too, is a pioneer in her own right. Her forebears were aware of the land around them and the resources it offered—and the dangers. She, likewise, became aware, at a very early age, of the land and the people around her and the literary resources they offered. Her parents and grandparents told and retold stories rich in hill-country folklore and detail which caused her, even at the early age of five, to realize that the past, for her people, was not really the past. Indeed, as she states in Seedtime on the Cumberland, "My people loved the past more than their present lives, I think, but it cannot be said we lived in the past. Two things tied all time together; these had run through most of the old stories to shape the lives of men, and so did they shape our lives and the lives of the people about us. These were the land and the Cumberland." Thus Arnow is a pioneer through heritage and this heritage exhibits itself in her ability to employ efficiently and without waste that which is about her. In his biography of Arnow, Eckley points out the great influence of her heritage, her past, and the environment of that past upon

\[1\text{Eckley, p. 25.}\]

\[2\text{Arnow, Seedtime, p. 4.}\]
both her earlier and her more recent writings. He says, "Though Mrs. Arnow no longer lives near the Cumberland River, it and the land it waters are still very much a part of her . . . and so [do] they shape the fiction and non-fiction she has produced."¹

Arnow is a pioneer in more than heritage, however; being as influenced by the past as she was, she could not avoid transferring to her own life some of the enthusiasm of her ancestors for blazing new trails and for ther that trail was—once again—the road to literary achievement. Had Arnow been born a man, the desire to write would indicate clearly enough possession of pioneer mind and spirit; because she was born a woman, the pioneer mind and spirit are then doubly evident. Her venture into the new territory would have a two-fold consequence: she would be going against the wishes of her parents who had decided that their daughters should become teachers and maintain these positions accompanied by much community respect, at least until they married,² and she would be trying to break into a field not generally kind to the few women that it did receive. Not wishing to rebel completely against the principles and ethics learned in the Kentucky hill home, Arnow did teach for a few years and, in doing so, gained some pioneer strength useful

¹Eckley, p. 18.

²Ibid., p. 41.
in overcoming the barriers facing women novelists.

One of these difficulties has been documented by Doris Grumbach in a 1964 *Commonweal* article entitled "On Woman Novelists." She contends that in the first half of the twentieth century there were few women writing fiction, other than historical fiction, that compared in quality with that which the men were writing. Among these few women were such writers as Mary McCarthy, Carson McCullers, and Flannery O'Connor, who are also members of the Southern Literary Renaissance and therefore compatriots of Arnow, and most of these were better known for their works of short fiction. Great novels come from the world of fact, from experience; and, since women are limited as to types of experience, most of their novels must deal with marital life and domestic strife, causing their subject matter to be fundamentally "other women, children, family, marriage, seduction, triangles and divorces . . . , love and courtship . . . adolescence and old age and the problems of beauty and age."¹ Such topics tend toward the romantic and sentimental, even toward the melodramatic and the maudlin. Arnow's use of romantic and melodramatic subjects indicates the extent of her courage and pioneer spirit for she does employ them, but she uses them as a creator of realistic literature does,}

in the background to provide local color and detail.

As a woman writer of realistic fiction which is also regional fiction—and furthermore Southern fiction, ever in the shadow of William Faulkner—Arnow continues in the tradition of the Appalachian highlander, both figuratively and literally. In The Kentucky Novel, a treatise on both Bluegrass and mountain fiction, Lawrence and Algernon Thompson point out that much post-Civil War Kentucky fiction deals with the primitive and unsophisticated inhabitants of the highlands and that many of the elements of that fiction, "moonshiners, revenuers, feuding . . . have unmistakable elements of romance," but that contemporary works about the mountains are strongly realistic.¹ They pay homage to her use of mountain customs, beliefs, and dialect, calling her one of "the better contemporary authors who have derived inspiration from the folklore of the hills," and giving her credit for employing "restrained almost scholarly notes on mountain life and customs" and for conducting in the novel, Hunter's Horn, an intense study of the psychology of the Kentucky mountaineer.² Thus the romantic and the melodramatic elements in Arnow's work are relegated to a position of secondary importance.


For instance, *Mountain Path*, the first novel, "... except for the conclusion in which Louisa [the principal character] acknowledges her love for a young feudor... seems to be autobiographical."¹ Though Arnow is relying on herself for a major characterization here, she does not fall into the same trap that her less capable women contemporaries do. Her own experiences are such that she can report life beyond the perimeter of the home and hearth; she recounts a novice teacher's year among poor mountain people who are innocent victims but resigned and determined perpetuators of a feud. *Hunter's Horn*, the second novel, deals with an entire family but concentrates on one young girl's attempts to escape the imprisoning characteristics of the mountain cove in which her family struggles to exist from crops grown on a poorly worked, poor quality hillside farm. The third novel, *The Dollmaker*, is concerned with domestic strife but concentrates on the ability of an entire mountain family to adjust to unfamiliar city surroundings. The fourth novel, *The Weedkiller's Daughter*, contains a minimal amount of domestic strife--always placed in a hazy background situation--and concerns itself with the endeavors of a precocious teen-age girl to be an individual in an environment demanding conformity and artificiality. Indeed, as Wilton Eckley says in his critical biography, Arnow's work, both the fiction and the non-fiction,

¹Thompson and Thompson, p. 26.
offers "a penetrating and comprehensive treatment of the life of the Southern mountaineer from his origins to his migration to the industrial cities of the North."¹

Arnow shows herself a pioneer both as a Kentucky author and as a regionalist. Grant C. Knight, in a 1945 article on the varieties of Kentucky fiction, comments that

Regional literature faces peculiar threats to esteem and longevity. It is bound to exhaust its material and thereafter its readers. Its primitivism is likely to suggest that we are being led backward instead of forward or that we are sitting in at a peepshow which caters to our snobishness. And it is pretty sure to lapse into a preoccupation with the trivial. Kentucky regionalists, foreseeing these dangers, have thought to escape them.²

Arnow has escaped the danger of preoccupation with the trivial by instilling in her works, through intricate detail of scene, superstition, and dialect, an overwhelming realism and a sense of naturalism so intense that occasionally the reader will think her extremely pessimistic. Rather, she is writing merely as the inherent soul and spirit of the pioneering mountaineer compels her to write. She, too, is affected by the land and the Cumberland, so affected that she perhaps even unwittingly has incorporated the phases of the myth and mystique of the Southern

¹Eckley, p. i.

mountaineer settler into her works of fiction.

The myth and mystique of the Southern mountaineer have provided the impetus for the study to follow which will concern itself mainly with the principal women in the novels of Harriette Arnow. That Arnow has chosen to assign major roles in the novels to women is not unusual in itself; that she has chosen to give the major roles to the women predominately, rather than to the men, is unusual however. Compared to the men, the women are well-founded characters, fully drawn, exhibiting the hardy Pelagianistic philosophy of the once-pioneering southern mountaineer after whom they are patterned and by whom their creator has been influenced since birth. Arnow's four novels, Mountain Path, Hunter's Horn, The Dollmaker, and The Weedkiller's Daughter, have as their central figures women—or child-women—who are personifications of this mountaineer philosophy. Strong-willed, independent, imaginative, and agrarian, they achieve their stature in the novels because they understand the implications of their circumstances, because they are resigned to what cannot be changed, and because they question continually those circumstances that can be changed.

As Arnow has completed each novel, the central figure has undergone another phase in the process of evolution. Louisa, the central figure in Mountain Path, is less refined and less complex than Suse, a central figure in Hunter's Horn. Gertie of The Dollmaker is a more mature version of
Suse developed with more detail. The process of evolution has its culmination in Susie of *The Weedkiller's Daughter*, who, though Arnow has moved her from the hills to the suburbs, is still Louisa and Suse in quiet perception and Suse and Gertie in independence and affinity with nature and the land. The evolution of the characters and the sequence of the novels parallel the mountaineer experience. Louisa goes into a new territory but returns—somewhat as the trailblazers and scouts who precede the first wave of settlers; Suse and Gertie, like the first generation of settlers in a new territory, struggle with the unfamiliar environment to learn its benevolence and its malevolence in order to carve a life from it; Susie, representative of the generation having grown up in territory once unfamiliar to their parents, manages to reach the point of establishing a settlement that functions in peaceful co-existence with the surrounding wilderness.

This study will, in part, trace the path of evolution of these characters as feminine constructions of the prototype of the Southern Appalachian pioneer. The prototype of the Southern mountain woman alone will not suffice, though the myth of the mountain woman depicts her as possessing great physical, moral, and psychological strength; indeed a chapter in *Flowering of the Cumberland* which Arnow devotes primarily to the woman instrumental in settling the hill country is, for the sake of subtle symbolism, entitled
"The Underpinning."¹ Understanding the total scope of the pioneer mystique requires the examination of the beliefs, customs, and habits of the hardy individualist who "had to be a world within himself ... who had to be able to believe in himself and the world around him."² By analogy, then, this study will be one of women, each of whom follows the trails, paths, and roads that lead her to be a world within herself.

²Arnow, Seedtime, p. 171.
Chapter II

THE PIONEERS

Pioneers are part of every civilization, every nation. They are the hardy individuals whose spirit provides the backbone of that civilization or nation, and because of such influence they set the standards of morals, ethics, economics, religion, and even the arts. Eventually the legend of the pioneer mind becomes inextricably woven into that nation's history, but the legend, as with all legends, develops long after those who have served as its source are gone. Discoveries and achievements are lauded, landmarked, and documented to be alluded to by patriotic descendants. Seldom does a nation pause to realize that its forefathers did not spring fully grown from the soil of that nation. They were, rather, a breed of innovative knights-errant. In the epilogue of Seedtime on the Cumberland, Harriette Arnow summarizes their achievements:

The kettle singing from the crane above the glowing hickory embers was like most other aspects of pioneer life, both new and old. Fire and kettles were old in Europe when Martin Chartier visited the Cumberland. The heat of hickory embers had long been known to the American Indian, but was strange to England. The pioneer put the three together.

The first settlers on the Cumberland, like first settlers elsewhere, invented nothing and most certainly not democracy. They pioneered no new systems of government or religion or
agriculture. Rather the successful pioneer was a master hand at adapting old learnings to a new environment.¹

In order for the pioneer to come into a new environment, he must leave an old one, the reasons ranging from humanitarianism to wanderlust to greed. Whatever the reason, there must be an exodus from a former place, and more often than not the exodus is conducted in the interest of self-preservation and thus, in a sense, is a forced exodus. Arnow, summarizing a trip she took in the early 1960's, writes the following in Mountain Life and Work: "Daughter Marcella and I rented a car and spent ten days touring the Scottish Highlands including the Hebrides; later we went to Wales; over and over I was caught up in the same sorrow that gets me in the back hills: deserted homes, farms, and fields--people could no longer earn a living; and over and over whether at North Urst or Barmouth, the same talk of the old--'The young ones have to go away; there's nothing for them here.'"²

She reaffirms that sorrow in the introduction to Mountain Path in a discussion of the influences of the town of Burnside, Kentucky, on her early life. "Still, though not living in the small town below me on the river, family life was shaped by town life--the graded school we attended, the

¹Arnow, Seedtime, pp. 426-427.

Southern Railway with most of its passenger trains then stopping in the town, the lumber mills, and the steamboats. I had grown up within hearing of train and steamboat whistles, and most of the time I looked toward the world of which they spoke—Nashville, Cincinnati, Detroit, Louisville, Chicago. That world had taken most of my people and would I knew in time take me; it offered most."1

Arnow was not alone in thinking that the world beyond the hills offered most. As she left the back hills in 1924 to attend Berea College in Berea, Kentucky, and from there moved onto those everbeckoning cities, Louisville, Cincinnati, and finally settled near Ann Arbor, her fellow Cumberlanders were, a few at a time, departing from the hills for the promising new territory of cities. She reports that "Life in the hills was on the whole worse than it had been for decades. The big timber was gone, the oil, and the soil washed from the hillsides and ridge tops; game was scarce. There was little left but scrub timber, worn out soil, and people—many people, for though there had always been emigration from the hills the Great Migration had not yet begun."2 Her own great migration had preceded by a few years that which began for her hillcountrymen with World War II. During the years since the war, the continued emigration has

1 Arnow, Mountain Path, p. i.

2 Arnow, ibid., p. ii.
resulted in the conditions she describes as follows:

One can walk for miles and miles through the upper reaches of the creek valleys above Smith Shoals on the Cumberland—or rather where Smith Shoals used to be for the old river like the lower reaches of the creeks is now deep under Lake Cumberland—and find only tumble-down houses, often the chimney alone, a rusted post office sign windlodged in a young pine tree, or a leaf-choked spring, around it scattered blocks of stone to re­mind the passerby that once a springhouse stood there.

This is the hill community after the Great Migration that began with World War II and con­tinues still. Population in the United States as a whole has in the last two decades shown a pro­digious increase; that of most counties in Eastern Kentucky has shown an even greater rate of decrease. There have been other changes, the beginnings of which one could see by 1933 when Mountain Path was begun—the Cumberland National Forest, WPA roads, more federal funds for county health and agriculture, hope of electricity. The things of which I had dreamed for the hills were coming to pass. There were other changes. These more or less paralleled those in all rural regions of the United States; improved roads and increased use of the automobile tended more and more to destroy the rural community, still too backward to attract industry of its own and so stay alive. The one room school was consoli­dated, and the little church when compared to that in the town now easily reached by automobile seemed a poor thing. The needs of the people were being met, but they were no longer there, for the most pressing need of all—some means of earning cash—never came to the back hill community.

This one great need was already destroying the world I saw when I taught my first school. Not all those who went away to work came home again. Well before Mountain Path was written I knew in Louisville and later in Cincinnati a good many of the trans­planted people. Some were the sons and daughters of little farmers in the hills; with no land to farm they had turned to industry during the booming twenties, and stayed on through the depression chiefly because back home there was nothing for them. Most, however, during the thirties did come back to the hills, so that school enrollments in many eastern counties increased during the depression.
The going out during and after World War II was different; the average man did not stay a few months and come home again. Instead the wife and children followed. The Great Migration twisted, and possibly wrecked, my old dream.1

Paradoxically, while her dream for the hill country was being wrecked, Arnow's dreams for herself were being fulfilled; she was journeying toward a figurative land where she would be free to practice what for her was a form of religion—the art of writing—and where she would find opportunity to adapt the old learnings, the customs of the Cumberlanders and the stories she had known since childhood, to the new environment of her own writings.

More than two centuries before her first attempts at writing, the people whose independent spirit and philosophies helped spur her on to the goal began their Great Migration from Western Europe and from the Tidewater areas of the Colonies into the Cumberland River Basin and its surrounding mountains, forming a part of the Appalachian South which has been the setting of much fiction and non-fiction since its settlement. This Appalachian South, according to Horace Kephart in Our Southern Highlanders, is a twentieth century version of the eighteenth century,2 or has been until the last forty years, at least; Eliot Wigginton's The Foxfire

1Arnow, Mountain Path, pp. vii-viii.

Book (New York: Doubleday, 1972), with accounts of handi-
crafts still being practiced and folklore still being be-
lieved, and Harry M. Caudill's Night Comes to the Cumberlands
(Boston: Little, Brown, 1963), with accounts of demoraliza-
tion and economic and social deprivation, indicate, however,
that even the last forty years have mattered little.

The area is one of steep-sided slopes covered with
hardwood and pine trees. The deep, narrow valleys—"hol-
lers"—which are formed by these slopes see very little of
both the sun and outside influence, thus making Arnow's
description of the Cal farm in her first novel Mountain Path
as "... a place of perpetual twilight"\(^1\) seem naturally
metaphorical. These deep narrow valleys and the steep wooded
slopes are to be found, along with characteristic language and
dress, in parts of Maryland, West Virginia, Virginia, North
Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Georgia, Alabama, and
Kentucky.\(^2\) Of these areas, particularly Western Virginia,
Western North Carolina, Tennessee, and Kentucky make up the
land of the trailblazers, the pioneers who led the first
phase of westering. These are the lands forming that wilder-
ness that was traversed, explored, and settled by such legend-
ary figures as James Needham, Governor Spotswood, William

\(^1\)Arnow, Mountain Path, p. 56.

\(^2\)Josiah H. Combs, "The Language of the Southern High-
lander," PMLA, 46 (1931), 1302.
Byrd, Dr. Thomas Walker, Daniel Boone, and Davie Crockett.¹

As Arnow records in her social history Seedtime on the Cumberland, these were the lands settled by

... German, Swiss, French, Welsh, sometimes English—a Methodist or a Baptist—now and then a Pennsylvania Quaker, or a family down from New Jersey, New York, or even New England—all hunting tolerance and cheap land. There was above all Scotch-Irish... We cannot be certain it was entirely poverty and persecution that made the Scotch-Irish along with many Germans, push up and up into the higher lands, with some crossing the Blue Ridge. ... The Scotch and the Scotch-Irish undoubtedly loved the high valleys, snug below high hills and mountains. Swift streams between rocky hills would have reminded them of their homeland, that is if any among them had been in the habit of using such a pretty word. The land-that-had-been-home was for them as for the French or German Protestant, a place of persecution, hardly an earthly paradise on which to hang fond dreams of going home.²

The deep valleys and steep slopes serving as natural barriers created an isolationist attitude among the settlers of the Appalachian South which caused the image of the hill people to contain feuds, moonshiners, and curious dialect almost poetic in its Anglo-Saxon and Celtic background and its close communion with nature. Kephart's verbal portrait of the Southerners claims that mention of this region causes one's imagination also to

... conjure up a tall, slouching figure in homespun, who carries a rifle as habitually as he does his hat and who may tilt its muzzle

¹Arnow, Seedtime, pp. 40-105.

