THE TREATMENT OF THE NEGRO

IN THE FICTION OF SOUTH CAROLINA

1920 TO 1940

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PREFACE

The prevailing attitude that the South has been, and still is, undergoing a Cultural Renaissance has had its effects upon the Negro. The recognition of this attitude has made the cultured Negro introspective. Just as critics of the South are searching for the effects that a supposed Renaissance is having upon every phase of southern culture, the Negro is seeking the effects it has had upon him as an integral part of the South. Such an observation has suggested this study, which is interested primarily in the literary side of southern culture.

Aware of the fact that the treatment of the Negro in the old fiction was one that originated and maintained the Negro in the traditional plantation pattern, the writer of this thesis has been interested in finding whether or not a literary Renaissance has precipitated a departure from such treatment, or whether that in awakening, southern writers of fiction continue to keep their eyes closed to the signs which might arouse them from the peaceful slumber of traditionalism. In order to determine this fact, an analysis has been made of a part of southern fiction. That this analysis may be more thorough and more complete, one out of all the southern states has been chosen. The state chosen for this study is South Carolina.

Because 1920 is the approximate date accepted as beginning the literary Renaissance in southern letters, the novels here treated range from then to 1940, when the most recent of their publications appeared. Several of the books of South Carolina published within that time were unobtainable, but a number sufficiently representative of the modern novelists and of their works has been secured. When his identification with the state was questioned, the author was conceded to that state having the strongest claim based first
upon birth, and next, upon adoption.

A penetrating analysis of the treatment of the Negro in the modern fiction of South Carolina has been based upon what the Negro characters themselves say, what the white characters say about them, and what the author reveals through interpolative remarks. The novels treated herein have logically fallen into two distinct classifications — the plantation Negro, and the Negro in other settings. These novels are of two kinds, historical and regional, and in some cases, a paradoxical combination of both. For the purpose of clarity and a richer interpretation, an introductory chapter on cultural backgrounds has been included. Since this research is concerned primarily with the attitude toward the Negro, books that were examined and found to have no inclusion of the Negro, neither as a character nor by pertinent reference, were not alluded to.

Though similar studies have been made in recent years, this treatise, to the knowledge of the writer, is the first of its kind to appear. Sterling Brown had published "a survey of the Negro in American fiction, both as character and author" under the title of The Negro in American Fiction (1937). Francis Pendleton Gaines, "in general outline," presented, traced the development of, and analyzed the validity of "the popular conception of the old plantation" in his work entitled The Southern Plantation (1925). Other scholarship on the Negro in American fiction has been done by John Herbert Nelson, The Negro Character in American Literature; Nick Aaron Ford, The Contemporary Negro Novel; A study in Race Relations; and Willie Lou Talbot, The Development of the Negro Character in the Southern Novel, 1824-1900. This study, however differs from the ones cited above in that its interest is concentrated on the novels of one state and all of the available works by the novelists. It is only part of a larger study which has the same aim, but a larger scope in that it will consist of an analysis of the modern fiction of all the southern states.
CHAPTER I

INDICES OF A CULTURAL RENAISSANCE
IN THE SOUTH

Though history is ever in the making, mankind is seldom moved to any great extent except through calamity. Plato was aware of this fact when he remarked twenty-three centuries ago:

"I was going to say that man never legislates, but accidents of all sorts legislate in all sorts of ways. The violence of war, the hard necessity of poverty, are constantly overturning governments and changing laws. And the power of disease has often caused innovations in the State, where there have been pestilences, or when there has been a succession of bad seasons continuing during many years. Anyone who sees all this, naturally rushes to the conclusion of which I was speaking, that no mortal legislates in anything, but that in human affairs chance is almost everything."

It was the impact of a great calamity, the debacle of 1865, that moved the South — a conservative, ambitious, stagnant South, soothing in complacency. A study of the South readily shows that the Civil War motivated a Cultural Renaissance, that the South is yet changing and may be seen from many angles in the process of change. But before discussing the prevailing indices of a Cultural Renaissance, a few terms should be made clear.

What is meant by culture? According to Herbert E. Bolton,

A nation's culture comprises the whole body of its civilization — its way of life, its modes of thought, its

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1. G. Croft Williams, Social Problems of South Carolina (Columbia, South Carolina, 1929), p. 3.


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religion, its social structure, its manner of artistic, spiritual and intellectual expression. It embodies the sum total of the nation's heritage from the remote and the less remote past. 1

The South's is a great cultural heritage; one which, if tutored in a school of liberalism, will engender a region that will be an asset to any nation.

The cultural revival of the South should not be measured by the culture of other parts of the United States. Instead, it must be thought of in terms of the South, which thought leads to another question. What is meant by the "South"?

Whereas a greatly marked contrast, such as that between Oriental and American culture, is quite obvious, differences in culture found within the United States may be passed up with little thought. It must be realized, however, that differences, though less conspicuous, do exist within this nation. In the light of the new interpretation, these differences have given rise to the term "Regionalism" as opposed to the historical concept, "Sectionalism". The term "Section" was appropriate in definition of the old South, blinded by glorification of its existing traditions. But the new South has outgrown this old garment and cast it aside for the newer and better fitting apparel, regionalism. Regionalism is more comprehensive in its scope, including the geographical, physiographical and topographical profile of the fourteen states called southern, 2 together with their customs and mores of the past and present. Realistic, rather than romantic in its outlook, it makes the South "an integral part of the nation rather than separate from it", and makes for progress rather

1Herbert E. Belton, "Latin American Culture," Southwest Review, XXV (January, 1940), 115-16.

2Regionalism is not restricted to, but is here discussed in reference to the South.
than stagnation.\(^1\)

With the foregoing definition of culture and the fact clearly in mind that the South is no longer the "solid section"\(^2\) that history at one time made it, let us now examine some of the forces indicating a Cultural Renaissance in the South.

Indications of a cultural awakening may be found primarily in social science, politics, education, economics, and literature. In some cases, one term may overlap another, but each shall be discussed separately. In as much as an interpretation of contemporary tendencies is based largely on the past, allusions will be made frequently to the South's heritage.

The South has become a pioneer in the leadership of social work. "The first county unit plan of public welfare was established in North Carolina in 1918."\(^3\) One of the most outstanding sociological movements of the new South is to be found at the University of North Carolina in the works of such investigators as Edward W. Odum, Lee M. Brooks, Katharine Jocher, H. E. Moore, and through such organisations as the "Institute for Research in Social Science" and the "Institute on Southern Regional Development and the Social Sciences." Signs of progress are shown also by the South's cooperation with the federal government in the promotion of various phases of social security. Better Housing Projects are now being sponsored by many of the larger southern cities in which, also,

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\(^2\) "... there is no single South; there are many Souths. Boundary lines that coincide with rivers or mountain ridges or that result from decisions of early surveyors do not immerse essence of the people residing within those boundaries today." *Ibid.*, p. 27.

professional organizations of social service, such as the Public Welfare Bureau and the Child's Delinquency Bureau, have arisen. That a Cultural Renaissance is even now in operation in the South is evidenced by the trend of current events. One of the most recent of these occurrences was the meeting of the Southern Conference for Human Welfare, of which Dr. Frank P. Graham, president of the University of North Carolina, was chairman. This Conference, which held its second annual meeting in Chattanooga, Tennessee (April 15–18, 1940), was interracial, and was attended by such noted Negro leaders as Dr. Rufus E. Clement, President of Atlanta University; Dr. F. D. Patterson, President of Tuskegee Institute; and Dr. Ira DeA. Reid, Professor of Sociology at Atlanta University, all of whom were speakers on the occasion. Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt, the first lady of the land, was the guest speaker. Such an inclusion of the Negro by the South in the promotion of its present and future general welfare is certainly a decided cultural change. To understand just how important these changes are, let us view the old South and its conservatism.

Tradition has it that the solid South of ante-bellum days was founded upon the feudal system. The basis of this foundation was the institution of slavery out of which grew the plantation, which, more than anything else, satisfied the craving for a system of caste. The pleasant, easy-going life led by men of honor and women of charm gave rise to a picturesque civilization, and "if feudal England was merry England, the feudal South was the merry and the sunny South . . . ." The evils as well as the brighter features of this system have been commented upon by many. A vivid picture is portrayed in the words of Francis Gaines:

1William P. Trent, William Gilmore Simms (Boston, 1892), p. 28.
The ante-bellum Southern estate is rich in both the pageantry and the psychology of feudalism. It offers the spectacle of the irresponsible lordly class and the scale of life that appertains to it. It offers, too, the spectacle of the lower class, obsequious in attitude toward this ruling group, cheerful in acceptance of a humble lot, unambitious, ignorant, superstitious, fantastically funny. On the one hand, we see rich modes of life and a hereditary authority, exorcised with the graciousness of condescending mercy; on the other, a comic inferiority, and a devoted concurrence in the scheme of government.

Satisfied with the existing social distinctions, the Southerner was slow to change and grew more and more inert. Aristocracy was in the ascendancy, and though the aristocratic slave master was pledged to democracy, the two terms are not rooted in the same political philosophy. Hence, the Southerner strove, unsuccessfullly, to resist the political developments of his country. Though guilty of many of its alleged short-comings, the old South was fertile with outstanding statesmen who became historically renowned for their political capability.

Indices of statesmanship in the new South, however, lead one to quite a different conclusion. Indeed, it seems to be politics that has suffered most in the South’s cultural awakening. Political thought and practices of the new South are predominantly reactionary. It is in politics that the South has remained more or less “solid” — solidly democratic. This democracy differs widely, however, from the democracy set forth and adhered to by Jefferson and his followers — "the principles of state rights, individual liberty, religious freedom, popular rule and separation of church and state." Southern democrats were false to this

code in 1928 when thousands of them refused to support their party's presidential candidate because he belonged to the Roman Catholic church. Unqualified men are given high offices through such policies as an affiliation with the Ku Klux Klan, non-opposition to lynching, and the advocacy of the reign of white supremacy. Thomas E. Watson of Georgia, who was strong in his "denunciation of Negroes, Jews, and Catholics"; Jeff Davis of Arkansas, who "pandered to ignorance and prejudice"; Cole Blease of South Carolina, who is remembered for his celebrated thesis — "Whenever the constitution comes between me and the virtue of the white women of the South, I say to hell with the constitution"; J. Thomas Heflin of Alabama, "a member of the Ku Klux Klan ... exactly an anti-Catholic maniac" — all of these men are examples of the evils of politics in the new South. 1 The South's strongest points of rationalization for such practices are the Negro problem and the effect of the Civil War.

While the South has a galaxy of such misfits in the political limelight, it would be unfair to brand them as typical Southern politicians. These men are in contrast to such liberal crusaders as Governor Aycock of North Carolina and Governor Harry F. Byrd of Virginia, pioneers of anti-lynching, both of whom were "genuinely concerned for the welfare of the masses, whether white or black . . . ." 2 Liberalism in politics is limited in the South, but politics here follows the trend of politics elsewhere. Politicians are known to practice the principles of expediency, rather than unselfish principles which make for the welfare of the general public, and the latter was seemingly the principle of

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1 Ibid., pp. 269-273.

2 Ibid., pp. 276, 277.
the old South. Partisan politics as applied in behalf of Southern institutions has had its most serious effects upon the administration of education in the South.

While the progress of education in the new South is lamentable, definite indices shine out as beacons, lighting this much travelled path of darkness. The formation of the Southern Education Board in 1901, John D. Rockefeller's establishment of his General Education Board in 1902, meetings of the Conference for Education in the South, the Anna T. Jeannes Fund, the John F. Slater Fund, the Phelps-Stokes Fund, the Julius Rosenwald Fund, and increase in school revenue, and private benefactions are all potent factors that have aided the progress of education in the South. Though higher education has an older and richer background in the South than has secondary education, three southern universities have now developed graduate schools that meet the requirements of the Association of American Universities. They are the University of Virginia, whose law school has won wide prestige; the University of North Carolina, with its scholarly and liberal-minded faculty; and the University of Texas, with its enviable library. The University of North Carolina has attained such eminence that it was said by Harold J. Laski, noted English educator, to be "regarded in Great Britain as one of the half dozen greatest universities in America." Unfortunately, no such comment can be made relative to secondary education. The reason for this goes back to the old South. For the upper classes there were private tutors, private schools, New England colleges, and finally, European schools and universities, as means of education. But in this system of feudalism,

1 Ibid., p. 346.
there was no middle class and consequently, little thought was given to education for the masses. Free schools were for the poor alone, hence, they remained poor schools. Just how wretched the common school system was may be shown by the words of William Gilmore Simms, who was brought up in it:

"They taught me little or nothing. The teachers were generally worthless in morals, and as ignorant as worthless . . . . There was no supervision of the masters or commissioners worth a deit. The teachers, in some cases, never came to the school for three days in the week . . . . When they did come, they were in a hurry to get away. The boys did nothing. Never attempted to work out a rule in arithmetic, but put false proofs which were never discovered . . . . The whole system, when I was a boy, was worthless and scandalously."

Little wonder is it that public education is so deplorable in the new South, whose greatest bulwark against change is, even today, conservative-mindedness. A large rural population, an aversion toward the Negro, poverty, ecclesiastical affiliations, and an intolerance of instructors' opposing views all have been primary obstacles to the South's advancement, because the South has refused to meet them with open mind. Thus, they have greatly impeded its development in education. The mere fact that they have become "problems", whether treated fairly or not, shows signs of a cultural awakening. Far-sighted liberals, however, are attempting to destroy these barriers. For the rural districts, longer school terms are being granted, funds are being appropriated for the promotion of better framing, and schools are becoming consolidated. While a dual system of education is still staunchly approved, feeble efforts are being made to improve educational facilities for the training of Negro teachers and Negro children. Other

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1William P. Trent, op. cit., pp. 4-6.
educational signs of a cultural awakening are shown in the Penn School's attempt to maintain the spirit of its old culture while at the same time modernizing it; in Trinity College's retention, in spite of great opposition, of Dr. Bassett, who had written that "the greatest man, save General Lee, born in the South in a hundred years" was Booker T. Washington; and of similar actions on the part of other schools. Education, more than any other one factor, is the foundation of progress, and in it lies the South's greatest opportunity for advancement. Sound philosophy is expressed in the words of Couch:

Disguise the truth as we may, throw the blame wherever we will, on the twin calamities of the Civil War and the tragic era of Reconstruction, on the predominantly rural character of the South, on the presence of the Negro, on real or fancied poverty, on the climate — that is, on geography and therefore on God — no matter how we seek to excuse our deficiencies, these remain obvious to even the most casual observer. And whatever the cause of the backwardness of the South in education, the affliction itself stifles industry, represses effort, discourages enterprise, weakens the desire for excellence, and makes us satisfied with second-rate achievements.  

Though the suppression of both education and industry were evils of the old feudal system, with the rise of a thrifty middle class, industry has outgrown education. Some critics say that industry in the South is in its infancy; others say that it is in its adolescence; be that as it may, proof of the fact that the South is now undergoing an Industrial Revolution lies in the evidences about us. North Carolina, the leading cotton manufacturing state in the South, has surpassed Massachusetts, the leading state in the North, in number of individual

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mills, wage earners and in value of products. Urban development is evident. There are the great iron and steel plants of Alabama, Tennessee and West Virginia; Alabama ranks fifth among the states of the country in the production of pig iron. There are the progressive textile firms of Texas, which also lead in the cotton seed oil industry. Other industries, such as tobacco, paper, and furniture have won recognition for the southern factories. The organization of labor unions to secure shorter hours and larger wages, and strikes resulting from them are marked signs of industrial change in this cultural awakening of the new South. Reactions toward this industrial revolution in the South are varied. From without there has been an eagerness to berate, and at the same time, there has been bewilderment within the South. Not all of the inside reaction is astonishment, however. Twelve southerners, known as the "agrarians," in their book, I'll Take My Stand, show strong opposition toward the present change. This opposition perhaps grew out of their interpretation of agrarianism and industrialism as being opposing forces. Such an interpretation dates back to the old South. Partially, because the South was settled by land lovers, and largely because of its geographical environment, there has been a dominance of agriculture in the South since its very beginning. William Gregg, a South Carolina apostle of industrialism before the Civil War, warned the South against the snarfsness that grew out of agrarianism. The planters, however, preferred buying more slaves and enlarging their plantations. Their assured independence is now

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revealed as having been only a "fool's paradise."\textsuperscript{1} The South's "inheritance from slavery has proved a great disability" to the industrialism of today.\textsuperscript{2} Despite this fact, the South is learning quickly in the field of industrialism. It is facing with a better understanding the problem of impoverished tenants — white and black — who are offered in the cotton factories each earnings, neighborly contact, and a "measure of self-respect."\textsuperscript{3} Growth of industrialism in the South, nevertheless, depends mostly upon education. The task remains for the schools to enlighten the present and future generations as to the new accomplishments and the need for future development in industrialism here in the South.

In each of these phases are seen signs of a Cultural Renaissance in the South. Some of these are more pronounced than others. These changes are conspicuous and Southerners are writing about them. Some writers see these changes and wince at them — as the "Agrarians" in \textit{I'll Take My Stand}. The South, like any other region or personality, desires to put her best foot forward. Hence, many writers are sensitive to any adverse criticism; others are apologetic. Some writers are nostalgic, but more are critically interpretative. Liberal writers are relatively few, but they are constantly gaining in national recognition. Quantitative expression cannot always be the criterion for judging. It is the quality of books, like Caldwell's \textit{You Have Seen Their Faces} that counts.

Thus far, no mention has been made of the literary awakening in the Cultural Renaissance of the South. In an address on "Literature in the South", delivered before the New York Southern Society, April 10, 1906,

\begin{itemize}
    \item \textsuperscript{1} Brackenridge Mitchell and E. S. Mitchell, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 286.
    \item \textsuperscript{2} Ibid., p. 294.
    \item \textsuperscript{3} Ibid.
\end{itemize}
a speaker declared that "literary productiveness ... is vitally related
to industrial productiveness, both being correlative manifestations of the
creative spirit." If this is true, the discussion of literature is cor-
rect in following the discussion of industry. With the subdivision of
plantations, the immediate effect of the Civil War became industrial and
economic; thus the year 1870 is taken by statisticians to mark the birth
of the new movement of industrialism in the South. This year is said to
be also the "birth-year of the new literary movement."\(^2\)

In reference to our American literature, as in sociology, the word
"Southern" is merely a concept and is applicable only from a conventional
point of view.\(^3\) Though it is true that each region of our country has
its own peculiar characteristics, a provincial caricature\(^4\) of the South
tends only to lessen the value of American literature. A nation contain-
ing as many diverse sections as does the United States offers its litera-
ture the added asset of various elements of local color and charm; and,
by utilizing these elements, such a nation therefore has the opportunity
to produce the material for some of the world's best literature.

The South is rich in romanticism and idealism, pride, triumph, tra-
gedy and suffering, and love of home—all of which are elements that go

\(^1\) C. Alphonse Smith, *Southern Literary Studies* (Chapel Hill, 1927),
p. 56.
\(^2\) Ibid., p. 66.

\(^3\) "Southern" is geographical, and is merely incidentally sugges-
tive of sectionalism in any political sense," Edwin Anderson Alderman et

\(^4\) The South is seen "at its worst in a certain shiftlessness of life,
slovenliness of dress and bearing, droll of speech, and an everplus of ar-
dent and often ill-directed emotionalism and pictured at its best in a
selfless chivalry of life, an Anglican culture of speech, a regnant ideal-
ism in society and affairs, and a heart-warm devotion to home, state, and
country in the order named." Ibid.
into the making of a great literature. It is true, however, that the South has not offered a line of "litterateurs" to take their place beside her statesmen in the Hall of Fame. Various reasons are given for this; first, the lack of a literary center; secondly, "the general ambition of the Southern people for political distinction"; and, finally, an absorption in political problems engendered by slavery.

Until near the middle of the nineteenth century, the larger part of literary activity belonged to New England, but the South was not inactive. The first Southern novel was "Delawel," published anonymously, which was followed by others, that were important only because they reproduced the life and manners of their day. Between 1829 and 1850, Southern letters became infused with a new vitality. The quality of the novels produced at that time reached its apex in the works of Kennedy and Sires. Romanticism and sentimentality characterized the novels of this period. Ellen Glasgow says of them: "... there was an absence not of character and passions, but of a detached and steadfast point of view. Novels lacked not only clearness of vision, but firmness of outline." Fascinated by the past, immediate or remote, these authors did not always choose their own times for their settings, but they did generally portray their own lands. A portrait of their own lands would have been incomplete without an entrance of the Negro, who was so intricately interwoven with life in the South. Consequently, the plantation tradition is treated by the first outstanding novelists of the old South.

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2 Alphonso Smith, op. cit., p. 56.
2 Edwin Anderson Alderman et al., op. cit., p. 5035.
3 Ellen Glasgow, "The Novel in the South," Harpers, CLVIII (December, 1928), 100.
It is in John Pendleton Kennedy's *Swallow Barn* (1853) that the first important example of the plantation tradition appears. *Swallow Barn,* pro-slavery in attitude, is a story of rural Virginia life in which Kennedy paints a colorful picture of the plantation. "Swallow Barn is an aristocratical edifice which sits, like a breeding hen, on the southern bank of the James River . . . . The main building is more than a century old." The thick brick walls, the ancient walnut door, the additions or wings that had been built by successive owners, the "lordly domain" of which it was the center, are all described with vividness and skill. The Negro is pictured to be happy, and contented; slavery as an institution is glorified.

The air of contentment and good humor and kind family attachment, which was apparent throughout this little community, and the familiar relations existing between them and the proprietor struck me very pleasantly: . . . I am quite sure they never could become a happy people than I find them here. Perhaps . . . this is a transition state in which we see them in Virginia. If it be so, as tribe of people have ever passed from barbarism to civilization since middle stage of progress has been more secure from barn, more gainful to their character, or better supplied with mild and beneficent guardianship, adapted to the actual state of their intellectual feebleness, than the negroes of Swallow Barn.

True to the traditional, popular concept, the Negro is ignorant, child-like and utterly dependent upon the white race:

I mean that he is, in his moral constitution, a dependent upon the white race, dependent for guidance and direction even to the procurement of his most indispensable necessaries. Apart from this protection he has the helplessness of a child, — without foresight, without faculty of contrivance, without thrift of any kind.

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3 Ibid., pp. 452-3.
4 Ibid., p. 453.
Kennedy wrote other representative novels, chief among which was Shoe Robinson (1835), but his primary importance here lies in the fact that he infused the plantation with glamour and romantic coloring; idealizing it with his own culture, he "gave matter and method for a literary tradition."\(^1\)

A still more ardent pro-slavery novelist was William Gilmore Simms, "second only to Poe\(^2\) in the Old South's gallery of literary men."\(^3\) The plantation tradition continued in the works of Simms.\(^4\) Longstreet's Georgia Scenes (1836)\(^5\) treats a different tradition. A humorist, he wrote of deck-fights, political brawls, and gander-pullings of the more

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\(^1\) Francis Pendleton Gaines, *op. cit.*, p. 25.

\(^2\) Though not a native, Poe, in many respects, is considered a Southerner. He was born in Boston, but, an orphan three years later, he was adopted by a wealthy Richmond tobacco merchant. Part of his education was obtained in Virginia, with private tutors and an incompletely course at the University of Virginia. Later, he was for two years editor of the *Southern Literary Messenger*, which attained great fame under his editorship. So, because of these affiliations, Southern literature cannot be justly discussed without the mention of Poe's name.

Poe, excelling in three fields of literature — criticism, poetry, and innovator of the short story, — is indisputably the greatest writer of the Ante-bellum South. More than that, he ranks with the foremost American writers of national and international fame. Indeed, in an address on "Americanism of American Literature," delivered at the University of North Carolina, October 12, 1911, a speaker states, "The older masters of the American short story were Irving, Poe, Hawthorne, and Bret Harte. These are all widely known in foreign lands, though Poe takes easy precedence among them."

Poe, too, found space for the Negro in his fiction. In The Gold-Bug, Jupiter's dialect, "an attempt at Ulahah, is language belonging with Poe's masterpieces, 'out of space and out of time'. Poe revealed pro-slavery thought, and treated 'loyalty-to-his master' as a predominant characteristic of the slave. "The master has a reciprocal feeling of parental attachment to his humble dependent: 'he who is taught to call the little negro his in this sense and because he loves him, shall love him because he is his'." Sterling Brown, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

\(^3\) Virginius Dabney, *Liberalism in the South* (North Carolina, 1932), p.150.

\(^4\) Simms, as a novelist, will be discussed more fully in connection with South Carolina, ff.

\(^5\) Because of its realism, Georgia Scenes was an anachronism during the period of romantic conception. It was dismissed then, in much the same manner that some of the writings of Erskine Caldwell are now, as "brutally exaggerated bits of realism."
realistic Georgians. Though he is said to be a strong apologist for slavery, Longstreet hardly proves it when he "non-committally shows a Southern backwoods 'lady' knocking her servant around from mere habit." Two other novelists of this period are presented by Virginia: William Alexander Garnethers, whose Kentuckian in New York (1834) is worthy of remembrance; and Nathaniel Beverly Tucker, whose George Balogee was regarded by Poe to be the best novel written by an American. The plantation tradition was woven into both of these novels where butlers, maamsies, and coachmen become stock figures. The plantation description suggested by Governor Taylor (of Tennessee) as a monument to the old South may be said to be characteristic:

"... a trinity of figures to be carved from a single block of Southern marble, consisting of the courtly old planter, high-bred and gentle in face and manner; the plantation 'uncle,' the counterpart in ebony of the master so loyally served and imitated; and the broad-featured black mamsie, with vari-colored turban, spotless apron, and beaming face, the friend of every living thing in cabin or mansion."  