²Ibid., pp. 105-106.
toward a stranger before addressing him, the form of salutation being:
"Stop thar! What's you-unses name? Whar's you'uns a goin' ter?"

. . . Our typical mountaineer is lank, he is always unkempt, he is fond of toting a gun on his shoulder, and his curiosity about a stranger's name and business is promptly, though politely outspoken. For the rest, he is a man of mystery.1

The stereotype that Kephart presented as the accepted one in 1922, the mountaineer with "the long rifle and the peremptory challenge,"2 is still the accepted one to the less informed reader. Arnow uses this stereotype as a base for her characterizations—for it is the mountaineer stripped of the personality traits that make him an individual and of the slight mutations of technological progress that have affected him in the past half-century. Kephart simultaneously laments and lauds the isolationism which is prevalent—because of natural barriers—in the hill country and which has kept the mountaineer and his family more than a century behind their Bluegrass and Tidewater contemporaries,3 though the more progressive Southerners cannot be called contemporaries of the Highlanders because time has passed more slowly in the Highlands. In the introduction to the First Appalachian Heritage edition of Mountain Path, Arnow includes a detailed passage that supports Kephart's theory of isolationism and provides an

1Kephart, pp. 11-12.

2Ibid., p. 12.

3Ibid., pp. 12-18.
explanation for the air of mystery that surrounds the mountaineer:

The contrast between the often prosperous and sometimes wealthy dweller in the county-seat towns of the hills and the rural family had sharpened; while the late twenties brought booming times to much of the rest of the United States, the roadless back hill communities knew only an all-encompassing poverty of environment. Mail in such communities continued to come twice or thrice weekly by mule-back. The institution now known as county health was in its infancy; hospitals were practically non-existent in Eastern Kentucky; many were born, lived and died with no help from that man seldom found in impoverished communities—the physician. The average school was a one room frame building, a miscellaneous collection of seats its sole equipment, no toilets of any kind, water from the closest spring, hogs sleeping under the floor, and almost no help from the State of Kentucky. Education was on the whole considered a local problem. The back hill child if he wanted any beyond the eighth grade had to come from a family affluent enough to pay the expenses of studying away from home.

Few of the women and children in the back hills had by 1930 heard a radio, for with no electricity all had to be the battery-powered type. Many in the more shut away communities had never seen a car. Meanwhile Somerset, not a great many miles from any community in Pulaski County, was like many county-seat towns, a busy, up-to-the-minute place with excellent grade schools, an outstanding high school, a public library, physicians, roads to the north, automobiles on paved streets, and nearby a roundhouse of the Southern Railway.

Yet, for all the influence such centers of education and modern conveniences had on the life in the roadless hills, they might have been hundreds of miles away instead of twenty or less.

Thus does Arnow exhibit her first-hand knowledge of the isolation of the mountaineer and of the psychology of the

1Arnow, Mountain Path, pp. ii-iii.
mountaineer, a facile achievement because her formative years were spent in the hills of South Central Kentucky and, paradoxically, a difficult achievement because the proximity with which she views these people presents too subjective a view for judicious evaluation by those less wise and less traveled than she. She qualifies all the more then as a reporter and recorder of the life of the mountain people because she has both experience and perspective and can, as Jay B. Hubbell professes, "... report its interior--its soul, its speech, its thought."\(^1\)

In reporting the interior of the Kentucky Highlands, Arnow defeats all arguments against the existence of regional literature. She has, as Mary Austin has said about another writer of regional fiction, taken her materials from "... native tales which she tells in the manner in which the natives would tell them. Work of this kind comes on slowly. Time is the essence of the undertaking, time to live into the land and absorb it; still more time to cure the reading public of its preference for something less than the proverbial bird's eye view of the American scene, what you might call an automobile eye view."\(^2\) Arnow has lived into the land and absorbed it.


\(^2\) Austin, p. 106.
In an article entitled "My Land Has a Voice," published in *Mountain Life and Work*, Jesse Stuart offers—as part of an explanation to a friend—a highly plausible reason for the success and ability of writers of the Appalachian South. He says, "... Appalachians, when they move away, recognize the land they leave behind, all of its spokesmen of song, music, art, dance more than any people in any area of the world unless it is Greece, Ireland, or Scotland. ... We are Celtic, A Celt is two men. He can be a coal miner and a poet at the same time." ¹

These Celtic descendants of the Scotch, the Irish, and the Scotch-Irish whose settlement of the Cumberland River Basin and its surrounding highlands is so expertly described in Arnow's two works of social history, *Seedtime on the Cumberland* and *Flowering of the Cumberland*, have been responsible for developing a literature that is twice regional, both Southern and Appalachian. It is first Southern because, like that set in the land of red clay and sandy soil erupting into fields of cotton, tobacco, and peanuts, bordered by live oaks dripping with Spanish moss, it contains remnants of the same spirit of Agrarianism as it was defined by the Vanderbilt University school in the 1920's.

Agrarianism advocates the pastoral life, a closeness

to the land. Donald Davidson, a founding father, says, "Life is a cycle, and the agrarian establishes man within that natural cycle where he belongs." Science, which here includes industry and technology but not the present-day science of agriculture, is evil, or at least causes man to do evil. The following quotation from John Crowe Ransom's *God Without Thunder* includes one of the central themes of the Agrarian cause: "To turn away—to turn forward, as the progressives always have it—from this idyllic simplicity of life that of the Garden of Eden is to seek to improve the human position at the expense of nature as an enemy, to eat the fruit of the tree of knowledge, to break from the definitive man-to-God relation, and to commit sin. This is the origin of unhappiness."  

Southern Appalachian literature also contains a yearning for the past, a distrust of science, especially as it spawns industrialism, and a definite concern for the plight of the small farmer, but a noticeable difference occurs in the intensity of the idealization of the fatherland.

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Unlike the Deep South, the Appalachian South does not mourn its lost heritage, or even its supposedly lost heritage, for it never has been wealthy enough to have one. That which serves as heritage is the independent spirit of self-reliance that has grown of necessity from the combination of natural barriers and sparse settlements and seems to begin anew with each generation. Still, Appalachian literature is Southern enough to contain the contemporary universal as Frederick J. Hoffman describes it in *The Art of Southern Fiction*:

The South was also—and more self-consciously so than the North—a land more easily identifiable as such than New England, for example, which was in essence an idea or a battleground of ideas. The image of a land on which its people lived in close moral dependency was a popular one and persisted in spite of all evidences to the contrary in the South's economic history. Here one must, however, call a pause, simply because two important changes have occurred in more recent samples of Southern literature: the shifting of the scene from the land to the city and the intellectual and moral change, from the Southern past to the contemporary universal.¹

This contemporary universal, as writers of Southern Appalachian fiction, particularly Arnow, use it, still permits the impact and importance of place, location or setting, to be felt in the literature. According to Hoffman, it "... begins with the image, the particular of the Southern scene, a quality of atmosphere or a simple human detail..."

The history of the Southern place is essentially one of human agreements made with nature.¹ According to Wilma Dykeman Stokely, a fellow contributor of Stuart and Arnow to Mountain Life and Work, Appalachian literature is unique but, like all Southern literature, emphasizes place. It springs from an area where poverty is most extreme, where the archetypal struggle between the hunter and the settler was once real and often took place within the spirit of the same man, and where the Civil War was not a war between states but a war between brothers.² Such a series of struggles, the economic, the spiritual, and the political, provides the Appalachian author with the awareness of the environment that Stuart describes. The Appalachian writer, then, cannot help providing his work with an authenticity found in works of no other region. Stokely comments: "This authenticity went beyond a precise recording of unusual words or phrases; beyond accurate descriptions of distinctive customs and even beyond convincing rendition of character. It grew from an authority in which all of these ingredients were combined to forge from the weather of their creators' lives a testimony of personal human experience and a communication."³

¹Hoffman, p. 21.


³Ibid., p. 17.
The writing of Harriette Arnow, a native of South Central Kentucky, possesses this authenticity, this recognition of the land, its people, its customs. Her forebears must have succeeded in co-existing with the land and with nature for she developed, according to Eckley, a concept of Nature that is "not an abstraction--but something concrete and sustaining, something providing a solid foundation upon which to base a life-view."¹

Arnow's four novels, one of which is not set at all in the South Central Kentucky Highlands, and her two works of social history clearly reveal this life-view, this kinship with nature. The mountain settings in her novels fairly drip with the dampness of a winter fog clearly and realistically described. The sunny summer days are cool with the highland lack of humidity. The mountain cornfields are small and sometimes vertically furrowed, but tended with the utmost care according to "the signs." The rustic cabins are sturdy but sometimes chilly in the dampness of highland winter. The dialogue of the characters is sparse but warm and sprinkled with natural metaphor and simile which become, because of Arnow's Celtic background and the Celtic background of those persons she uses for models for characters, veritable poetry. The characters are tall, lean, and sturdy like the oak trees around them and from which their cabins are built. They

¹Eckley, p. 18.
learn to respect the ways of the woods and the river from the cradle and to know to fear nature only when they challenge it. They are the possessors of the "pioneer mind" which Arnow denies exists as a specific trait of a specific individual, but which she ultimately points out in the principal characters in each of her four novels and in the histories and descriptions of the Cumberland River and its surrounding lands.

Arnow's principal characters, always women, are developed from the prototype of the pioneer, but no more so than Arnow herself is developed from it. In the most immediate and most literal sense, she is a pioneer through legacy. She is a descendant of pioneering mountaineer stock. In a literary sense, she is a pioneer in that she is a writer of realistic fiction set in areas which tend to produce elements and themes usually attributed only to romanticism. Interest in the primitive and the unsophisticated is a characteristic of romanticism as that literary philosophy manifests itself periodically in American literature. Agrarianism, with its advocacy of close communion with nature, is an inherent part of the philosophy. Another characteristic is emphasis on the individual, which evolves into desire for humanitarian reform, particularly as it

1Arnow, *Seedtime*, p. 427.
relates to the liberation of slaves and women. Thus, in a third sense, Arnow is a pioneer, her efforts to plead for the liberation of the mountain woman not resulting in a regression into romanticism.

In each of her novels, the principal characters find their strengths in their abilities to co-exist with nature, to work with nature, not against it. Accordingly, their weaknesses all result from their inability to tolerate man’s attempts to impose the order of the machine on the nature that is their source of strength. Louisa Sheridan of Mountain Path, the outsider, comes to the mountains. She is a "furriner," an anomaly, an oddity, something to be looked at and whispered about for a time. Louisa, inexplicably possessing the mountaineers' sensitivity to nature, quickly observes and absorbs the behavior patterns of those natives she watches. Suse Ballew, the principal character of Hunter's Horn, a child-woman rather than a mere woman, makes her agreements with nature. She is aware of things that cannot be changed and does not concern herself with these. Her convictions that that which is controlled by man can be changed, needs to be changed, and too often is not changed, are shared by Gertie Nevels, the physically and philosophically strong protagonist of The Dollmaker. Moving from the

hills to the city, Gertie, a humanitarian above all else, succumbs to the conformity imposed by the machine only when she recognizes that exertion of her individuality will cause pain to others. Her agreement with nature is more accurately an agreement with human nature. Susie Schnitzer of The Weedkiller's Daughter, already living in the suburbs, makes simultaneous agreements with both human nature and nature and discovers that she may still maintain her individuality.

A very significant chapter of Seedtime on the Cumber-
land is entitled "The Shirttail Men." While the title may appear to refer only to the males of that race of mountaineers, it really refers to a philosophy and a psychology that belong to the entire breed--including the all-important women. A study of the self-reliance of the race as a whole underscores and provides background for that possessed by the early mountain women, by Harriette Arnow herself, and by the women in her novels.

The initial depiction in the chapter is of the Southern Appalachians' contribution to the Continental Army of the American Revolution. He was called the Long Hunter because of the rifle constantly with him. He had been used to fighting in frontier skirmishes defending his own immediate territory, but

... the long-hunting-soldier-farmer-borderer was an unloved figure; Washington praised his skill with the long rifle, but found him difficult. He was; he didn't mind fighting but hated soldiering, and had an innate distaste for drills, standing armies,
and all other aspects of the military life. New Yorkers and New Englanders found him uncouth and even silly with his long shirt and 'rifled barrelled firelock... The British also hated the borderers for they found the 'shirt-tail men, with their cursed and twisted guns, the most fatal widow-and-orphan-makers in the world.'

They were; they hated war. Fighting was a business they would be done with, and the only way they knew to end it was to kill as many men as possible. They could then return to the real struggle for more and better land on which to raise their families and get ahead in the world. Their many-handedness was typical of the times when a man had to be a world within himself: make a poem, sing a song, mend a gun, preach a sermon, shoot buffalo, Indians, British, make a moccasin or a boat; teach school; but always able to live in the woods if need be.

The man who was a world within himself, the man who could believe in himself and in the world around him, was not a novelty. Every nation had had its translation of the pioneer or frontiersman archetype, but the Southern Appalachian Mountains, being unlike any other territory in the world, had spawned a new breed. Their forebears might have been from another territory, even from another country, but these people so believed in and had so adapted to the world around them that they were a new breed.

\[\text{William}^7\text{ Byrd... didn't like much of what he found among the backwoods settlers. He loathed, as Washington did later, the nights he sometimes had to spend in a backwoods cabin. The thing, however, that troubled him more than the physical aspects of their lives was their mental make-up. He could not quite accept the independence of the North Carolinians he met along the line; even those of English origin didn't seem to worry much whether}\]

\[\text{1Arnow, Seedtime, pp. 170-71.}\]
their babies were baptized or no. They could live in good content without priests, lawyers, or physicians, and this amazed him. Byrd realized he was meeting a new breed; a people who could with only Bibles to read, keep their self-respect and feel properly religious without ministers. These North Carolinians were not only physically free of the necessity of overmuch trade with England, but psychologically free. The French along the Santee had never had an English home, but even North Carolinians whose fathers had been born in England, were less inclined than the Virginians to think of it as home. . . . These people . . . lodged justice but 'indifferently,' and the 'Court-House having much the Air of a Common Tobacco-House.' They had 'neither Church, Chappel, Mosque, Synagogue;' were 'neither guilty of hypocrisy nor superstition,' and paid no tribute 'either to God or to Caesar,' for everyone did just what seemed 'good in his own eyes.'

Doing what seemed good in his own eyes and in the eyes of his world, both natural and human, was instrumental in transforming the mountain settler into a natural man, a being at the outset only slightly less inclined to co-exist with nature than the native Indians; and ultimately the settler became as skilled as the Indian, though he found the Indian far more difficult to live with than he found the woods and the other creatures and dangers they contained. Arnow's portrait of the borderer and his skills, which he developed in order to survive, is a detailed account of what must have been an amazing individual.

... the skills and learning needed to live in the border country became commonplace. More men learned how to use and even make the rifle, a

\[1\] Arnow, *Seedtime*, pp. 104-105.
must for every border household during the French and Indian War. Most any farmer in the backwoods could help build a log house, and more women learned to spin and weave, make soap, hominy, cook wild meat, churn butter, and all the other skills needed to live as mistress of a civilized household in the woods.

Skills alone were not enough; it is true any man who would survive on the border had to be an artist in the use of the broad ax, skinning knife, scraper, hoe, froe, auger, awl, adz, and other tools, but equally important or more so was a knowledge of the woods. All borderers who lived as farmers were woodsmen. The forest was only part enemy to be pushed aside for cleared fields. It was for the Virginia or North Carolina settler a vast and seemingly bottomless widow's barrel yielding up all manner of things from walking for the newborn baby's tea to dogwood for the weaver's shuttle. The settler had to know these offerings, where to hang slender hickory sapling for the corn pounder sweep, lightwood for a bit of tar, cane stalk for the weaver's sleigh, a small and crooked white oak for a sled runner, but a straight one for a splitting maul. He had to know his wood—poplar for hewing and gouging, but cedar for riving, and so for several dozen, what would sink and what would float, what would bend, and what was best for a shoe peg. He was dependent upon the woods around him not only for building materials for house, barn, fence, much of his furniture, and many of his appliances from pitchfork to gunstock, but the woods gave him fuel, drugs, dyes, and a good bit of food. All new-settled farmers, even the wealthy, had, until fence could be built, to use the open range so that meat, milk and butter came from woods pasture.¹

The frontier farmer, according to Arnow, was also a hunter. This, of course, was of necessity, for it meant meat for the family, but many of the borderers were avid hunters and would have preferred to hunt exclusively. The borderers readily accepted the challenge of the activity that was far

¹Arnow, Seedtime, pp. 139-140.
more than a sport. "It demanded ... a high degree of
native intelligence coupled with unusually sharp senses, and
other certain attributes—patience, ability to judge dis-
tance, to distinguish even minute differences in sound."\(^1\)

Such activities as the hunting and the fighting—as
they were very much a part of the living with—rather than
in—the woods were instrumental in letting the mountaineer
develop an affinity for his natural surroundings. Living
in the woods required ability that, even among the women and
children, resembled instinct rather than training.

They had had no nature study or lessons in woods-
craft, but on a Monday morning they could, with no
apparent study of the either muddy or dusty roads,
tell all who had ridden or walked by the schoolhouse
during the week-end, for they knew every shoe print,
mule and horse "sign" in the neighborhood. They
knew the common names as well as uses of several
dozens of plants, and they knew them winter as well
as summer. One faint clink of a distant bell and
they could tell whether made by a horse, cow, or
sheep, who owned the animal and what it was doing,
grazing or sleeping or "hid-out." They could track
a strayed mule or hog or cow for miles when there
were no tracks. ... 

They, no different from the young hunters of earlier
generations, ranged over rough lands and were never
lost or hurt. They delighted in swinging out over
creek or river and dropping into a pool of water,
they climbed tall trees, explored sinkholes, caves,
creek pools, rockhouses, yet seldom was a school
child hurt by a fall or ... a snake ... and many
of the boys started hunting alone at ten years of
age with no gun accident. Bred into them was the
same caution the hunter had to have.

\(^1\)Arnow, *Seedtime*, p. 140.
They were forever cautious; they respected the woods, the caves, and the river as one respects honorable enemies. . . . The understanding by the young and their cunning was little compared to that of the old. They knew the sky and what the sunset said, and the wind. . . . If one long dead were resurrected in the dark in one of those now forgotten and lost graveyards he could with a smelling of the wind and some listening from the high hills know the season, the state of the weather, and if there were no fog or cloud between him and the stars, he would know the time, but he could never say exactly how he knew these things, or describe the difference in sound between a moist south wind and a dry one out of the east.

The Long Hunters of almost two hundred years ago knew all such unteachable things. They had to have, too, courage with the caution and the cunning, and in addition many skills, so many that most of their childhood play, what little there was of it, would have been spent in learning.

This mountaineer prototype finds its way into Harriette Arnow's work in all her stronger characters, but most frequently it is clearly revealed as the basis for her women characters. Not only do the spirit of the land and the myth of the people who first settled that land provide the sources for her female characters, but the history of the Cumberland and Arnow's past are filled with people whose influence on her has been so great that they, reading one of her novels, might find themselves clearly carved into the pages, though bearing fictitious names and fulfilling fictitious roles.

A prime example of the prototype of the pioneer woman—Arnow's crowning characterization—is found in the first

1Arnow, Seedtime, pp. 140-142.
chapter of *Flowering of the Cumberland* in the account of the siege of Buchanan's, a forted station of settlers in Middle Tennessee in September of 1792, when four hundred Indians, Creek and Chickamauga, attacked the little settlement of several women and children but only seventeen men. The attack was unsuccessful; only one of the seventeen male settlers was injured and he through a fall rather than through battle wounds. While many of the men are given credit for saving the station, the real hero of the legend is a heroine. Sarah Ridley Buchanan, called Sally, had, even in the thick of the fight, while endangered by bullets, gone from man to man with extra bullets in her apron and a bottle of encouraging whiskey in her hand.¹

A more interesting aspect of Sarah than her courage was her size. "Different from most women of the old Southwest who were as a rule smaller and frailer than is the average woman in today's United States, Sally weighed more than two hundred pounds. She was of a strength to match her size, for she could stand in a half-bushed measure, pick up, and shoulder a two-and-one-half bushel sack of corn, or 150 pounds."²

Arnow continues her description of the pioneer mountain woman prototype in Chapter Two of *Flowering of the Cumberland*,

¹Arnow, *Flowering*, pp. 1-29.

²Ibid., p. 2.
entitled "The Underpinning." This symbolic title is indicative of the position of women among the settlers. They were not the foundation itself, but the protection and reinforcement of the foundation of the settlement. The various accounts are of such women as Rachel Jackson, Mary Slocumb, and Margaret Wilson—all women who were of independent mind—adjusting behavior considered "ladylike to the demands of the situation. One woman, worried about her husband's welfare as he had gone to war, rode alone for forty miles at night to see him and thus be reassured. Other accounts are of the full—and over-full—lives of the wives of planters and of women whose husbands had left them at home to go into the wilderness and search for new land to settle or for more prolific hunting grounds. The meek, frail woman receives little notice, little mention. She was not made for frontier life. The strong-spirited, strong-minded, strong-bodied woman was the frontier woman, the Southern mountain woman.

Both Seedtime on the Cumberland and Flowering of the Cumberland were written after Arnow had published her first novel, Mountain Path. One of the sources of the idea for them was the work she did for the Federal Writers Project after making unsuccessful attempts to get a second novel, Between the Flowers, published. No doubt the other major sources were the living among the descendants of the women

1Arnow, Flowering, pp. 30-57.
about whom she writes the works of social history. These
descendants included Mollie Jane Denney Simpson, Arnow's
mother, and indeed, Arnow herself.\footnote{Eckley, p. 56.} The psychology of
proxemics is perhaps one of the reasons she describes a
principal character in \textit{Mountain Path} as follows:

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textquoteleft\textquoteleft an uncommonly large woman. \textquoteleft\textquoteleft, she was
  large, not hippy after the fashion of well-fed
  women in cities, but tall and thin and rangy with
  long loosely put together bones, and a long neck
  set under a long but well-shaped head. Her jaws
  were long and thin, so was her nose, and her chin
  long and pointed--almost pretty. Her feet \ldots
  were long like the rest of her; narrow heels, long
  spreading toes with each great toe standing a
  little apart from its smaller sisters, and seemingly enjoying a much wider range of experience.
\end{itemize}

The woman described is Corie Calhoun, called \textquoteleft\textquoteleft Miz Lee Buck Corie Cal.\textquoteright\ She is Arnow's larger-than-life woman who finds
her physical configuration in the latter works in the per-
sons of other characters: Suse Ballew in \textit{Hunter's Horn};
Gertie Nevels in \textit{The Dollmaker}; and The Primitive, who, one
can assume with relative assurance, is Gertie again, in \textit{The
Weedkiller's Daughter}.

Although the physical aspect of this female character
is perhaps not determined from Mrs. Arnow's experience, the
personality and the psychology are. Part of the personality
and the psychology is of Harriette herself. According to
Eckley, Harriette realized very early in life the importance

\footnote{Arnow, \textit{Mountain Path}, pp. 33-34.}
of the past to the elderly around her. The "... older people lived on memories."¹ She drew much of her philosophy from these people. Her mother, Mollie Jane, had been a teacher and could easily draw stories from memory or create them in order to entertain her children. Later, the eager mind of young Harriette would also draw characters and incidents from these stories as she would from her Grandmother Simpson's stories of guerrilla warfare during the Civil War. Mollie Jane lived according to the rhythm of the natural world around her. She loved flowers, gardening, and animals. She preferred natural order and natural rhythm to that imposed by man; the seemingly haphazard schedules that the Simpsons kept are easily explained, then, by Mollie's love for nature.² The agrarianism inherent in the ability to live without complaint and objection within the rhythm of nature is an outstanding characteristic of the principals in the Arnow novels, particularly Corie, Rie, and Louisa from Mountain Path; Milly, Suse, and Sue Annie from Hunter's Horn; Gertie and Cassie from The Dollmaker; Susie and her friends and the Primitive from The Weedkiller's Daughter.

Occasionally, for contrast which reveals the "Natural woman" with more clarity, Arnow includes a narrow-minded figure who is obsessed with order imposed by man. Nothing

¹Eckley, p. 25.
²Ibid., pp. 20-25.
should be wild, unkempt, or out of place according to the vision of man. Such characters might have had their model in Harriette's Grandmother Denney, a woman of the old guard who liked order in everything--gardens, households, schedules, and people. She was a feminine woman who preferred feminine granddaughters, but she was denied her preference for Harriette and her sister, definitely potential women, were not given to ignoring the attraction of roaming the hills and fields around them. Grandmother Denney was also strongly religious and mourned during the last years of her life for an unredeemed husband who she was persuaded was suffering the eternal fires of hell. Not the least noticeable of Grandmother Denney's traits was her strong disapproval of reading materials such as newspapers, most magazines, and many books.1

Some of the characteristics of Grandmother Denney found their way into one of the minor characters in The Dollmaker, Mrs. Kendrick, mother of Gertie, the protagonist, is an anomaly among the usually Pelagianistic women of the hill country. She is a fundamentalist, basing all of the problems of the people upon their failure to live up to the Ten Commandments. Mrs. Daly, another minor character in The Dollmaker, seems based, in narrowness at least, upon Grandmother Denney.

Characters are not the limit of Arnow's reliance upon

1Eckley, pp. 24-28.
the past. Indeed, the past is as much a part of her as it was of those elderly people whose recollections provided her with substance for her stories and plots for her novels. In the introduction to *Mountain Path* she states:

Almost before I knew it, I was teaching a one room school in a shut away valley near the Cumberland above Burnside. I cannot say this was the realization of a dream; quite the opposite; poverty had forced me to stop college after only two years and start teaching at eighteen... Thus, to the question I have many times been asked--where is the scene of *Mountain Path*--I can only answer it is a composite of places known in Pulaski County with possibly touches of other hill counties visited or lived in for a time.1

Thus Arnow was so impressed by her first teaching position--and the area in which it was fulfilled--that she made it the foundation for her first novel. Like this teaching position, Harriette's life in the hill country, including her marriage and her brief and somewhat futile endeavors on the acreage on Little Indian Creek on the Big South Fork of the Cumberland, finds its way into *Hunter's Horn* and into part of *The Dollmaker*. The Detroit years in the housing project contributed much to *The Dollmaker*, including such minor concrete symbols as the small plots of scraggly flowers and the little red wagon. The Detroit life and the subsequent move to then rural Ann Arbor contribute much to the content of *The Weedkiller's Daughter*, which is set in a subdivision similar to the location of the Arnow's

1 Arnow, *Mountain Path*, pp. i-ii.
Perhaps the realism and detail with which Arnow writes require the use of the past to the extent to which she relies upon it. Whether or not this is the case, Arnow's past and the sense of place which she has maintained throughout her writings, locate her definitely among Southern writers, among regionalists, and among pioneering writers, in both subject matter and style. Yet, as an artist she is an individual and in a class by herself, writing as only Harriette Simpson Arnow writes.

In addition to details of character and setting and a preoccupation with nature, Arnow's Appalachian heritage provides a third characteristic which strengthens the other elements of realism in her writing, particularly in the novels; it is the authentic Southern Appalachian dialect used by Kentuckians. Each of the four novels exhibits Arnow's ability to write as people speak; even The Weedkiller's Daughter, set in a Michigan suburb, presents one character who speaks in easily identifiable Southern Mountain dialect, though she speaks only a few lines. The Dollmaker, set primarily in a wartime housing project in Detroit, contains examples of several dialects in addition to that used by the Kentuckian protagonists; Mountain Path and Hunter's Horn are freely laced with the terse idiomatic speech of the Kentucky

1Eckley, pp. 57-60.
highlander. This folk dialect is among those classified as Midland which are spoken, if imaginary boundaries can be drawn, west of the crest of the Blue Ridge Mountains in Virginia and North Carolina; in northwestern South Carolina and in northern Georgia; and in southern Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois. Indeed, Hunter's Horn has been the subject of more than one master's thesis of a lexicographical nature, simply because of the unfamiliar words used not only in the dialogue but also in the description and narration, thus indicating that they have been at sometime in the past a part of Arnow's life.

The characteristics of the dialect, some contributed by Old English, Elizabethan English, Scotch and Irish have been documented in a 1931 article, "The Language of the Southern Highlander," by Josiah Combs, himself a highlander. The outstanding qualities of the speech of the highlanders are the brevity, the idioms, and the figurative language. The importance of the brevity supersedes that of grammar and clarity and contributes to the stereotype of the tall, reticent mountaineer who is never without his rifle which speaks more often than he. Yet, the brevity can sometimes be


sacrificed to figurative language and idiom,¹ and it is the use of the idiom in the dialogue of her characters that helps give Arnow the classifications of local colorist and regionalist. An example of colorful idiom taken from *Mountain Path* occurs during a discussion of early dismissal from school because of the excellent apple-drying weather in the Cave Creek community.

"Now ain't that a pity. We jist got two knives, one fer me an' one fer Mom. Pop he's been a layin' off tu make us a knife, but hit's like Mom sez. Layin' off is what Pop is th' best at, 'ceptin' playin' th' fiddle an'--sich like."²

The passage, spoken by the child-woman Rie, contains elements studied and discussed by Lester V. Berrey in the article "Southern Mountain Dialect." Elision, or the dropping of an initial vowel as in 'ceptin', occurs with great frequency, as do intrusive sounds such as the h in hit, meaning *it*, and the d in drownwed, meaning drowned. The dropped final g as in layin' occurs almost without exception. Metathesis, or the interchanging of re and er syllables (preform for perform, geography for geography), is a common occurrence. Parts of speech themselves provide as much interest as the unusual sounds. Seemingly superfluous

¹Combs, pp. 1302-1308.

compounds occur such as church house and beetle bug.¹ In the Mountain Path scene in which she introduces herself to Louisa, Corie calls herself "Miz Lee Buck Corie Cal,"² and another character's wife is referred to by her name first, then his, when she is called "Sally Haze Cal."³ Abnormal plurals are frequently noted, as in The Weedkiller's Daughter when The Primitive speaks of birds on "their nesties," meaning nests, and "fence posties," meaning posts.⁴

The authentic dialect is only one of the many elements in Arnow's works that affirm the realism with which she writes. Cleanth Brooks, in "Regionalism in American Literature," says, "If the Southern writer attempts to deny his heritage I think that it is very likely that he will end up writing synthetic works which have no interest as literature. If Southern writers deny their inner beings, the South can be only an exporter of raw materials, perhaps an exporter of manpower, and a consumer of imported cultural products."⁵ Arnow, who

²Arnow, Mountain Path, p. 34.
³Ibid., p. 64.
has seen the South—at least the Appalachian South—export far too much in the way of manpower, does not deny her heritage. Rather she capitalizes upon it to produce novels not officially called "local color works," because, according to Claud Green in "The Rise and Fall of Local Color in Southern Literature," though local color seems to flourish more among Southern writers to which group Arnow belongs, the movement was generally considered to be among the writers of inferior works. A writer of superior fiction that contains local color is quickly moved into another school or studied singularly.¹ Singular study is the case with Arnow.

¹Claud Green, "The Rise and Fall of Local Color in Southern Literature," Mississippi Quarterly, 18 (winter 1964-65), 1-6.
Chapter III

THE PATH INTO THE WILDERNESS

By and large, the women in the novels of Harriette Simpson Arnow are variations on a motif represented in fact by the pioneer woman, Sally Buchanan, the heroine of the siege of Buchanan's. Sally was large physically and courageous and did work usually assigned to men of the station; Arnow's fictional women are large, if not physically, at least spiritually. Indeed, in realistic fiction they seem paradoxically larger than life, a quality of many women characters in American--particularly twentieth century American--novels. Their great size is apropos in view of the prototype they follow and in view of the functions of their roles in the novels. They, too, are courageous and in the novels function in a supreme role--a role usually reserved for the men in American fiction.

Sally, the prototype, though she really existed, is herself a reflection of a motif that runs through western literature--the archetype of the Great Mother or its variant form, the Earth Mother. As Arnow describes her--big, pregnant, brave--she is associated with elements Wilfred L. Guerin attributes to the Great Mother in A Handbook of Critical Approaches to Literature, "birth, warmth, protection,
fertility, growth, abundance."\(^1\) Leslie Fiedler, in *Love and Death in the American Novel*, claims that "no genuine archetypal figure from the mythologies of the past ever dies, no matter how reviled and bedeviled; thrust down as divinity, it will emerge as sentiment or hysteria or madness."\(^2\) The Great Mother has been represented by things Good, things Bad, and things Vengeful. Among twentieth century realists, regionalists, and local colorists, one of which is Arnow, the Great Earth Mother has been reincarnated in a realistic combination of the Good and the Bad. Specifically in Arnow's novels, the Good Earth Mother has become part of the hero archetype as Guerin outlines its three divisions:

a. The Quest: The Hero (Savior or Deliverer) undertakes some long journey during which he must perform impossible tasks, battle with monsters, solve unanswerable riddles, and overcome insurmountable obstacles in order to save the kingdom and perhaps marry the princess.

b. Initiation: The Hero undergoes a series of excruciating ordeals in passing from ignorance and immaturity to social and spiritual adulthood, that is, in achieving maturity and becoming a full-fledged member of his social group. The initiation most commonly consists of three stages or phases: (1) separation, (2) transformation, and (3) return. Like the Quest, this is a variation of the Death- and Rebirth archetype.

\(^1\)Wilfred L. Guerin, et al., *A Handbook of Critical Approaches to Literature* (New York: Harper, Row, 1966), p. 120.

c. The Sacrificial Scapegoat: The Hero, with whom the welfare of the tribe or nation is identified, must die in order to atone for the people's sins and restore the land to fruitfulness.1

Arnow's fusion of the Great Mother archetype with the Hero archetype results not in the Heroine Archetype, but in the prototype of the Southern Appalachian pioneer, especially as the elements of the quest and the initiation are concerned. The vision of the hardy soul of Scotch-Irish, Scotch, or Anglo-Saxon extraction starting on his quest for a better life by following the paths and trails of initiation through the Cumberland wilderness, enduring both real and symbolic separation, at least symbolic transformation, and symbolic return shines through the realism of each of Arnow's four novels. The corona of this vision is an archetype which, because of the stature and strength of her female characters, is not essentially a feminine version of the Hero archetype but rather a feministic version. Arnow's principal women are strong, self-sufficient, and superior in both construction and constitution to the men in her novels. Of course, Arnow is a woman creating women and writing about them and being sympathetic toward them. She is not, however, at the same time being unsympathetic toward the men. She is merely, as a realist, combining the past that she knows through hearing stories of her pioneer forebears with the past of

1 Guerin, p. 121.
her own personal experiences, including her own Quest and Initiation into the world of the successful novelist, to provide women characters who reflect the resigned determination of the Southern pioneer mountain woman, the one who goes into the wilderness, then adjusts to the demands of that wilderness, and ultimately, when the settlement is established, regards the area enclosed by the wilderness as wilderness no longer; it is, in a sense, a return to an established home.