With the appearance of Uncle Tom's Cabin, there arose a number of Southern writers who launched a counter-offensive against the then-popular book, and within a period of three years, fourteen pro-slavery novels were on the market. The very purpose for which they were written limited their worth. In their aim to glorify the institution of slavery, the writers depicted only the contented, loyal, perfect slave; the freed Negro

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1 Sterling Brown, op. cit., p. 13.
2 Virginia Dabney, op. cit., p. 138.
3 Of the works of Tucker, this tradition is best portrayed in The Partisan Leader, in which he paints an unfavorable portrait of the yankee, and at the same time, defends the system of slavery.
5 Sterling Brown, op. cit., p. 21.
was always unsuccessful. Exaggerations and omissions prevailed, hence
the Negro stereotypes became the popular concepts of plantation slaves.

Such was the attitude of Southern authors toward the "peculiar in-
stitution" during ante-bellum days. "The plantation ... stands as a
kind of American embodiment of the golden age." During the era of the
approaching crisis, the older novelists were still at work and new names
appeared. During the Civil War, the South had little time for letters.
Defeat and disaster were in the land, and a defiant and discouraged
people were making a valiant effort to adjust themselves to a changing
order.

The Reconstruction period brought a new group of writers. The
year 1870 bade a sad farewell to the old social order, not only in mili-
tarism, and the beseamed passing of Robert E. Lee, but also in litera-
ture with the passing of John Pendleton Kennedy, William Gilmore Simms
and August Baldwin Longstreet. The literary representative to greet the
new social order was Irwin Russell, not only because of his "priority in
the fictional use of the negro dialect", but also because of his "priority
in utilizing for literary purposes the social and institutional condi-
tions in which he himself had lived." The year 1870 does not usher in
a new literary tradition, however. Southern writers before the war had
felt obliged to defend and apologise for the institution of slavery,
but with the coming of writers who never knew it, there grew a new appreci-
ciation for the old régime.

During the period immediately following the Civil War, an increasing

1 Francis Pendleton Gaines, op. cit., p. 4.

2 Alphonse Smith, op. cit., p. 75.
number of writers turned to the plantation for the source of their
material, and with an even greater intensity of romanticism and sentimen-
tality, the "Southern aristocratic tradition came to its period of greatest
flowering...."¹ The novels of this movement are concerned chiefly with
contrasting the old South of aristocratic slave-owners with the new South
suffering under the blows of reconstruction. All of the writers of this
time, in some respect, are either affirming or denying the old tradition.
They were living in an age in which the social and economic structure had
been shattered, and in the newly existing order, the former ruling class
"had no function, no real significance." Hence, "like an army fiercely
retreating, they went back into the past. Myths and legends began to
spring up. The past became a beautiful, wonderful thing."²

It is this departed glory, "the sublimation of what once was," that
crowds the pages of Thomas Nelson Page, filling them with the most roman-
tic coloring of the old South. It was only natural that Page, who, like
Miniver Cheevey, "born too late," should find reference in such material:

Thomas Nelson Page, with the blood of several genera-
tions of Virginia gentlemen and gentlewomen flowing in his
veins, was a typical product of the social conditions that
prevailed in Virginia under the old regime. His highest
ambition was to reveal and to interpret the civilization
which he believed to be the 'sweetest, purest, and most beau-
tiful' that this country ever had.

In Ole Virginia (1887), of which the well known "Marse Chan", "Meh
Lady", and "Unc' Edinburg's Drownin'" are a part, is the most per-
vasive of his accomplishments.

¹Hamilton Basso, "Letters in the South", The New Republic, LXXXIII,
(January, 1925), 161.
²Ibid., 162.
Joel Chandler Harris reflects the old régime through the stories of Uncle Remus, "one of the best characters in American literature." Though Page had succeeded in recording the Negro dialect of eastern Virginia with much accuracy, "no author before Harris had recorded Negro speech with anything like his skill." Harris's comprehensive knowledge of the plantation enabled him to immortalize the popular conception, in which Uncle Remus is the truest exponent of the stereotyped plantation darky:

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

Though Harris and Page are the most typical of their movement, they are by no means the only ones of importance. Georgia furnishes another, follower of Longstreet and a forerunner of Erskine Caldwell, with his tendency toward realism, in Harry Stillwell Edwards. The Two Runaways, which pictures "a rough-and-ready friendship between swearing master and a none-too-obsequious slave," is a good example of Edwards's deviation from his contemporaries. In Colonel Carter of Cartersville, F. Hopkinson Smith adhered more to the popular sentimental treatment of the Negro. Other sentimentalists, and idealists of this movement were James Lane Allen, whose Uncle Tom At Home In Kentucky offers a direct contrast to Mrs. Stowe's Uncle Tom's Cabin; Grace King and Kate Chopin, two Louisianans who are also loyal to the traditional treatment, and a large body of work

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1Sterling Brown, op. cit., p. 55.

2Francis Fendleton Gaines, op. cit., p. 3.
contributed by Southern women, consistent with the romantic treatment.\footnote{Tbid., p. 83.}

This period was certainly the most prolific that Southern fiction had witnessed.\footnote{There are many names of importance that do not appear here. For a detailed study of all the books that are important to the development of the plantation tradition, one should consult Mr. Francis Pendleton Gaines’s \textit{The Southern Plantation}.}

While it is true that these writers looked to the past for their material, it must be noted that a new realism of speech and color was added to the fiction of the Reconstruction period. Though this local color is said by some to be due to the influence of Bret Harte, this explanation is questioned by others. One does know, however, that while Harte’s effect upon Southern literature is an assumption, the upheaval of 1861-1865 is a fact; that while discoveries in one region will naturally have their effect upon another, a break in the continuity of the social and economic system within a region is certain to have its bearing upon the prevailing literature. Whatever was the cause, the result remains the same. Local colorists sprang up throughout the South. Miss Mary Murfree, who wrote under the pen name of Charles Egbert Craddock, told fabulous tales about the mountain folk of Tennessee. Mark Twain found color in the Mississippi valley, and George Cable, in New Orleans. Altogether, there was

\begin{quote}
\ldots an outburst of local-color and dialect stories, developing by stages into longer stories or into romances \ldots or into novels of character delineating the suave, superstitious, and essentially humorous negro, the bold, rough-hewn, but substantially forceful mountaineer, the sensitive, delicate and artistic Creole, with his love of all the pleasures of life and all the solaces of religion and his paradoxical adherence to France in his American loyalty.\footnote{Edwin Anderson Alderman \textit{et al.}, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 5045-46.}
\end{quote}
The experiments with dialect and other forms of local color were numerous and seldom divorced from the sentimental treatment of the plantation tradition.

The treatment of the Negro was consistent in most of the novels. He was always as sprightly as a minstrel, as philosophical as Uncle Remus, as loyal as Uncle Tom—always present only in so far as he offered comic relief for his "kindly southern whites." Like Skylock—if pricked, he would bleed; if tickled, he would laugh; if poisoned, he would die; only, unlike the Jew, in the popular conception of the plantation tradition he was never pricked, never poisoned, and may, never, never would he seek revenge. To revenge would require a mind, independent thought, and this the Negro did not have. He was a human being only in the physical; mentally, he was "without faculty of contrivance... dependent upon the white race."

Such was the glorification of the plantation tradition. Ellen Glasgow, who entered the pages of literature a few years later in bold relief against these romanticists, said of this writing:

What had begun as an emergency measure had matured into a sacred and infallible doctrine. And among these stagnant ideas the romantic memories of the South ripened and mellowed and at last began to decay... To defend the last became the solitary purpose and the supreme obligation of the Southern novelists, while a living tradition decayed with the passage of years into a sentimental infirmity... In the end this writing failed to survive because, though faithful to a moment in history, it was false to human behavior.¹

The first writer to question the validity of the plantation tradition, and, thus blaze the trail for the realistic writers to follow,
was George Washington Cable. It was Cable's address to an audience at the University of Mississippi in 1882 that officially credits him with being "spiritual godfather" of modern Southern realists. In this address, Cable revealed the fact that the hope of Southern literature lay in "writing for a national rather than a sectional audience . . . [and] the author must see his local color from a national point." Of no less importance as a pioneer of modern realism in the South is Ellen Glasgow, who charged the romanticists with "evasive idealism". Although both writers have books of importance to their credit, their significance here lies in the effect they had upon a transition from romanticism to realism.

Critics generally agree that there has been a "revival" or at least an "awakening" in Southern letters. There are indices substantiating the fact that this is true. The defensive attitude taken by some Southern writers who are sensitive to accusations made against literature of the South is a sign of an awakening. In 1907 Edwin A. Alderman wrote in his preface to The Library of Southern Literature, which is in seventeen volumes:

The literary barrenness of the South has been overstated . . . both as to quantity and quality. A new day has come, and with it a new literature marked by new energy, new freedom and self-analysis, and descriptive power.

This same body of works is said by Paul Green, in 1925, to be

... thousands of pages, selections from hundreds of authors, sent forth unashamedly to convince the world that we were a wronged people, that our literature would bear comparison with that of any time and place.

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2Hamilton Basso, op. cit., p. 163.
3Edwin Anderson Alderman et al., op. cit., I, p. xxi.
4Edwin Hims, op. cit., p. 128.
Such fearless, open-minded criticism by one Southern writer against another, and, at the same time, against Southern literature, is definitely a sign of an awakening. Green wrote also that "the old South of abstraction is dying, is dead. And in its place I profess to see emerging in literature a New South whose possibilities are such as to startle even the American Mercury."\(^1\)

New magazines have appeared and old ones have continued: the two elder quarterlies — The South Atlantic Quarterly, established in 1902, and The Sewanee, which also is the oldest living quarterly in the United States\(^2\) — are still enjoying great success; The Journal of Social Forces was founded by the North Carolina group in 1922, and The Southwest Review and the Virginia Quarterly appeared two years later. Other indices are shown in the growth of literary groups like the Chapel Hill group of the University of North Carolina, the Fugitive group of Nashville, or the Poetry Society of South Carolina; by investigators and collectors of folk-lore and folk-art like Botkin's Miscelany of Folk Say at the University of Oklahoma; by university theatres and little theatres like the "Carolina Playmakers"\(^3\) at Chapel Hill, and the little theatre at the University of Texas; in the establishing of university presses, such as the University of North Carolina Press and the University of Georgia Press.

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2. Ibid., p. 190.
3. "There is everywhere an awakening of the folk-consciousness, which should be cherished in a new republic of active literature. As did the Greeks and our farseeing Elizabethan forebears, so should we, the people of this new Renaissance, find fresh dramatic forms to express our America of today — our large conception of the Kingdom of humanity.

and last, but by no means of least importance — indices of a literary
revival are shown in the works, themselves.

There are many indices pointing to a literary revival now in pro-
cess. Though it is true that 1870 witnessed the birth of a new movement,
motivated directly by the Civil War, that movement was merely an impetus
of what was to follow. The date of the new revival is debatable — generally
conceded to be 1914 or 1920. Some critics argue that there is no revival.
It has been the writer's aim, however, to point out those things that in-
dicate a revival. The present group of writers, themselves, offer the
best indication. Realism characterizes the works of Erskine Caldwell,
William Faulkner, and, to some extent, Thomas Wolfe. Faulkner and Cald-
well are concerned chiefly with the lower strata of Southern society, with
tenant farming — a continuity of the old plantation — usually the founda-
tion of their plots. _Tobacco Road_ offers a typical example of the effect
of tenant farming, portrayed by Caldwell. _Stark Young's So Red the Rose_,
following somewhat in the Page tradition, portrays only the classes that
inhabited ante-bellum Mississippi. _Rawlings' The Yearling_ sticks closely
to the backwoodsmen of Florida. There are many other Southern novelists
who now enjoy prominence, among whom are DuBose Heyward, Julia Peterkin,
Margaret Mitchell, and T. S. Stribling. Although they all portray their
characters with much realism, the unfortunate middle class still suffers
from want of attention. While Basso, Glasgow, and Stribling approach
the problem of the middle class, _Tobacco Road_ is certainly a long road
leading to _So Red the Rose_ — and a road that is practically untravelled.
From the aristocrats of the romanticists to the lower classes of the realists,
there has yet been no one to write the 'great Southern novel' of the middle
class. Caldwell, today, is as one-sided in depicting the lower class as
Page was in depicting the aristocrats. Such an omission is to be lamented when one remembers that the part does not make the whole. The whole of the Southern region is yet to be presented by fiction.

In the South's fertile literary material, the Negro is one of the most popularly used subjects. It has been shown that in the past the Negro was displayed only as a complement of the rich planters. The treatment of the Negro in modern fiction of the South will be revealed by the several studies that are now being made on that subject. This study, like Southern fiction, presents only one part of the picture. For the whole picture that modern fiction of the South displays, one must examine the various theses treating this subject in different states. The writer is concerned chiefly with South Carolina.

South Carolina, because of its social and historical background, offers fertile soil for the analysis of the treatment of the Negro in modern American fiction. Her heritage is a series of superlatives in which the Negro plays a basic part; during her Golden Reign of Aristocracy, she was most complacent; the hot-bed of session, this same state could be

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1 It is to be feared that most ante-bellum Carolinians, Charleston was the centre of the universe. They swore by St. Michael's Church, by the statue of Pitt, by the Orphan House, and by the old Broad Street Theatre. They were proud of their Library, of their Battery, of their beautiful harbor . . . . Very stately gentlemen they were, these distinguished Carolinians. Courtesy sat upon them like a well-fitting garment, albeit they preserved an air of coldness and reserve, reminding one of their unsociable houses which rose behind walls shutting in beautiful gardens, which it would have been a sacrilege for the public to enjoy . . . . It was far more likely that one would become proud and sedate like these South Carolinians than that he would succeed in disturbing their self-satisfied quiescence . . . . This complacency, this lack of ambition, is a chief characteristic of the little State and its people.


branded easily the most bitter rebel of the Civil War; and with a majority Negro population, she was the spoils for the victors of slavery during the Reconstruction period.

To clarify the interpretation of the novels to be discussed in the following chapters of this thesis — novels by and about South Carolinians — a closer study of the historical background of South Carolina will be presented.

In the year 1663 the illustrious King Charles II granted to eight Lords a tract of land stretching "along the coast from the 29th parallel to 30°30' and westward from 'sea to sea". These eight men, the Earl of Clarendon, Lord Chancellor; Anthony Ashley Cooper, later the Earl of Shaftesbury; General George Monk, the Duke of Albemarle; Lord John Berkeley, Lord Craven, Sir George Carteret, Sir John Colleton, and Sir William Berkeley, were given absolute sovereignty over this grant of land "between the southern frontier of Virginia and Spanish Florida". The first settlement

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1 One of the most significant days in our history is December 20, 1860 — the day the South Carolina convention took action at Charleston .... Before nightfall that day it passed an Ordinance of Secession which formally separated South Carolina from her sister states and proclaimed her an independent republic." N. W. Stephenson, A History of the American People (New York, 1934), pp. 678-79.

2 Not only was South Carolina the first state to secede from the Union, but she was also the first to commence firing, thus beginning the War of the Rebellion. It is needless to state that the question of Negro slavery was the fundamental cause of the War.

3 South Carolina has always been pointed to as the typical Reconstruction state.... In the years from 1868-1876, in a state where blacks outnumbered whites, the will of the mass of black labor, modified by their own and other leaders and dimmed by ignorance, inexperience, and uncertainty, dictated the form and methods of government." W. E. B. Du Bois, "The Black Proletariat in South Carolina" from Black Reconstruction (New York, 1935), p. 381


4 Ibid.
was made on the Chowan River by discontented migrants from Virginia. In 1670 a group of adventurous planters from Barbados arrived on Ashley River, some hundred miles south of the earlier settlement. After ten years the Barbados planters removed to the present site of Charleston. The two widely separated settlements later developed into North and South Carolina.

The Lords Proprietors made a vain attempt to set up and enforce a fantastically elaborate constitution known as "The Fundamental Constitutions of Carolina", written by the famous British philosopher, John Locke. Despite the impracticality of these basic laws and the repeated rejections of them by the colonists, the joint-proprietors clung to them for forty years. Thereafter they lapsed into passiveness and the progress of settlement was allowed to take whatever course it might. Although the document was unsuccessful, two factors outlined by it — a government feudal in character and a landed aristocracy — developed to be the fundamental structure of the South Carolina government.

The Negro comes early to South Carolina, and comes in increasing numbers through many years. Physically, he was naturally adapted to the life in the low-lands, and because of its geographical location and natural resources, South Carolina offered a ready home for the system of slavery. Some of the early Barbadians, coming from a place in which slaves were numerous, perhaps carried slaves with them to Carolina. However, the early means of livelihood, such as Indian trading, lumbering, and miscellaneous farming gave no distinct occasion for employing Negroes. But after the discovery of rice as a staple resource from which prosperity might be won, slaves were imported rapidly, "first from Barbados, and

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their status received official confirmation in 1682. 1 During the rest of the colonial period the production of rice advanced, and the slave population increased. "By 1720 the number had increased to 12,000, the white people numbering only 9,000." 2 The Negro population continued to exceed the white by such a great margin that far-sighted politicians began to fear slave insurrections and the general outcome of the situation. Hence, in 1740 a prohibitive duty larger than that passed by previous legislature was placed upon Negroes imported into the province. 3

Meanwhile the rule of the Lords Proprietors had been renounced; South Carolina had become, in 1719, a Crown Colony and had separated politically from her northern sister. Indigo had been introduced as a supplementary staple, and with rice and indigo culture, Negro slave labor became a most desirable asset to South Carolina. Thus, by the sweat of the Negro's toil, the great plantations were made, and the Golden Age of the Low-Country began.

In South Carolina, as in Virginia, where aristocracy reigned supreme, the old plantation was at its height. One can visualize

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a great mansion; exquisitely gowned ladies and courtly gentlemen moving with easy grace upon the broad veranda behind stately columns; surrounding the yard an almost limitless stretch of white cotton; darkies singingly at work in the fields; negro quarters, off one side, around which little pickaninnies gambled in glad frolic... 4

Old Charleston — "where culture blooms as brilliantly as do the azaleas —

1Benjamin Griffith Brawley, A Short History of the American Negro (New York, 1913), p. 11.
2Ibid.
3Ibid., p. 12.
where the Past lives on in the Present . . . And the fine art of living is the great heritage of her people—was, at one time, the most outstanding city of the old South. Here, the aristocratic planter of the low-country had his town home, where he resided during the social season. It was the home of the first department store in America to which "the great ladies of the old South" came from many miles about "to buy treasures in lace and the like which were imported from far corners of the world." It was here that in 1735, the first grand opera in America was produced. Also, it was old Charleston in which "the first theatre building in America and . . . the earliest theatrical companies in the Colonies" appeared. Thus thrived Charleston, the glory of the old South, until the great catastrophe of 1861-65, after which she was shattered, broken, and robbed of her glamour.

Perhaps the most vivid picture of modern Charleston is given by Edward Twig in his article "Charleston: the Great Myth." According to him Charleston had its day—a brilliant, magnificent day. All that is left of that day are a few mansions, complete with Adams doorways and walled gardens and the memories of another age . . . . There is no such place as the utterly beautiful, charming, gracious old city that the romantics, the wishful thinkers, the fabulists say there is.

Charleston is "not antique—just old!:

She is like an old woman who has lived too long, disfigured with age, forever dying, yet always still alive. Actually, here is a kind of life beyond the grave. Charleston at midnight is an eerie place.

Though before the war, to speak of Charleston was to speak of

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5 Ibid.
South Carolina, Charleston now has no such monopoly of prestige upon the State. Unfortunately, South Carolina has failed grievously to keep pace with other progressive states in the South. It must be thought of now as it was before the war — Up-country and Low-country. Whereas the Up-country was barely known to exist before the war, since that time there has been a turn in its history. Because of its progress in industrialism, the Up-country offers the most prominent signs of a cultural awakening in South Carolina. However, Charleston does offer the Poetry Society group for an example of a literary revival.

Until recently, fiction in South Carolina was practically non-existent. William Gilmore Simms is the only writer of prominence during the old South of which the state can boast. Although Simms is given by critics a place of honor among the American novelists, he was not lauded by his State nor readily accepted by Charleston society because he suffered the misfortune of being born out of the ruling class of aristocratic Charleston. On the other hand, Legare, who has not received Simms’s national recognition, was highly favored because of his aristocratic birth. Simms founded and edited several magazines, was greatly interested in promising young writers, and produced "almost a hundred books of prose and poetry." He is probably most remembered for his *Yemassee*. The Cabin

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1 Greenville is one of the most outstanding industrial small towns in the South today.

2 Augustus Baldwin Longstreet, also of national repute, is claimed for South Carolina by Wauchope. He gives three reasons for the State’s claim: "He Longstreet himself asserted that he was born in South Carolina; he resided in this State for many years; and much of his literary work was either written here or deals with South Carolina scenes, incidents, and characters, and was inspired by them." George Armstrong Wauchope, *The Writers of South Carolina* (South Carolina), p. 57.

3 Virginia Demsey, *op. cit.*, p. 130.
and the Wigwam (1884), like Longstreet’s Georgia Scenes, was out of its
time and unpopular because of its bits of realism. The treatment of the
Negro in Simms’s works, except for The Cabin and the Wigwam, conforms to
that of his romantic contemporaries, previously discussed.

There were many other ante-bellum South Carolina novelists of minor
repute, among whom were Susan Pettigrew King and Henry Junius Nott.¹

No other one of the United States has a richer, fuller, or more
romantic literary background than South Carolina. Contemporary writers
of that State are realizing the fact, thus, for the first time in its
history, South Carolina is one of the foremost states in southern fiction.
One of the most popular subjects of this fiction is the Negro. Perhaps
more than in any other state, writers in South Carolina have devoted books,
almost in their entirety, to the Negro, and the treatment of him is exact-
ly reversed from that of older fiction, the white man being as much in the
background and as incidentally included now as the Negro was then. The
treatment of the Negro in modern South Carolina fiction may be divided
into two phases — the plantation Negro, which includes the rich field
of folklore, and the Negro in other settings. To these two major divi-
sions, the following chapters will be devoted.

CHAPTER II

THE PLANTATION NEGRO — TRADITIONAL AND REALISTIC

Part I

Folk Material

Because of its Sea Islands, densely populated with Negroes from earliest settlement, the "Old Palmetto State" is rich in folklore, which has been utilized greatly in literature by Julia Peterkin, Ambrose E. Gonzales, Samuel Gaillard Stoney and Gertrude Shelby, E.C. L. Adams, and to some extent by DuBose Heyward and L. M. Alexander. The land and people of these islands have won in fiction national renown for these writers, of whom Mrs. Peterkin is considered the greatest fictional exponent of the Gullah people in South Carolina. Chief among these islands is St. Helena, which, for the purpose of background support will be considered at some length.

About midway between Charleston and Savannah lies St. Helena Island — a mere spectre of the ante-bellum home of some of the South's proudest aristocrats — whose isolation has left its present Negro inhabitants essentially unchanged. Slaves were brought to the Island by early settlers from Barbadoes. The rise of indigo

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1 Scarlet Sister Mary (1928) won for Mrs. Peterkin the Pulitzer Prize, and Mrs. Alexander's Candy (1934) won the ten thousand-dollar Dodd-Mead Competitive Prize.
as a staple brought, because of its poisonous nature and difficult cultivation, an increasing number of slaves to St. Helena and thus established the plantation system. Later, when indigo was supplanted by sea-island cotton, an even greater importation of slaves resulted, making for the unequal balance in white and black population which has lasted until this day, and the plantation system was made secure for many years following.

The prosperity of the Island, growing out of the plantation system, made it an ideal haven for social stratification. At the top of the scale were the aristocratic planters who owned from one to two hundred slaves; next were holders of much smaller numbers; then came the white managers and overseers, hired by the plantation owners; next came the poor whites, descendants from indentured servants, considered "po' white trash" by the slave as well as by the aristocrats; and, finally, at the bottom of the scale, there were the slaves. This caste system was adopted by the slaves themselves: thrown in direct contact with the masters and mistresses of the plantation, the house servants mimicked their ways and considered themselves the "quality" Negro; the mechanics and occasional foremen who were put in charge of the field hands were also in this upper class, as well as any who, through their superior intellect and dominant personalities, automatically became leaders; at the bottom of their scale were the "low blood fiel' hants". Because of indirect supervision, resulting from large slaveholdings, and long periods of absentee leadership, resulting from the unhealthy climate, the St. Helena Island Negroes were exposed to little white culture. Also, there was little contact with Negroes on neighboring plantations. Hence in this

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1Planters learned early to give certain trusted Negroes limited authority over others so that with a change of overseers the plantation routine might be disturbed as little as possible. On the large plantations, the foreman also trained newly imported Negroes and was responsible for their behavior.
1 isolated region, the slaves remained more stationary in their African
customs and speech than those on Up-country or more distant plantations
where smallness made for closer contact with advanced culture.

The extent of interference in the domestic life of the slave varied
with the attitudes and interests of the plantation owner. A Charleston
planter once stated: "We don't care what they do when their tasks are over-
we lose sight of them till the next day. The men may have, for instance,
as many wives as they please, so long as they do not quarrel about such
matters." Such an attitude places a new light upon the general attitude
that the Negro is immoral, especially when one stops to think that in Africa,
polygamy was a custom of marriage. An engagement consisted in the slave's
permission from the master to marry a girl, after which, in many cases, the
ceremony was performed by the planter himself. A wedding was an occasion
for much celebration. Any violation of the marriage vows was no cause for
disgrace, unless, as in some cases, punishment might be enforced by the
master or the church. However, "marriages were often faithfully adhered
to during life." Illegitimacy was not banned. In fact, many slave-
owners often encouraged mating for financial purposes.

In the family life of the slaves, the woman generally ruled as
the head of the house: she issued the weekly allowances of rations
given by the master; she received the cloth and did the sewing for the

\[1\text{St. Helena is a barrier from the Atlantic for two other large islands,}
and the Island itself is cut up into various small islands by the broad tidal
creeks which interlace it . . . . Shut off from contact with the outside world}
\]
\[\text{The slaves were thus unfamiliar with many of the cultural traits of the}
\]
\[\text{whites which had sprung up since their own forebears had become "tamed."}
\]
\[\text{Quinn Griffis Johnson, } \text{A Social History of the Sea Islands} \text{(Chapel Hill, 1930),}
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p. 129.

\[\text{\textit{Ibid.}, pp. 131-32.}\]

\[\text{\textit{Ibid.}, p. 134.}\]
for the family, which fact made the husband dependent upon her for even a
new suit; whatever money there might be was obtained from products of her
thrifty endeavours, and was hers to use as she thought necessary; the master
donated the cabin to her; the children were recorded as hers — in every
respect, the woman, during the plantation regime, was given precedence over
the man. Children were rigidly disciplined, in order that they might not
grow up to be "no-manners", and cared for either by the mother or, if she
were in the field, by a "sober old matron in charge of the . . . shining
urchins, collected together in a house near the center of the village."1

The slave's leisure time was spent primarily fishing, tending per-
sonal small crops, singing and dancing. Holidays on St. Helena Island
consisted in "Saturday afternoon and all of Sunday, three days at Christ-
mas, and an occasional day at the end of a hard season of work."2

"Praise Houses" were the sites of most plantation religious weekly
meetings. When these were not provided by the master, services were held
in the leader's cabin. After several prayers and songs, benches were
pushed back and all participated in the "shout". The "shout" was a sort
of "informal dance" which provided a recreational and spiritual outlet at
the same time. Its distinction from the dance lay in the forbiddance of
crossing the feet; yet, it was not wholly devotional, in that it was not
begun until after the end of the services. Frequently, moaning and wall-
ing persisted many hours. "Seeking" was a religious custom of a highly
fabulous nature, practiced in excess, the purpose of which was to lead
to a very impressive conversion. A few small churches existed, and white
teachers organized for the slaves a religious life based "largely upon the

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1 Ibid., pp. 135-38.

2 Ibid., p. 144.
same plan as their own. The only education permitted on the plantation was a limited teaching of the Bible in terms of the slave’s everyday life. Hence, the slaves were ignorant and contented in their ignorance.

Such were the customs and mores of the plantation slave on St. Helena Island. By the outbreak of the Civil War, a definite culture had developed there, rooted deeply in the plantation tradition, kept by isolation before the war, and since preserved by isolation. In 1862 Edward L. Pierce saw in the Negroes there “a deterioration from their native manhood . . . involving a physical degeneracy” counter to the laws of nature. However, he soon found “many features in their life and character” that warranted the Government’s making of them “a happy, industrious law-abiding people” if it would have the courage and patience to do so. With money they had earned by free labor after emancipation, many Negroes purchased land (often belonging to their former masters) which was confiscated by the Government in 1862 and sold at drastically low prices. Knowing no other means of sustenance, the freedmen set out tilling the soil, modelling their procedure after the method learned during slavery. Thus the transition from slavery to freedom effected little change in the daily life of the Negroes on St. Helena Island.

The year 1927 witnessed the construction of a bridge which connected St. Helena Island with the mainland, and which, together with a new highway leading into Beaufort, removed all barriers of isolation. It is true that by this time, the passage of years had brought changes, but

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1 Ibid., p. 134.

2 Ibid., pp. 127, 152-64.
... the people in their isolation were slow to give up their traditions. Their folk-ways were the outgrowth of slavery; their songs, the ones they had sung in bondage; their speech, the English their ancestors had learned when they were "tamed".  

Here existed a group of "good-natured, contented people, happy in their freedom, ignorant in their isolation, suspicious of all "foreigners" but gentle and courteous when once this suspicion had been allayed."  

The most vital factor in the introduction of new culture on the Island since the Civil War has been Penn Normal Industrial and Agricultural School. The School is interested in the welfare of the entire community, thus through its influence, better homes have appeared, better health habits have been observed, moral problems have been treated, and adults as well as children have been exposed to education. The family, in structure, however, has remained much the same as it was during the plantation regime. There have been "no innovations in the form of marriage"; the fallacious and "artificially controlled monogamy", a substitute for the African tribal marriage, which persisted during slavery, had a great affect upon the individual's attitude toward the institution. Little value is placed upon it, hence the rate of illegitimacy has remained high. Rigid child discipline is still practiced. Methods of religious worship have not changed; though churches have been organised, "praise houses" remain the local units of worship. Perhaps the most interesting observation made in reference to religion is the relation of religion and crime. The occasional disputes that arise here are settled in the "praise house", where "restitution is the keynote of the decision". Rarely is there cause for the secular law, 

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1 T. J. Hesler, Jr., *Black Yeomanry* (New York, 1930), p. 47.  
known to them as the "unjust law", to intervene. There is little serious crime. This fact will doubtless startle those who maintain that the Negro possesses innate criminal tendencies.

The Islanders' lack of ambition, lack of accumulated savings, so essential to progress, and laxity of morals are three outstanding indications of their failure to adapt themselves to American standards. Behind their lack of accumulated wealth is the effect of the disastrous storm of 1893, the advent of the apple weevil in 1919, and the recent failure of a Beaufort bank. Behind all these three factors has been the disadvantage of isolation — an isolation which has resulted in what Mr. Wooten found there in 1927:

_Africa is here._ Physical traits, and doubtless many subtler cultural traits, are African. Down the road from the house goes a straight-backed girl balancing a bucket of water on her head with a natural grace possible only to Africans.

_Old England and early America are here in the songs and dialect which fall so strangely on the ear, in the ox-drawn, two-wheeled carts which we so frequently pass, in the yeoman culture of small plots of land with its independent life not fashioned after a money economy._ Long arms of the past reach down through tradition to shape the life of the people today.

In the opinion of some, such a lengthy historical background of the Sea Island culture may appear irrelevant. But in view of the fact that such criticisms as the following prevail —

_These sketches [Congaree Sketches] . . . however slight, are revelatory of the negro mind, and all of them delightful in their unsophistication._

— Saturday Review of Literature, June 25, 1927.

_Bright Skin_ — " . . . a story of negro life and manners in

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1. T. J. Wooten, Jr., op. cit., p. 238.
2. Ibid., pp. 251-52.
3. Ibid., p. 9.
the Southern States today..."

—New Republic, December 26, 1928.

"Black April..." Mrs. Peterkin's rich store of understanding knowledge of the Negro shows itself on every page..."

—Saturday Review of Literature, March 19, 1927.

In view of this fact, the writer firmly believes it necessary to emphasize the uniqueness of these particular people who furnish the subject-matter for the folk material treated in this study. Despite the fact that the authors themselves state very clearly, in one place or another, that they are writing about the Sea Island Negro of South Carolina, such criticisms as those cited above persist. The foregoing historical background is not fictional; rather, it is based on recent scientific research made by scholars of the Social Science Research Council of North Carolina and the Columbia University Council for Research in the Social Sciences. A research made by such scholarly men who experimented in the laboratory of St. Helena Island itself is taken to be valid.

In this research the writer has found the plantation Negro to be the basis of all the stories dealing with folk material. Just how these Negroes adhere to or depart from the traditional concept, the characters themselves will show. In recapitulating, one remembers the plantation Negro to be intuitive, inferior, emotional, rather than rational, and wholly dependent upon the white man; at his best, he was loyal to his master; at his worst, he was savage.

This research has been compiled in the following three volumes:
In her fiction, "Blue Brook Plantation" takes the name of Mrs. Peterkin's own 2,000 acre plantation "Lang Syne", located near Motte, South Carolina, on which there dwell about 135 people. These same people are the ones she writes about on the "Blue Brook Plantation" of fiction. Through all of her novels run the same theme, to a great extent, the same names, and always the same people. In each of her novels there is to be found the one strong male character, standing out preeminently; a mixture of the traditional and the realistic. Traditionally, he is intuitive; often born with second sight; though he shows few of the other traits of emotionality, he cannot restrain the strong urge of sex, thus having several illegitimate children. When driven by strong outside pressure he also yields to overt action. He is usually one of the "quality folks", having descended from house servants or foremen, sometimes himself being a foreman. In Green Thursday, a series of connected short stories and first of Mrs. Peterkin's works to appear, this strong man is Kildee; in Black April, next on her list, he is April; in Scarlet Sister Mary, June stands out, and in Bright Skin, it is Wes.

Kildee, though kind-hearted and possessed of many admirable traits, finds it difficult to combat a lustful desire for Missie:

She was so little — so tender — so trustful. Could he ruin her because she was what he loved best? Love was a disease. It was wilting all the joy in her — in himself. It was a poison that would burn and shrivel — that would change her clean freshness to shame.

This desire had lingered over a period of years. Missie had been taken into the home of Kildee and hose when she was a little waif. From the very beginning Missie and Kildee were attracted to each other in what seemed a father-daughter relationship. As the girl grew older, this attraction grew into a fervent love on the part of

1Julia Peterkin, Green Thursday (New York, 1929), p. 137.
both. She is still quite young when Mrs. Petarkin allows Kildee to yield to his desire:

What was he to do — What?
He was caught in a trap. Caught fast. How could he ever get loose? Deep down in his heart, did he want to get loose? He was not sure . . . .

From the meeting in the quarters, Kildee heard strains of "I'm So Glad, Trouble Won't Last Always".

Something in his heart answered the singers,
"Joy can't last' always needer. You sing about trouble,
I'm gwine take one joy whilst I kin."²

Although Kildee, in the end yields to temptation, this lack of restraint differs from that of the traditional plantation Negro in that, by stifling his desire, Kildee gives evidence of applying thought to the issue. In the fiction of the romanticists, he would have yielded readily and without thought.

If Kildee were unable to control his sex desire, he suffered no such emotional weakness with reference to religion. Kildee was a "sinner." He heeded not the bad-luck sign of plowing on "Green Thursday" — the day of Christ's Ascension, but he did have other 'signs'. Seeing the new moon "through trees" meant another month of bad luck for him. When a rooster stole into the house and pecked out the eyes of his little Babby Sis, Kildee remembered ". . . how the new moon hid behind the chinaberry tree last night. Bad luck had come. Yes."³

April conforms greatly to the traditional immoral Negro. He differs from Kildee in that he shows no attempt to restrain his

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¹Ibid., p. 188.
²Ibid.
³Ibid., pp. 104, 114.
sexual desires. With no thought of virtue, April enjoys the intimacy of many women. Himself an illegitimate child, April has a far greater number of "outside chillen" than "yard chillen." Zeda reminds him that

"Sherry's you own, an' who is Breeze, but you own? Ev'body knows dat. It's a wonder somebody ain't cut out you' throat long time ago. If you wa'n't so lucky you'd 'a' been in hell wid some o' dem women you sent dare."

April had been "born wid a caul over his face", therefore he was "blessed with second sight": "He'd always be able to see things that stay hidden from other people. Hants and spirits and plateyes and ghosts, Things to come and things long gone would all walk clear before him . . . . " He is a great fighter, in one instance, approaching the savage. In an argument with Sherry, April says

If you wanted to butt somebody, whyn' you come try my head...?

Sherry's eyes glared, his head crouched between his shoulders, he came forward with a rush. But April jerked him clear up off his feet, and his big head came down on Sherry's forehead with a butt that brought the blood streaming from both men's nostrils.

June is no exception from the other strong men in succumbing to the sex urge. After July, his brother, had deserted Mary and had shown no intention of returning, June and Mary lived together unmarried until he went away. Mary gave birth to a child for him.

Wes is another April, differing only in name. He conforms to the traditional treatment in the same respect as does April.

In each of Julia Peterkin's novels, there is to be found also the

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1Julia Peterkin, Black April (Indianapolis, 1927), pp. 256-67.
2Ibid., p. 29.
3Ibid., p. 213.
the same immoral female character. In Green Thursday, it is Mary:

... since Bully left, children had come to Mary just the same.

She always laughed and said: "My chillen daddy ain' nobody een particular." 1

In Black April, it is Zeda. Big Sue says of her:

Zeda's got ten head o' livin' chillen an' no two is got de same daddy. Zeda don't like to see no other 'wan hab no man.

Zeda wants 'em all. All!

"It's a wonder some 'wan ain' out Zeda wide open befo' now ... ." 2

In Scarlet Sister Mary, it is the Mary, from whom the title of the book is taken. Here, is the Mary of "ten scarlet stripes", nine of which were for her nine children "born in sin", and the other one was for the "sin child" of her daughter for whom she set the example. Here, is the Mary whose first child was born "right there in the middle of the road":

God must have blessed her with the same wisdom he gave to beasts, who know well when the time comes to birth their young, and ... go off alone without a word and struggle with their labor as best they can ... ." 3

In Bright Skin, Cun Jule "birthed a whole litter of chillen widout a piece o' husband."

These characters, though the most outstanding, are typical of other 'scarlet' women found in Mrs. Peterkin's novels. They all adhere to the traditional conception that the Negro is innately immoral. But could these characters, here as in the fiction of the romanticists, who were the inheritants of centuries of African culture — one in which marriage differed from the Anglo-Saxon custom — could they be branded

1Green Thursday, p. 135.
2Black April, p. 72.
3Julia Peterkin, Scarlet Sister Mary (Indianapolis, 1928), p. 76.
as immoral? By which standard should their morality be judged, centuries of African culture or a few generations of white culture? Even in America, many marriages were performed by mere plantation owners, who had no official authority to administer an orthodox ceremony simply because they were planters. If these marriages were illegal, would not all the children born in such cases be also illegitimate? In the light of their African heritage, such actions as those practiced by these characters should not be termed immoral. These people simply did not possess the virtues of American culture, and were therefore immoral in a culture forced upon them and one which they had not yet wholly adopted.

The traditional primitive Negro is also found in each of Mrs. Peterkin’s works. There invariably appears a child “born with second sight”. There is always a “Daddy Cudjoe”, the “Conjure Doctor”, a “Maum Hannah” who “catches chillen”, an “Uncle Isaac” and an “Uncle Bill” to supply the superstition. Although superstition soars in each book, it overwhelmingly abounds in Black April. Seemingly afraid that she will omit some 'sign', Mrs. Peterkin crowds almost every page of the book with superstition. Ignorance was coupled with it, but to these characters, "magic" was education itself:

Lijah had never liked books . . . . He'd have made a good conjure doctor. Once he put some of his own hair in a hole in a tree, and it cured his sprained ankle. He put an elder stalk for Maum Hannah's asthma, and tied it by the neck and hung it up in the loft, and it cured her, too. For a while, before he ran away, he saved all his toe-nails and finger-nails to put in his coffin, but that was so much trouble he quit after he got one little bottle full. It takes a lot of learning to be a good conjure doctor, for there's black magic as well as white. Magic can save as well as kill. Breeze ought either to pray now or start learning magic.  

1 Black April, p. 123.
Their ignorance of scientific medical attention was rooted in "magic."

They need not resort to the white man's medicine because

Black people ruled sickness with magic, but white people got sick and died. White people leave money to their children, but black people leave signs.

"A share ground and filed and put under a bed is the best thing in the world to cut birth-pains," but this was not necessary when Maum Hannah "caught chillen" because she had

... a string of charm beads their old grandmother had brought all the way from Africa when she came on a slave ship. They and the charm words that ruled them were left in Maum Hannah's hands. Ever since he was a boy, living on Blue Brook, he had heard people say that those beads had never failed to help a woman birth a child safely. No matter how it came, head foremost, foot foremost, or hand foremost; it was all the same when those charm beads got to working."

An illegitimate child was valuable because "a child that has never looked on his daddy's face can cure sickness better than any medicine. Just with a touch of the hand, too."

Children were born, and people died with the "turn of the tide". It was unlucky to start a new fire with a match:

"We had luck for a fire to die in a house and this fire had never gone out altogether since it was first started by Maum Hannah's great-grandpa, who was brought from across the sea to be a slave."

Everyone believed in ghosts. In Bright Skin, Ana Fan said:

Everytime I go to Gun Hester's when the moon is young, I spends half my time bowin' to spirits on de avenue tellin' em, 'Good evening, suh! Good evening, ma'am'. Same like I speaks to people."

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1 Ibid., p. 125.
2 Ibid., pp. 18-19.
3 Ibid., p. 31.
4 Ibid., p. 112.
5 Bright Skin, p. 107.
Such signs and superstitions are typical of those found in all of the Peterkin novels.

Religion, innate philosophy, an observation of nature and of man-kind are all kaleidoscopic parts that contribute to the symmetrical whole of the Negro's primitive nature. The traditionalists recognized a philosophical trait in the Negro, but attributed it to his primitiveness. Because the Negro could not think independently, could not reason, this innate philosophical trait was purely intuitive. In the novels of Mrs. Peterkin, this primitiveness is emphasized repeatedly. It is interesting to note that for these primitive people, as for the most educated, behind the Universe is God:

How do things buried deep know when the moon changes? Seed in the ground know. The water in the river knows. The weather knows. All know more than men. Mam Hannah said Jesus tells His children a lot of things.  

When asked how he was able to tell what hour of the day it was by glancing at the sun, Sherry attributed his ability to nature:

. . . there were many other ways to tell; the tide runs true, rain or shine, morning-glories and lots of other flowers open and close by the time. . . . Birds change their songs with the turn of the afternoon . . . .

. . . "She'll." Uncle Bill declared. "If you watch things close, you'll git wise. Wise?" . . . ?

Though characterized as primitive, the following prayer which is likened to the life of man bears the same thought as does some of the greatest poetry:

De life ob a man is same lak de pat' ob de sun.
Een de mornin' e rise up bright een de east —
Ebying look shine an' beautiful.
'E soon sta't plawin' e furrow 'cross de element
ob' de sky.

1 Green Thursday, p. 55.

2 Black April, pp. 157-58.
"E strong, e krabe —
When de cloud come stan' een 'e way, 'e fight e.
E knock em — e ain' fai'd;
De lightin' flash em e han'.
Tell de cloud fall down een rain.

But de time haffer come een 'e stren't' gwine fail.
E ceasted 'em climbin' higher.
'E sta't fe' 'rap todes de wes'.
'E meen tell de sky tu'n red.
But 'e haffer go to 'e res'.

'E sink.
'E gone . . . 1

Of course ignorance, a fundamental characteristic of primitiveness,
has a place in the novels under treatment. A general reference was made
to it in connection with superstition. It is connected with superstitions:

"I eat a piece o'pessum what was kinder spoilt fo' my
supper last night, an' I ain' been hardly able to travel
all day. Spoilt viestuals never did set right in my stomach,
somewhere. I don' know how come so."

As Uncle Bill studied, his eyes snapped. "Spoilt pessum
meat wouldn' hurt nobody. You looks to me like you's con-
jured. You 's eyes looks strainin'. You must 'a' crossed
somebody dat Sunday."2

But it also commands a place here on the basis of sheer ignorance; when
Cricket wrote back home for a divorce from Blue, no one around knew the
meaning of the word. Later, when Cricket, herself came, Blue asked

"What's a desvace, Cricket?"
Her eyes widened with surprise.
"You don't know what a desvace is?"
"Not exactly. Gun Andrew thought it might be a
gold cup or either silk cloth for a dress."3

The treatment of the emotionality and lack of restraint of the
traditional Negro is adhered to in the Peterkin novels in ways other
than sex. Her characters display as much emotionality in religion

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1. Green Thursday, pp. 3-73.
2. Julia Peterkin, Black April, p. 55.
as did the Negroes of ante-bellum and post-war fiction. The "shout" is
carried on in all of her works. In *Scarlet Sister Mary*.

Maum Lou, the weakest frailest soul in the room, had
began the shouting. With short, shuffling, rocking steps she
eased into the center of the room. Her arms were bent at the
elbow, her veined old hands hung limp from her stiff wrists,
"Juble-lee" her old lips quivered. Tears shone in her eyes, her
joy was keen as grief.¹

After Rose, in *Green Thursday*, had shouted to her satisfaction, she ex-
claimed, putting her "thick wet body as she said it": "I deela' to Gawd,
I ain' got a dry t'read on." "But you she is shout nice, Con Rose,"
Andrew assured her politely.² Having recently returned from a trip
to Africa, a preacher called himself "Reverend Africa". Now, when he
walks in the church, "de spirit comes wid en so strong people falls down
and rolls on de floor. Day had to wrap quilts around de posts in de
church to keep en from breakin day arms and legs", Bina tells Con
Fred. Bina has so much religion that she "ain' hardly slept dis whole
week".³ The characters' opinions on religion vary. In *Black April*,
Uncle Bill tells Big Sue that "Dat new preacher preaches dat de Great
I-Am is a nigger! Don' let en fool you, gal. Gawd id white. You'll
see it too when Judgment Day comes".⁴ Maum Hannah has decided that

"Hell ain' no hole . . . ! A hole would a been full long
time ago. A hole couldn' hold all de sinners! No! I tink
Hell must be a lake!" . . .

"Hell is a lake. A lake of fire. It is full of
sinners strugglin an' burnin now. Right now. Right down
under us in the ground."⁵

¹Julia Peterkin, *Scarlet Sister Mary*, p. 146.
²Julia Peterkin, *Green Thursday*, p. 77.
³Julia Peterkin, *Bright Skin*, p. 56
⁵Julia Peterkin, *Green Thursday*, pp.74-75.
Prayers, expressing their heavenly desires, sometime portray the sociological aspects of their lives. Daddy Gudjo prays:

"When I git to heab'n I wan' leddown an' res' tree weak. On a big white counterpane bed. Da's all I wan' do. Dis res' . . . .
"I don' wan' no gol' shoe, please, Suh — Shoe ober did bit my feet — Don' gi' me no ekra an' to-mattus soup fo' eat. Suh — I so lub alabber and sweet milk. An' honey an' white flour bread."

Superstition, of course, is blended in with their religion. Bina advised Com Fred to "put Reverend Africa's picture inside you hat. It might turn you hair black."

Emotionality was shown also in their grief:

A thin scream leaped from Aun Missie's throat, leading the way for others that followed with every breath. Her rigid arms stretched upward, her feet stamped the ground. "Oh, Jesus," she yelled. "Get out my way, Al-fred! I got to mourn, mourn, I tell you! I can' hold in no longer. Dat man in' fooled me, B fooled my Crisket!"

Fighting adds local color to the novels. The following scene is one of a homicide — all over a hog:

Like a flash they closed. Arms, fists, heads, bodies, whirled, staggered, fell rose. All efforts to pull them apart were useless. Leah was the first to waver. After an awful blow in the face her arms dropped. She stood still, then tilted back on her heels trying not to fall. As she struggled for breath her mouth stretched wide open, gasping as fish gasp out of water.

A traditional picture would be incomplete without theft: "Blue trembled with terror when he thought of his sins. He often lied to Aun Fan and he stole things from the store every time he had a chance."

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1 Julia Peterkin, *Green Thursday*, pp. 74-75.
2 Julia Peterkin, *Bright Skin*, p. 57.
3 Ibid., p. 268.
In a scene from *Scarlet Sister Mary*, a picture of contentment is shown: "All through the noon hours people lay flat on the warm earth, resting, turning up the soles of their lazy feet to the sun, that great friend of man, who not only gives light and food, but healings."

The advent of the bell weevil cast a shadow of sobriety over "Blue Brook Plantation", almost robbing the Negro of the traditional characteristics, laughter; but Big Sue finds a breeze an exception: "Son, I'm she glad you love to laugh. I love to laugh my own self." Her narrow eyes sparkled through her gold-rimmed spectacles and her wide loose lips spread across her face.

The traditional picture of the Negro's love for loud, conspicuous raiment is exemplified in the taste of Blue and Man'Jay. When he went to town, "Blue had meant to buy only a cigar, but he got a bottle-green box coat and peg-top purple pants, a blue shirt and a stick pin with a red stone." And when Man'Jay returned from Harlem, "Jesus himself could not have dressed finner than Man'Jay with a round black hat, a salt and pepper suit, and shiny black shoes . . . ."

When all of the parts presented by the treatment of the Negro in this traditional light are taken and fitted into a whole, one sees the picture of a ridiculously comical Negro, which is itself a traditional characteristic.

With plantation life as the setting, all of Mrs. Peterkin's novels conform greatly to the traditional plantation concept introduced first by

1Julia Peterkin, *Scarlet Sister Mary*, p. 75.
2Julia Peterkin, *Black April*, p. 44.
3Julia Peterkin, *Bright Skin*, p. 251.
Kennedy in *Swallow Barn* and glorified by Thomas Nelson Page and his contemporaries. However, though these novels follow, for the most part, the traditional concept in material, they are a complete departure in method of treatment. It is this treatment, which shall be discussed later in this chapter, that has won for Mrs. Peterkin wide acclaim as one of the leading writers of the new school of realism.

Mrs. L. M. Alexander's *Candy*, in many respects, reflects the novels of Mrs. Peterkin. All in all, however, the book is more sentimental in tone. The characters on "Kimesa Plantation" are, as a whole, less primitive than those on "Blue Brook Plantation", more diverse, more intelligent, and more adaptable to change — and, perhaps more modern. Certainly, they are more carefree. In *Candy* the same superstitions, and the same religious and moral elements as found in the works of Mrs. Peterkin prevail, though not to as great an extent. In making these comparisons, the writer has in mind not all of the books of Mrs. Peterkin (which would make for an unfair advantage), but the one which, in her opinion, is most like *Candy* — *Bright Skin*. One might think the statement "the book is more sentimental in tone" contradictory to the comparisons immediately following it; but it is not. Primarily, *Candy* deals with sociological changes based on the economic depression of a southern plantation owner, and of the South at large. The plot grows out of the Negroes' adjustment to, or failure to become reconciled to, these changes. The love that they have for the plantation and the way in which they are shown clinging to a past that is dead make for the thoroughly conventional, sentimental tone. Their love for the field in preference to an ambition for the advantages the city offers emphasizes their primitiveness. Despite this sentimentality, the book shows, in many ways, a departure from the traditional concept of the plantation Negro. First, however, let
us look at the traditional aspects.