The Arnow women are a contradiction of the statement of Nona Balakian in "The Prophetic Vogue of the Anti-Heroine" in which she says, "Women in literature, except in the instances when they have broken a commandment or brought some miracle to pass, have traditionally been subsidiary figures, treated uncritically and seen more often as prototypes than as individuals.¹ One of Arnow's crowning achievements as a novelist is the manner in which she employs the prototype and still creates strikingly individual characters around it. She is an author whose heroines are among those reflecting the change during the past three decades in the depiction of women from that of romantic, desirable, and vulnerable creatures to human beings possessing somewhat more substance, though her women have not become anti-heroines who lack honesty, sensibility, endurance, or

modesty. Arnow's women are Southern women, or at least have their origins in Southern women, but their lives do not conform to the image of the lives of feminine delicacy of Southern women that Anne Firor Scott rightly castigates in her book, *The Southern Lady: From Pedestal to Politics 1830-1930*. Wives of small farmers, including mountain men, worked long, hard hours in the fields, never having time to think about the supposed encroachments upon their femininity caused by soil, sunburn, and calluses.

The mountain woman is depicted in the following passage from *Our Southern Highlanders*:

Many of the women are pretty in youth, but hard toil in the house and field, early marriage, frequent childbearing with shockingly poor attention, and ignorance or defiance of the plainest necessities of hygiene, soon warp and age them. At thirty or thirty-five a mountain woman is apt to have a worn and faded look, with form prematurely bent--and what wonder? Always bending over the hoe in the cornfield, or bending over the hearth as she cooks by an open fire, or bending over her baby or bending to pick up, for the thousandth time, the wet duds that her lord flings on the floor as he enters from the woods--what wonder that she soon grows short-waisted and round-shouldered?

From Kephart's record of Miss Ellen Semple's work in

1Balakian, p. 134.


3Kephart, pp. 288-289.
Geographical Journal of London in 1901, comes the following observation of the Southern Appalachian woman, not an anachronistic description even as recently as the 1930’s and 1940’s in the light of Arnow’s account of the separation by two hundred years of time of the Kentucky hill woman from her nearby town neighbors. "The women are almost as rooted as the trees. We met one woman who, during the twelve years of her married life, had lived only ten miles across the mountain from her own home, but had never in this time been back home to visit her father and mother."¹ The isolationism implied here must have been strongly influential in the mountain woman's becoming a world within herself, and by her becoming a world within herself, just as the myth and mystique of the Southern mountain pioneer reports that he was a world within himself, the mountain woman created an image with which Harriette Simpson Arnow was sufficiently familiar to be able to parallel her own Quest and Initiation and from which she could create novels of Quest and Initiation without sacrificing realism to parable or allegory or comedy or melodrama. Doris Grumbach, in "On Women Novelists," remarks that few women modern novelists have attempted parable or allegory in their work;² granted, the use of mere archetypes does not change a piece of literature into allegory; even

¹Kephart, p. 23.

²Grumbach, p. 200.
the use of the Great Mother-Hero archetype alone does not create allegory. The forces affecting the novels of Harriette Arnow, however, have resulted in a faint outline of symbolism that is sustained throughout the four novels. The prototype of the Southern mountain woman is an interpretation of the symbol of the Matron which, according to Giroit's *Dictionary of Symbols*, has a value of mother-protector, also a form of Mother-symbol, in turn reflected by Earth, Water, and Nature.¹ The mountain woman, then, both draws her life from her environment and exists as a living symbol of it.

Arnow, herself almost a mountain woman, is a personification of the land of her formative years, particularly as she is influenced by the terrain and the Cumberland River. Thus a Cumberland woman, the myth of the Cumberland pioneer woman, the characters based on that myth, and the land of the Cumberland Basin itself stand in telescoped femaleness as each pursues a Quest, undergoes Initiation, and becomes a Sacrificial Scapegoat as she fulfills the feminist version of the Hero archetype.

Women in the novels of Harriette Simpson Arnow are all cut from the same pattern. Each of them is a personification of the myth of the hill country spirit and of the hill country itself. Each of them is a pioneer in that she must

open a trail into a new territory, she must learn to know that territory, and she must establish a settlement that operates in harmony with the surroundings of that settlement. Each is a Southern version of the Initiation archetype; she experiences separation, transformation, and a symbolic return. The cycle of novels, too, follows the archetype of Initiation. Mountain Path representing for the most part separation; Hunter's Horn representing transformation, albeit a negative sort of transformation; The Dollmaker representing both initiation and transformation; and The Weedkiller's Daughter representing the return. Each novel contains examples of all three elements, just as each character has in her the same elements that the others have. Each novel, taken in chronological order and viewed as a separate step in the process of a whole, reveals its protagonist to be a better developed, more refined version of her predecessor.

Louisa (Mountain Path) is the green beginner, the young inexperienced questioning non-conformist. Suse (Hunter's Horn) is a variation of the inexperienced youth. She is experienced in the ways of the hills but questions them and definitely does not wish to conform to them. Gertie (The Dollmaker), a questioner herself, is not a non-conformist by determination but apparently by design. She cannot conform to the ways of the city. She is a personification of the agrarian. She wishes to return to the earth. Susie (The Weedkiller's Daughter), the final character, one more
central than the others, is young but precocious, almost to
the point of not needing experience. She constantly ques­tions the people and philosophies to which she is exposed.
She is a decided non-conformist whose struggle to make peace
with her environment does not cease entirely but does reach
a plateau at which she becomes confident that she can deal
with the obstacles.

Non-conformity and questioning and independent
thinking are central motifs of the novels of Harriette
Arnow. This grows in part from the knowledge that the hill
country code of ethics is not the same as that of the rest
of the state—even of the rest of the county—of which it
may be a part. Indeed, Arnow's background and heritage
provide either the material for her works or the soul that
is contained within them, or a combination of the two. In
the preface to his critical biography of Arnow, Eckley
states that "... as a result of her realistic treatment
of both rural and urban themes, Mrs. Arnow can claim a niche
for herself in what is commonly called the Southern literary
renaissance."¹ He adds that The Weedkiller's Daughter, the
fourth novel, which deals with both rural and urban themes,
but most directly with urban themes "... departs from the
mountaineer motif... ."² The novel does depart from the

¹Eckley, p. ii.
²Ibid.
mountaineer motif on the surface but below this surface—and close enough to it to have a profound effect upon the development of the characters—is the spirit of the mountaineer. Whether the characters are natives of the hills of Kentucky or of the Eden Hills subdivision, they exhibit a philosophy and an independence unique to the Southern Appalachian Highlander since the days of the early settlers. This alone would make Arnow a Southern author—if nothing else did—for according to Dewey Grantham, Jr., in "Interpreters of the Modern South," Southern writers seem obsessed with the past; the obsession, however, is not inexplicable when one realizes that, for the Southerner, the past is part of the present, that it is a living past.¹

Even as Arnow, drawing from her past, blazed trails into the literary wilderness to publish Mountain Path, her semi-autobiographical character, Louisa Sheridan, was blazing them into the hill country of the moonshiners. Louisa, twenty, fresh from her third year of study in chemical engineering (Indeed, that course of study itself indicates her pioneering tendencies.), and needing money, finds her year in the hills foreshadowed when she meets a mountaineer who cannot read and thus cannot help her with the map she is studying, but who quickly comprehends both that she is scared and that she will triumph.

¹Dewey W. Grantham, Jr., "Interpreters of the Modern South," South Atlantic Quarterly, 63 (Autumn 1964), 528.
Her separation from the world she knows has begun. The callus on the middle finger of her right hand, put there by years of study and of rank in the upper two percent of her class, no longer seems the mark of achievement that it once did. Suddenly "the ability to ride a mule counts for more than an Einstein's knowledge of trigonometric formulae."¹ Pioneer Louisa continues on her journey, however, armed with intelligence and caution. Since she is not yet aware of the potential dangers of the new territory, she must also rely upon her keen powers of observation. Being human, she does make a mistake when she expresses her concern over the possible presence of the hidden-out murderer, Chris Bledsoe, only to be told by the man who meets her "at the forks" with the mules, "I'm Chris Bledsoe."² Determined not to err again, Louisa increases her observation time and power.

Arnow reveals Louisa's astuteness through the eyes of the other characters in Mountain Path. Indeed, the motif of the eyes is a major one in the novel and is peculiarly appropriate in view of the Kephart portrait of the Southern Highlander. The mountain man of the feral eye has been trained not to betray his emotions in any way to a stranger; thus faces remain expressionless and mouths speak few words.

¹Arnow, Mountain Path, p. 10.
²Ibid., p. 28.
which even themselves lack expression. Because the
mountaineer has not learned the fashionable society concept
that staring is impolite, a stranger to mountain society is
often annoyed by the fixed stare that accompanies the
mountaineer's attempt to learn of the stranger.¹

For Arnow and for Louisa, the eyes are the windows of
the soul. As the characters in Mountain Path become more and
more familiar to one another, they communicate freely through
the eyes. Arnow seldom reveals a face in its entirety.
Often she first shows only hair, forehead, and eyes or eye­
brows and jawline. The mountain man's first observation of
Louisa is through her eyes, and from those eyes he makes a
character judgment that holds true throughout the novel.

"Ye’ll git along," he said again. "Don't be
highfalutin', an' don't bawl all over creation
th' first time th' youngens hanker tu tear th'
school house down and put hit on th' roof." He
thrust his shoulders forward and looked down
into her eyes. "No need tu tell ye not tu bawl,
fer ye won't. Ye've got a dawg's eyes--like a
smart shepherd dog's--more browner."

"Don't women with dog's eyes cry?"

"I've hearn they don't. My ole woman's got
blue eyes, an' she used tu cry when I'd go on a
spree--'fore I jined. They say them th't don't
cry feels things th' worst. I dunno. But dog's
eyes is pretty eyes--kinda sad. Ye're a lookin'
that away now. Don't git skeered an' homesick on
th' beginnin'. Frum fer away?"²

Arnow occasionally mentions that Louisa is small and

¹Kephart, p. 288.

that she has brown hair, but even when Louisa looks at herself in the mirror later in the novel, nothing is more noticeable than her eyes:

She picked up the lamp, saw her reflection in the little mirror hung above the mantel, and set the lamp down. She could curl her hair. She had forgotten that. She twined a brown wave closely behind the other ear. She mustn't look like that. She tried to smile. The eyes that looked back at her from the mirror made her think of Chris's eyes. Not frightened but something else. Something that would not let Chris go away and forget, something that would not let her forget.¹

One of the most complete Arnow descriptions of a face occurs early in the novel when Louisa first meets Chris. Once again the eyes, blue and piercing, dominate the passage:

She saw that his hair was light, silver almost in the sunlight, but what of his face she could see was so tanned by the sun and wind as to be strangely dark against the lightness of his hair. He reached the ridge crest and raised his head so that she saw his face, and she stood a moment in forgetfulness and looked at it. It was gaunt with a gauntness that seemed to go deeper than hollowed muscular cheeks set deep below ridges of bone and narrow temples laced by tight cords of muscle. The eyes were a deep blue, with bluish whites like those of a child, but holding nothing of childishness in their expression, rather a cold unwavering desolation, not sad, nor bitter, nor despairing, but filled with some other emotion that had come to be a part of the eyes, and seemed to have always been there, just as the eyes had always been vividly blue in a thin brown face. She saw the white line of his teeth, showing lightly between thin lips, the upper somewhat short with a tendency to curl upward so that the man's face seemed fixed into a little smile until one looked into his eyes.²

¹Arnow, Mountain Path, p. 309.
In most of the instances other than this one, Louisa meets the other characters through the eyes. Rim, the daughter of the Lee Buck Cal's, appears first as a "head of straight, taffy-colored hair and a pair of narrow blue eyes set into a small homely, half-child, half-woman face." 1

Louisa's thoughts the first night in Cavecreek turn into a dream of "... a tall man walking slowly up a ridge side, his head bowed a little and shining in the sunlight. He came closer and she saw that the sunlight had not touched his eyes: they lay in a band of shadow that struggle as she would she could not push away with her hand." 2

Samanthetie Pedigo, the untamed child of the wilderness, though Louisa sees her feet first, is revealed as "... two black eyes, wild and sharp and cunning as those of a hawk, but so set about with a shrubbery of lash and brow as to reveal nothing of their shape and size." 3

Samanthetie remains both wild and inscrutable throughout the novel.

The motif of the eyes is also a means of measuring Louisa's growth throughout the novel and her involvement with the people in it. In Chapter IV Lee Buck Cal's eyes are "... pleasant holding nothing of the stark coldness of Chris's eyes, but rather ... betokening a great good humor.

1 Arnow, Mountain Path, p. 46.

2 Ibid., p. 55.

3 Ibid., p. 107.
to take the world and its men as he found them." Later, after the attack on Chris, Louisa witnesses the following:

"Teacher with ye?" Lee Buck asked, and looked quickly over the chair-back down into Louisa's face. A tongue of flame brought his eyes leaping suddenly out of the shadow, and she looked into them, and thought that for once the man's gaze was not straight and open, but veiled and secret, shifting away to the dog and to Corie's hands.

Louisa's being aware of the eyes of the mountain people is another of Arnow's indications that Louisa is constructed from the prototype of the southern mountain women. Though Louisa is well-educated according to the academic standards of the day, she recognizes immediately that she is not educated to cope with the mountain situation. She does, however, possess the common sense that the legendary pioneers possessed and remains quiet and observant in order to learn from her surroundings. As the scout moves cautiously into new territory, so does Louisa. She is quick to notice when her questions or her comments cause pain to the Cals and to others in the valley, and immediately either stops her questioning or brings up another subject. Simply from remaining quiet and listening and watching she learns the truth, as much of it as anyone ever learns, behind the feud in the Cal Valley. At the conclusion of the novel, Louisa's initiation is complete. She has gone into the wilderness, has been transformed, and has made her return.

1Ibid., p. 57. 2Ibid., p. 346.
The device that Arnow uses to indicate this return is the callus that is still on the middle finger of Louisa's right hand.

Corie came down the spring path to meet her. She led her into the big house, and set her in the chair with the sheep skin. Louisa felt the cold now. She spread her hands to the fire, and looked at them as if seeing them for the first time. They were empty. That was as it should be. She stared at her hands; first the palms, and then the backs. It seemed to her that they should be old and withered and dry, twisted and ugly as the Gholston woman's. But the fingers were pale and smooth with a faint callus on one. It had not gone away.

It would never go away--now.¹

Louisa's role as teacher in the novel emphasizes her pioneering qualities. She has a position of leadership, of responsibility, possibly a variation of the Great Mother archetype. Certainly the fact that she is never called anything but "Teacher" by the mountain people indicates that she is regarded as somewhat a goddess, moreover as one that must be referred to by title or rank because of a name too sacred to be uttered by a mere mortal. In fact, other than in the narrative and descriptive parts of the novel, her name is spoken only twice and she herself is the speaker even then.

Even though she cannot be regarded as a deity constantly she is like the highlanders whom Arnow describes as believing in themselves and the world around them. On the

¹Ibid., p. 374.
first day of school Louisa discovers that her equipment is meager.

The door was unlocked so Louisa and her two pupils went in. There was a stove; an overly large, tall, heavy, fat-bellied monster in the middle of the room, a dozen or so of seats of all shapes and sizes scattered about the room in every conceivable position, and that was all. Louisa quelled a shiver of repulsion. The early morning cold was not yet gone from the place, and a thin sheeting of yellow dust lay over the floor and benches, so that to her the little room seemed fantastically ugly and dreary and dirty. It seemed impossible that she must come here day after day for seven months, and try to teach children without books or maps or pictures; without anything in fact except a strip of painted wall, which she supposed was the blackboard.

"An' look, Teacher," Rie said, her arms yet burdened with the things she had carried for Louisa, "we've got recitation benches an' ever'thing."

She glanced at the two, long, narrow, backless, homemade benches the child pointed to, and wondered what the purpose of such a bench might be, but was afraid to ask. Rie placed the few books on one of the benches, then stepped back and surveyed the meager pile with satisfaction. "We ought tu have a good school fer ye've brung plenty tu work with," she said. "Last term, that Arthur Sears, he was too lazy tu bring a broom, an' we naiver swep fer a month. He didn't bring no 'rasers neither, but this yer we've got ever'thing."

"So we have," Louisa said, and for some reason felt hot shame and a disgust for women who pitied themselves into forgetting that water buckets and dippers and children and chalk were the only essential school supplies.¹

Yet, being able to combine new ideas with old and available ones, as her pioneer sources were, Louisa leads the children through a successful year of education, some of it

¹Ibid., pp. 62-63.
futile because of the imprisoning effects of the mountain
cove. Nevertheless, in true spirit of self-reliance, she
advances pupils by borrowing books from her aunt, by
creating an unorthodox globe from the pot-bellied stove, by
having the students and their families contribute local pro-
ducts of agriculture, and most of all by throwing away her
prescribed course of study.