Candy, from whom the book takes its name, is undoubtedly the most strongly drawn character. Following closely are Was and Sally. She is reminiscent, even in description, of a type found in the traditional plantation:

... the young woman flashed into view in a sky-blue frock and a gold-colored kerchief bound turbanwise about her head. She stepped lightly toward the clothesline, her long, bright eardrops swinging in merry unison with her care-free movements.

Her voice was easily musical; her big brown eyes were tender.¹

Though Candy has never been married, she has three different children by two different men. However, her philosophy of love and marriage tend to lessen the censure of her immorality. She "loves men" but she "loves 'em one at a time."² She said of herself:

"I loves 'em long as day treats me good. An' whilst I does love 'em nobody could love 'em me! . . .
"But when day treats me mean I ain' like 'em no mo'."³

Later, she tells Bob, whose love she will not return because of her cynicism:

"I is gone f'rom one to 'tether, but it was allus one at a time, an' I was boun' to day one . . . . I ain' never had but th'ee men in all my life but de las' one of dem th'ee kill my love . . . ."⁴

Candy is skeptical toward the marriage institution. In her opinion, "mar'yin don' settle nothin'. What can a man wid a little book de?"⁵

At the end of the story, Candy agrees to marry Bob simply because "de

¹ L. M. Alexander, Candy, pp. 406.
² Ibid., p. 30.
³ Ibid., pp. 42-43.
⁴ Ibid., p. 502.
⁵ Ibid., p. 301.
oh'ch say it sin to love an' not mar'y, an' I promise de Lawd dat de nex' time I loves a man I'll ma'y 'im. I ain' wunderstan' de Lawd, but Candy allus de what she way she will."  

Candy, philosophizing about the sex problem, is more like Kildee and possesses more emotional control than any of the "scarlet" women of Mrs. Peterkin's novels. However, since she does have illegitimate children and sundry love affairs, she, in this lack of restraint, is no different from the traditional immoral Negro. The unpleasant picture of the seduction and impregnation of Georgia Bell, Candy's young daughter, by Coon, Candy's very base and somewhat brutish sweetheart, is hard to erase from the mind.

Philosophy is supplied by Dan when he interprets, in his artless way, a statement made in reference to the forces behind the sale of Mimosa Plantation: "I guess it be like when de el' Savannah rises in de longrun's ... We don' stop to argy wid it. We gits out en its way."  

Superstition, also, is on the plantation. Granny's reaction to an approaching automobile is a mixture of superstition and ignorance that is sadly amusing:

"Oh, my Gawd!" she screamed mawreringly, in terror. "It's de devil! Henry's conjur done fall on me! Oh, my Gawd, hab mercy!" She scrambled to her feet, clutching at her green beads with one hand, and with the other fumbling nervously for her cane. She turned and scurried away with an energy born of her alarm, and was soon swallowed in the darkness.

When Granny died a few months later, obviously from old age, Aunt Jimsey reflected:

"Dey says she would 'a' lived a year longer of it hadn't been dat Henry put dat conjur on 'er, tellin' 'er he gwine bury 'er 'cross de word' when she die. It de conjur what kill 'er. . . ."

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2Ibid., p. 296.
3Ibid., pp. 25-26.
4Ibid., pp. 95-96.
A combination of ignorance and superstition is found also in the words of Candy:

"I'd sooner cut off my right han' dan tech dem ashes fe' de baby a mont' old. Bookie, f'om over de river, she was brash an' take up de ashes one day befo' de mont' was up, jus' one day, an' dat baby was dead in less'n a year."¹

William's fear of ghosts adds a note of humor to the story. An assembled group of Negroes always knew when William passed "the buryin' ground"; his song became uproarious.

In religion, as in sex, Candy offers the best example of emotionality. After a period of "seeking", Candy's conversion appears with all the color expected of one:

"It's come, oh, Lawd! It's come!"

Candy . . . was off, swinging down the aisle, waving her arms left, calling on the name of the Lord.

"De glory of de Lawd is all about me an' it's shinin' in my heart! Forgive me, Lawd, for all de sin I ever do! I loves ev'rybody. I loves ev'ry niggah, an' I don't hate no white man! I for-gives ev'rybody, for all day is ever done to me. I forgives you, Lawd, for all you is ever done to me, an' you she is hit me hard. You is made a gran' worl' right here on this plantation, Lawd, an' we is gwine live in it wid pure heartsl Oh, Glory be! Glory be! Glory be!"

She became uncontrollable . . . There never was such a hard "coming through" in the history of the Book.²

Later, however, after God "hadn't played fair" with her, Candy becomes somewhat rational:

"I tol' de Lawd, Rose, plain as anything, dat ef He would spare de little baby I would lead de new life an' do like ev'rybody day I oughter. An' I did.

. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .

' . . but He jes halfway answer me. He took Georgia Belle, an' now He 'spets me to go all de way wid him. It's 'fraid ef I ever sins agin He'll take de baby. Dey ain' no tellin' what He gwine do. He can be awful hard on folks when He take de notion. I can' figger de Lawd out, Rose."³

¹Ibid., p. 107.
²Ibid., pp. 182-85.
³Ibid., pp. 202-203.
Candy's loyalty and honesty are recognized by Little King who, though he states that he belongs to "every damn niggah on the place", entrusts the plantation keys to Candy only. To Aunt Jinye this implies that the rest of them are dishonest, and she voices her resentment:

"Little King ain' got no call to say anybody on dis plantation light-fingered. Mebbe sometime somebody take a little somep' cause dey knows Little King'd gib it to 'em anyhow ef dey ax 'im. Dat ain' stealin' . . . . ."\(^1\)

The Negroes here are carefree and, for the most part, satisfied with their easy-going life. Granny warns them that Little King's plantation is tremblin' in de balance', that something will soon have to be done about it, but Jim reminds her that "you ain' been bawn wid no Saul over yo' eyes, dat you can see things what ain' gwine happ'n. Dey ain' gwine be no trouble'."\(^2\) After more caution by old Granny, the Negroes grew tired of her foreboding words; "their inborn spirits could not be repressed. Sol began to twang his guitar and sing, in a bantering tone:

"I's livin' easy!
"I's livin' high!"\(^3\)

With reference to some love for the plantation and loyalty to the owner, Little King, are depicted so strongly that they overshadow signs of social unrest. Candy loves the place so dearly that she tells Bob,

"'I Wouldn' want no happier life dan to live right here in dis sabin wid you, long as I live'."\(^4\) When accused of thinking that she owned the plantation, Candy replied:

\(^1\)Ibid., p. 98.
\(^2\)Ibid., p. 19.
\(^3\)Ibid.
\(^4\)Ibid., p. 309.
"I knows I ain' own dis plantation, but Little King done
tel' me dat my cabin yonder, whah Granny lived, an'whah my mommy
was born, an' whah I was born, an' whah my little Georgia Belle
was born, is my home jes de same as ef my name was on de paper
in de Cour't House . . . ."

"Oh, I knows you loves dis ol' place all right," Dan
hastened to agree. "You loves it mos' better'n you loves folks,
seems like Coon an' Georgia Belle. An' when Candy do love, her
heart be so full hit jes slop over."  

When Sally and Jim went to New York for a visit, Sally, within two
weeks, was ready to return to Mimosa. Later, however, for financial
reasons, she was persuaded to return. Rose had been educated in the
city, but was contented to live at Mimosa for the rest of her days.
Candy could not be persuaded to leave.

He William couldn't understand Rose and Sally and Candy
at all. Sally had never been weaned from the old place.
She was saving every cent she could make so that she
would come back down here and buy a little farm of her
own.  

The sentimental love for the old plantation, glorified through Candy
at the end of the novel, is reminiscent of the pro-slavery writers.

Because of their similarity, and because of the present writer's
failure to secure all of their works, Gonzales, Adams, and Stoney and
Shelby will be grouped together. All their works discussed here are
folk tales in Gullah dialect.

The word "Gullah" applies not only to the dialect, but to the
people who speak it. The derivation of the word is as yet undeter-
mined, and has been the problem of much research. Out of this research,
two important theories have resulted. Professor Reed Smith of the

1 Ibid., p. 7.

2 Ibid., pp. 290-291.
University of South Carolina, advances the following theory:

Both the word Gullah and the Negroes so named came from the West Coast of Africa, but exactly where has not been agreed upon. There are two widely-held conjectures. One is that Gullah is a shortened form of Angola, the name of an African West Coast district. . . .

A second, more probable suggestion is that Gullah comes from the name of the Liberian group of tribes known as the Golas . . . . These Golas were formerly numerous and powerful, but have now dwindled to a small tribe dwelling some thirty miles inland from Monrovia, the chief sea-port of Liberia.

A different point of view is held by John Bennett, author of *Madame Margot*, who made the first serious study of the subject, and whose long and careful devotion to it has made him accepted as an authority on the subject. He says:

The dialect of the West Coast, from which came these Gullah negroes was early commented upon as peculiarly harsh, quaking, flat in intonation, quick, clipped and peculiar even in Africa. Bosman, the Dutch sailor described its peculiar tenacity, and calls its speakers the "quaquas, because they gabble like geese."

Whatever the derivation of the word, it has come to be applied not exclusively to one type of Negro, but to all of the Negroes inhabiting the sea-islands of South Carolina and the coastal region in general. The dialect has been studied closely by Gonzales and Stoney and Shelby, and is represented by them in such dialects that make for a difficulty in reading. Here, as in the preceding books, the setting is always the plantation.

Gonzales adheres to the traditional pattern in that he is intent upon defending a lost cause. His work, as a whole, is an example of "southern Anecdotage." With the plantation Negroes in his books, all

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2. Ibid., p. 5.
3. Ibid.
is well; tragedies, hardships and suffering have no place in the lives of these happy, contented people whose only trouble is occasional marital irregularities. There is always the "wise old darky", the "dusky King Solomon", to represent the intuitive trait of the Negro. Accustomed to working in the open, he is an authority on the weather. Whenever the "Low-Country prognosticator" casts his eye at the clouds and the wind, and sniffs the moisture, grunts: 'e gwine we'nduh', it usually does. ¹

In Laugerre, there are always chicken thieves, whose "instinct . . . for their unlawful prey [is] too strong to be resisted." A fight can always be expected:

Two quarrelling African males will often bristle up and exchange epithets and challenges for hours without looking horns, but the women come to grips on slight provocation, especially if a masculine name is brought into the controversy, and by the time these ladies were disinterred, each had acquired somewhat of the wool and the raiment of the other. ²

Marriage means nothing, as the words of Laugerre so plainly tell:

"Don't you know that the marriage ceremony — "me hab him, en' him hab me" — in which most of you Niggers are held in 'the holy bonds of matrimony' is a slip-knot that wouldn't hold a buck rabbit — much less a buck Nigger?"³

The following passage, which gives a vivid picture of the Negroes in Laugerre, might very easily have been written by one of the romanticists themselves:

All the morning, groups of happy Negroes, the women decked out in bright calicoes, gingham and head-kerschiefs, had been passing along the road a few yards in front of the door, on their way to church, shouting and laughing and exchanging pleasantries, as only these childlike, irresponsible people can. However empty the larder, however bare the backs or limbs of their little children, however tortured with pain and trouble their kindred, the merry laugh or the joyous shout is always near the surface. ⁴

¹ Ambrose Gonzales, Laugerre (Columbia, 1924), p. 90.
² Ibid., p. 34.
³ Ibid., pp. 275-76.
⁴ Ibid., p. 44.
The Black Border, With Assop Along the Black Border, and Black Genesis, all contain a series of folk-lore stories which adhere to all of the traditional characteristics of the plantation mentioned on the foregoing pages. In the great imaginative power of these Negroes, the hero of the animal stories is always a deceiver, usually portrayed by the fox, the rabbit, or the wolf.

Higger to Higger is a series of sketches and poems in which morals, superstitions, humor, religion, ignorance and sociological problems are all embedded in the intimate conversation between two Negroes. As the author himself said, "these stories show the influence of slavery, the dread of the overseer — escape and capture" upon the lives of the southern Negroes. These memories are blended with superstition, ignorance, and other characteristics of the plantation tradition, but a sociological element enters that makes some of them horribly realistic. Ignorance, as shown in the "Telephone Call", produced a very comical picture of the Negro. A Negro uses the telephone in a community store to call Sears Roebuck in Chicago relative to a suit order, two weeks previously:

He tells long distance he ain' wan' 'em to make no mistake. He wants to speak to de big boss, an' right now. He tell 'em ef dey ain' got no phone to Sears Roebuck, jes to send a messenger.\[^{1}\]

Ignorant of any fee, the Negro insisted on a lengthy conversation. When the operator reported a charge of $167.28, the Negro ran away.

The Negro is shown to be contented in his ignorance:

I never has seen a nigger wid edication fitten for nothin'. If you send him off to school, he sho' God forgits

\[^{1}\]Edward C. L. Adams, Higger to Higger (New York, 1928), pp. 102-103.
how to plow, an' a axe or pick or a hoe looks like pizen to 'em. Dey is was several on 'em dan day is of a rattlesnake or a mos-
casin. Dat's one thing schoolin' does for 'em — it makes work a frightful thing . . .
Laff it to God Almighty — He put de pen in de hand dat best suited to handle it, an' He have made He own plan 'bout de best place for de plow . . . .

Though all of these folk stories undoubtedly contain some authentic-
ticity, they are based largely upon the Negro's imaginative ability. So great is this imaginative quality that the reader, like Ted himself, is sometime dubious of the stories' authenticity:

"I done listen to 'Poleon, an' he tell a lie so nat'ral till I ain' know ef it de trute or a lie. I heared him 'scribe thing till day jes look like a nat'ral picture somebody drawed."

Thus far, the writer has been interested in pointing out those ways in which the works, here treated, that deal with folk material, conform to the traditional plantation characteristics. In this conformity, these authors have presented the old Negro in a relatively new social order. Only rarely, as in the case of a few characters in Candy, does a new type appear. In many cases, glorification of the old order has per-
sisted. "De white ladies" of long ago were as "sweet as a rose." Now, there is only white trash who, as Wes says, "never did have no sense. Day ain' got no sense to dis day."

"Dat's de God's truth," Cun Fred agreed. "Dem what owns land now acts awful big. But what's in de blood stays in de blood to de bitter end."

Occasionally, however, there are echoes of the unpleasant side of the old régime. As to one former plantation owner, "everybody was glad when he left for he was sifful. He counted black people no more

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1Ibid., pp. 66, 68.
2Ibid., p. 185.
3Julia Peterkin, Bright Skin, p. 108.
4Ibid.
than the mules that plowed his fields. Thank God he was gone! No such
criticisms as that will be found in Candy, where there is only reverence for
the old South:

"Didn't that fool man know there was no kind of new
house that could touch the Big House? She had heard
her gramy tell about how the beams in that Big House were
all grooved together and every log laid just so! And the
mantelpieces were carved so that it was hard to find any
like them any more. They didn't build house nowadays like
the Big House. Little King said so. But that outsider had
to come to Mimosa Hill and tell Little King how things ought
to be changed."

In the very description of some scenes in Candy, the old South reverberates:
"Under the sinking late August sun the fields lay singularly tranquil;
lazy peace and sweetness hovered; lazy contentment brooded." Such was the
adherence to the characteristics of the popular concept of the plantation
tradition.

It has been stated that the plantation is the setting in each of
the books; that these plantations are located on one of the sea-islands,
and that the people on these islands had remained practically unchanged.
Hence, the customs, superstitions, religion, language, and traditions,
having remained in a state of arrested development, are depicted by
these writers as they are today. This, along with their method of hand-
ling the material, accounts for the realistic trend of the books. They
give the realistic lie to the romantic, sentimental plantation tradition.

The new interest in the Negro as subject matter for novels is a
definite characteristic of the new school of southern writers. From
the early conception that the Negro was too common a character for

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1 M. Alexander, Candy, pp. 264-65.

2 Ibid., p. 21.
literary subject matter except as necessary background to the establishment of conventional roles for him as a character, the Negro has come to be used freely as foreground, rather than background material. All of these books deal almost wholly with the Negro. Mrs. Peterkin sees them on "Blue Brook Plantation" only in terms of their own important lives. Rarely do white people enter her novels. Though the influence of the white plantation owner and his friends is strong in Candy, it is there only to add atmosphere to the lives of the Negroes. In his books, Gonzales not only defends a lost cause, but is intensely interested in the happenings of the Gullah folk on those plantations. The very name of Adam's Nigger to Nigger suggest the method—a method which certainly would have had no place among the ante-bellum and post-war writers. So, even though these novels do cling to the traditional pattern in their treatment of the old Negro, they are, in their method of handling the Negroes as characters rather than types, a definite departure from the sentimentalists.

Though the picture presented is not always a pleasant one, Mrs. Peterkin's descriptions are painted with a brush dipped in realism. The picture she gives of life in the Quarters is life as she sees it today:

Between the two rows of dingy old houses that squatted low under the great oak trees the hot sunshine brought rank scents up out of the earth. Odors of pig-pens and cow-stalls and fowl-houses and goats, mixed with Hoyt's German cologne and the smell of human beings.

Children were playing around almost every doorstep. Plump, bright-eyed. Boys with loose-hanging, ripped-open trousers, their black bodies showing where shirtfronts lay wide open. Girls with short, ragged skirts flapping around slim prancing legs. Babies cried. Tethered goats bleated. Fomed pigs squealed. Men, women, some in every-day clothes, others in their Sunday best, sat on the door-steps, leaned out of windows, lolled on the bare earth, where there was sunshine
Talking. Parading. Laughing...1

The sociological environment as shown in the following description is to be deplored:

The schoolhouse was a broken down log cabin near Heaven's Gate Church. Its warped clapboard roof was held down by heavy logs. Two small square windows left it so dark inside, fire in the chimney had to help give light. Every rain washed holes in the chimney which had to be plastered up with mud.2

Objectivity is the basis of Mrs. Peterkin's treatment, and character descriptions, as folk-beliefs, are portrayed without condescension. Behind the following description of "Budda Ben", one sees an undaunted spirit, a credit to any man, whatever his race, creed or color. Budda Ben was a cripple who

"... had to walk half-squatting with a stick and sleep with his knees doubled up close to his chin. He had to work sitting down and most of the time he sat on the woodpile cutting wood and fat lightwood splinters, or mending shoes worn out by strong firm feet."3

The names, however, given to her characters may be a condescension on the part of Mrs. Peterkin. It is the opinion of the writer that such names as "Oooh" (for "unexpected"), "Reverend Africa", and "Man Jay" are more belittling than realistic. A substantiation for this argument is the fact that last names are of no importance. In the very few instances in which one is given — incidentally mentioned at the end of the story — it is usually the same, "Pine-sett". The significance of "Pine-sett" is as follows:

"Cricket don' know his last name, Ann Missie."

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1 Julia Peterkin, Black April, p. 113.
2 Julia Peterkin, Bright Skin, p. 67.
3 Julia Peterkin, Scarlet Sister Mary, p. 16.
"Why, Cricket! You last name is Pine-sett same like dem pretty red flowers what blooms in de Christmas."1

New trends in character development are found throughout the novels of Mrs. Peterkin. The 'strong men' of her novels are more a departure from, than an adherence to, the traditional concept. They are ambitious, less superstitious, always honest, independent, and truthful. Counter to the concept that the Negro is lazy, these men are hard-working and always the most prosperous of their fellowmen. Though uneducated, they possess much common sense, and are not pictured as the traditional ignorant Negro. The following description of Wes is typical of all the 'strong men':

. . . Cum Fred declared that Wes had a right to play skin if it pleased him. Wes made fine crops; he hauled logs for the sawmill; he had money buried all under his house. The boys tried to win it in skin games but Wes never lost, and he never cheated, even when luck went against him.2

April, in his tragic death scene, approaches the heroic. As a result of gangrene, which had started in his feet, April's legs were amputated, but as he was dying, he forced himself to say:

"Bury me in a man-size box — You understand. —
A man-size — box — I — been — six — feet — fo' —
Uncle — Six feet — fo'!"

The blare in his eyes fell back, cold, dim. A long shudder swept over him. The tide had turned.3

Mary, despite her scarlet reputation, is found to possess a desire natural to any woman:

. . . after she was married to July, she would help him to be steady and faithful. She would make him a home where he liked to stay. She would save his money and teach him

1Julia Peterkin, Bright Skin, p. 131.
2Ibid., p. 39.
3Julia Peterkin, Black April, p. 318.
how to be a serious-minded man.

That characters are treated as personalities, rather than as types is evidenced by the following quotation in which Blue tried hard to overcome a naturally cowardly spirit. His weak character was a direct contrast to that of the nonfearing, bold Man Jay, typical example of the rough-neck boy of his age. Blue was afraid to dig clams just as he was afraid to learn to swim:

"Try catching one, Blue. It's fun."

Blue's heart gave a painful thump. "I got a pain in de belly, Man Jay. I can't bend over."

"You got a coward heart," Man Jay spat . . . .

"Blue shut his eyes and reached down, down until the tips of his finger felt something hard and sharp. He seized it for dear life's sake."

"You is braver'n I had thought, Blue," . . . .

Ambition, involving a desire for education, is a new trend of character development. In each novel, there is a young girl who goes to the city for an education, and there is the young man who leaves because he is ambitious for advantages the plantation does not offer. In Black April,

Joy was weak and easy. But she was a nice girl. She was in town, going to college, getting educated. Joy wouldn't rest until she got a diploma. When she got it, she'd teach school or marry some fine stylish 'town man. Joy was a stylish girl herself.

Though an element of caste enters, Wes recognizes the necessity of an education for Cricket:

"I ain' come here to talk about me, Al-fred. I come to talk bout Cricket goin' to school. Cricket ought to be educate' even if de chillen at school ain

1Julia Peterkin, Scarlet Sister Mary, p. 21.
2Julia Peterkin, Bright Skin, pp. 206-207.
3Julia Peterkin, Black April, p. 42.
in his class."

In Black April, Big Sue wants to adopt Breeze because "he'd be far better off with her than here with his mother, and a house full of starved-out children, growing up in ignorance."

Mrs. Peterkin even endows her characters with an aesthetic sense. Having killed some ducks, Sherry held them up:

"Poor creeters!" he pitied, holding the gay-colored bill of one of them between his fingers. "Ain' e a beauty!"

This trait is brought out also in Big Sue, who, sniffing the fragrance of flowers in the air, cried: "Laud, ain't de flowers sweet? Jeedus, have mercy! Dey pure outs at my heart strings."

A bright skin enters Mrs. Peterkin's novels as a problem to which is devoted a book by that name. The characters' general opinion of a "bright skin" is that expressed by Blue's father:

"A bright skin is a bad thing, son. You Mammy's sister birthed one an' died."

"Is e a white trash?"

"No, son. E ain' white trash. E ain white, neither black. A bright skin is yellow as dis river water."

"Cim Hester" said that

"... In [God's] sight one skin is same as another. De back o' my neck where a mustard plaster took off de skin is white as any white somebody."

Cim Hester bared the scar, but Jule declared: "Dat don' prove a thing. A bright skin ain' got no place in dis world. Black people don' want an' white people won' own em..."

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1 Julia Peterkin, op. cit., p. 106.
2 Julia Peterkin, Ibid., p. 45.
3 Ibid., p. 141.
4 Ibid., p. 61.
5 Julia Peterkin, Bright Skin, pp. 17-18.
6 Ibid., p. 94.
Cricket, the "bright skin", recognized her plight and was moved by ambition to leave the plantation:

"If I stay on here, Blue, nothin' ain' ahead for me but to dry up an' get sour like Aunt Missie. If I marry to you, Aunt Fan would say you married beneath you. I'm a bright-skin, Blue. People here holds it against me. Cooch says bright-skin people stands well in town." ¹

The element of caste enters on the part of Cricket herself. When encouraged to dance at an entertainment she was resentful: "Does you think it pleasures me to dance wid dem black sweaty mens? My God! I'd as soon dance wid a bunch o' ram goats." ² Blue, who was in love with her, was of the opinion that

She was not like Cooch or Toosie in ways any more than in looks. She was as far above them as the sky was above the river. He must try to have patience with her. Long patience. Bright-skin women are different from black ones. He had luck to be Cricket's husband. Any man in the country would jump up and crack his heels to take her around and show her off, much less live with her.³

In Bright Skin, a sociological treatment enters which involves an inter-racial problem. The plantation Negroes' general conception of town was that held by Blue, after he had been robbed there:

Misery gnawed at Blue's insides, hate for town people gnawed at his heart. May Satan get them all and burn them forever, with their jails and stores, policemen and thieves.⁴

To them, town was a place "full o' people" where "if you crack you teeth policemen put you in jail."⁵

¹Ibid., p. 233.
²Ibid., p. 305.
³Ibid., pp. 305-306.
⁴Ibid., p. 311.
⁵Ibid., p. 312.
When Man Jay returned from Harlem and told of the white people's visiting the Negro night clubs, Cum Fred said:

"Dey must be white trash," ... but Man Jay laughed and said up-North white people was rich and gran d ... . They liked black people. They liked to dance with them too. They was not scornful like the white people down South.

Sometime, a few person would come to the plantation and operate an amusement place, which often proved the source of evil, as in the case of Reverend Cato Singleton's cafe:

The cafe dances often ended in a row; the lights were kicked over, scared people leaped out of windows and doors, ran across the fields when pistol shots banged behind them, but for all that, they was fun.

The "bury-league", in which most of the more thoughtful had insurance, was a sociological innovation in the novels:

"We got a Bury-league, now ... If a man loses his wife, he git twenty-five dollars an' a good storebought box to bury em, 'an' a nice tombstone ... A lawful husband brings sixty dollars, but if e ain' married to you, you don' get a Gwad's sente.'"

Only in Bright Skin does a new-type Negro (which will be treated in the following chapter) appear. This man is Caesar Weeks, and is typical of the Charleston Negro of "Catfish Row", treated specifically by Heyward. Cricket asked him:

"You ain' scared to roam round mongst strangers"?
"Scared?" He laughed. "I don' know what scared means. I been cut up wid a razor about ten times, I been shot wid a pistol ball five times. I'm hot-stuff man, honey. Nothin can' kill me." Cricket sat silent until he added, "But if I had to live in dis God forsake'
Thus, administering the foregoing innovations, Mrs. Peterkin is realistic in her method of treating the plantation Negro.

In Mrs. Alexander's Candy, urban migration is a problem which makes for new trends of realism. Despite their sentimental loyalty to the old plantation, some of the characters are treated as definite personalities, who are very strongly drawn. They possess strong, independent minds. Character description is objective, often raised to the point of flattery. A vivid description is given of Sally,

They thought Sally was as pretty as the bright colored pictures they had seen in fashion books Miss Mary sometimes gave them. She was prettier; she was alive. It seemed to them that another world had been brought into the street. Sally's dress, Jim's costume, the gay things piled on the chair did not belong to Mimosa. They were different. 2

and of Jim:

The black velvet suit with its rich trimmings was becoming to him, and there was romance in his slim, graceful figure and his good-looking face and handsome eyes. 3

Though some of the characters show a reaction against change, others are highly ambitious for the greater economic and educational advantages the North offers. When told by Rose that it is "no better anywhere else," William answers:

"It's no better to git fo' dollars a day dan to git sebenty-fi' cent? No better to have more'n you wants to eat dan to have no more'n bare enough? No better to have a fine house to live in dan to live in a cabin you has to patch yo'self?"

1. Julia Peterkin, Bright Skin, p. 246.

2. L. M. Alexander, Candy, p. 57.

3. Ibid.
No better to have a little Ford car dan to have jes yo' own two hoofs? An' den, Rose," he looked at her with returning seriousness, "I can make plenty in no time to go to school all winter an' do nothin' else ef I don't want to."  

Sally's desire for education was so strong that she was determined to "read anyhow." As a result of seeing her with a book open before her upside-down, "Mr. Jade" taught Sally how to read.

Education brought favorable results, eliminating superstition, initiating ambition, and improving speech. William "was not afraid of Friday as he was before he had got some education. Schooling came mighty hard for him, but he was getting along."  

The aesthetic, artistic side of dancing is exhibited through Sally and Jim, replacing the traditional characteristic of the minstrel Negro. For the first time in these novels, the aesthetic side of love enters the lives of Negroes. The love which exists between Sally and Jim, her husband, is beautiful. They are loyal and devoted to each other. When he is drowned, the unusual element of a Negro girl's pining her heart away over a departed lover enters. Of course, Mary, in Scarlet Sister Mary, pined for July, but she later found solace in the arms of other lovers. Sally remains true to her love for a deceased husband. These characters are made outstanding personalities by vivid description, and leave a refreshing memory in the mind of the reader.

Sociological environment and social injustices toward the Negro are presented so realistically by Adam's Nigger to Nigger that the book leaves the reader bitter and cynical. It is indisputably the

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1Ibid., p. 85.

2Ibid., p. 290.
most realistic of this group in depicting Negro life in the South. All
descriptions are vivid. The one of Mensa is not unpleasant:

Mensa was one er dese kind er niggers dat would cut
you' th'eat ef you got him wrong, but he would bow to de
ground an' take he hat off 'fore he done it, but, my bro-
ther, ef you got him wrong, he was bad wrong an' he make
everything look wrong 'bout him. Mensa would jes cut you;
th'oat 'pologizin' for it.

... I ain' never see a bad man so much folk love,
white an' black, an' I ain' never see such a kind, mannerable
man so much people dread. He been diff'ent from other people."¹

But the "Congaree Swamps" can produce some horrible looking savage
people:

"... an' dey was terrible lookin'. Dey been back in one
er dem guts, an' dey had en ole tored shirts an' dey braces
fasten up 'round dey waist wid a rope. Dey been barefooted
an' half naked, an' dey been slimy wid yaller mud all over
'em — look like two ole alligators."²

The "water hole" is a horrible place which thrives on barbarity and
brutality. The people are more animals than human beings. A descrip-
tion of it presents an unpleasant picture:

You know whah kind er place de water hole — wid tall tree all
'round it an' mud an' slime, an' on de upper side it narrow
wey de creek run in an' widen out an' dat wey dey got a cros-
sin' log. All dem niggers goes down dere when dey's guinea in
de swamp an' comin' out, an' dat's wey dey have catfish stew
an' fish-fry, an' wey dey guts dey fish."³

Education is not so good for the Negro in the opinion of Tad and Scip.
The educated Negro is satirized:

All I hates 'bout dem kind er niggers is ef dey
ever starts to stretching' dey necks, dey is liable to
git mient stretched 'long wid dey ownt. ... Dem ed-
cated niggers losses dey manners, an' goes 'round reared

¹ Edward C. L. Adams, Nigger to Nigger, pp. 46-47.
² Ibid., p. 81.
³ Ibid.
back wid dey thumbs stuck behind dey galluses
wid sell'rg cocked up in dey mout' like it gah
sorrow de rim or dey hat', makin' dey self dis-
gustin' an' stirrin' up trouble an' leffin' when
de' fire gits good an' hot. An' de white folks
starts holdin' us feets to de fire.

A bitterness toward social injustices is shown in "A Darn Nig-
ger":

Jake was a nigger. De judge was a kind judge —
a good man — wha ain' believe in too severe punishment
for white folks when a nigger is kill, ain' matter what
kind or white folks. An' de solicitor who' presents
an' see dat de criminal git he full dose is a merciful
man. An' he got great ideas or bein' light in punishment
dat white men who wore de uniform or dare
country in war.

......

"De courts or dis land is not for niggers .... De
Bible say, "De Lord watcheth de full of every sparrow."
an' I says: Why ain't He take He eye off sparrow an' Inkr 'em rest some time on bigger game?" 2

Injustice, the unimportance of homicides, the lack of medical
attention, savagery and ignorance are some of the subjects that pro-
"Land Rent", "The Telephone Call", "Fifteen Years" are some of the
stories, most of which are tragic, found in Nigger to Nigger, which
all in all, presents some of the harshest stories of the new realism.

The chief contribution to the dawn school of realism made by
the folk stories of Gonzales, and Stoney and Shelby is their recog-
nition of the potentialities of the Negr race for literary material.
The most outstanding realistic characteristic of these books is the
language in which they are written. Thus, a further analysis of their
realism would like in whether or not they present accurate Gullah.

This, only an authority on the phonetics of the language could say.

1 Ibid., pp. 117-118.
2 Ibid., pp. 105-106.
Part I of this chapter, dealing with the contemporary folk material of South Carolina, has been an endeavor to show just how this material has conformed to, or departed from, the popular concept of the plantation tradition. In a study of all the novels of Julia Peterkin, *Candy* by Mrs. Alexander, *The Black Berdor* by Asey Along the Black Berdor, and *Langway* by Gonzales, *Black Genesis* by Stoney and Shelby, and *Higger to Higger* by L. B. L. Adams, characteristics of the plantation tradition and characteristics of the new school of realism have been evoked. From such an analysis it is revealed that these books seemingly present a paradox — they seem traditional and yet untraditional in their treatment of the plantation Negro. The books are of this dual character, but there is no contradictory element involved.

In adhering to the traditional concept of the plantation Negro, these writers have treated the old Negro but in a relatively new social order. However, since the characters of this folk material represent the Negroes on the sea-islands — a place where the "old Negro" has remained until the present time, essentially unchanged — the latter statement is also an example of realism in subject matter. In their method of handling their material, together with a few innovations in subject matter, these authors have given a realistic cast to the old romantic, sentimental concept of the plantation tradition.
Part II

Historical Fiction

The new concern for folk material, sociological problems, and other realistic subject matter has not eliminated entirely the ever-existing interest in the old South as a glamorous source for literary material. The recent popularity of the historical novel has given new momentum to this interest. Three of the novels treated in this study follow the course of historical fiction. The ante-bellum South, the rebellious South, and the Reconstruction South all provide the settings for these novels. In two of them, *The Tides of Malvern* (1930), by Francis Griswold and Peter Ashley (1932) by Du Bose Hayward, the plantation tradition is continued. In *Sea Island Lady* (1939), Griswold is primarily concerned with recording, in a fictional way, the historical facts of South Carolina during the Civil War and the Reconstruction period, and the effect of these periods upon the lives of the characters.

In the two novels that continue the plantation tradition, the Negro remains quietly in the background, serving only as a complement to the white man. In *The Tides of Malvern*, the Negro might be seen as "a grinning black boy [with] battered hat in hand"; or as butlers, coachmen, and footmen, attired in "liveries of plain color with

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Since it is the duty of the historian to transmute the truth, and since Mrs. Peterkin does just this because she authentically records the sociological backgrounds of a practically forsaken island, and the western, folkways, and traditions of the people thereon, the novels of Mrs. Peterkin also may be classed as historical fiction.

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trimmings of gold braid"; or as house servants who, "without direct supervision ... are never dependable"; or as the superstitious Mama Bimah who said "it was bad luck to pass under the old copper lantern that hung from the roof"; or as the loyal body-servant, who, having waited her chance to greet her master and his bride, "kissed the hem of Mary's skirt and Gilbert's hand" and heaped upon them "feelings and frank good-wishes, admissions and God-blessings"—about which they laughed after she had gone. ¹ And, true to the plantation tradition, the Negroes in The Tides of Malvern were well treated by their masters:

After breakfast Mark went out to the front steps to watch his father and mother distribute gifts to gangs of slaves: for the women handkerchiefs, which they twined about their heads; for the men woolen caps, which they flung into the air; for the children rock candy, which they popped into their mouths. Laughter, singing, shouting. Several buckets of hot punch appeared and circulated freely in the company of large baskets of gingerbread.² It was the beginning of the three-day Christmas festival.

The Tides of Malvern recounts the love-affairs, triumphs, sufferings; and family incidents of four generations of the Sheldon family, crowding on its 533 pages the history that embraces three major wars— the Revolutionary, Civil, and World War.

Peter Ashley, which has its setting in the Civil War period, opening with South Carolina's signing of the secession pact, is pro-slavery in attitude. The prevailing attitude toward slavery advanced in this novel, voiced by Simms, is the one maintained by

¹Francis Griswold, The Tides of Malvern (New York, 1920), pp. 5, 64, 71, 137, 244.
²Ibid., p. 135.
all pre-slavery writers;

... we held slavery to be an especially and wisely devised institution of heaven; devised for the benefit, the improvement and safety, morally, socially and physically, of a barbarous and inferior race, who would otherwise perish by filth, the sword, disease and waste, and destinies forever growing, consuming, and finally destroying.

The plot centers around Peter Ashley, member of an old aristocratic Southern family, who returns to South Carolina upon the eve of the State's secession. Having sojourned in England where he attended a university for a long time, Peter returned home with the conviction that while the slavery system existed in fact, it was theoretically wrong, and would in time crumble. Back in South Carolina, however, where he saw the system working before his very eyes, and where even the term "slave" was seldom used among his associates, Peter began to ponder over whether the system was workable or not.

Personified, the institution presented itself to him in the form of Caesar and the fourteen members of his household who occupied the brick range in the kitchen yard of the Chardon residence, and who were reprimanded by the big house only when their noise transgressed all bounds and disturbed the peace of the neighborhood.

During his period of uncertainty, Peter gives the question much thought. He reflects that

About the treatment of the negroes in his locality there had grown up as an intricate a code of good form as that which surrounded the institution of dueling, or behavior upon a ballroom floor. A gentleman, confronted by a certain situation, would conduct himself in accordance with the unwritten code. If he failed — well, there were deflections in every social order; it was unfortunate, but the...

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1. Ibid., Peter Ashley (New York, 1832), p. 206.

2. Field hands were referred to as "our people" and the domestics as "the servants".

3. Ibid., p. 69.
transgressor was no longer quite a gentleman . . . .
The days of the trade, when naked negroes were knocked
down to the lowest bidder at the ship's side, were a
consistently forgotten page cut out of a long past.¹

However, when fighting actually began, Peter was loyal to the cause —
a cause that was soon to be a lost one.

Here, as in The Tides of Malvern, the Negro remains in the back-
ground. The faithful body-servant is presented in Caesar, who "could
be depended upon to understand his master's needs."² The "Slave Mart
on Chalmers Street" presents the well-known story of human bondage.

There, one may see for sale an

. . . intelligent girl nineteen years of age, a superior
house servant. A lively and intelligent woman thirty-
five years of age, a good cook. A prime man forty years
of age, splendidly trained house and personal servant.
A lively and intelligent girl twenty years of age, a
superior washer, clear starcher and ironer, and seamstress.
And at private sale only to a known and responsible city
resident there would be available a remarkably likely
light mulatto girl fourteen years of age, of good charac-
ter with privileges of repurchase at future date.³

During the period of brooding unrest, the slave markets were held
"the most accurate barometers of public confidence."⁴ If pur-
chases ran high, the market proved that the State's confidence in
future triumphs was sustained. One may find among the traders at
the "Slave Mart" a "mugger splitter" like Margrew, who not only split
families, but also "bought up gangs of prime negroes and shipped them
to the same fields."⁵ To Margrew, slave trading was a business into
which he entered with all of his heart. In the case of one examination

¹Ibid., pp. 71, 72.
²Ibid., p. 15.
³Ibid., p. 35.
⁴Ibid., p. 68.
⁵Ibid., p. 77.
he ordered the Negro to undress, and after examining his back for scars,

A fist shot out and delivered a terrific blow to the man's
groin. There had been no warning. The muscles of the stern-
musculature slack and unprepared. A spasm drew the negro almost
double, but he made no sound. In a moment he was again erect

Peter looked at Margrew's face. The eyes were the same
as before — cool calculating, preoccupied. There was no per-
sonal animus. He had nothing against the negro. He was doing
his job. That was all.¹

A somewhat unusual description of a slave, and one which reflects
the realism of Mr. Heyward's sociological novels is the following:

Peter had never seen such a physique on any human being.
Over six feet in height and perfectly proportioned, it
possessed that indefinable added beauty that transcends
perfection of form, and springs from that inner harmony
which, when repose gives way to movement, becomes sudden-
ly lyric.²

"Race Week", so important among the social functions of the
southern aristocrats, brought the Negro a little to the foreground:

Small black jockeys became infuriatingly self-important.
Negro trainers developed into autocrats, and respectfully
but firmly told their masters what they could and could not
do in the domain of the stables.³

Of equal importance in the lives of the Negroes were their own "cock
fights", at which time

The lot was black with negroes in high excitement at
the prospect of enjoying their favorite sport. Most of the
house servants would be at the races in the capacity of
either maid or groom. But there were others, the
laborers, the great substratum of the city life. They
swarmed about refreshment booths. Here and there one would
pass with a treasured cock held carefully in the curve of
his arm. The air was loud with unrestrained African laughter.

¹Ibid., p. 79.
²Ibid., pp. 78-79.
³Ibid., p. 117.
Colors soothed, shifting from harmony to discord back to harmony.  

The presence of a free Negro was resented by the whites. "Everybody distrusted a free negro," because they thought them to be "the tools of abolitionists":

They were dangerous to have on a plantation associating with the obedient and contented negroes.  

If the Negro stepped a little to the front of the scene during "Race Week," his quiet retreat transferred him well into the background everyday of every other week. In Peter Ashley and Hayward, in continuing the plantation tradition, saw that he remained there.

The popular conception of the natural inferiority of the Negro race reaches the height of its portrayal in the following scene of the Negro in the Civil War: When the barracks were blown up

The negroes promptly turned the heat, over and crumbled beneath it, and Private Young demonstrated the superior courage of the Caucasian by seating himself fully exposed upon its upturned bottom.

Reverent for St. Michael, the St. Cecilia Ball, Race Week, the Battery, southern gentility, and a very impressive duel as characteristic of the chivalric southern aristocrat, all made for the scenic color of this thoroughly conventional novel.

In A Sea Island Lady, one of the most recent of the books under treatment, Griswold changes his setting and presents another historical romance, though different in tone from The Tides of Malvern. Beginning with the outbreak of the Civil War, the book has its setting

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1 Ibid., p. 132.
2 Ibid., p. 84.
3 Ibid., p. 277.
primarily in the Reconstruction period. The importance of the plot thereafter lies in the effect of the War upon the lives of the characters. When not following authentic history of the Negro during Reconstruction, Griswold's interest in him is primarily a traditional one. In the very little space devoted to the Negro before the Civil War, emphasis is placed upon a mulatto slave family. Omission of their color and of the importance of the white family to which they belonged, these Negroes furnish a good example of the caste system practised among the slaves. Freeing his feet of boots that were too small, Peter meditated:

His feet might be too broad for the master's narrow boots but they were not splayed like black nigger feet. He was no black nigger, thank God. He was light-colored, like his mother. He flat nose and thick lips. And brother Robert was light, and so was sister Phyllis. Because of that and because he belonged to the Fenwicks, also knew he could afford to hold his head high. He knew the worth of himself and his family, white and colored."

Such concisit made this family somewhat free with the house family, but not with Joseph Bramwell, a visiting brother. Bramwell cared nothing at all for a mulatto slave:

A few people — and his own brother-in-law, Major Michael Fenwick, was unfortunately among the number — held the parverse position that the lighter the color the better the servant; but it was Joseph Bramwell's conviction that in house as in the field a negro's proper color was black. 2

When the Negroes were first notified of their freedom after the battle of Port Royal, they received the news with "stupified grins." 3 But upon seeing their masters' homes invaded by the

1 Francis Griswold, A Sea Island Lady (New York, 1939), p. 4.
2 Ibid., p. 6.
3 Ibid., p. 40.
soldiers, they began to lose their shyness, "to understand this freedom thing." Some of the scenes describing the Negroes as contrabands of war are very similar to ones describing a "slave pen" at the height of the slave trade from Africa:

The outside of a relief hospital was alive with negroes... men, women, children; some lying on hard benches, some sitting, most standing for want of any place to lie or sit. Their eyes stared vacantly at him like the eyes of animals herded in a pen. The dress of these contrabands from Georgia made a pathetic masquerade. Among the general plantation rags and nearnakedness of the children were feather bonnets and stovepipe hats, bonnets made of turkey carpet, capes of crazy quilt, lace shawls, bell gowns, and odds-and-ends of salvaged uniforms, Rebel and Yankee mixed. The air was heavy with the smell of a gleaming stove, aird with the stench of black bodies, and vibrant with suffering.1

Another side of the Negro during the Civil War is the story of the house servants of the Fenwick family. Having become pilot of the Indigo, a little Rebel sideswheeler that had been giving the blockading fleet much trouble, Robert smuggled his mother, sister and brother on board the ship one night, and "sneaked the boat out of the harbor to the Union fleet:

"Fuh dat," Phyllis explained, "de Gov'ment make 'us Cap'n of de Indigo, and he bring we back hynk an' bay bussa house to de Yek sale."

Robert is a complete departure from the stereotyped characters to be found in the plantation tradition.

He was a fine-looking man, quiet and self-respecting, and he spoke with little trace of the Gullah that made most sea-island people, even house servants like Mau Minta and Phyllis, so hard to understand. He was neat and clean, Cap'n Robert Fenwick, unlike the majority of uniformed freemen, who swaggered about dirty and careless with forage caps

1Ibid., p. 40.
Robert Fenwick made quite a name for himself during the Reconstruction period, when the government of South Carolina was run almost completely by Negroes. Aaron Moffet, a carpetbagger, said of him:

"... I'm glad I didn't have to offend Robert Fenwick. He's becoming quite a figure in our Republican circle here. I've had some interesting talks with him lately — a very intelligent man. Comes as a guest now to the house where he once served as a slave."

Alec and Phyllis, however, cling either to the traditional treatment or anticipate the new-type Negro to appear in books that realistically treat the Negro of the twentieth century. Both are described as being irresponsible and lazy. Alec was always shirking his duties, coming to work "only when he was hungry and needed money. He had bought himself a flashy turnout at the new clothing store on Bay Street and his companions were the young colored sports." Phyllis "was pretty, certainly, but she was slovenly in her dress and ways and her manner was too free and knowing. She was lazy, too, letting her mother do most of the housework as well as the cooking." The traditional treatment of the Negro's emotionality and lack of restraint is maintained through Phyllis too. She could not refrain from dealing:

... her slim fingers were light as a professional pickpocket's... Any brief remorse she suffered seemed to come from being caught rather than from being guilty, — she was shameless as a child.

She was brazenly immoral, being coquettish and openly flirtatious.

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1. Ibid., p. 61.
2. Ibid., p. 162.
3. The latter treatment, however, often does not exclude the former.
4. Ibid., p. 61.
5. Ibid., p. 60.
6. Ibid., p. 75.
with white men. She says to a white captain:

"You ain' like me?"
"I like you well enough to see you keep out of trouble."
"You like me fuh gal, eny?"
"I'd like you to finish your work and clear out."
"Spec' I ain' good enough fuh you . . . . I know howcome you ain' hab eye fuh me . . . . You hab eye fuh His 'Nuffit.'" 1

Later, she became mistress to Aaron Meffet during the estrangement of Aaron and his wife, Emily. When Mrs. Meffet returned, Phyllis went to their house, burst into the bedroom and created the following scene:

"You been gone long time, His 'Nuffit. T'ink you' been twillin' he t'umb all dis while?"

Aaron tried to seize her arm again, but she was ready. For Meffet made such a savage scratch at his face that he stopped back.

"If you like you' looks, man, keep way fum me!" her tongue lashed at him shrilly. "Tellin' me I ain' fuh come to dis house! I ain' fuh come. You cyan' hide me out unplace. You ain' nebbuh goine lose me — I ain' makin' way fuh no gal, black or white." She swung back to Emily. "I been whinin' fuh you to come eralin' back to de bed I don' warn! He goine put me in secun' place fuh a piece like you, what ain' got no me' bosom dan Aliol." 2

Emily left Aaron— and for good enough reason. True to her word,
Phyllis clung to Aaron throughout his success of the Reconstruction period. With the fall of his ring, which spelled the end of the reign of the "Black Republicans" and of the Reconstruction period in South Carolina, Aaron made one last effort to disencumber himself of Phyllis. In his attempt to free himself of Phyllis, she and her Negro companions freed the world of him. When Emily last saw him

He lay on the floor, his head and shoulder slumped against a leg of the overturned armchair, his eyes staring at her drearily. His coat was out to ribbons, the shirt soaked with blood. There were opened gashes on the neck and cheek.

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1 Ibid., p. 76.
2 Ibid., p. 172.
and the hands and wrists were slashed. Around him were stream the contents of a shaving kit, mirror, brush and soap, and an ivory-handled razor smeared with blood.

Thus, one family, alone, is enough to offer the two extreme characterizations of the Negro in A Sea Island Lady.

There is also the picture of Reconstruction made ignominious by the Negro. "The state was in the hands of a motley crew of blacks and tans, sealsmen, and carpetbaggers." Mention is made to an article in Harper's, "South Carolina was in the depths of despair under the Carpetbagger-Negro machine of Governor Moses . . . ."

The freedom of the Negro gave rise to much conflict between the two races in South Carolina. A white barber gives an account of a riot between some soldiers and Negroes, and displays the general attitude found here of the "southern white toward the Negro:"

"Then soldiers vacossed out of Bay Street double-quick when the nigs started pullin' razors on them. Felt like pitchin' in myself with a few good licks at the nigs. I can't stand nigs. Can't stand the smell of them and the airs, and can't stand having them set in my chair givin' orders same as a white man. If I didn't have to make a livin' I couldn't hardly stand touchin' them. But I sure would enjoy slicin' a few of their throats!"

"Nine and women were at the bottom of it, of course, but it went deeper than that. White and black were like oil and water. They never would mix together equal, one was always going to be floating on top, no matter how hard the Abolitionists strained themselves and everybody else trying to change the laws of nature."  

One Abolitionist resented "Sherman's attitude toward the freedmen." She complained of his lack of enthusiasm. Elsewhere, it is stated that black troops were shoved into the front lines to keep them

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1 Ibid., p. 260.
2 Ibid., p. 300.
3 Ibid., p. 211.
4 Ibid., p. 80.
5 Ibid., pp. 52-53.
from running away. 1 Another historical account of the Negro in the Civil War states that

Exposed to cold, hunger, thirst and disease, many of the freedmen, following the army out of bondage, perished. Without masters or friends, many who were left behind died. Suffering and tragedy among them abounded. Already, free labor was exploited.