Louisa's crowning achievement as a self-reliant
mountain woman occurs when she assumes the role of a Cal
Valley woman--including both dialect and behavior--in order
to save Chris from the men who plan to kill him as he leaves
the church after meeting. At this point she begins to feel
deeply the initiation she is undergoing. She attempts to
remind herself: "This is not my life. I am preparing for
my real life. Some day I shall live and be a success. I am
already ashamed that I was so frightened a little while ago
over a man who is nothing to me. But I will remember that I
once rode unafraid in the dark and carried a baby in my
arms."¹ And the deep sensation of the initiation she tries
also to reject when, near the end of the term she is packing
for the trip back into civilization, she notices the matura-
tion of the child-woman Ria during the year:

Looking at the girl, she noticed how she had
grown during the winter. Breasts had appeared on
her childish narrow chest, and some soft sadness

¹Ibid., p. 205.
in her eyes betokened the approach of womanhood. In three years she would be almost sixteen—married in all probability—preparing for the birth of a child without doctor or nurse. In three years [Louisa] herself would still be going to school, preparing for life while this child stepped deeply into it. A life of fulfilling the biological pattern cut out for all things that were female and defenseless against ignorance (and poverty) and pain. She thought of the woman by the fence among the cedar trees. Life might do that to Rie. Bitterness and fear and love might warp her and twist her until she became like walking stone. Rie would have lived. She would never live. The things the woman had felt and Rie might feel she would never know. She would escape it all by being civilized and going away. . . . When the child had gone she sat a long time trying to justify herself to herself. Many things were in favor of the self she had thought she wanted to be. She had a mind fit for the work she had planned. She knew that without being an egotist. She was not fitted for a life here in the hills. She had done her share. Her patrons agreed that she had taught the best school Cal Valley had ever known—the highest attendance, the only teacher who had taught the whole of a term, and who had not had a "fallin' out" with some parent. If she came here again to teach, and made of herself a teacher and nothing more, all the years spent in preparation for something else would be wasted.†

Louisa's initiation is complete. As the novel ends, she is preparing for a return to the civilization of Lexington and the academic world, and she will return very definitely transformed. She thinks in the final passage, "She would spend the next few years of her life making [the callus] bigger: pencils and pens and test tubes—her finger and a little of her brain. The rest of her would die. It

†Ibid., pp. 286-287.
was dead already. Why couldn't she cry . . . ? She didn't want to cry. She would forget them all—dog's eyes—trumpet vine—poplar leaves—and woe, woe, over the hearthstones."¹ Louisa has followed the path into the wilderness. Her independent spirit and self-reliance have permitted her to adapt, for a time, to the ways of the wilderness, but she, like the pioneer scouts of history, must return to the order of the city and of civilization to report her discoveries. She returns a much wiser woman.

As protagonist of the novel, Mountain Path, Louisa is surrounded by other women characters who are likewise built upon the myth of the spirit of the pioneer woman of the Cumberland highlands. While these women and child-women are truly southern mountain women and while physically, educationally, and socially they are in strong contrast to the character Louisa, they embellish rather than oppose or contradict the development of that character. In similar fashion the Louisa character puts a great deal of emphasis on their development and helps provide a proper framework in which they are revealed as variations on the Earth Mother motif.

The physical descriptions alone of Corie Cal and her daughter Rie, and of Samanthietie Pedigo, the child-woman of the holler in between, provide a background of bigness and

¹Ibid., p. 374.
hard life against which Louisa is starkly contrasted. Corie, the wife of Lee Buck, is a large woman, not small like Louisa; neither does she possess eyes like a dog, as does Louisa according to the man Jess. Corie does not cry; she feels things with the sensitivity of the dog-eyed person, but she waits. That is her virtue, the waiting.

Corie's daughter, Rie, is destined to be much like her mother and already is, to an extent, even to the diminutive form of her name. Still another child-woman, Salanthea Pedigo, almost abandoned to the forces of nature, a natural woman in miniature, representing the innate and environmental intellect, is set in contrast to Louisa. She is small like Louisa, but does not compare in any other way. She is described as

... small yet seeming older than the ten or twelve years her size indicated. She appeared to be clothed with a single garment; a faded, ill-fitting voluminously skirted dress of some cheap cotton material. Black, tangled, slightly wavy hair, growing low about her ears and forehead, together with long black lashes and heavy low brows, gave her face a peculiarly wild, primitive appearance. Her skin was unnaturally dark, but whether sun or dirt made it so Louisa never knew. High cheek bones, an aquiline nose, and full bright red lips threw her into a fever of curiosity as to what her visitor's lineage might be.

She looked slightly Spanish, more Italian, and there seemed a dash of Indian about her nose and forehead. Perhaps two hundred years ago an Italian had married an Indian Squaw and given his features to a child who had in turn married a Spaniard. Perhaps she was Turkish; she looked it. But were there ever any Turks in Kentucky?1

1Ibid., pp. 107-108.
Samanthetie's physical description directly parallels her symbolic function in the novel and for her the parallel is much more complete and obvious than for the other woman in the novel. Louisa's questions as to Samanthetie's genealogy are not used merely to further the narrative. Samanthetie is a mystery woman, a juvenile and yet not juvenile version of the archetype of the Dark Lady. Samanthetie's unnatural darkness is a suggestion that she possesses what Leslie Fiedler in Love and Death in The American Novel calls "that primal power bred out of ladies by civilized life."¹ (Indeed, Rie says that Samanthetie is "'teetot'ly unceevilized."²) Fiedler, having used this phrase in reference to the dark, mysterious, voluptuous ladies in works of nineteenth century romancer Nathaniel Hawthorne and his contemporaries, meant that primal power only as full erotic sexuality.³ For Samanthetie, the primal power is still one of sexuality, but it is no longer erotic. She is a natural woman, the Earth Mother in a sense, even within the body of an adolescent, and that primal power bred out of other women by civilized life is her understanding of her environment and of the wilderness. She is like the

¹Fiedler, p. 295.

²Arnow, Mountain Path, p. 105.

³Fiedler, p. 295.
manifestations of the power of nature in that she does not take sides in the feud. She has no time for hating because her woman's life is too full of the tilling and husbandry that are part of farming. She is even a natural huntress; she herself trees a wildcat, her only weapons being her father's skinning knife and her own strength and stamina. The chase even involves literal bodily combat between Samanthetie and the cat. As a natural woman Samanthetie is, of course, naturally mature. She, the unschooled, possesses the ability to teach the teacher, the highly educated, in that she knows the background of the feud and when lying is a necessity and a virtue rather than a sin. The maturity of this half-wild child-woman becomes one of the factors in Louisa's initiation, too. The episode involving Samanthetie's visit to the school house during the lunch hour when Louisa offers her the cold fried apples is one of the steps in that initiation.

Louisa thought about sugar. She did not remember ever having done so before. Heretofore it was something one always had and thought nothing of. One took a cube or spoonful or cupful, and if the receptacle were empty it would be filled. Sugar, she saw, could be important. Its long forgotten sweetness was giving this child pitiful delight. She looked at Samanthetie scraping the last of the apples from the cup, and her emotion was not one of pity, but of respect. Respect for a dirty child in a single rag was an unpleasantly disturbing thing. This child, unlike a million others out there in the would, unlike herself perhaps, loved sugar but could live without it. And more important still--live
without asking for it, without self-pity because she did not have it.¹

This ragged child lapses again into mountain woman wisdom when she, having explained that "pore-do," meal gravy made with water, is the emergency measure taken when the family larder is lacking flour, ceases her discussion of gritted bread, another substitute for the product made with flour, and looks at her hands, "... not as a child would look, but like an old woman in deep trouble."² Then tactfully she counsels Louisa, whom she too calls "Teacher," to react to questions about Chris as if in ignorance of his presence in the valley. Samanthetie is aware of the ways of the hills and of the peculiar ways of the people in Cal Valley.

Rie Calhoun, a somewhat tamer child-woman than Samanthetie, is no less attuned to the forces of nature and the characteristics of the hill country. When the stove used to take the mountain early morning chill from the schoolhouse falls because of Louisa's momentary fit of anger, it is Rie who realizes that the students will be very cold before the sun touches the school grounds to warm them and who suggests that they "'ketch hit on the ridge'."³ She

¹Arnow, Mountain Path, p. 136.
³Ibid., p. 166.
counters Louisa's protest by saying, "'We kin have school on th' rocks up thar. Hit'll warm us a walkin', an' we kin gather fat pine and chestnuts on th' way'." Louisa recognizes Rie's innate ability to educate those around her—including the adults who are not of the hill country—and often yields to her suggestions as to the appropriate things to do.

Much of this natural teaching ability grows out of Rie's inventiveness. She is, after all, the daughter of Corie, who is herself creative enough to make Christmas cookies in the shapes of stars, bells, and Santa Clauses from paper patterns because she has no cookie cutters. Rie's crowning achievement is the creation of a globe of the world from available materials, those being the pot-bellied stove in the center of the schoolhouse and the box of colored chalk available to the students.

Rie was usually quiet for the remainder of the afternoon, but ever and anon her eyes would stray to the lower of the fat black bellies of the stove, then away to a box of colored chalk by the blackboard. After a time she raised her hand, "Teacher, th' stove's round."

"Yes," Louisa agreed with no inkling of what lay in store for the stove.

"An' one a them thar globes is round, an' me an' you an' Lander kin draw, an' th' chalk's got colors," She stopped, seeing no need to say more.

(Reflecting here the mountaineer trait of refraining from unnecessary discourse)

Louisa gasped a little, but after all Rie was Corie's child and Corie had made a spittin-proof

1 Ibid.
stirrer. "Just what do you mean?" She had asked, wishing to give the young inventress full scope. "I mean tu make us one a them globes on th' stove. We won't be usin' hit fer a spail, an' th' door kin be sommers we won't tawk about. We could put Somerset County on th' behind whar hit's nioean' shiny."

Even such activity as this is not sufficient for Rie, who prevails upon a pumpkin from her father's lower corn field to serve as the sun because it is "'... round an' she's yaller, an' she kin come up an' go down'." Finally, being persuaded by Louisa that the world goes around the sun rather than the sun around the world, she leads the group in a compromise that echoes the mountaineer's resigned acceptance of things in Nature that cannot be changed. "'We'll leave hit this away til we haf tu have a fire, then we'll make a punkin world, an' th' stove'll be th' sun cuz hit'll be hot'." Rie, ostensibly to express the philosophy of Lee Buck, but in reality to express her own resigned attitude, says, in an effort to comfort a cousin upset about the disagreement in Cal Valley, "'Quit yer whimlin', Mable. Hit's like Pop says, folks wuz born fer fun an' trouble, an' they's no use tu let neither one git ye down'."

The physical description of Rie's mother, Corie, definitely an outgrowth of the prototype of the Southern

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1Ibid., pp. 101-102. 2Ibid., p. 102. 3Ibid., p. 103. 4Ibid., p. 170.
mountain woman, neatly but emphatically underscores the psychology of her development. Along with her unusual stature goes what Arnow as third person limited narrator of Mountain Path in the person of Louisa views as follows:

"Corie might be nothing more than a long brown barefooted woman in an ill-made cotton dress, but she had a natural dignity and reserve that Louisa, accustomed only to the dignity that comes of heroic corseting or much learning or money, respected too much to attempt to violate." Corie's physical strength and dignity are paralleled by a spiritual strength unsurpassed by any other woman in Cal Valley and they all, including Louisa, suffer the effects of stilling, the Calhoun men's actual occupation.

When that old trouble happened breeding hatred strong enough to stamp children unconceived at the time, Corie had lived through it. She lived now, troubled every day, perhaps, for Chris and Lee Buck and their still. Yet she tended cows and pigs and children and chickens and laughed at times. If, as Louisa had seen her do once or twice, she lapsed into stony, cold-eyed silence, she would not stay that way but get up quickly and go singing about some piece of work. She did not forget her troubles and fears, for Louisa knew without Samanthaic's telling her that people here forgot nothing, she only laid them away in a corner of her mind where they were not easily stumbled upon.

Corie's worry about the stilling activities of Lee

1Eckley, pp. 67-69.

2Arnow, Mountain Path, p. 97.

3Ibid., p. 141.
Buck do not keep her a clinging vine wife. She is ever alert to opportunities for him and even reminds him, wisely and tactfully, to turn the disaster of the collapsing schoolhouse stove into an economic advantage for himself and his family by selling some of the illicit liquor. Her function as a form of the Great Mother, or perhaps even as an agrarian goddess, is illustrated in Louisa's evaluation of her as an almost omniscient being.

Corie could read people as she read weather signs at sunset or in a cow's teats. She did it unconsciously. When Louisa came from school, tired, and short-tempered, burdened with loneliness and a growing fear for Chris, Corie seemed to know and did not bother her with words, but made the children be quiet or sent them immediately away to the barn. ..

. . . Gradually [Louisa] would feel better and talk with the older woman, who was always willing to talk but understood well enough when to keep silent. She learned things from Corie she had never found in books. . . .

Louisa had never been grateful for anything, but from Corie she learned gratefulness and thankfulness for all things: dry wood, rain when the spring was low, cold snaps that cured up colds and made a spell for killing hogs, sunshiny days, snowy days (they meant good crops), hard frozen bare ground for it was then that the children did not wet their feet or ruin their shoes. Without being a pessimist Corie expected the worst of all possible combinations in all things, and as a result was eternally grateful for some little thing.1

The thankfulness with which Corie regards the beneficence of nature becomes sincere charity when she herself is the benefactor as in the case of the Christmas package forwarded to Louisa's relatives in Lexington. This beneficence

1Ibid., pp. 214-215.
extends to Corie's revelation of Christmas customs and folklore to her family and Louisa for entertainment as she never once forgets to perform what Lee Buck considers woman's work, milking the cow. Corie, as an example of the prototype of the Southern mountain woman, displays a kinship with nature and the land; a resigned acceptance of the aspects of her existence that cannot be changed and a determination, perhaps a deliberate, methodic one, to correct those that can; and an astounding ability to wait. She represents all mountain women in this sense, or at least those mountain women who are married to distillers of illicit moonshine.

"Ye're a woman," Corie said, and paused to listen for a moment, "an' women has th' hardest work uv all. An' that's th' waitin'. 'Fears like all my life I've been a waitin' . . . . When I wuz leetle an' maw died seemed like I waited forever tu grow up. . . . Now I've waited nine months six times fer chillern tu be born. An' ever' time wuz hard. . . . An' three I've set an' watched an' waited while they died. Me a knowin'. Not a hopin'. Jist a waitin'. . . . That wuz hard." . . .

"An' so many nights I've set an' waited fer Lee Buck tu come home. Not knowin' ever'thing— but something like tu-night." 1

The ability to wait is made more noble because the woman who waits must do so alone. Even the nobility of waiting alone is embellished by the knowledge that there is a reason to worry. In this case, both Corie and Louisa know that the cave in which Lee Buck's still is located is to be

1Ibid., p. 343.
attacked by men informed by people from "the other end."
Corie's utter aloneness in this situation is underscored by her two quotations that reveal complete rejection of her sister, now married to one of the sworn enemies. Corie reveals the relationship to Louisa who is unaware of it.

"Maw died when I wuz little. I wuz th' baby one. When Paw married agin I lived most a th' time uth Molly 'til I wuz old enough tu marry. Her man wuz allus a wild'un. He hated Lee Buck e'en when he come a tawkin' tu me. Molly, pore soul, cud allus see both sides, a holdin' fer her man an' her own blood kin at th' same time."
"You and her are relations, then?"
"Didn't she tell ye . . .? We was sisters."¹

The was in that sentence carries an implication of severance, which gets the ultimate sense of finality, of rejection when Corie reveals Samanthetie's visit to throw the rock attached to the note of warning.

"She threwed th' rock, and walked off into th' woods. I went out an' picked hit up. Hit had a piece a paper tied 'round hit. Hit said in her that was my sister's handwritin', 'Tonight they're comin'."²

The mountain woman is self-sufficient, self-reliant, independent, creative, patient, and most of all, alone.

Corie, Samanthetie, and Rie all provide the framework within which to view Louisa as an off-shoot of the prototype of the Southern mountain woman. They provide, within the novel, development of the narrative, unfolding of the plot, and extremely important local color detail. Their primitive

¹Ibid., p. 319. ²Ibid., p. 338.
mountain customs and mores and manners contrast greatly with
the highly refined, highly polished ones of the insecure
Louisa whose initiation each of them helps bring about. Rie
is the child-woman to whom Louisa brings some knowledge of
the world outside but from whom she absorbs a knowledge of
the paradoxical combination of the fierce pride of the hill
country people and their unflagging pragmatism. Samantha
is the device through whom Louisa learns to lose her self-
pity. Corie, of course, the tall, larger-than-life woman,
is the primary figure in Louisa's initiation. She, drawn
much more completely and more fully than any of the other
characters, except Louisa, is the strength of her family,¹
the worker of the land, and the guide for her husband who is
known, because he is a man, to be living in sin and is ex-
pected then to take part in such activities as playing cards
and fiddling. She is the one who teaches Louisa to wait;
thus she becomes a Mountain woman counterpart of Louisa.

Louisa ventures into the unknown territory when she
goes into Cal Valley; she discovers there cares and responsi-
bilities and she has not known before, serious cares and
responsibilities involving the immediate welfare of her fel-
low man rather than the long-term welfare to be improved by
some innovation in chemical engineering. Corie ventures into
unknown territory each time she sits by the fire waiting,

¹Eckley, pp. 67-69.
each time Lee Buck leaves to work the still. Author Arnow creates in both Louisa and Corie the strength to conquer the unknown no matter how much they may be changed by it. The full impact of the waiting strikes the reader of *Mountain Path* in the scene where Louisa, realizing that Corie knows that the men are coming, and wanting to get word to Chris and Lee Buck says, "'Corie, can't we go when we know. I can't sit here, and--" and Corie replies, "'Yes, ye can. I can!'" They do.