Immorality was prevalent:

Moreover, the army was appallingly lacking in . . . virtue. To be frank, there was no doubt but that the men were using Negro women for lustful purposes on a large scale . . . she had heard of so many instances from refugees themselves. This bestial fornication put Northern men on a plane with Southerners . . . under the old regime every planter had one or more concubines in the yard. 3

The following scene of exaggerated depiction of a white woman anticipates the rape scenes of the twentieth century Negro:

Mrs. Sager became aware of a shanty black man in uniform coming down the street toward her . . . she had taught him in her school at the Tabernacle . She had been helplessly afraid of him then and ever since. Her fear had always been that she would meet him like this on a dark night in some back street, that she would be seized and dragged into deep shadows, a powerful hand over her mouth. No saving herself, for fright would have deprived her of all power of resistance. 4

Though much of the treatment of the Negro in A Sea Island Lady is authentically historical, the traditional treatment is still to be seen. " . . . the difficulty of getting any Free Negroes to work" 5 is a statement that continues the belief that all Negroes are lazy. Loyalty is a quality so deeply imbedded within the body-servant that even freedom does not eliminate it. When the surviving Fenwicks returned

1 Ibid., p. 42.
2 Ibid., p. 55.
3 Ibid., p. 53.
4 Ibid., p. 120.
5 Ibid., p. 80.
and were heralded with harsh rebukes from many Negroes, the loyal and devoted Robert rescued them, carried them to his home (formerly that of the Penwicks), and offered them every hospitality. Without the supervision of the white man, the Negro's plight is a sad one. Indeed, it does not take even a northerner long to learn that "they were so quick to respond, and they could forget so easily; she knew them well enough to know that only constant patient effort would keep them in line."

In parts of the book an apology is made for the old regime. Once, Emily is advised by another Abolitionist to

". . . forget the sentimental twaddle you were taught about these people — they are utterly lacking in character, conscience, and initiative, and they will lie, cheat, and steal as naturally as they breathe . . . ." It was clear to her now that this was all true, though only part of the whole truth. Certainly lying and stealing were common enough among them, and getting something for nothing from white people was one of their greatest accomplishments; they were completely ignorant of morals; and they seemed quite content to pursue a dull undisturbed destiny, untroubled by the spur of ambition. Moreover, they were enormously superstitious, every act of their lives was sponsored by some magic formulae Many put a hex, placenta, or ame under the bed at childbirth to cut the pain, and death was accompanied by the covering of mirrors and stepping of clocks; they moved in an atmosphere of spells and exorcisms and conjucks. Yet, strangely, as her illusions about them fade, she found her affection for them increasing.

And again,

Now that the old plantation life is gone, its faults are easily seen. Slavery was a fatal mistake, but it wasn't the cruel institution that fanaticism conceived . . . . Her own work among the freedmen was teaching her what a burden of responsibility must have been borne by the plantation master and mistress; it was really they, she thought, who had

1 Ibid., pp. 495-96.

2 Ibid., pp. 186-87.
been liberated. As for the Negro, he was no longer a romantic figure, a sort of white man in blackface. He was a very human being. And a stubborn enigma.¹

However, there is realism in the description of the customs and the sociological background of the sea-island Negroes:

The women did the greater part of the work, including the heavy hoeing and the break-back plowing. They seemed to accept their burdens as a matter of course. In slavery times . . . they had been the responsible heads of families; the children had been listed in plantation records as belonging to them, the cabins had been theirs, and any money made from the sale to the Big House of chickens and eggs and yard truck raised in the hours after the day's task had been theirs to spend. Since freedom the men had grown jealous of their rights; they wanted to be the boss in the home . . . but they were willing to leave to the women the privilege of doing most of the field work, as well as buying rations, cooking, washing and ironing . . . .²

Though the treatment of the Negro in A Sea Island Lady has been largely historical, Griswold, as all other writers of South Carolina, has not departed entirely from the traditional treatment of him.

A Sea Island Lady, as well as The Tides of Malvern or Peter Ashley, is a typical, regional, historical book.

¹ Itid., pp. 185-86.
² Itid., pp. 202-203. Of the historical background of St. Helena Island treated at the beginning of the chapter.
CHAPTER III

THE NEGRO IN OTHER SETTINGS

In the preceding chapter, the treatment of the Negro, both traditional and realistic, was confined to the plantation Negro. On the plantation, the Negro, unchanged in his folkways and mores of a stagnant heritage, is safe from the forces of evil that seep into an advancing civilization. Primitive, highly emotional, and utterly contented in his ignorance and inferiority, the Negro is shown bearing, in every respect, the marked stigma of his race. In such a setting the Negro is generally conceived by the white man to be exactly where he belongs. He has been so vividly treated, so intricately interwoven into a setting thought to be rightfully his own, that the plantation Negro has been erroneously regarded as "the revelation of a race." If based upon historical validity and explicitly assigned to its proper place, the sentimental, conventional treatment of the plantation Negro is harmless enough; but when the treatment of the plantation Negro is taken out of its unique category and assigned to the Negro race at large, such a treatment becomes not only grossly misrepresentative, but amusing in its inconsistencies.

The pen of a few contemporary South Carolina novelists has taken the Negro from his traditional locale and placed in other settings where he becomes a real human being, confronted with problems arising from his status as a Negro. Though he is sometime shown to experience emotions other than the traditional ones, his place in literature has become so fixed by sentimentality that even here, authors who tend toward realism have not been able to free themselves entirely from the strong traditional influence and thus dissever the new Negro from the old and treat him as a completely evolved human being, as free from the stigma of bondage as from bondage itself. However, by the small section that he devotes
to the new Negro in Mamba's Daughters, Heyward might be considered an exception. Definitely, the greatest effort of any South Carolina novelist to see the Negro in a new light has been made by DuBose Heyward, interested primarily in the Negro's struggles within the race, and in the sociological barriers which he reaches and cannot surpass because of his greatest sin — that of being born black. Heyward takes the same "old Negro" and placing him in an entirely new social order he becomes a real character whose normal experiences and reactions to emotions make him an everlasting image in one's memory. Coleman also treats the "old Negro" in a new social order, but his treatment is so warped by the ever-clutching grasp of sentimentality that his characters are merely the same old ones warmed over. His "new Negroes" are only a myth — the only thing new about them being a new setting in which to fight, to be immoral, and to maintain all other characteristics of the plantation tradition. Their new garb is so incongruously bedecked with the brightest colors of traditionalism that such an unpleasant array adds nothing to the Negro's rightful place in the new movement of realism.

In Fo' Buckra, Stoney and Shelby paint a portrait of the Negro that is horrible in its naturalism, transparent in its conventionalism, and insidious in its furtive prejudicial treatment of him. However, whether traditional, whether realistic, or whether a combination of both, all three of these writers have produced characters worthy of individual treatment.

From the pen of DuBose Heyward there have come characters so much alive that they have taken their places among the immortals of fiction. There is Mamba, the ambitious, shrewd, indomitable old woman who reshapes her life to meet the necessity of her daughters; Hagar, the great tragic figure who gives her life that her daughter might achieve the success for which she has long striven; Lissa who, ever appreciative of the
sacrifices being made for her, reaches, un tarnished, the height of success; Porgy, who makes a profession of his begging; and Rhoda and Adam who symbolize Atlas in ebony.

Mamba . . . was a woman of medium height, frail almost to a point of emaciation. She was not a full-blooded African negro, but her prominent nose and the coppery cast to her dark skin suggested a strain of American Indian rather than an admixture of white blood in her veins. Her face had reached the point at which it tells nothing of age. As it looked now with its multitudinous wrinkles, it would still look at her death. She smiled a little timidly and revealed a lonely yellow fang in the middle of her lower gum. . . . From the network of wrinkles the woman's eyes, large and of a peculiar live brown brilliance, looked startlingly out, bright with the fire of indomitable youth.1

Having incubated a plan by which she might establish herself for the future protection of her daughter, Hagar, and her granddaughter, Lissa, Mamba rises "out of the darkness of the underworld into the light of the Wentworth's kitchen."2 The motivating factor behind this plan was rooted in the strong force of social injustices practiced toward the Negro. The only means of protection open to Negroes of the lowest strata was that of a white friend. Not only did one need a white friend if he were to combat the injustices of the law, but especially did he need one if he were the least ambitious, if he were the least desirous for the elevation of himself or any of his loved ones from the rut into which he was born. Mamba was ambitious. That she was shrewd is evidenced by the scheme upon which her plan was founded. She did not choose a large, wealthy family to invade, where she could have gained no personal recognition; rather, she chose among the four hundred a small family "born in the slave-holding tradition of amused and even affectionate tolerance toward the negro once that negro had detached himself from the mass and

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2Ibid., p. 3.
become identified as an individual."¹ Here also was a well-bred house-
ervant, "a gentle and highly competent instructor in the intricate 
technique that the aged tyro must acquire."² Further proof of the 
skill of Mamba's plan lies in the vulnerable moment of her attack, 
timed with a proficiency expected only of a professional mathematician. 
On an evening of unusual excitement, the evening of Polly's debut, Mamba 
appeared with flowers that 'just happened' to be the only thing lacking 
to complete the girl's toilette. The natural reward was gratitude. 

Though Mamba could not readily force herself upon the Wentworths 
with complete acceptance, she humbled herself to the depths of servility, 
even to the condescending house-servant, in an effort to worm her way in- 
to that household. "..., with the true spirit of the social climber, 
she was prepared to pocket her pride until it could be worn with dignity."³ 
Through her artless wisdom⁴ Mamba senses that "there are more flies to be 
cought with honey than with vinegar." She knows that by starting at the 
bottom of the household and continuing upward by working herself into 
the good graces of the children, she will finally be accepted by the 
mother herself. Having continued to shower "Little Missie" with flowers, 
Mamba insisted upon doing bits of Maum Nette's work:

"Tek yo' ease, Mistress Netta, tek yo' ease. Ah 
knows dishwashin' ain't fuh de quality sullud folks. 
Attuh yo' done git up, an' comb yo' putty gray hair, 
an' cook dis fine breakfus, an' 'splain tuh yo' white 
folks what tuh do all day, yo' ought fuh tek yo' ease 
an' studdy 'bout yo' frien' Gawd, while some poor-
folks nigger like me cleans up attuh yo'."⁵

When given clothes by Mrs. Wentworth, "Mamba courtesied almost to the

¹Ibid., p. 5.
²Ibid.
³Ibid.
⁴A true characteristic of the "old Negro."
⁵Ibid., p. 10.
floor, with her rags trailing grotesquely about her. Then she raised
a face that was radiant with gratitude.

"Oh, t'ank yo', Miss. Ah's too t'ankful. Ah's been too 'shame' tuh come roun' yo' an' Little Missie in dese ole rags. Now Ah's goin' be dat clean my own ma wouldn't know me. Now Ah t'ink dat de nex' time Little Missie go to dance she ain't goin' be 'shame' fuh let me go long wid she an' carry she slipper bag."1

It was not flattery and cunningness alone that won for Mamba entrance into the Wentworth's household. When around, she was never idle, and "therein lay her triumph."2 After Mamba's position was fairly secure, she knew that

She had only to keep a favour ahead of her victim, leaving upon her the burden of an unrepaid obligation. . . . Presently, when she was safely out of earshot of Maum Netta, she commenced to refer to the Wentworth household as "my white folks."3

Mamba worked for three years without any compensation other than food and "outworn and easily recognisable garments of her new mistress." This, however, was just what Mamba desired, because in addition to identifying her as "that new negro of the Wentworths,'" such an arrangement gave her the liberty to go and come at will. Her private life was not questioned.

Not once did Mamba, even after her position had become fixed, forget the purpose which had driven her to adopt the Wentworths as "her white folks." Even song, which Heyward emphasizes as God's greatest gift to the Negro, did not eliminate her periodic preoccupation. Set out in bold relief against the seriousness of her purpose is the incident in which Mamba conceals having found a Judge's false teeth, lost while he was in swimming. Mamba leaves the Wentworths and persuades a dentist to fit

1 Ibid., p. 11.
2 Ibid., p. 15.
3 Ibid., p. 16.
these teeth into her mouth. Though comical on the surface, even this
episode has its place in Mamba’s scheme. When she again enters upon
the scene of the Wentworth threshold, she presents herself as a trans-
formed person. In a dress covered by a spotless apron, with a white
starched, ruffled cap upon her head, and with her face filled out by
the masculine false teeth, Mamba presents a comical picture standing
before the Wentworths. But Mamba stood composed; she was not there to
be amusing now:

Four years had gone into building toward this moment; four
years of cajolery, flattery, clowning. . . . She was emerging
as a new entity now. The strange assortment of accessories that had gone into her make-up: cast-off clothing of
Mrs. Wentworth, teeth of a distinguished jurist, manner
sedulously copied from Maum Netta, apron and cap from God
knew where, were losing their separate identities, merging
into the new ego that they were destined in the future to
express. . . .

. . . Mamba stood before them recreated in her own concep-
tion of the ideal toward which she had been striving. . . .
She brought a new, compelling element into the atmosphere
that seemed subtly to disturb the ancestral rhythm of
thought and action. The room was very quiet. The abrupt
change from hilarity made the silence seem ominous.1

Having tabulated all the uncompensated tasks which she had performed,
Mamba knew that the balance was in her favor, and was ready to present
her well-meditated speech:

"Ah gots tuh get uh pay job now, Miss Wentworth.
Ah gots tuh get money fuh somet'ing p'tic'lar. An'
Ah gots tuh fin' uh white boss what kin look attuh
my chillen when dey meets dey trouble. . . . Ah is
axin' yuh now tuh gib me letter an' say Ah is raise
wid yo' famly."2

It was then that Mamba stated the goal toward which she was working.
When asked her purpose, she confessed:

"Tain't fuh me, Miss. Ah kin tek care ob Mamba.
But time is changin'. Nigger gots tuh git diff'ent
kind ob sense now tuh git long. Ah gots daughtuh,

1 Ibid., pp. 36-39.
2 Ibid., p. 40.
And Mamba was ready when trouble came, as shall be pointed out later.

To the Atkinsons, who knew of aristocratic Charleston only through the myth surrounding it, Mamba was not the low-bred Negro bearing the stamp of the waterfront, but one of the old-fashioned traditional "mammies" who had belonged to white people of quality. "Maum Mambe" of the Battery had truly arrived. Little did the Atkinsons, who were southerners by adoption, realize just how untraditional "Maum Mambe" really was. The time was now ripe for Mamba to wear her pride with dignity.

It was her sly, unconquerable will that won for Mamba a place of distinction in the Atkinson household; it was designing plus efficiency that endeared her in their affections and kept her there. With "the look of unsatisfied hunger" in her eyes, Mamba settled down to face the long struggle before her.

Those first days had been cruel. She had missed the strong talk of the court, the broad, frank humour, the smells, the clashing colours, the ours, goats, buzzards, and tumbling black babies. She had missed her pipe in the long summer duaks with the old men and women who were drifting happily with the days, gossiping and scolding the young negroes to their hearts' content. But later her wild longings had found a tame consolation in retrospection.\(^2\)

Retrospection alone did not serve to adjust Mamba to her new setting:

She had to an amazing degree the racial adaptability that even age cannot stiffen into a set pattern, and . . . she lived with that complete immersion in her impersonation that made her for the time being the character itself.\(^3\)

By saving half of her wages every week, Mamba, within six years, had acquired a representative reserve, "awaiting the inevitable emergency."

"And above and beyond all other considerations, she now had her white

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\(^1\) Ibid.

\(^2\) Ibid., p. 55.

\(^3\) Ibid.
folks to stand between Hagar and Lissa and the impersonal justice of the state should evil fortune bring them to that."\(^1\) And wise had Mamba been in so shaping her life, because the "inevitable emergencies" did arise.

Within the remaining pages of Mamba's Daughters, there occurred three great episodes which affected the lives of both Mamba and her daughters. In each instance, it was the uncanny, quick-working brain of Mamba that decided the best course to be taken. When Hagar's first great offense took her to court, it was Mamba who wheedled her boss into interceding, thus lightening Hagar's sentence. Though the sentence to leave town immediately was light in comparison to the usual ones of Negroes, it gave rise to the problem of where to go. Mamba again came to the rescue. At the Wentworths Mamba had been the most understanding friend of Saint Wentworth, now managing a commissary store on one of the sea-islands. Naturally, Mamba sent Hagar there. Hagar went and simply explained:

"All she say was for me to come to yo' an' tell yo' she done sen' me."
Saint thought: "Confound the old woman. Is there no limit to her audacity!"\(^2\)

The second of the three episodes was Hagar's forbidden return to Charleston. Having brought a very sick man to town, Hagar sought Mamba for advice. "An hour after the old woman came cursing into the court,\(^3\) arrangements were complete," and as Hagar left,

In the moment of departure, the old face, hanging above her against the thinning night, softened, and the deeptimbered voice said gently, "Good-bye, Daughter. Fuh Gawd! take care ob yo'self an' keep out ob trouble."\(^4\)

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\(^1\) Ibid., p. 56.
\(^2\) Ibid., p. 86.
\(^3\) Court here is used in the sense of a section in East Bay Street.
\(^4\) Ibid., p. 123.
The third and greatest catastrophe to touch the lives of Mamba and her daughters was the murder of Gilly Bluton by Hagar. Because Lissa's reputation was involved, Mamba's first thought was of the girl.

Mamba wasted no sentimental pity on the broken thing upon the floor. Her whole being was focussed on the staggering predicament that confronted her. "Get outside," she ordered. "Ah got to t'ink." She blew out the candle and followed them into the open, thinking aloud: "Ah got to see! Lissa away quick, an' she got to go far..." 1

Mamba was "full of plan-making." The great "inevitable emergency" for which she had been scheming twenty-three years to meet, had truly come. Hagar was given ten dollars and advised to "hit it out an' hide." Mamba disliked the idea of hiding, but she knew that once questioned, Hagar would be "gibbin' yo' self away by mornin'." 2 Lissa, last to have been seen with Bluton and to whom the murder would have been charged, was sent to New York to live with a friend of Hagar's. Saint Wentworth, who was now in New York, was again appealed to by Mamba. Saint received a telegraph from his mother which read:

Mamba's granddaughter Lissa in trouble arrives New York noon train. Mamba begs you to meet and assist her. 3

Wise old Mamba! The servility, the humbleness, the many favors she lavished upon the Wentworths when she first invaded their home had been compensated for not in cash, but in many ways for which money could not substitute -- ways that were now extending into the third generation. At the time he received the telegram, Saint had other things to do, but "a power that he was at a loss to explain kept dragging him back," back to granting Mamba's request. He reflected:

Mamba out of the long past with the funny string-wrapped hair, the solitary fang -- her savagery -- her understanding

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1 Ibid., p. 284.
2 Ibid., p. 285.
3 Ibid., p. 286.
tenderness. Mama with her one idea and her everlasting persistence. What did she care if it upset his plans -- Lissa -- Lissa! He was reminded of the time she had made him take Hagar in at the mines. Would he never be free of Mamba's daughters? What was there about her that could hound a man across the miles and make him feel like a cur until he did her bidding? A comical old negress a thousand miles away, and yet, somehow, he felt that he dare not go back and meet her eyes unless he had responded to her summons for help.¹

Saint did not fail Mamba. The years of mental and physical toil that went into the guidance of two lives, the ambition, the scheming, the will power which could not be moved, and all of the crowning glory of Mamba as a truly great and immortal character are so artistically read into the following passage that the failure to quote it would do injury to the stoic, and yet romantic, the resolute, yet tender, the unforgettable, the dearly-beloved Mamba: When Saint asked Lissa how she was "fixed for money."

She opened her handbag and gave him a roll of bills and a pass book on a Charleston bank. He counted the money -- three hundred dollars. Then he opened the pass book. It showed an account in the name of Lissa Atkinson that had been opened nineteen years previously. He spun the pages that exhibited columns of deposits of one dollar -- sometimes two -- here and there a week was skipped. That was when Hagar was up for a fine, he thought. After each of these eloquent breaks the amounts would run to one-fifty or even two-fifty until the deficit had been made good. He came to the final page and found the balance: fourteen hundred and twenty-five dollars. For a moment he sat struck dumb by the utter beauty of the thing that lay behind the prosaic columns of figures. Mamba -- a maker of bricks without straw, a disciple of a single transcendent ideal, in the name of which she had worked her obscure miracles, with none to know, none to applaud.²

Heyward's artistic style is again at its height in several descriptions of Hagar. Hagar is first introduced in a state of drunkenness: Up on the bed

... a huge negress was sprawled. The arms thrown over the head were muscles like a stevedore's, and there was a  

¹Ibid., pp. 288-89.  
²Ibid., pp. 291-92.
strange incongruity between the masculine shoulders rising high on the pillow and the full, heavy breasts of a woman. The face, dark and broad-featured, showed no effects of dissipation but seemed singularly childish as it lay there in the oblivion of sleep. Below the chest the body was not ungainly, the swell of the hips scarcely noticeable, and the legs, slender and powerfully thwed, seemed wholly masculine.

A creature designed by nature to bear her young, then, single-handed, to wrench their sustenance from a harsh physical environment; an enormous maternity and the muscles of a fighting male bound together, and the face of a simple child set in watch over them. A pre-pioneer type, not versed in the solving of riddles.

After a fight she may be seen as

. . . a gigantic figure, her massive torso bare to the waist, the great breasts of a woman, and the knotted man’s shoulders, blood on her face and in a dark rivulet between her breasts. . . . The circle opened as she approached, and with the fixed stare of a somnambulist she passed through . . . .

Coming out of the swamp where she has just deposited her murdered victim, she may be seen

Crouched over almost on all fours, with prehensile hands tearing her way through the undergrowth, the great woman emerged like a prehistoric creature quitting its primal slime, and climbed out upon the knoll.

Though Hagar’s physical strength makes for a lasting picture of her as a grotesque, colossal, childishy dumb, fighting individual, the many virtues that she possessed do not fail to leave a strong impression also. Her honesty, her submissiveness, her fair-play, her kindheartedness are traits that make for spiritual strength not dwarfed by her physical strength. Even in court a young lawyer said of her:

"One can’t help liking the woman. She’s not a criminal type."

"There’s nothing vicious about her."

In the following scene, honesty and fair-play are behind Hagar’s savagery:

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1Ibid., pp. 31-32.
2Ibid., p. 64.
3Ibid., p. 303.
4Ibid., pp. 71-72, 77.
Upon returning clothes to a group of sailors, Hagar was seduced into getting drunk, and thereby cheated out of her money. When, unexpectedly, the boat was ready to leave, Hagar was rushed off deck, and, becoming sober in the process, pulled one of the sailors off with her. A fierce fight ensued in which Hagar, "sobbing loudly and bitterly," uttering in a continuous monotone the words, "two dolluh," emerged victorious.

The woman's lips moved inaudibly. She bent over the inert body, turned it over, and fumbled laboriously through its pockets. At last she found some bills, opened them, retained two, and returned the remainder with an air of detachment.\(^1\) (italics mine)

When arrested twenty minutes later, Hagar was, as usual, submissive in her surrender. The officer "had slipped his gun back to the holster. He had come for her before, and he knew the woman with whom he had to deal. There would be no trouble."\(^2\) Drinking was perhaps Hagar's greatest vice, and often led to her arrest after which she returned "childishly shamefaced and repentant." If drinking were her greatest vice, love for Lissa was certainly her greatest virtue. Mamba had so instilled within her the necessity of giving the child a chance for the better things of life that in Lissa lay Hagar's religion. In her childish, incompetent way, she did all she knew how for the well-being of the child. Such tender devotion to a child by so crude an individual is almost a paradox. After Hagar was sentenced to leave Charleston, she could see her child only when Mamba brought her to their secret rendezvous. At one of these meetings she

...fell on her knees in the dirt of the road and strained the child to her breast, drawing her fingertips along the soft cheek with her characteristic gesture. As always she was awed by the miracle that this fragile thing could be the fruit of her great crude body.\(^3\)

After Lissa had gently released herself from Hagar and had "sidled over and

\(^1\)Ibid., p. 64.
\(^2\)Ibid.
\(^3\)Ibid., p. 100.
leaned against Mama's clean, stiff Sunday black."

For Baxter the glory had somehow gone out of the sunlight. The sight of Lissa leaning against her grandmother filled her with a new sort of loneliness that hurt her more than the past days of separation.

Hagar's physical strength was even increased when she went to work in the phosphate mines, where she "laboured with her great body for her child ...". As a result of lifting "ten pounds of rock with every hoist of the shovel," her "muscles were like iron and were no longer a vast half-directed force but a perfectly disciplined machine."

There was more than kindheartedness behind the scene in which Baxter was the only one around who made an effort to save the life of the unanimously despised Gilly Bloton, who lay on the floor bleeding from knife wounds. Self-sacrifice enters in that Baxter risked her own freedom to get Gilly to the hospital in Charleston.

Sympathy and understanding are exhibited by Baxter when she, again alone in her conviction, goes to the new minister's church to worship everyone else had deserted him and returned to his old church. When Baxter admitted that she had not come because she believed in the God that he preached about, Reverend Grayson asked:

"Then why did you come in to-day?"

She had trouble getting started. Words eluded her, and she was trying terribly hard to be honest and yet not hurt him. At last she said, "Ah been lonely a lot, too. Ah ain't likes tuh be by myself in my trouble. Ah done set out fuh de ole church, and when Ah pass, Ah see yo' here, an' Ah can see yo' lookin' lonely. Den Ah come in. Dat's all."

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1 Ibid., p. 101.
2 Ibid., p. 103.
3 Ibid.
4 Ibid.
5 Ibid., p. 2:9.

Upon going to the country to work in the phosphate mines, Hagar changed her name to Baxter.
By so doing, Baxter had made a friend who later more than returned her favor.

Enraged by the fact that the very man whose life she had saved had attempted to blemish her daughter's spotless character, Hagar, ever blind and thoughtless in her actions, strangled Gilly Bluton.

Mamba advanced toward her. In her extremity her voice seemed heavy with hatred for her big bungling daughter.

"Yo' damned fool," she said. "See what yo' done now, everybody at dat dance know Lissa been wid Prince. People seen me come out here. Ah ought to ha' known if Ah turned my back on yo', yo'd play hell—"

Hagar buried her face in the crook of an arm and commenced to sob. "Oh, Gawd, Ma. Ah ain't stop to t'ink. Ah only know he been hurt Lissa."

After Mamba and Lissa had gone, Hagar thought of her crime "with neither regret nor terror." Without the guiding genius of Mamba's intelligence, Hagar was left for the first time to solve an important problem alone. As a result of her dull brain and her big kind heart, Hagar's solution proved cumbersome. Her mind was not so dull, however, that she could not realize the dilemma of things and take the heroic way out. Hagar carried the body of Gilly on her shoulder through the gloom of a dense swamp, in the middle of which she left the body to sink into the black ooze. But after she had left him there, Hagar could visualize

...his limbs jutting woodenly from the water, and black ooze creeping toward his open eyes. Poor Gilly---she couldn't hate him now."

Hagar tried to think of other things, but she could not forget how much Gilly hated the dark. She wondered if he would forget that she had once saved his life.

...Yes, Gilly would forget that she had saved his life once....
He'd only remember that she had strangled him and left him with his eyes full of black water.

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1Ibid., p. 284.
2Ibid., p. 304.
3Ibid., p. 395.
Nagar had no peace of mind until

...she had retraced her steps and with incredible labour of
body and agony of spirit dragged the corpse to the island.
Rigor mortis was passing, and Nagar composed the limbs de-
cently, and bathed the face and eyes with her handkerchief.
Then, leaving it gazing up into the open sky, she set out
for the outer edge of the swamp.¹

She now felt free, and her spirit soared, because "Gilly would rest easy
now with the sun in his face all day and the stars keeping him company at
night."² This act, however, motivated by some unexplainable emotion closely
akin to sympathy or kindness, proved to be the tragic flaw of this last
great episode which made Nagar a tragic figure. With Gilly out in the o-
pen, the buzzards began circling over him; they were tell-tale signs that
were certain to lead to the murdered man's discovery. Nagar, sensing her
inevitable doom that was sure to involve Lissa, decided that "at last, she
was going to give her child something of value, something that she could
always remember."³ Thinking her plan out carefully, Nagar returned to the
commissary and, true to her promise of twelve years previously, settled a
debt left after the drowning of Baxter, whose name she adopted upon first
coming to the mines; she treated all of the customers and said to Davy "with
a spurt of fierce and uncontrollable exultation in her voice: 'Don't
gimme de change, Son. Take um de do' an' t'row um far an' high. Ah's
done wid money. Ah's free now...free as Cawd."⁴ Then Nagar dictated a
note which defies the accusation of her having a slothful mind:

"Las' night Ah strangle Gilly Bluton do deat' wid my two
han'. Ah kill um 'cause he use' always tuh be my man, an' he
git sick ob me an' t'row me 'way. Dere ain't nobody dere but
me when Ah kill um. Dere ain't nobody know muttin' 'bout um
'ces' me...."⁵

¹Ibid., p. 306.
²Ibid., p. 307.
³Ibid., p. 310.
⁴Ibid., p. 314.
⁵Ibid., pp. 314-15.
Hagar then performed an act that marks the height of the new realistic treatment of the Negro by any white author: she walked very complacently down into the river....Her greatest asset, her big, kind, benevolent heart, had proved to be her greatest weakness.

It is again through the opinion of Saint Wentworth that the nobleness of Negro character is expressed, which fact has imbedded within it a startling significance: it gives added weight to Heyward's realistic treatment of the Negro character, because it makes for double realism in that it concedes liberal views toward the Negro by a southern character. Wentworth enclosed the clippings relating of Hagar's suicide within a letter to Lissa, which read:

These clippings will pain you, but you ought to know what they say. In no other way can you realise the sacrifice that Hagar has made for you. To the few of us who know the whole story, she has revealed herself as heroic, a mother of whom you should be proud as long as you live. The body has not been recovered and was probably carried far out to sea. It took Hagar's death to show us what she really was, and I for one am proud to have known her.  

Lissa is an example of an entirely new Negro character in a new social order that Heyward, alone among all the South Carolina novelists, depicts. Ambitious, sensible, and morally clean, she is shown bearing none of the traditional characteristics. Though different from Mamba and Hagar, Lissa never acts superior nor condescending toward them. She is fully aware of, and grateful for the sacrifices of these two women upon whose lives she rises to fame. Just as he shows through Mamba and Hagar that color does not operate where deep, intense emotions of the inner life are concerned,

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1Ibid., p. 321.

2Lissa here is an anachronism, but because her life is so closely interwoven with that of Mamba and Hagar, the writer feels that, for emphasis, she should be discussed at this point.
Heyward shows through Lissa that sociological barriers can be surmounted, and that color is not strong enough to draw a line where real talent is presented.

When Saint Wentworth, Heyward's mouthpiece, first saw Lissa, "her lack of embarrassment in the alien setting struck him at once." He judged her to be about ten or eleven, and thought:

Also she was beautiful. He knew that it was in bad taste to think of beauty in a Negro, but there was no other word that would serve. She was no more a pretty child than an ugly one. Beauty was the one word. Those eyes that were both Mamba's and Baxter's wore like lamps in the small oval of her face. A moment of wild conjecture came to the boy—where would this child end?—what destiny did America hold for her?

Well, it was Saint, more than any other white character, who found out just what place America did hold for Lissa. When Saint met Lissa in New York, after her hurried departure from the ugly murder case back home, he saw her for the first time as "Lissa Atkinson, with an individuality of her own."

She was clad in a modish tailored suit of dark blue with a flash of bright embroidery on collar and cuffs, and carried a small blue silk umbrella suspended from her wrist by a loop. Wentworth's glance took in the slender, superbly carried figure and the expressive face with its small full-lipped mouth and Mamba's eyes.

Lissa's composure and self-possession were in Saint's opinion, colossal. The way he "took her small valise," and his treatment in general of her as a lady were, in the writer's opinion, colossal. At first he took her coolness and calm acceptance of the sacrifices that had been made for her as ingratitude, but he soon saw this coolness as determination so strong and immovable that Lissa had no thought of questioning it.

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1Ibid., p. 137.
2Ibid., pp. 137-38.
3Ibid., p. 250.
4Ibid.
5Lissa's complete confidence and faith in the strength and ability of
Lissa would attain her goal because she, like her grandmother, had never once removed her gaze from it. He knew, of course, of the girl's reputation in coloured circles as a singer, and of Mamba's faith in her future. Now he saw that this faith was the only thing that mattered in their lives. It had been born and bred into the girl, her own belief in herself was supreme. Of the great faith that she and Mamba held in common there were certain articles that she must perform...If Lissa hesitated now, if she removed her gaze from the steady light to which it had become accustomed, and turned back, dazzled and blundering, she would have broken faith with Mamba. She would be guilty of unpardonable weakness. She must look only forward, and leave the road that she had travelled to the watchful eyes of the old woman.

After Lissa had become settled in New York, her most reverent thought of Charleston was that of her mother.

It was strange that she could feel no horror over her mother's act....After the years of separation Hagar had stood forth in that one illuminating hour more real, more vividly alive, than Mamba, for all the old woman's shrewd planning and unyielding devotion. Then, in the moment of parting, had come the climax when the inarticulate big woman had kissed her hand and she had found herself in her arms...the thought of her was a swift infusion of warmth--a feeling of completeness where before there had been want--a sudden and inexplicable pride of birth.

Realizing that the years of separation had prevented her showing appreciation for all the many things Hagar had done for her, Lissa, not knowing that her mother was even now passed beyond earthly reach, resolved to make it all up to Hagar. Upon being informed of her mother's death, and her every reaction is described with realism. One example follows:

"I won't go on," she rebelled. "I hate music. If it hadn't been for that I'd be alive to-day. I didn't know until that night how much I was missing her. I was always lonely, and I didn't know why. Grandma never gave me time to think. Now she's gone, and I'm sick of everything. I'm the loneliest girl in the world."3

her mother and grandmother made for her assurance. When Saint remarked that she did not seem the least afraid of being involved in the consequence, "I am not," she replied confidently. "Grandma and Mamma'll fix it at home; there's nothing they can't fix..." Ibid., p. 291.

1Ibid., pp. 292-33.
2Ibid., pp. 319-20.
3Ibid., p. 329.
But Lissa did not give up. She was reminded of her great chance for success. Salinski, who had never trained a Negro before, "was extravagant in his praise" of her voice. She realized that she was merely a symbol, that her great chance represented "a great chance for the negro race."  

Seven years later, Lissa made her debut in the new Metropolitan Opera House, which occasion brought the Wentworth family to New York. The description of Lissa's singing, the thoughts put into the minds of characters, and the ejaculations and comments expressed by them are all tools of Heyward's unbiased and thoroughly realistic treatment of the Negro. Broken comments follow:

"Good God, where'd she come from?" . . . "Can't you see it's now -- different? Can't you feel that it's something of our own -- American -- . . . . "It's native from the dirt up -- it's art -- and it's ours." "Ours?" a voice inquired. "Do you mean Negro?" "Negro, if you will, yes, but first, American.


The basis upon which the lives of the three women previously discussed were interwoven is expressed in the words of Mamba herself:

"Yo' an' me, Hagar -- what de hell is we? -- Nuttin'!
But Ah ain't no fool at schemin', an' yo' gots de strength.
Look like we ought fuh gib dat gal a chance 'tween us.

They did give Lissa a chance, and her success proved her to be worthy of it. Such were the characters of Mamba and her daughters.

Porgy, the crippled beggar, while possessing less of the admirable traits of the preceding characters, is equally individualistic.

Either by birth, or through the application of a philosophy

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1Ibid., p. 330.
2Ibid., pp. 333-35.
3Ibid., p. 102.
of life, he had acquired a personality that could not be ignored, one which disturbed. There was that about him which differentiated him from the hordes of fellow practitioners who competed with him for the notice of the tender-hearted.\footnote{DuBose Hayward, \textit{Forgy} (New York, 1925), p. 12.}

There was something about Forgy, as there was about Mambe, that prevented one's guessing his exact age. Like her, he was stoic, but unlike her, he was never romantic. His emotions were ever concealed.

He never smiled, and he acknowledged gifts only by a slow lifting of the eyes that had odd shadows in them. He was black with the almost purple blackness of un-adulterated Congo blood. His hands were very large and muscular, and, even when flexed idly in his lap, seemed shockingly formidable in contrast with his frail body.\footnote{Ibid., p. 13.}

Forgy's one vice was gambling, and while he was a beggar of the streets, he was king of the dice games. Not only was he an ace gambler, but Forgy excelled in other ways that did not require physical strength. It was generally conceded that "Forgy ain't got a leg, but he sho got sense."\footnote{Ibid., p. 43.} Forgy, however, was aware of his physical handicap, and reflected: "Sense do berry well; but he can't lift no weight."\footnote{Ibid.} Looking wistfully at big, strong stevedores, Forgy remarked: "Sense gots power tuh take a t'ing atter yuh gits dere, but he neber puts bittle in belly what can't leabe he restin' place."\footnote{Ibid., p. 44.}

The coming of Bess into Forgy's life had a greater effect than anything that had formerly touched the undisturbed dreamer. Bess made him a good mate, and Forgy, in his happiness, lost much of the "defensive barrier of reserve that he had built about his life."\footnote{Ibid., p. 76.} With Bess by his
side, Porgy met and overcame all obstacles — even when it involved his murdering Crown — that threatened his newly found happiness. Not until Bess finally left him did Porgy readopt his former stolid personality. Her desertion was the great tragedy of his life. He was laboring under this disappointment when at last

Maria saw that Porgy was an old man. The early tension that had characterized him, the mellow mood that he had known for one eventful summer, both had gone; and in their place she saw a face that sagged wearily, and the eyes of age lit only by a faint reminiscent glow from suns and moons that had looked into them, and had already dropped down the west.¹

Porgy and his goat were left alone "in an irony of morning sunlight."

Rhoda is a combination of Hagar's physical strength and Mambo's mental strength. She was a massive individual, "permanent, immutable, like a hill or a mahogany tree that had got its growth."² One might see her as Adam did, who "slid his eyes sideways from his guitar and saw dimly a large, earth-stained foot, and rising from it to the shadow of a high-tucked skirt a shapely but massively sculptured leg."³ Tall, broad-shouldered, and of good carriage, Rhoda was so sure "of her inexhaustible vitality, that she could spend it laughingly on anyone and have a superabundance left for her own incessant labors."⁴ Having become a "hardened matriarch" by the economic depression that struck St. Croix Island, Rhoda, in her dauntless crusade against the institution of marriage, was as strong in her conviction and as dominant a personality as was Jeanne d'Arc, who fought for a more noble cause. Rhoda's crudeness, her intellect, her strong emotional appeal are all diverse elements that make for her strength.

¹Ibid., p. 196.
²DuBose Heyward, Star Spangled Virgin (New York, 1939), pp. 15-16.
³Ibid., p. 36.
⁴Ibid., p. 32.
While Adam does not measure up to Rhoda, his mate, in personality, his physical strength is described with even more vividness:

His body was an incongruously assembled but beautifully functioning mechanism. The torso had obviously been designed for a larger man. The legs were short, slightly bendy, and enormously muscular. Arms that hung almost to his knees gave him the reach and power of a gorilla. His face, large, quite black, with strong, mobile features, presented to the world a look of disarming candor behind which his thoughts moved in complete privacy. His head was well shaped but too large, too perfectly formed. But... Adam in action became instantly a harmonious whole, at one with the sea or the land.

Adam, like Rhoda, regarded the institution of marriage with aversion. After deserting Rhoda, with whom he had lived for several years in common law fashion, Adam finally married, but soon tired of the strict custody of the institution and became free again:

Yes, he was wearied to death of the Anglican Church, "God Save the King" and the holy estate of matrimony. For five years he had tried them and he had found them wanting, and now, in his rejection of Victoria, their exemplary and shining exponent, he was rejecting them all.

He thought of his wife as a borrowed individual, "lent him" by God for the purpose of producing the "man-child" that Rhoda had been unable to give him. Hence, Adam was "at peace with his conscience" when he denounced the marriage institution, and returned to St. Croix where "Life... had been a free, gay and casual matter. You didn't marry, you lived with a woman as he had with Rhoda, and you were equally independent."

Though Adam and Rhoda are strong, individual characters, and though the conventional pattern of their lives has been greatly upset by the forces of a new social order, both, in their limitation of the traditional plantation characteristics, are nearer an adherence to than a departure from the traditional treatment represented through the preceding.

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1 Ibid., pp. 17-18.
2 Ibid., p. 4.
3 Ibid., p. 28.
characters treated as the old Negro in a new social order.

While the most dominant characters that Heyward treats in the light of the old Negro in a new social order have been discussed individually, they are by no means the only ones to appear in the same novels. In *Mamba's Daughters*, Maum Vina and other rural inhabitants whom Hagar encounters at the phosphate mines are characters identical to the sea-island characters of Julia Peterkin's novels. In a treatment that limits the traditional plantation concept, they are presented in the same environment, they adhere to the same superstitions, emotionality, and primitiveness that characterizes the Negroes in the novels of the preceding chapter. It is to this same group that the characters in the background of *Star Spangled Virgin* belong. However, the background characters of *Star Spangled Virgin* are more affected by political, economic, and social changes that grew out of the initiation of "The New Deal" on St. Croix Island. A similar type of Negro, but in a further advanced stage than the sea-island inhabitants is represented by Gilly Bluton, in *Mamba's Daughters*. He may be described even as a relatively new type in a new social order, but in direct contrast to the upper-class Negroes of the Broaden type cited below. He maintains baser principles. Bluton was

... a mulatto with negro predominating, but among the negroes of the camp, most of whom retained the sooty blackness indicative of undiluted Gullah blood, he seemed of a different race. The contrast was accentuated by the fact that he could read and write, and figure with rapidity.¹

Bluton was dishonest, but his dishonesty was based upon shrewdness, therefore, he adheres more to the 'ultra-racketeer-type' of the twentieth century than to the chicken thieves and the usual dishonest type featured in

the plantation tradition. He was flashy — "he always wore store clothes of extreme cut, and never spent money unless he had an audience" —, he gambled, he sometimes drank incessantly, and he engaged in violent conflict. He was low-bred, low-type, and through his own vices, he met his death.

To this same class belonged the Negroes of Catfish Row, mentioned in both Forgy and Mamba's Daughters. Their vices often led to homicides, which, in turn, gave rise to the element of social injustices in application to the Negro. Homicides within the Negro race rarely met with seriousness by the law. When the murderer was traced, it was not for the elevation of the morale of the Negro; instead, the punishment served only as an outlet for the white man's emphasis of the inferiority of the Negro. In each case of a sociological treatment, the Negro realizes the injustices inflicted upon him, and in different ways, he builds up barriers against them. A common bulwark is that of a white friend, as expressed in Mamba's Daughters. Another is the Negroes' solidarity against the white man, expressed most vividly in Forgy. When looking for Forgy, a lawyer asked a young Negro woman of Forgy's whereabouts:

"Forgy?" she repeated slowly, as though trying to remember. Then she called aloud: "Anybody hyuh know a man by de name ob Forgy?"

Several of the silent bystanders looked up. "Forgy?" they repeated, one after another, with shakes of the head.2

When Serena appeared and saw that the white man was Forgy's friend, she said:

"Go 'long an' call Forgy. Can't yuh tell folks when yuh see um?"

A light broke over the young woman's face.

"Oh, yuh means Forgy?" she cried, as though she had just heard the name for the first time; "I ain't understan' wut name yuh say, Boss," and echoes arose from different parts of the court. "Oh, yes, de gentleman mean Forgy. How come we ain't understan'." Then the tension in the air broke, and life resumed its interrupted flow.3

1Ibid.
2DuBose Heyward, Forgy (New York, 1925), p. 58.
3Ibid., p. 59.
The only initiation of an entirely new type of Negro is found in some of the novels of DuBose Heyward. It is indeed appreciable that this innovation has been made by a novelist who is a truly artistic writer, one who, because he writes for the sake of art, cannot be accused of diverting to Negro material as a means of escape.

The only representative space devoted to this type of Negro is found in Mamie's Daughters.

In the set in which Lissa moved she seldom met a full-blooded negro. . . . The atmosphere that she breathed was that of the Victorian drawing room. Music . . . had, in that rarer air, become "culture," and found expression in the Monday Night Music Club, and exhibitions of paintings. . . . in the life of the aristocracy, the new freedom was beginning to be manifest, smashing conventional usage, talking its Freud and Jung -- rearranging moral standards, and explaining lapses in its pat psychoanalytical jargon. . . . in the Monday Night Music Club ladies were ladies, those who were pale enough blushed, a leg was still a limb -- and gentlemen asked permission to smoke cigarettes.

. . . it must always be remembered as a beginning. It was establishing standards, putting a premium on chastity. Drawing-room pioneers, perhaps, but adventures none the less, and leading the way into a terrain that was new and strange.1

The Broadens, who are described as being "exceedingly well-to-do," represent the typical family of the upper-class Negro of the new type.

In his office of the new negro bank . . . and facing a caller across his desk, he [Broaden] emerged as an individual. Immediately one would notice the high broad structure of the forehead and the deep thoughtful eyes. Mrs. Broaden was a perfect partner -- small and delicately made, she carried her fifty years as though they were thirty and managed the home with that consummate skill which conceals itself in its work and gives an effect of effortlessness and ease. Both Mary and Thomas Broaden had taken degrees, but his was from Tuskegee, while she was a graduate of Howard University.2

The Broadens and their circle of friends objected to the expression, "coloured people." Mrs. Broaden said to Lissa: "You mustn't say coloured

1Ibid., pp. 231-32.
2Ibid., p. 232.
people, my dear — that doesn't mean anything — Japanese, Indian — all are coloured. You are a Negro — doesn't it make you proud to say it?"¹

Among Lissa's friends there was also Frank North, "a painter and a violinist," who had graduated from Avery, and for two years, had attended an art school in New York; Dr. Vincent, "a graduate of a Northern university"; Frederick Gerideau, "a contractor and builder who was an authority on colonial architecture . . ."; a Y. W. C. A. secretary, and a young social worker, both of whom "exhibited the flawless approach of the trained worker."

² Some of these people owned homes and automobiles; all were very cultured and refined. They spoke of "what our race is accomplishing artistically — when we have Burleigh, a poet like Paul Laurence Dunbar, and in painting, Tanner, to speak for us, we have something to be proud of . . . ."³

They were cognizant of the fact that when a Negro artist appeared before a white audience,

. . . if a negro wants to hear one of his own colour he has to get a seat in the gallery. We are not good enough to sit in the orchestra yet, but they will pay three dollars a piece to hear us sing or act.⁴

The attitudes held toward these Negroes by white characters within the same book are of the following nature: "... the sight of a negro attempting what they would have described as putting on airs," provoked from them "frank amusement."⁵ The more liberal attitude of Saint Wentworth was pointed out above. The contrasting attitudes toward the Negro attributed by Saint and his mother might be said to express the liberalism on the part of the young white generation and the adherence to the

¹Ibid., p. 233.
²Ibid., pp. 234-55.
³Ibid., p. 238.
⁴Ibid., p. 245.
⁵Ibid., p. 247.
traditional attitude toward the Negro by the old white generation. While at Lissa's concert Mrs. Wentworth was thinking:

... Libel on the South — nothing less than plain libel. ... Who, in pity's name, from a section which is famous for its aristocracy, elected to go and hunt up negroes to be sung about? Mambo's Lissa! Hagar's! Still more incredible... But if it had to be negro music why not, at least, the beautiful old spirituals? 1

It is possible that the author is expressing his own opinion when he had Lissa think of the new type of Negro: "They seem to spend all their time saying how glad they are to be negroes and all the time they're trying their damnedest to be white." 2

In Forgy, Simon Frasier is given the position of "a practicing attorney-at-law," but unlike the group of new Negroes in Mamba's Daughters, he is ignorant and illegal in his practice.

Without possessing the official sanction of the State for the practice of his profession, he was, by common consent among the lawyers, permitted to represent his own people in the police and magistrates' courts and to turn his hand to other small matters in which it was thought inadvisable to enquire too deeply. 3

Such a permission by white lawyers displays an attitude of the unimportance attached to the application of law to Negroes — so long as the violation concerned only the Negroes themselves. However, when an interest was taken in the improvement of the moral conditions among Negroes, Frasier was threatened to be jailed for the illegal granting of divorces. When reminded that a divorce is unobtainable in South Carolina, Frasier answered:

"I hyuh tell dere ain't no such t'ing fuh de white folks; but de nigger need um so bad, I ain't see no reason why I can't mak up one wut satify de nigger? He seem tuh work berry well, too, till dat sof' mout' gentleman come 'roun' an' onsentle all my client." 4

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1Ibid., p. 335.
2Ibid., p. 247.
3DuBois Hayward, Forgy (New York, 1925), p. 70.
4Ibid., p. 74.
In this same scene, the attitude of the Negro's inferiority is portrayed by a white lawyer who said to another, relative to Frasier's arrest: "There is no use taking the State's money and your valuable time on this case."\(^1\)

In *Star Spangled Virgin*, Victoria, "with her ideas about getting on in the world, reading books, marrying and being what she called respectable,"\(^2\) is a representation of the new Negro. Although she is never introduced as a character, the ideals for which she stands create an image as strong as the vivid characterization of Rhoda and Adam.

*Po' Buckra* by Stoney and Shelby, because of its odd treatment of the Negro, presents a problem of classification. Whereas the fate of a mulatto might be tragic, the mulatto, even if 'passing', is treated from the very beginning as a Negro problem. But in *Po' Buckra*, Barty, who is not affiliated with an acknowledged Negro family, and who is treated as a problem in the white race, raises the question of whether or not he should be included in a study which analyzes the treatment of the Negro in modern fiction. The very connotation of the title of the book -- *Po' Buckra*\(^3\) -- suggests a white character. But the fact alone that the authors permit Negro blood to flow in Barty's veins -- besides their verification of this blood by assigning to Barty traits reputed to be characteristic of the Negro -- is enough to convince the writer that the authors intended Barty to be a Negro character. However, because the treatment of the

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\(^3\) "*Po' buckra is a Southern term for poor white. . . . It has . . . been adopted by white and black alike, usually to describe a white man held in no great esteem or, . . . in the plural . . . as a race classification . . . ."* Stoney and Shelby, *Po' Buckra* (New York, 1930), Note.
dominant character so intricately involves both the Negro and the white race, the novel becomes sociological in its adherence to an interracial problem — a problem

"... that the Low-Country has had on its hands for nearly as many years as there have been white men in Carolina. They found the Indian here and brought the Negroes. Three races, three cultures, three histories. Each race was bred to meet different conditions, had achieved different minds and bodies. Folly, lust, and carelessness mixed them so that we now have these men whose bodies are battle-grounds of bloods and instincts and who are never at peace with themselves or the world they live in."

Certainly, Barty's body was a battle-ground "of bloods and instincts," and he was never, never at peace with himself or the world he lived in.

Out of the interracial mixture in the Low-Country of South Carolina, there had evolved four kinds of people, one of which was the "brass-ankle," the class to which Barty belonged. A "brass-ankle" was

"... a mixture of everything human that lived here—about a hundred years ago. White, negro and Indian, compounded. Some traces of wild foreign bloods, Spanish and Portuguese, real or suppositional. Sometimes the mixing was four or five generations ago; but there's enough of the tar-brush about all of them to damn them eternally so far as this country is concerned."

The origin of the mixture involved in Barty's ancestry occurred about three generations prior to his time. His great-grandfather had been a man of "quality" until "... dat ol' fellow way back dere took to liquor an' strange women..."