Louisa is not alone in her journey into the wilderness. Indeed, all of the major characters in Arnow's novels venture into the unknown territory, and the character most closely comparable to Louisa of *Mountain Path* is Gertie Nevels, the heroine of *The Dollmaker*. The character Gertie, coming two novels later in the series, is of course, more carefully developed with more detail and more polish, but a comparison of the earlier character and the later one is inevitable. Just as Louisa, when she goes into the Cumberland Highlands to teach, goes into unknown territory, Gertie, when she takes her family from the South Central Kentucky hills to join her husband in the wartime housing project in Detroit, goes into a new territory. The fact that the literal movement is directly opposite that that Louisa takes, from hills to city rather than from city to hills, does not alter the fact that

each is equally a wilderness to the protagonist. Each woman must adjust to strange sounds, unfamiliar beliefs, and eccentric behaviors. The silence of the mountain valley is overwhelming and disconcerting for Louisa, as are the cries of animals and the dialect of the people. For Gertie, whereas the sounds of nature and the Kentucky hill accents are reassuringly familiar, the "roar of the fast through train [and] its screeching whistle"¹ are frightening. No less comforting are the Midwestern accents of the people heard through the thin walls of the apartment and the sounds of men departing for work at midnight and the fizz of the after-work beers of the neighbor women who work the three-to-twelve shift.

Both Louisa and Gertie are warned to listen and learn, although in Louisa's case the warning is in the vernacular of the Mountain Path hill country:

"Th' only thing," he said after examining each knuckle, "if'n so much ez two hawgs git into a fight don't take sides with neither one."²

For Gertie, the instructions are to adjust. She hears it first from the teachers of her children.

The widely opened door into which Gertie had backed was closing. She turned determinedly back to the room. "I'd better help her out a all that riggen."


²Arnow, Mountain Path, p. 18.
"We'll teach them that; she'll adjust," Miss Vashinski said, with a big bright smile on her bright red mouth and an uneasy glance toward the room where Mrs. White's voice sounded thinly above the ever increasing babel.¹

The split oak basket, one of the final links with the former life, is a device that Arnow uses to trace Gertie's learning. Even her own children are insistent that she adjust.

The children stood waiting in a silent little huddle against the coal house, which gave some shelter from the keen-fingered north wind. Clytie frowned on the basket, whispering, "Mom, I don't think people up here carries baskets." But Gertie only pressed the basket against her as she stood by the telephone pole and looked about her. The sky, unlike the skies back home, told her nothing. Was it the even gray of clouds, of smoke, a cloudy dawn, or a cloudy sunset? It seemed early, very early, more like milking time than school time.²

Those who seem to assure her that she and her children will adjust do so with a noticeable irony, for they speak their soothing phrases while obviously admiring the unadjusted oak basket.

"Are you sure you don't mind leaving the basket I guess it's an heirloom," the teacher said.
Gertie smiled. "I've left four youngens here. I oughtn't to mind leaven a old split basket."
"They'll be all right," the man said. "They will--" now he didn't seem himself at all, but was like Miss Vashinski--"adjust. This school has many children from many places, but in the end they all--most--adjust, and so will yours. They're young."
"Adjust?" One empty hand pulled a finger of the other empty hand.

¹Arnow, The Dollmaker, p. 193.
²Arnow, The Dollmaker, p. 183.
"Yes, adjust, learn to get along, like it—to be like the others—learn to want to be like the others."

"Oh." She pondered, looking down the hall—ugly gray—and at the children laughing in the doorway, then turned to him with a slow head-shake. "I want 'em to be happy, but I don't know as I want em to—to--"

"Leastways not too good."¹

Gertie's enthusiasm for living as the wishes to results then in her "adjusted" philosophy: "We've all got to live together,"² with more emphasis on the live than on the together.

Both Louisa and Gertie, because they are instructed to listen and learn, begin to question the injustices they see in the lives and in the treatment of the people around them. Louisa questions the applications of laws made outside the hill country to the hill country people and their behaviors.

By all standards that had been set up for her out there in the world Chris was uncivilized and lawless. Yet to himself and those who knew him he was a lawful man. She caught glimpses of something deeper than words written on paper by other men calling themselves legislators. Chris's laws were of the hill law, older than the modern mechanism of law, rooted in freedom and living in people rather than in books. Chris and Lee Buck and Corie and others of their kind, she knew with the same certainty that she knew her name, would not steal or fail to give a guest the best their place afforded. They would not lie except in connection with such things as moonshining, neither would they be friendly with an enemy or forget to hate one they had determined to hate. They sent

¹Arnow, The Dollmaker, p. 196.

²Ibid., p. 460.
their children to school because they wanted to, and not because of a state law they had never heard of.

Gertie finds herself shuddering at the prejudices, slurs, and slanders exhibited and bandied about from neighbor to neighbor in the housing project. She becomes painfully aware of the unequal and inhuman treatment of the Flint plant workers by the parent company and of the underhanded dealings of both management and labor in efforts to gain control. She discovers a union code of laws that resembles in many ways the code of the hills--the same people who would share their last crust of bread with their likewise destitute neighbors would not hesitate to resort to violence in dealing with those who exploit them.

Louisa and Gertie trace the archetypal initiation very closely. Their listening and learning and questioning contribute to their transformations but do not operate independent of the loss of a loved one to the new surroundings. Louisa loses Chris to the environment of the hills as a result of the code of the hills. Chris himself is not from Cal Valley, but from a place high on a ridge. A great passion of his is to be able to "see off." Because he dies in the cave still, however, Chris is denied his greatest wish. Gertie's loss is of a relative, a daughter, but the parallel works in all other situations. Cassie, the younger daughter

1Arnow, Mountain Path, p. 124.
not yet able to read because of her poor vision, possesses an
ever-active imagination and, in her own way of seeing off, creates
playmate Callie Lou who, along with Gertie, appreciates Cassie's creativity.

Cassie sat on the block of wild cherry wood, as quietly as she was ever able to sit, wiggling, giggling, whispering. Gertie looked at her sternly until she sat unconsciously still, her thin legs, that looked even thinner above Enoch's last spring's shoes, held carefully straight and still by the block of wood, her arms folded over her stomach, her hair, the color of corn silk, escaped from its braids and fallen across her bright dark eyes, laughing now in spite of the prim straightness of her mouth.

The child is never still, always creating, and seldom conforming, or as the teacher in the school near Merry Hill would say, "adjusting." Because Cassie continues to talk to Callie Lou—even when the others think she is alone, they begin to think her behavior unusual and detrimental, to them if not to her. Gertie informs Cassie that there is no Callie Lou, much against what her own creativity dictates. The machine, which seems ever to be the enemy of Gertie, a personification of creativity and originality, is partly responsible for Cassie's death. She dies after her legs are severed by the wheel of a moving boxcar under which she is sheltering Callie Lou. Gertie's shouted warnings to her are futile, unheard above the roar of an airplane on a landing approach. Cassie never realizes that both Gertie and the

1Arnow, The Dollmaker, p. 41.
children who play in the alley want her to be able to keep Callie Lou. Louisa and Gertie share the frustration that comes with not being able to provide for a loved one the thing that he wants most.

Likewise, Louisa and Gertie share the independent resistance to adjustment to the new surroundings, though Louisa's attempts at resisting the environment are quickly reversed. She eventually appreciates the mores and customs of the hill folk; she resists until she is beaten, however, the resignation to the lack of communication, ultimately, the intense hatred of one end of Cal Valley for the other. The nights of waiting and the loss of Chris defeat her, and her transformation is complete. Louisa can claim for herself conclusion to the process of initiation; she can make her return. The callus on the middle finger of her writing hand has not gone away. The link with the past is still there.

Gertie, less fortunate than Louisa, must struggle against the world of cramped living quarters, regimentation, clocks, assembly lines, and machines. She, who has always lived close to the land, who indeed even seems a part of it, faces a more naturalistic version of the return.

The hard white light overhead hurt her eyes and made a shadow on her work. The night sounds of Detroit came between her and the thing in the wood, but worse than any noise, even the quivering of the house after a train has passed, were the spaces of silence when all sounds were shut away by double windows and the cardboard walls, and she
heard the ticking of the clock, louder it seemed than any clock could ever be. She had never lived with a clock since leaving her mother's house, as in her own time had been shaped by the needs of the land and the animals swinging through the seasons. She would sit, the knife forgotten in her hands, and listen to the seconds ticking by and the clock would become the voice of the thing that had jerked Henley from the land, put Clovis in Detroit, and now pushed her through days where all her work, her meals, and her sleep were bossed by the ticking voice.¹

Gertie's resistance to change is summed up quite well again in a statement she makes to her son Reuben's teacher, who is irritated at Reuben's failure to adjust: "'But he can't hep th' way he's made. It's a lot more trouble to roll out steel--an make it like you want it than it is biscuit dough'."² Gertie longs to return, but unlike Louisa who makes the journey back into the academic world, she never gets back to the Kentucky hills. Yet she does return—as a minor but influential character in Arnow's latest novel, The Weedkiller's Daughter—to the land. She is never referred to as Gertie, but she is called "The Primitive" and Mrs. Nevels, and the explanation of her acquisition of the land in the Eden Hills area is consistent with the pattern of Gertie:

... the woman had bought the land years and years ago, either during or just after World War II. She'd lost a relative in an accident; a lawyer ... had read or heard of the accident, and got for her several thousand dollars in

¹Arnow, The Dollmaker, p. 199.

²Ibid., p. 324.
damages. Her children and her husband, some kind of skilled factory worker, had not wanted to go back to their old home in the south. So she had bought land up here [in Michigan]; she had wanted a place with "little hills if I can't have big hills," they said she had said.

She makes her return by settling for what, to her, is second best.

Each of the four major women characters in the novels of Harriette Simpson Arnow makes her own journey into the wilderness. Likewise do some of the minor characters. The initiation motif requires it—and the study of the prototype of the southern mountain pioneer woman also requires it; of the four major characters, however, the movement into the wilderness is most obvious in Louisa of Mountain Path and Gertie of The Dollmaker, and through them, the initiation motif, the exploration phase of the southern mountain pioneer has its greatest impact.

Chapter IV

THE STRUGGLE TO SURVIVE

Hunter's Horn, the second novel of the Arnow series and a more accomplished work,\(^1\) contains the character Suse Ballew, who compares to Louisa without being her direct parallel. Suse is literally part of the territory that is being explored by Louisa. Though she does attempt blazing trails of her own, Suse never makes it into the new territory, the city that for Louisa is old territory; and the figurative journey is unpleasant, taking her into an emotional, economic, and sociological wilderness that is a veritable prison, even a death, that prevents her making the literal journey out of the hollow on Little Smokey Creek. She, in true southern mountain woman fashion, nevertheless, struggles with the literal, emotional, economic, and social environment in order to reach an agreement with it in an effort to live—or perhaps merely to exist.

In this sense, Suse of Hunter's Horn is comparable to Gertie of The Dollmaker, for Gertie struggles with the same parts of her wilderness. She, so at home with the land, indeed a personification of the agrarian spirit, struggles to adjust to the barren soil of ethnocentrism and the choking underbrush of too-crowded living and the seemingly

\(^1\)Eckley, p. 93.
impenetrable forest of technology. She too, learns to co-exist, even though it is a somewhat resigned existence.

In the physical sense, Suse and Gertie are much more nearly parallel than is Louisa to either of them. They are both big, raw-boned mountain women who are capable of doing men's work. Yet they are comparable to Louisa, too, in philosophy, a part of which is their astute observance of the impossible, inescapable plight of the mountain woman. Their struggle continues, nevertheless.

The dominance and superiority of the woman in the novels of Harriette Arnow extend even to the females of the lesser species of the animal kingdom. In Hunter's Horn, the protagonist family possesses two pedigreed hounds that are trained to hunt foxes, most particularly the antagonist fox, King Devil. The pups, a male named Sam and a female named Vinie, are both excellent fox hounds; Vinie, however, seems to dominate the pair in intelligence, determination and capability. Sam falls into an icy spring and almost dies from exposure, though treatment by a veterinarian pulls him through. Vinie, having avoided the spring through innate caution, receives compliments while Sam receives the treatment.

"That's a pretty thing, now," he said, "a pure white, pure-blooded hound--don't know as I ever saw one before."

"She's got a little dusten a red," Nunn said, trying to act unconcerned about Vinie's beauty, but Vinie understood at once that here was a man who knew what a pedigree was, and so went into her prettiest poses. She sniffed the floor just enough to show how pretty she was with her nose down and
her white ears dangling by her black eyes; then she tossed back her ears like a child pushing hair out of her eyes, and looked at him and showed her fine face and the dainty way she had of standing lifted on her toes, as if she spurned the ground, and when he said, "Fox-footed," she understood his admiration, and all unafraid began to investigate the stethoscope with one paw and her teeth.1

It is Vinie who hunts, "... as ever, for fox scent,"2 though she is not alone in the eventual subjugation of King Devil, who, consistent with the pattern of all the stronger Arnow characters, turns out to be Queen Devil, a vixen. Consistent also with the illustrations of the life of the mountain woman in a society in which the man is the head of the household is the fate of Queen Devil. The vixen is pregnant and at term. As Milly Ballew listens to the cries of the hounds she hears "... Sam's wild cry, more a vicious snarling bark than a hunting bay ... rising above Keg Head's voice and then the thud of animal bodies in the soft earth of the cornfield; Vinie yipped once, as if in pain, but Sam was snarling ... ."3 Whatever Vinie's reason for yipping in pain, it can symbolically be interpreted as an expression of sympathy, especially in contrast with Sam's superior conquering snarl. Milly, on discovering the gender


2 Ibid., p. 283.

3 Ibid., p. 395.
of the long-time red foe, says, "'Pore thing . . . Pore thing, if'n she hadn't a been a vixen they'd never a caught her.""}

Another ironic illustration of the plight of mountain women occurs in the juxtaposition of two parts of the narrative in Chapter 33, the one subsequent to the account of the death, funeral, and burial of Lureenie, the woman who had escaped from the hills into the city but who had been forced to return pregnant and without means of support for herself and her children because her husband is in a Cincinnati jail. Nunn Ballew is ruminating the discussions conducted during some recent gatherings.

Jeremiah had tried again to dicker with Nunn for \( \text{the pups} \) but had received such scant encouragement that old Andrew Mclellan, that day visiting the Tuckers and reputed to be the stingiest man in the country, suggested that Nunn breed Vinie to Sam and sell her pups to him and the Tuckers—he would pay $30 for two. Nunn only grunted at that; he had no wish to breed Vinie, and each time she was in heat, he went to no end of trouble to keep her from getting in the family way.\(^2\)

In this manner, Vinie fares better than do her human counterparts. No man bothers to go to no end of trouble to keep his wife from getting in the family way. Moreover, the women are pawns of their own beliefs, of the teachings of the hills. Milly's thoughts as she discovers that she, still

\(^1\)Ibid., p. 395.

\(^2\)Ibid., p. 345.
younger than thirty, is pregnant for the seventh time, are extremely pessimistic:

Milly never scolded Sue at such times; poor child, soon enough would come the time when not just her body was tied down by work, but mind, too, with troubles and worries—it seemed sometimes like God made women for trouble: she wasn't real certain, but then she never was certain right away—or maybe she only wouldn't let herself believe—but it seemed like she was in the family way again. The thought would check her suddenly in whatever she happened to be doing, and she would stand a second open-mouthed and staring; this thing had happened to her again. An instant later she would chide her sinful heart; women were made to have babies; it was a sin not to want them, and a black, black sin to try to keep from having them. The thing was to work as long as she was able.

Lureenie finds these beliefs fatal. No man, not even her own husband, expresses quite so much concern about Lureenie and her condition, even to notice that she and her family are starving; yet every man in the hollow is willing to pray for Lureenie who died in sin because she was "unforgiven, unrepentant, unregenerate, and unreconciled." A double irony of this particular phrase is that it is spoken by Lureenie's husband, newly sanctified now that he has been released from jail.

Of the four novels, all of which deal pointedly with the plight of the mountain woman, Hunter's Horn is the most graphic, most pessimistic. Essentially there is no one female protagonist; rather a spirit of mountain womanhood or

1Arnow, Hunter's Horn, p. 158.

2Ibid., p. 347.
mountain feminism runs throughout the novel, each of the women, and even the female animals, providing at least one facet of the entity. Sue Annie, Hattie Tiller, Lureenie Cramer, Milly Ballew, and Suse Ballew—and even Vinie the hound and Queen Devil her prey, contribute a portion to the prototype of the pioneer mountain woman. Of the women characters, Suse Ballew and her mother Milly serve most readily as protagonists and, of the two, Suse is more closely related to Louisa Sheridan of *Mountain Path*.

Though the literal movements of Louisa and Suse are not parallel since Suse does not really ever leave the prison of her native hills, personality traits and symbolic meanings are comparable. Louisa is a student; Suse is also, to the extent that schooling is available to her; she is intelligent and her father, Nunn, conforming to the mountaineer stereotype which Nora Miller's survey, taken about the time *Hunter's Horn* was being written, has proved a common trait—that of being able to read but possessing little regard for book learning,¹ says, "'She is the readenest youngen.'... with more of pride in his voice than complaint."² Suse is also very much the teacher that Louisa is, though in her take-charge activities at Deer Lick School when the


superintendent and county board members came to evaluate Andrew Haney, she is also much like Rie Cal of Mountain Path. Innate intelligence and sensitivity to the needs of others make her a child-woman variation of the Great Mother archetype.

Suse's innate intelligence combined with the little academic training she has had help provide subtle semantic humor in Hunter's Horn, though Milly's training in decorum contributes the irony. During the discussion of the pedigrees of the hounds, Nunn and Suse, who "has read the agriculture book in school through three times," discuss Suse's knowledge of breeding animals. Because they use what for Milly is a taboo word instead of brute, the acceptable euphemism for bull, Milly reacts with an ironic "'Shit-fire, Nunn, I can't stand it. Quit talkin that away; you'll have Lucy talkin dirty up at school.'" In an earlier remark to Suse, Milly chides her for behavior too girlish, yet she also chides her for behavior too adult.

Physically Suse and Louisa are different. Louisa, who never is really called pretty is little and brown-haired with dog's eyes. Suse, though she is maturing physically and emotionally throughout Hunter's Horn, is tall and thin and brown—and in the final scene when Suse, pregnant and

1 Ibid., p. 98.

2 Ibid.
unwed, is dismissed from the cabin by her father whose weaknesses she recognizes but understands, consequently whom she respects for his non-conformist beliefs and therefore whom she adores, Nunn notes that her head has almost touched the mantel for which Milly must reach. Suse has gained both literal and symbolic stature greater than that of her mother.

Dreams and plans for the future are important to both Louisa and Suse, though each one's dreams are thwarted by a force beyond her control, forcing her through that important step in the process of initiation, the one at which she no longer questions, merely acquiesces. Louisa wishes to return to her schooling and later exchanges that dream for the one involving the young moonshiner, Chris. Suse, even in Chapter One of Hunter's Horn, is dreaming of escaping Little Smokey Creek, though the dream is encased within the exposition:

There was a sudden scurrying behind them, and Zing came with Suse at his heels. "I thought I heard a plane," Suse said, and jumped on a square of stone and stood searching the northern side of the sky.

Milly and Nunn listened, too, and heard a faint drone; somewhere up in the hill across the creek it sounded. Then Suse was jumping up and down and pointing, "There is comes; see it, like a star a walken, only redder, ever minnit it looks like it was goen to bump into th stars, only a body knows they're lots higher," and oblivious to Nunn's warning of copperheads in the grass and Milly's admonition to get to bed, Suse kept her eyes on the sky until ev'en the drone of the plane was lost behind the fog.\(^1\)

\(^1\)Arnow, Hunter's Horn, p. 12.
Suse's dream of escape is not always related in images of technology. For her the elements of Nature provide a minimal escape. The top of Pilot Rock, the highest point in the settlement, is her place for looking off and dreaming, for looking northward. Her encounter with the wild geese, rather a parallel to the encounter with the airplane, occurs when she is in this sacred place:

Soon she could make out three V-shaped bands moving high and effortlessly across the sky, flying toward the Pilot Rock as if it were a milestone in their path. One band flew straight over her head, so low she could see the beating wings of the leader who held together the two long lines behind, meeting in him, then spreading outward into the sky, weaving, bending like grass-blades blown in the wind, waving far outward at times, like the slowly opening wings of some fantastically shaped bird, then closing until the birds seemed a line of black dots in the sky, the lines never still, never breaking, with each goose keeping his proper place and proper distance behind the other.

She watched, craning her head, turning slowly, her eyes never ceasing to follow them in their flight. The honking grew fainter and fainter, until she could not have told when the sound of it ended and the memory began; the flowing lines grew thinner, smaller, blacker as they moved southwestward. One instant she could see three thin black strings blowing against the gray sky, then only the gray sky; but she looked still into the empty grayness, something inside her, like the spirit of God that came on Milly at church, rising and flying with the birds straining after them, crying and calling fit to burst her heart, but soundless and wordless, because there were no words that could tell the thing, only the knowing deep inside her that she, Suse, would go away into new fine country, as the wild geese were going now.

Only, the wild geese would come back with the spring, and they went together; but when she went, she'd go alone and she'd never come back.¹

¹Ibid., pp. 293-294.
When she is in a spot in the hollow that is lower than Pilot Rock, Suse still rejoices in the changes the hills offer, but she does experience occasional twinges of uncertainty.

Suse . . . looked out the window at the hillside; she liked to look at the hill; like the rest of the woods, it was for her full of more change and excitement than any other part of her life; it was fun in spring to leave the corn planting and hunt flowers in the woods or wild greens by the river, and the long grape hunts in the fall—a sudden and unreasoning fear of the future filled her for an instant with painful doubt. . . .

She shrugged her shoulders and smiled at the hill as the strong smile at the threats of the weak; she wouldn't be like Milly and she wouldn't be like Lurenie; she'd make her own life; it wouldn't make her.

The spirit of rebellion inherent in these passages and which is personified in Suse was a necessary element in the make-up of the pioneer and even more necessary in the make-up of the pioneer women. Suse’s quotation to Mark Cramer, just as they are beginning an emotional involvement, or at least an emotional involvement on Mark’s part, is "'Let go . . . I hate to be held like a horse on a bridle when I don't want to be'". The hills hold Suse like a horse on a bridle as mountain womanhood holds her. Her independent spirit erupts into seemingly disrespectful and blasphemous tirades against her parents, against other people on Little Smokey Creek, and against Fate in general.

1 Ibid., pp. 227-228.

2 Ibid., p. 229.
Sue Annie warns the Ballews of Suse's potential attempts to escape the prison of her environment:

Sue Annie stopped in the middle of a description of Flonnie's new rayon dress, took the pan of cracked walnuts from Suse, pulled a hairpin from under her headrag, and went to work. "These walnuts ain't hurt, Milly, but Suse is a goen to be, if'n th pore child has to set by th fire thisaway all th time like a old woman. Bottlen her up thisaway, she'll bile over on you an bust like a full keg a sweet cider set to Bour with a tight-stoppered bunghole."1

The keg remains stoppered, however, with household chores and adult responsibilities, and begins to boil over, gradually at first with complaints about lack of meat for meals, about clothing so insufficient that she must hide in the bushes to avoid being seen, about never having a stylish dress to show off her small waist, and, always silently, about never being able to get away. An eruption occurs shortly before the child-bed death of Lureenie, a prisoner like Suse, and in a sense, a foreshadowing of her, when Suse lashes out in virulent curses at Lureenie's father-in-law, at Nunn, and at God for their neglect of Lureenie and ultimately for the treatment of all women. The independent spirit that Nunn has always admired in Suse is turned on him when she strikes at him with "'High school, hell! You'll never have enough to send me in decent clothes to th post office, let alone high school. You're always aimen; never finishen nothen'."2

1Ibid., p. 276. 2Ibid., pp. 318-319.
The prison of her environment continues to crush Suse's spirit and essence until it, this nature that she loves, becomes a form of death. She laments of Mark, even on the very eve of her impregnation, almost with a knowledge of prophecy, "I'll never git away . . . an they'll be recollecten what I've done as long as I live." And she told him all in broken sobbing how she had cursed in the church house and Hattie Tiller had heard her. And how, worse yet, she hated God—the things He had done, like sending Lureenie to hell. . . . 'You nor me neither can't change th world',"¹ Mark’s resigned reply also shows some ironic foreshadowing, for their relationship both makes Suse’s escape impossible and insures that her initiation is complete; her life changes and the change would be insignificant except that it is a change for the worse. She has come to an agreement with the surrounding wilderness, though in her case it is a forced acquiescence. She will leave her father's house and become the mountain woman she has always dreaded becoming—the one grown old at thirty from hard work and too many pregnancies—because she has no choice. Suse, possessing no choice, is figuratively dead.

In this manner she is a personification of Queen Devil, the vixen who evades the hounds for years and is taken by them only when she dies from running. Sue Annie speaks

¹Ibid., pp. 344-345.
what is the proper eulogy for both Queen Devil and Suse:

"I guess she figgered she'd ruther die a runnen than be smoked to death er dug out. . . . My notion is that onct, when she was little, she had a taste a bean penned up; mebbe took frum a den when she was little by somebody that cropped her ear an tried to make a pet uv her—that's why she was so smart an mean an a haten people so."1

Suse's settlement is a symbolic death worthy of the sacrificial scapegoat in the hero archetype2 which she is indeed, for at least Nunn is aware of the truth in the invectives she has hurled at him previously, regarding the plight of his women. Her tomb is sealed, however, with Nunn's final remark to her: "'I ain't a holden th wrong you've done agin you—but this fire—it's never warmed a bastard.'"3 Suse, being the strong proud woman that she is, stronger than Nunn even for she stands unsupported while he must lean against the generations-old chimney of that fire as he speaks, "... never look at him or anyone, but walk away from the fire and through the middle door."4

Gertie Nevels of The Dollmaker is merely a more mature Suse, developed with more refinement of detail. Her extraction from the prototype of the Southern Mountain Woman, and ultimately from the archetype of the Great Mother is more

1Ibid., p. 396.

2Guerin, p. 121.

3Arnow, Hunter's Horn, p. 411.

4Ibid., pp. 410-411.
obvious and more easily followed that that of Suse Ballew, but the comparison otherwise is extremely close. On the literal level, Suse is a big, strong Kentucky hill country girl who cares little for housework, who, like the wild animals lives to run free over the land, or perhaps lives because she runs free over the land, who cares little what other people—including the God created by those other people—think constitutes sin and salvation. On the literal level, Gertie is a big, strong Kentucky woman who, though weighted down from the outset of the novel with the responsibilities that fall upon Suse in the later chapters of Hunter's Horn, shares Suse's Pelagianistic attitude toward religion, each being unable to accept the doctrine of original sin. Gertie, too, struggles to co-exist peacefully with the new environment that she enters, having followed the trail blazed by those going before her. She, fortunately, makes a more positive agreement with this environment than Suse; yet the agreement is a pessimistic one made with reluctance and resignation, for Gertie, a veritable personification of the Agrarian philosophy, made more potent by the qualities of humanitarianism, must concede to the power of technology. Thus the housing project and the factory are as prison walls but not as the solid walls of a tomb.

1 Dorothy Brooke Nicholson, Pilgrims Were They All (London: Faber and Faber, 1937), pp. 143-156.
Arnow's indication of the superiority of her women characters through size as well as through philosophy is operative once again in *The Dollmaker*. Gertie is big, tall, broad-shouldered enough to control an unruly mule with only her long thighs while she holds her sick child in her arms; big enough to dislodge a car perched precariously on a bluff. Gertie is symbolically larger than her own husband, Clovis, who is "as tall as she, but without the bigness of bone or width of shoulder."¹

Gertie's size is often referred to or implied in the narrative and in the dialogue which explains her closeness to nature. Things growing and things from the land seem to know Gertie's touch and mold themselves to her wishes, even the things she whittles, and working with wood is second-nature to her. The passage in Chapter Five which describes the red cedar water bucket provides example of this:

The stove light shone on the wash bench of her own making, and on the bottoms of the water buckets. One was of red cedar, made of pieces of wood fitted together barrel fashion and held together with copper bands. It was an old bucket and had, like most of the furniture which she had not made herself, been a cast-off from her mother's house.

Clovis quarreled often at the weight of the cedar bucket and the clumsiness of it, pointing out that a new one would cost only a quarter. The children seldom carried it to the spring, but filled it from the smaller buckets. . . .  [Gertie] smiled on it, remembering the years she had had it, and was filled for a moment with a proud consciousness of ownership, something solid and old, know and proved

¹Arnow, *The Dollmaker*, p. 32.
long ago by hands other than her own . . . .
As always in any weather, she picked up the
cedar bucket and went to the spring . . . .
There was no whiteness of rock or glimmer of
starlight under the pines to mark the craggy path
down the ridge side to the spring, but she fol-
lowed the path with no more thought for her feet
than she would use to cross the kitchen floor.
The spring seeped into a hollowed-out basin at
the foot of a low ledge, and without being able
to see where stone ended and water began she
squatted by the pool and dipped the bucket in,
then lifted it and drank easily and soundlessly
from the great thick rim as others might have sipped
from a china cup.  

Gertie’s ability to find the path in the dark is
indication of her affinity with nature, which is born out
also in her dealing with the mule in the introductory
chapter of the novel when she understands his fears of the
car and talks to him as if he were one of her children,
firmly but lovingly and not harshly. When she is staying
with her son in the hospital, she wishes to go for coffee
in the pouring rain because, being closed in the room, she
can neither hear the rain nor smell it.

Gertie’s extreme independence and intense desire for
space and room and freedom to move about in that room is
supported by a passage which confirms her Agrarian spirit.
Here and there on the walls, in little wooden
shelves contrived by her father, covering the
low window sills, set on the cedar chest, on the
center table, crowding Henley’s picture on top of
the phonograph, were her mother’s potted plants:
geraniums, begonias, varieties of cactus, coleus,
sensitive plants. Many were blooming, but in a

Ibid., p. 76.
sad, half-hearted way, as if they were tired of the red clay pots, tied with crepe paper, that cramped their roots like too tight shoes . . . . Not long after her marriage her mother had given her a good-sized piece of a giant maidenhair fern rooted in a large red pot. She had on the way home stopped by a limestone ledge above the creek and there set the fern where it belonged to be.¹

Even the Pelagianistic attitude toward Christianity that Gertie possesses does not escape the influence of the agrarian and of affinity with nature. Gertie describes Christ to the creative daughter, Cassie:

"Pshaw," Gertie said, "a body don't have to go to Jesus. He's right down here on earth all th time."

"Have you seen him, Mom?"

Gertie considered, looking up the hill, "Well, it's kinda like you a seen Callie Lou."

"You mean he's got black curley hair and black eyes like Callie Lou?"

"No-o-o. When I seen him walken over th hill--he jist looked like a good-turned man."

"Like a preacher in suit clothes a carryen a Bible?"

"No. Seemed like he wore overalls like a carpenter. He made things like yer granpa."

"Was he a carryen a ax to cut a ax handle?"

"I didn't see his tools. He'd been in th woods, though, a looken fer something, fer he was carryen a big branch a red leaves. I figgered he'd cut down a old holler black gum tree fer to make beehives, an th leaves was so pretty he took em with him. . . . Jesus walks th earth, an we're goen to have us a little piece a heaven right here on earth. Your pop has to go away, but he'll be back--he'll be all right.²"

Arnow achieves her portrait of Gertie as a personification of Nature who is completely incompatible with

¹Ibid., p. 63.

²Ibid., p. 73.
technology—partly through fear and partly through ignorance of that technology, by subtle descriptive phrases. Early in the novel, Clovis accuses Gertie of being as jealous of machinery, a product of technology, as if it were another woman. This product of the anti-agrarian forces that overwhelm Gertie in the new territory, begins in an article as small as the flashlight which she disdains for the cheaper, softer, more dependable lantern light, and extends to the final steps in the process of technology, war and the factory, and even then Gertie prefers the horrors of war to the horrors of the enclosing, imprisoning factory.

Not only does the factory imprison, but also do the effects of the factory, one of which is the housing project into which the Nevels family moves. Here Gertie's pioneering spirit and independence are tested to the breaking point. The new surroundings are indeed a wilderness into which she has journeyed and with which she must learn to co-exist with a minimum of disagreement. The novel, *The Dollmaker*, does not, on the surface, permit Gertie to adjust to the technology. She finds the train ride to Detroit intolerable until she can spend some moments whittling. She cannot move about the interior of the Nevels' unit without colliding with radios, washing machines, refrigerators, and other assembly line products which, while symbolizing the technology she must struggle against, literally keep her from quick access to the outdoors, and even the outdoors is not easily accessible, what
with Michigan weather combined with technology-produced smog.

The refrigerator and the gas oven, seemingly insignificant, are even obstacles for Gertie’s path. An unsuccessful Christmas dinner, made so because of an underdone turkey, too hard butter, and frozen lettuce, all caused by lack of familiarity with the appliances, is redeemed somewhat by Cassie, who, taking the dress from a store-bought Christmas doll and putting it about the hickory one whittled by Gertie, begins the painful process of bringing old ideas to a new environment and combining the two in order to create a totally new product or idea. Cassie probably makes the greatest strides of all in adapting old ways to new environments when she introduces the other children to Callie Lou, the witch-child. Cassie serves rather as the sacrificial scapegoat in that she must die in order to prove the existence of Callie Lou in the minds and imaginations of the other children in the alley and, through this, to give Gertie and her children the courage to attempt to plant flowers in the drab, usually littered alley. The flowers planted in the city earth constitute a final attempt to exercise free will for Gertie who is convinced that “only your own place on you own land brings free will.”

In spite of her symbolic attempt to maintain her own place on her own land through working with wood, Gertie must

1 Arnow, The Dollmaker, p. 308.
surrender to technology even in that. The crucifix she hand
carves for Victor is eventually replaced by sawed lumber
crosses that Clovis cuts from a pattern on a second-hand jig-
saw he locates and repairs. The jumping jack dolls that she
takes credit for creating are, in reality, completed by a
microcosmic assembly line composed of all the members of the
Nevels family save Reuben, returned to Kentucky, and Cassie,
deceased, each through refusal to be like other people.

Knowing that she cannot keep what is left of her
family together and in good health, Gertie lets her initia-
tion be almost complete. She accepts the idea that the knife,
in the hands of Clovis, the personification of technology, is
an instrument of destruction, perhaps even of death, while
in her hands it is an instrument of creation, and the objects
it creates are taken from nature with love and concern.
Gertie is totally alone in the idiom of existentialism1 when
she decides to give overwhelming ground to technology, to the
assembly line, to conformity by splitting the block of cherry
wood, the thing that has been her salvation up to this point,
into boards for whittling so that it turn, it can become
the salvation of her family. She does surrender to the
prison of conformity, but not without a final fasp of inde-
pendent spirit which is stimulated by the people who follow

1Jean-Paul Sartre, Existentialism (New York: Philo-
sophical Library, 1947), pp. 11-61.
the red wagon carrying the faceless cherry block to the wood lot, speculating as to what person Gertie had intended it to be. The varying conclusions coming from the crowd indicate that individualism has not been completely destroyed and individuality is underscored when the wood lot man refuses to split the block himself but insists that Gertie do it. Whatever Gertie might have surrendered to technology, she maintains the final word for independence of thought when she says:

"No. They was so many would ha done; they's millions an millions a faces plenty fine enough--fer him."

She pondered, then slowly lifted her glance from the block of wood, and wonder seemed mixed in with the pain. "Why, some a my neighbors down there in th alley--they would ha done."

Gertie Nevels and Suse Ballew, protagonists in *The Dollmaker* and *Hunter's Horn* respectively, represent primarily the second of three steps in both the initiation motif of the hero archetype and the prototype of the pioneer spirit. They struggle to develop an agreement with their environment with permits them to continue living and also preserves as much as possible of the original state of the environment. Figuratively each woman is alone in a new territory. For Suse the literal territory is not new, though the territory of her fantasy world is; the territory of mountain womanhood is new to Suse, too. For Gertie, the literal territory is

1Arnow, *The Dollmaker*, p. 571.
new; the figurative, not entirely so, for her family that constitutes much of that territory is with her. Still she is trapped by the literal territory of pressure to conform. Suse is trapped by the literal territory that she has always known, for she never escapes the hills; in the same manner that the hills imprison her does the new territory of womanhood imprison her.

Both Gertie and Suse are able to compromise with their environment rather than to give in to it, though Gertie's compromise is somewhat more positive, somewhat less naturalistic than Suse's compromise. Suse is disowned by her entire family and must turn to people who are veritable strangers, thus in essence being alone. Gertie is rejected only by her overly pious mother; her own husband and children reject only portions of her philosophy, and she finds neighbors who sympathize with her in part; thus she is not, in essence, completely alone. Her individuality and independence do ultimately gain respect from those around her.

The solitude Suse and Gertie know begins in the earliest novel with Louisa Sheridan, the orphaned stranger to the hills who comes alone to initiate and having done so, departs initiated but still alone. Susie Schnitzer of The Weedkiller's Daughter is perhaps the woman most alone of the four. Most fitting then are her position in the fourth novel and her extreme refinement of construction when she is compared to the other women in the novels of Harriette Arnow.
Chapter V

CONCLUSION: THE SETTLEMENT

The pioneers who opened the paths and trails into the Southern Appalachian Highlands, particularly those of the Cumberland region, and who brought old world knowledge to combine with the new world environment, thus creating institutions superior to the parts that compose them, by adapting the rhythm of their lives to the rhythm of the environment, were able to establish settlements in the wilderness from which other mountaineers, interested in moving on to new territory, emerged as pioneers. Eventually as the land was all conquered, the pioneer spirit had to evolve into other forms, some psychological, some religious, some ethical, and some philosophical.

In the same manner have the women characters of the novels of Harriette Simpson Arnow evolved until Susie Schnitzer, protagonist of the fourth novel, The Weedkiller's Daughter, has become the culmination of the process of evolution and the ultimate refinement of Arnow's use of the southern mountain pioneer woman prototype. Though the novel that Susie inhabits is not of the quality of the other novels, of Arnow, and though Susie is less realistic (according to Eckley, "often trite and too good"¹), less naturalistic

than Louisa, Suse, and Gertie, she is the only one of the four who contains all of the elements present in the other three. A scope such as this requires that she be "too good" and somewhat less than believable, for as Arnow's final product, she has attained a stature of rather a goddess.

Each of the four women is alone in her struggle, most of the time so alone that if she were not already the independent thinker who questions the institutions and customs of her society, especially when they can be changed, she would be forced to become so. Each also has an affinity with the world of nature; each is imprisoned by conformity or by the pressure to conform. Susie, as the most refined development of the four characters, must of necessity possess the most obvious variations of these traits. As a precocious teenager, recently arrived in new territory, both literally and figuratively, Susie is alone. Her family has been in Eden Hills less than two years, constituting the literal new territory for Susie. The figurative new territory is made up of Susie's belief and values that differ from those of her parents. She is the most rejected of three children in a loveless household motivated by fear to hate everything not blatantly White Anglo-Saxon Protestant. ¹ Susie's solitude if further compounded by her interests in people as individuals, not as members of a race or a creed; by her

¹Ibid., pp. 175-185.
leanings toward pacifism; by her desire to see the ecological balance maintained everywhere but particularly in her neighborhood; and by her attempts to locate and insure her own identity.

Related in part to all the quests Susie has decided to make her own is her abhorrence, not so much of technology, for she employs that to her advantage, but to the devastation of nature than technology causes. Her crusade against technology begins most immediately with her father's weed-killing tendencies. So much does he desire to be rid of weeds—and their parallel forms, the people whose races and philosophies aren't comparable to his—that he forbids even real flowers in his house, pleading allergy to them, and inspiring Susie to use as part of her crusade the triumphant feeling that comes from keeping flowers in a secret attic hideaway. Another facet of Susie's anti-antweed campaign is the walled garden that she and the cook have cultivated, significantly, behind the shed which provides storage for Mr. Schnitzer's herbicides and insecticides.

At the shed corner she stepped off the cement into the damp softness of grass, where she searched until her hand felt leaf and flower. Gently feeling, now and then pinching a stem, she soon held up to Robert what, in the dull red light of the far away fires, appeared to be a handful of small round black shapes on stems. "Mexican chrysanthemums. They are little and browny red, but when you smell them you know it's flowers you smell. The gardener at first wouldn't have them, because they weren't in the landscape architect's plan. But Lulu persuaded him, and took care of them while I was gone this summer." She
upheld the flowers to the pale blur of his face. "They haven't been sprayed. Can't you tell from the smell?"

Since Susie cannot have growing things in her room, according to her father's orders, she often visits the pond and swamp belonging to The Primitive, who is Gertie Nevels now evolved to a higher state of development, at least a happier one, than she possesses in The Dollmaker. In order for Susie to get to The Primitive's pond, she must cross the site of construction of a six-lane highway inhabited by the monstrous machines that are working "still in the get-the-trees-out-of-the-way stage." While this destruction of the environment in favor of technological advance disturbs Susie greatly, the wilderness of the swamp and pond that The Primitive is struggling to keep as wilderness provides Susie with opportunity to be near wild things and to observe their living in harmony with their environment; thus she is not totally surrounded by plastic flowers and the absence of natural fragrances.

The pond is a place of refuge for several human creatures who constitute a figurative endangered species, Susie and her friends, Iggy, Angus, Katy, and Ben. They are variations of the archetypal maimed one. Susie, of course,

1 Arnow, The Weedkiller's Daughter, p. 25.

2 Ibid., p. 62.

3 Cirlot, A Dictionary of Symbols, pp. 1-2.
is literally but not severely marked by facial scars from an accident that occurred during her very early childhood. Like the others she is figuratively maimed by an inability to conform to parental and societal standards. The special powers that the pond-watchers possess, powers for which the maimings are payment, are an inexplicably miraculous ability to see the defects in their parents and in the society and an equally miraculous ability to avoid being influenced by them, through either environment or heredity. Iggy, the son of an artist considered a detriment to his child; Katy, the daughter of a teacher accused of unamerican leanings; Ben, a Negro; and Angus, the son of a minister recently made wealthy by a best-seller which grew out of the pain and grief of his counselees, are, like Susie, anti-bigotry, anti-pollution, anti-war, and almost anti-technology.

Susie herself cannot claim an attitude anti-technological in its fullest sense, for in her search for her own identity she employs it and is successful partly through its help. Early in the novel she admits to a friend that she "... gets tangled in her selves sometimes," and her imagination is continually recalling past events in great detail, creating events that could occur simultaneously with that which is occurring, and flashing into future events. She finds that her brain which she, in the language

1 Arnow, Weedkiller's Daughter, p. 22.
of technology, calls IBM, is generally able to keep her functioning successfully in both the real world and the dream world without short-circuiting. When Susie is interviewed by the social worker, a would-be psychologist interested in her scar-alienation crisis, she employs technology in the form of tape recorders to defeat the man's invasion of her private life; his recorder, hidden under his shirt, she uses to defeat him as she gets him confused and demands that he remove it; her own hidden recorder she uses to defeat him, but more to reassure herself that she tells him nothing of the real Susie.

The lonely Susie paradoxically strives to preserve her private life, thus in many ways compounding her aloneness. Like the pioneers who brought old ideas to new surroundings, Susie uses technology to help keep her secrets or to adjust the sterile, almost unnatural environment of the estate on which she lives to an atmosphere she can tolerate. Her pacifist inclinations are underscored in this too, for she uses, with a bit of revulsion for all the suffering it might have caused others, the powerful magnet from a surplus bombsight motor to fasten securely against intruders the sliding doors of her closet while she is escaping into her secret attic hideaway through the back wall of the closet. She has created her own little electronic control panel, to whom she gives both name and personality Little Atlas, for opening and closing doors that only she knows about, doors
that lead to a place not sanitized and deodorized to death.

She stopped, smiled; some little animal had struck metal in the jungle of piping between the upstairs of the garage wing and the back of her quarters. It could be a bird or a squirrel, or even a cricket to chirrup. She had always hoped for a cricket—here; the only spot in all the Schnitzer Domain where any living creature save man might be safe from sprays, pellets, traps and Brandon. She listened, but the sound did not come again. . . .

Nicer was the good smell of wood from the bare beams and trusses holding up the roof boards, so widely spaced that with a flashlight she could glimpse the cedar shingles. She stood, head cocked, listening to the wind, a very little one tonight, more like the sigh of a weary world. No good gusts to let you imagine it was the sea you heard instead of the trees up the hill, or the one Schnitzer tree big enough to roar. She sniffed. Mixed in with the wood smell was another smell, damp.

The passage illustrates Susie's desire to know even the smallest item in its natural state; she abhors the artificiality that permeates everything usually around her, including her mother's homemade *apfelkuchen*, which is purchased from the frozen food counter at the supermarket and rewrapped and relabeled for the Schnitzer's freezer. The plastic plants, the plastic people, and their plastic faces drive Susie ever onward out of the house of the too-exact color schemes and decorations and the too obviously present bomb shelter. She turns, in an implausible combination of desperation and common sense, to the world of The Primitive, where she finds the warm, the real, and the natural.

1Arnow, *Weedkiller's Daughter*, p. 32.
The Primitive offered Susie, with a word of caution on her safety, free run of her barns, woods, fields, swamps, and ponds, not forgetting her home. Susie came to know and love them all, from the sheep fold to the sugar bush with the great kitchen tying everything together. She particularly enjoyed the big, iron, wood-fired cookstove that as the fall weather sharpened The Primitive used more and more while the electric range sat cold and idle.

Better than mere seeing was the doing. She would never have believed a place inland could have so many interesting jobs—from getting down hay for hungry cattle to washing butter fresh from the churn. And as they talked together, she learned The Primitive’s language; she now knew that Bender, the big, friendly black and tan dog, was a cur-dog, not a feist, the look and feel and taste of "strung okrie" and what a diddle was. She learned the glory of walking in the sugar bush late in the afternoon when the long, low rays of the setting sun added yet more gilding to the red and gold leaves over her head and around her feet.

Susie, a precocious child of adolescent stature and adult mind, uses this precocity to expedite her search for her identity, which she does by combining technology and almost innate medical and technological skills. She suspects immediately that the fugitive cousin in her attic is suffering from a throat infection and almost without time to think, she acts to get medicine for him by being true to herself, but false to some of the people she loves most. She manages to act her way through a sore throat and a fever by using make-up, merthiolate, and a hot iron and by shaking a thermometer by the wrong end so that it moves up rather than down. Her medical skills and her nautical skills are equally

1Ibid., p. 276.
superb and seemingly innate. She, without any apparent previous experience, is able to help a friend, who does not really appreciate the gesture, bring the boat which she affectionately calls Antiname back safely to the marina in spite of a storm. Susie is definitely the self-reliant woman. She adapts—with astonishing rapidity—to whatever the situation and always triumphs, hence the comparison to a goddess.

Susie, as the other three women characters created by Harriette Arnow, is fundamentally alone when she arrives in the new territory. The new territory is such that it effects isolation, so the solitary state creates a self-reliance and an independent spirit. The independent spirit enables the pioneer woman, as each of these women is fundamentally, to develop her own creativity by combining what she knows of life with what she must learn of life to make a better life than either of the parts alone would have made. Susie, like these other women, questions much of her environment, but works to change only what she can change and patiently waits until she will be able to change the rest. She, too, is imprisoned by conformity and fervently desires to escape that, but since she is the culmination of the evolution of the pioneer woman prototype as Arnow uses it, she is more refined in every aspect than the others. Susie is Louisa Sheridan, but she is Louisa with money, and while she is in a sense, every bit the orphan that Louisa is, she is
separated from the loved ones only temporarily and thus maintains the dream that Louisa must relinquish to the hill country code of ethics. Susie is quite obviously Suse Ballew, even to the similarity of name, but she is Suse with opportunity to exercise her independent spirit. Susie may complain about her high school experiences, but she at least is getting them and does not find herself hopelessly tied down to a family at the age of fifteen. She is a Suse who, though she has not yet conquered her environment, is well on her way to doing so and is optimistic that she will. Susie is Gertie Nevels, but she is less naturalistic, more romantic than Gertie. She has more time, more money, and more room for hope than Gertie. Arnow achieves symbolic indication of this in that Susie, agrarian in spirit in the same proportion that Gertie is, is also nautical. She knows the sea manages to draw the best from it just as Gertie manages to draw the best from the land. Susie is also Sue Annie from Hunter's Horn in her ability to deal with the sick and in her ability to counsel the frightened, even the selfishly frightened like Vicki Maxwell with the open-heart surgery scar. Even the witch-child Callie Lou/Cassie from The Dollmaker finds her way into Susie. The creativity and the imagination, even to the calling upon IBM and to the dialogue with Little Atlas, is proper behavior for an urbanized Cassie, who can exist in The Weedkiller's Daughter since that novel is much less realistic than The Dollmaker.
The evolution of fundamental traits of the four characters is underscored by Arnow's use of the hands in the final chapters. Louisa of Mountain Path sees hers as she holds them to the fire, open and empty. So strongly does she feel her initiation that she expects her hands to be changed, but is surprised to find them as they were when she came, even to the callus she had been certain would disappear. She is like her hands, open and empty, for she is free to return to her former life with only memories of her life in Cal Valley.

Suse of Hunter's Horn stands with her hands slowly twisting, closed like her future, and moving as if by instinct or reflex, as she will move during much of her work-shortened life. Gertie of The Dollmaker's hands are tightly clinched, representative of the determination required to permit the cherry wood block to be sawed into boards. It is her last means of identification with the Gertie she was before the corruption by technology. Susie of The Weedkiller's Daughter has evolved to merely pulling her thumb when she feels threatened. She succeeds in the final episodes in remembering not to pull the thumb. Indeed, her hands do not even become part of a farewell handshake with the social worker. She has found herself and is free.

A life promising freedom, or at least more freedom than they possess at the time they decide to take those
unknown paths, has always been one of the objects of the pioneers' search. They go into the new land rather as the Hero archetype goes through initiation, bringing their ideas which they adapt to the new environment as they attempt to establish a settlement. Successful adaptation of the old to the new is a prerequisite to the thriving settlement, but the settlement also requires that some of the individuality existing before the adaptation be preserved, for the independent, self-reliant man or woman is the only one capable of looking forward, of continually striving to reach the goal, of breeding a race of independent people who will also strive for whatever provides freedom for them.

The Scotch and Scotch-Irish and the sprinklings of people of other nationalities who followed the paths into the wilderness of the Southern Appalachian Mountains were such an independent, self-reliant people. Their descendants, bred with the same pioneer spirit, were, among others, the Cumberland Highlanders. Some of the offspring of the Cumberlanders were the Denneys and the Simpsons, ancestors of Harriette Simpson Arnow. She, too, possesses the independent, self-reliant spirit which has spurred her on to her goal. She has followed the path to mud road to graded gravel to highway and, in doing so, has moved from town to hills to city to suburbs. The development of her novels has paralleled her movements and the movements of her women protagonists. As the characters move from city to hills to city to suburbs,
the settings move from hills to city to suburbs; the setting of the final novel, however, is significantly Eden Hills. As Susie is the ultimate step in the evolutionary process which begins with innocent Louisa and moves to imprisoned Suse and then to temporarily imprisoned Gertie, Eden Hills must be considered the ultimate setting. It adapts the city experience to the mountaineer spirit, thus creating in Susie and her adult counterpart, The Primitive, a freedom that comes only with peaceful, unqualified co-existence with the environment.
LIST OF WORKS CONSULTED


Eckley, Wilton. "Harriette Arnow." MS to be published by Twayne United States Authors Series.