"De fust' wife was a white woman. If she was a cracker or no, I ain't sho'. De second woman were a

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1Tbid, p. 36.
2"Bum! here dey is four kinds o' people. Two kind o' white folks; quality-buckra, an' po' buckra — da's crackers; all kind o' colored folks — dem is all niggers. And den dey's dem what has Injun in 'em too. Dem is de las' kind an' dey git de most of it — brass-ankle. You is brass-ankle, an' dat is straight." Tbid., p. 25.
3Tbid., p. 36.
Injun. And den in his old age he got him a big nigger
gal w'at gin him mo' chillum twice ober dan de udder two.
He liked his meat stronger every time! Since den, de'
mame o' Grandison come to Grimson. 'Tis well come by too;
'cause de ol' man's gran's, an' great-gran's, married an'
remarried an' got all tangle' up till tis a durn hard matter
to call any ob 'em white, black or Injun. Dey's all mix'
up till none o' 'em is anything. Look at 'em — all colors,
like dey is! Black, white an' yellow. Dey's all brass-
ankle now."

In the opinion of Uncle Tacitus, Barty bore "the true stigmata of
his people":

"Look at the strange copper tones in his skin — some of
them as yellow as Chinamen — the coarse dark hair, the
wide nostrils, the thick lips: Indian, Negro, and God
knows what. If you'd looked close I warrant you'd have
seen the brown flecks in the whites of his eyes, that
come only from African blood. ..."

He has "known honest brass-ankles but they're devils if you get them
against you. Then they'll lie, steal, cheat, and shoot you in the back."3

In his sadistic misdemeanors and horrible crimes, Barty is shown to be no
exception in the maintenance of these characteristics. His revenge upon
those who brand him as a "nigger," and the many ways in which he tries to
become accepted by white society are compensations that do not appease
his agony and conflicting emotions motivated by the thought of having
Negro blood in him. He had been reared as a white child, he wanted to be
white, but he had always borne the stigma of a "brass-ankle". At "Hell

1Ibid. In addition to slipping in an attitude that belittles the
sexual potentialities of the Negro in the statements "He liked his meat
stronger every time," and "... w'at gin him mo' chillum twice ober dan
de udder two," the authors have shown evidence of absurd reasoning in the
summation of the entire quotation. The character clearly stated that
these off-springs had married and remarried an "got all tangle' up." She
did not state that they had intermarried. Yet, Barty is a "brass-ankle",
who is supposedly a mixture of all three bloods. How any off-spring from
the mating of either white and white, or white and Indian, or white and
Negro can be so entangled with traits from all three, without there having
been intermarrying, is beyond the comprehension of the writer.

2Ibid., p. 37.

3Ibid.
Hole, however, everyone knew of his ancestry, and while reflecting, he thought: "Nigger they probably were callin him right now. And who were they to put a name like that on him? He was 'most as white as any of them." The army was "the first place he'd ever landed where he had had unquestioned social rights." When he first enlisted classifying had bothered him. How would they rate him, white or colored? Before them at last he'd quaked as he answered a lot of questions, but he'd done his best to follow Mericky's advice, act like a white man, and not be too exact a bout names and places. He needn't have worried... He wasn't trying to vote or join a church. They didn't question his color.

When he had first decided that he would not be satisfied being anything other than white, Mericky had advised:

"You got to git 'way from here -- nebbe a hundred miles or so. When you gits dere, you gotta act like a white man de bes' way you kin. 'Member one t'ing; don't you be too ordinary, needer mean to niggers. A white man ain't 'fraid to be polite to niggers his own way. Yo' pappy and de like o' him don't care to treat 'em decent for fear people will t'ink day is kin an' kind. Don't ebber fight wid 'em, an' nebber git drunk wid 'em. Boss 'em an' cuss 'em like a real white man does."  

Barty had

... sat there looking at her in intense protest. He did not want to be negro. How could he go on like this? It was hopeless to be otherwise if he lived as the nephew of a colored woman, whether people called her so or not.

Barty had ambition, and in that way of course, "... his white blood was asserting itself." But his ambition was over-shadowed by his many

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1Ibid., p. 14.  
2Ibid., p. 162.  
3Ibid., p. 150.  
4Ibid., pp. 28-29.  
5Ibid., p. 24.  
6Ibid.
base qualities:

He did not know and he did not care to know why he did or did not do a number of things. If he felt lazy, he wanted to lazy. If he felt vindictive, he wanted to be savage. His virtues and his vices were those of an animal.\(^1\)

He lacked sportsmanship; he was bitter in his hatred for all Negroes; ruthless in his selfish ambition; primitive in his emotions; savage in inflicting pain upon others, and, all in all, an utterly despicable character. Barty's last name, Grunson, calls up the word gruesome, not only because of the similarity in sound, but because the latter is far more descriptive of and befitting to his brutal personality. When, in the army, Zeb had destroyed Barty's chance of marrying the girl he loved and tainted his record by "telling" (that he was a Negro), Barty had been afraid to avenge himself by murdering Zeb there, but his revenge was hardly less gruesome:

He'd done a mean old fighting trick to the fellow. After all he ought to be happier walking around than six foot underground where he deserved to be. He could still see. Only one of his eyes was gouged out.\(^2\)

Later, when Zeb encountered Barty while prowling on his land, "Half-un-consciously he moved a hand up toward the empty eye-socket."\(^3\) The sight of Zeb made Barty again want to kill him, but "Killing wasn't good enough."

Barty said to him:

"You strayed into my way once before and you broke me up with a girl and with everything. I've a good mind to fix you as I fix stray razorbacks that come botherin' round my hog pasture. . . . Them big ears o' yo'n would hold my plantation mark good, an' I'd only be too sorry you hadn't a tail to dock to show what I done to you."\(^4\)

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\(^1\) Ibid., p. 270.
\(^2\) Ibid., p. 317.
\(^3\) Ibid., p. 339.
\(^4\) Ibid., p. 341.
Barty put his knife away, because he knew that "if he once drew blood, he would go mad, and rip, and stab, and cut! If he so much as struck him it would end the same way." Barty did not kill Zeb. Instead, he left him lying "naked and burning under the full play of the hot sun," bound hand and foot to two saplings, with his face upward, with scores of flies pestering him, and buzzards flying around waiting for him to die. None to Barty's credit, Zeb was found before it was too late.

After his marriage to Judith, a fallen aristocrat who knew nothing of Barty's history, he was continuously mean to Useful, a follower of her foreparents as a servant in the Beaufain household. However, these and other misdemeanors, though serious enough, were dwarfed by his greatest crime, so tragic that it looms high above the others. Having confessed to Judith that he was involved in selling whiskey illegally and that he was a "brass-ankle", Barty left the Barony in despair, thinking that Judith had turned him away because of the convictions of her brother, who had just returned. In an effort to ease his turbulent soul, Barty became intoxicated. In his intoxication, he grew more evil with the thought of what had just happened to him, and thoroughly enraged with Judith's brother, he returned to the Barony:

As he reached the foot of the terrace steps, the round-headed window on the stair landing slowly filled out against the dark body of the house into a pattern of faint yellow light.

Barty swayed uncertainly, drawing heavy, short breaths and watching, fascinated.

Then, unmistakable against the flare of the lamp he was carrying, the silhouette of a man's head and shoulders stood out — the man he was going to beat up and scare off — René Beaufain.

Brain, hand, and eye moved almost automatically. Quick as lightning and almost unpremeditated, Barty's gun was up. After that, he knew what he had done only when the sound of the shot humming in his ear,

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1 Ibid., p. 342.
2 Ibid., p. 343.
the sudden blackness in the window, and the impact against his shoulder, connected themselves in his
groggy mind.

Then he turned and ran.\(^1\)

To murder his wife's brother from the dark was not enough to portray
the black character of Barty. To this ghastly deed was added cowardice,
which crowns this treatment of exaggerated realism: Seeing the house
on fire, Barty, thinking that Judith was inside, rushed back to save her.
Then, the idea occurred to him that Judith might not be inside, and that
she might have him convicted for the murder of René. The very thought
left him numb with fear.

Or even if they had been burned to death, what would
the law want to know about that house in ashes, about his
missing wife, or about René Beaufain?
Jail? This might mean the Chair! Fear became frenzy.
He wanted cover. He started to run, and crashed through
the bushes on the ditch bank.
"Come on, Tige! Come on -- we got to trabble, trabble
fas' an' far.\(^2\)

For all of his viciousness, savagery, and debasity, however, Barty --
true to the maxim which includes the expression, "there is so much good in
the worst of us" -- does have one outstanding virtue, that of his love for
Judith. The love for his wife motivated a desire to measure up to some of
her high standards, and had a meager effect upon limiting Barty's baser
principles. Pathos fills the scene in which he tells Judith of his mixed
blood:

His face became pitiful, his eyes filled, and his voice
was husky. "You and your friends thought I was po'
buckra. Well, I passed for one, but I'm not a white
man -- not what your people call white. I'm a mongrel,
Bad as Tige. I'm mixed; white, Indian, and -- nigger!"

Frenzy seized Barty. "Yes! Worse than nigger!
I'm a brass-ankle -- worse than a stinking nigger or
a lousy Indian -- too low and mean for anybody, black
or white, to want around. I'm a BRASS-ANKLE! Do you

\(^1\) Ibid., p. 415.
\(^2\) Ibid., p. 426.
hear? And even God don't show any mercy to brass-ankles."\(^1\)

Such was the tragic fate of Barty Grunson.

A minor treatment of the Negro is displayed in Po' Buekra through Useful, the loyal house-servant. Useful and the few other Negroes who enter only as complements to the white characters, are as exaggerated in the light of traditionalism as Barty is in the light of realism. Devotion on the part of Useful and Judith was mutual:

\[\ldots\text{ Useful was the oldest friend that she had in the world, closer than kin, more dependable and depending. To lose her would be more than the mere loss of a limb, more, Judith thought, like the cutting away of a vital organ.}\]

In withstanding the many abuses from Barty all for the sake of her beloved "Miss Judy", and in foregoing her own personal desires to stand by Judy in time of need, Useful is a 1930 edition of an 1832 Hester.\(^3\) The few Negroes here depicted are superstitious, lazy, and thoroughly conventional. The attitude of laziness is expressed in the following quotation: "'Dey seem to t'ink dis war fetch a now freedom. De las' one free dem from slavery, dis one free dem from wo'k!'"\(^4\) Depreciation is hers:

It was typically negro to give an air of conspiracy to such a simple thing as the sale of a cow or the purchase

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2Ibid., p. 280.
3"Co'se, Miss Judy, I ain' 'mostly wanter go back, de way t'ings is, but if you is goin' I gotta go wid you. I ain't like dat triflin' London, to run an' lef' you in yo' trouble. After all, ain't I Bewain raise'? An' I is proud o' my raisin'." Ibid., p. 140.

Cf. Simms's The Yumassaee (1832), Hester portrayed the same loyalty when he refused his freedom. "I d'n to h---- maussa, if I guine to be free. \ldots\ 'Tis impossible, maussa. \ldots\ !" Sterling Brown, The Negro In American Fiction (Washington, D. C., 1937), p. 9.

4Stoney and Shelby, Po' Buekra, p. 178.
of a sewing machine. Writing and paper were white man's magic."

Whether realistic, or whether traditional the treatment of the Negro in Po' Buckra makes for a very derogatory portrait.

Madame Margot (1921) by John Bennett also adheres to an interracial problem, but one that involves the Creoles in New Orleans. Very beautiful and accomplished in her art of millinery Madame Margot is concerned chiefly with having her daughter remain virtuous and honorable. Her greatest desire is "to keep her white to all eternity." In order to accomplish her purpose, she sells herself to the devil. As she grew older, her beauty faded, her prosperity waned until she was finally poverty stricken. "Old Mother Go-go", in her old age, was claimed by the devil.

Margot died in a dirty hovel in an undesignated alleyway in the midst of a negro quarter, where, if one beat a drum or caused an instrument of an orchestra to sound, the people swarmed from the tenements like ants out of a hill. The place was fallen and foul, and filled with beggary; and that is the end of a tenement; for beggars are like distemper, the place where they have lived is hard to cure. All the houses in the alley were filthy, but none was filthy as hers.

The following quotation succinctly expresses the cause behind all the misery of a tragic mulatto:

Too black to be buried among the white, too white to lie down with the black, she was buried, in secret, in her own garden, under the magnolia-trees.

Highly imaginative, and written in beautiful, poetic language, Madame Margot is so cleverly written that Madame Margot's identity is but little revealed until her tragic end. The book's greatest significance in disclosing an attitude lies in the author's conception of the deep bitterness of a tragic mulatto who, if not at peace with herself, also has no place of recognition in this world.

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1 Ibid., p. 134.
2 John Bennett, Madame Margot (New York, 1921), p. 106.
3 Ibid., p. 110.
If traditionalism is waging a battle against realism in Coleman's Don't You Weep, Don't You Moan, the former is so obviously victorious that the faint survival of realism is pathetic in its effort to hold its own. The Negro is definitely in a new social order, but it is one in which his inferior place is rigidly fixed. In Charleston, Negroes are seen "carefully mingling with the whites on the sidewalk. Mingling yet apart."

On upper King Street the fascinating window displays of "yellow shoes and crimson dresses "never failed to "attract the eyes of the eager blacks."" Stale pink candy and yellow fly-specked buns were among the luxuries which were bought on Saturday night, when discretion and economy were cast aside" by the Negroes.

The type of Negro treated in Don't You Weep, Don't You Moan is the same old type, unsuccessfully disguised in a new social order. The best delineation of this type is presented in Tater, one of the main characters. A description of him follows:

He was not too dark. That was the important thing. He was a copper brown. His hair could be parted and made to lie moderately uncurled on his head. No wonder he did not look like a nigger. He was a Hugger. Had he been as black as slate, he would not have looked like a nigger. One has to be a nigger to look like one. He had white folks. Those white folks had brought him up carefully, following the traditional standards for the negroes who "belong". He did not have to announce to Charleston that he was a white folks' nigger. Charleston could tell such things by his manner, by his attitude toward other negroes, and by the very look of him.

Tater was not superstitious.

"Cuttin' ain't de onliest way to fix people," he snapped.

"Conjur?" she asked, beginning to get frightened.

"Gawd, No! You is a country nigra fo' sho. Al-ways gettin' pop-eyed about conjurs. I'se a town man an' a white folk's nigra an' ain't studyin no such

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1Richard Coleman, Don't You Weep, Don't You Moan (New York, 1935), p. 177.

2Ibid.

3Ibid., p. 3.
crazy mess as conjurin' people."\(^1\)

but true to the traditional portrayal, he was fundamentally emotional:

Perhaps he would forget his notions acquired in the Nigger yard house and remember he was a negro like all the rest; wanting his woman before all else, and in spite of all else.\(^2\)

At times he is, untraditionally, unhappy: "Tater was unhappy. Even a white man who thinks that negroes never know unhappiness could have seen that."\(^3\) He even foregoes the traditional characteristic of love for loud, conspicuous apparel, and recognizes poor taste in others.\(^4\) In a very odd and depreciating way, he is accorded pride: "He hated all of the kitchen work he had to do for both the big house and the yard house . . . . He was a man now and a woman's work was hateful to him."\(^5\) But Tater was traditionally ignorant. He thought:

Any fool knew that Charleston was . . . no doubt as big as towns ever got to be. He had heard a man on a cotton boat say that New York and Baltimore and New Orleans were bigger than Charleston, but that man was a liar.\(^6\)

However, despite the intricate mixture of traditional and untraditional characteristics that Tater possessed, his vivid characterization grows out of a realistic method of handling material.

Lasses, equally as strong a character as Tater, conforms to the same treatment of combined traditionalism and realism. Physically, she is unlike the traditional black:

"Yo' skin look like coffee wid jus' a little milk in it.

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\(^1\) Ibid., p. 192.
\(^2\) Ibid., p. 196.
\(^3\) Ibid., p. 263.
\(^4\) This was true also of his mother: "He had some brown pants what was mo' like red den brown and he had a green sweater . . . and he had a pair ob yella suspendahs. He she was tricked out." Ibid., p. 179.
\(^5\) Ibid., p. 2.
\(^6\) Ibid., p. 188.
You ain't tan and you ain't nowhere's near yelluh, but you is de sofer's brown I ever see. An' yo' hair ain't dat greyish black what look like a nest what bin stuck on yo' head, like it is wid mos' ob de women on de is-
land. It what you call glossy black. It shine jes' like yo' eyes do. Yo' lips is red and dey thinsk 'muff to be temptin' widout lookin' like dey bin rolled up like a rug. What I mean is, you sho' got de looks."

Tater gives another vivid description of her in a new dress:

"Gawd, you look like de white folks. . . . No gal in Chahun't's got dat style. . . . Libin on a sea is-
land's made you habe country ways, but de class shows in spite ob de swamp notions in yo' head. You gots style an' you'll learn quick. Ain't nothin' like you nowhere's. Standin' in de light ob dat lamp you is too beautiful in dat white gown." 2

She was traditionally immoral, but realistic in her philosophy relative
to morality. After having given her love freely to "the Gaddfly", Lasses
was sorry for what she had done and was reproaching herself for it:

It wasn't the sinning that worried Lasses so much.
Something which is as free as air and more pleasant than
a big dinner or even than hot music was called bad. That
did spoil it some, but she never let the word "sin" fret
her much outside the meeting house. Sin was just an
ugly word. Because white people call a thing a sin does
not make it bad. White people were wrong about a lot of
things. The whole trouble with white folks, thought
Lasses, is that they don't really know about such things
as love anyhow. They are cold and numb to joy, pain, or
pleasure . . . . She had made a mistake . . . . She
had meant to promise much and give little . . . . but
she was acting like any swamp trash; giving in to the
first man who smiled at her. 3

It cannot be said that Lasses is immoral. In this new social order, she
is depicted as having a moral sense, but plainly lacks restraint. Her
sexual surrender was sometimes premeditated:

This wasn't going to happen without her thinking
about it. She knew it was going to happen and wanted
it to.
This hadn't been any mistake. Froggy Lassane couldn't
be a mistake. She was glad they had crossed the field.
Why should she be sorry? . . . only a fool would turn

1 Ibid., p. 209.
2 Ibid., p. 33.
3 Ibid., pp. 78-79.
aside such pleasures when they were offered by the knowing Frosky.¹

Coleman's attitude toward the Negroes throughout the book is that they are immoral. Many times, Tater "spent the night with Crissy."² With reference to all the Negroes, the author states that "Adultery was a humorous and casual affair with them. Its humorous connotations were irresistible. Even old auntie would have doubled up in laughter at the mention of things long left behind her."³ While the morals of Negroes are treated with a mixture of traditionalism and realism, the following quotation furtively discloses, at the same time, an attitude toward the mulatto:

"You talk nigger fool don anybody I know. Maybe it's de white in you what gives you notions, and de black what makes you act like trash. I always did heah dat a yelluh person is a mixture of de must t'ings in de white man and de nigger. You ain't act like anybody I know, white or black. You talk 'bout marryin' in dat same tone ob voice as white woman do, and den you turn 'round and take on one man atuh another in de house same as any two bit whore."⁴

That the traditional attitude which brands the Negro as being immoral is victorious over whatever prevailing realistic concept that concedes the Negro any moral virtue is evidenced by the final dismissal of the subject through the conversation of one white woman to another:

They agreed that most negroes were alike. Their common denominator was promiscuity. ... Environment changes a negro only superficially. ... She was very fond of her black people in the yard house, and she had heard that Tater was running around with many women the way negroes will run around. ... Only that morning Missy had been moaning about Tater staying with some yellow woman over on Franklin Street. Missy said that Tater and Issacs took a liking to each other from the start, but they could not keep their affections in one place for long.

¹Ibid., pp. 103-04.
²Ibid., p. 11.
³Ibid., p. 142.
⁴Ibid., p. 205.
"That is the way of young negroes," said the visitor. Immorality seemed a natural inheritance. . . . Their easy desires lead them constantly into other fields. It was too bad that the girl had to go from man to man, but she supposed the women were no different from the men. . . . the thing might work out eventually. Even a negro can become surfeited or at least he can want one woman at last. And when he does reach that stage he is as completely that woman's as a negro can ever be.¹

The only passage which most nearly approaches a new type of Negro is tainted by the lurking traditional attitude of immorality:

Crissy's father had been the lightest negro in Charleston. His eyes were grey and intelligent. He swept over the mulatto women in town like a plague. After several violent skirmishes with neglected black men he left town with a high yellow of whom the town was well rid. Crissy's mother lived long enough to bring her up . . . . Her father had gone to Philadelphia, but he had not forgotten he had a daughter. Shortly after her mother's death she received a letter from an insurance company stating that she was the beneficiary of a compensation policy. . . .²

Even the meager economic progress granted the Negro cannot be recorded without the traditional attitude of laziness underneath: "Crissy possessed what most negroes dream of, but seldom acquire, an economic independence which made work unnecessary."³

The realistic handling of material makes for a variety of character types. There is an entrance of several mulattoes.

Crissy was the color of a meerschaum pipe. Her hair was glossy and straight. She had a permanent wave which covered her head with tight ringlets. Her eyebrows were plucked so that they were thin black lines accentuating her slit-like eyes.⁴

Another mulatto is presented in Proggie Lesane:

He had on a white linen suit, which was immaculate and possessed creases of knifelike sharpness. His shirt

¹Ibid., pp. 215-17.
²Ibid., pp. 7-8.
³Ibid., p. 7.
⁴Ibid., p. 10.
was a deep dark blue and his tie a brilliant red. 
It was a striking combination of color, which suited 
his own café au lait complexion. His hair was glossy 
and in tight smooth ringlets. His smile parted his 
lips, which were too thin and too red for a negro 
and revealed glistening teeth.¹

Sometimes a comparison, favoring the mulatto, is made between the lighter 
and the darker characters, as in the case of a description of the Gadfly:

"His body glistened with drops of perspiration, but sweat did not stream 
down him as it did on the brown bodies beside him."² In another compari-
son, Lasses reprimands Tater for his indifference toward a woman when he 
knows her to be in love with him: "De Gadfly diffunt 'cause he gots 
white in um. Yummm don't hab to keep um miserable all de time to keep um 
in love wid you."³ Two small mulatto boys are introduced, "who did not 
know as yet the snobbery and bitterness of color."⁴

The same type of Negro, who wavers in the balance of new and old, 
as presented through Gilly Bluton in Mamba’s Daughters is treated in 
Don’t You Weep, Don’t You Moan. Froggy Lesoens and Garret Fly (the Gadfly) 
are the best representatives. Less immaculate and more crude than tyey, 
but definitely of the same type is 

... a big negro with a flat spreading nose and thick 
pendulous lips. Like the Gadfly he bore the mark of the 
waterfront. His heavy work pants were thick with dirt, 
and his blue shirt was stained with sweat and grime. 
He had on an enormous leather belt with brass studs in 
it.⁵

Here, again, it is from this type of Negro that the homicides arise.

"The white folks' negro seldom comes in contact with the blacks who

¹Ibid., p. 100.
²Ibid., p. 186.
³Ibid., p. 193.
⁴Ibid., p. 94.
⁵Ibid., p. 125.
slip back into savagery when fury is in their breasts and knives are in their hands.\(^1\) A gruesome, \textit{savage}, but typical Negro homicide displayed is a description of the murder of Froggy Lesesne:

"But wen de man finally got um down, 'e jus stan ober um an say, 'Now I gone cut yo leg.' He reached down and gash he whole leg open. Den he'd say, 'Now I gone cut yo odder leg.' Froggy jus groan ebber time he cut um. Den seem like anything kin killum. Some people crouch up against de wall, but dey too fraid to go anywhere neah dat country nigger wid de blood lus on um. At las 'e say, 'Now I gone cut open yo belly.' Ebery time he say somethin like dat, he stoop ober and cut Froggy dis way or dat, wid long easy strokes jus like you rip open a fish. 

"Froggy flounder round on de groun, an den 'e ain't move no mo. De man kick um an wipe 'e razor on a dry spot on Froggy's clothes. 'I look at de people peepin round de corner ob de house, an 'e shake de razor at um. Dey run to dey houses an put de bolts up on de do's.\(^2\)

That "A negro killing is not very important, even one as brutal as this one,"\(^3\) reveals the traditional attitude that the Negro is inferior, thus the law is very little concerned. When the law does intervene, injustice is the reward; hence, as is stated in Forsy, the Negroes are cooperative in concealing the murderer: "As much as everyone hated him for what he had done, there was not a negro in Charleston who would reveal his whereabouts to the white men who were looking for him.\(^4\)

As a result of this predominantly traditional treatment of the Negro, one can see in the new social order "Little children with immaculate and starched mammy nurses . . . playing decorously in the shade."\(^5\) Though the Charleston characters think and speak disparagingly of the conventional sea-islanders, they, themselves are but little less traditional. "Swamp

\(^1\) Ibid., p. 126.  
\(^2\) Ibid., p. 231.  
\(^3\) Ibid., p. 233.  
\(^4\) Ibid., p. 276.  
\(^5\) Ibid., p. 6.
people" were said by Tater to be "like pigs and cattle around their cabins . . . ."\footnote{1} The attitude of inferiority, which has become instilled within the Negroes themselves, is exhibited in the following scene: "At the crossroads store, the people were afraid to call out with much show of feeling because of the white woman in the car."\footnote{2} But, even in town the Negro remains primitive. The Negro is pictured to be as indigenous in the dance as he is emotional in religion. "Primitive extravagances" and "natural expression of rhythm" are terms used to describe Lasses' dancing. Further, Lasses' ancestors had danced like this before a tribal fire in the depths of Africa. There it was called the Dance of Fertility. Its sexual symbolism was apparent to the hypnotized circle surrounding the island girl, who did not know its meaning or origin, but was intoxicated by her own ritualistic fervor. She had become a lithe brown animal performing a sexual rite which is characteristic of its kind.\footnote{3}

Another typically traditional portraiture is manifested in the following scene:

Against the shady wall many of the flower vendors sat with their legs extended on the flat pavement. The great majority of these merchants were asleep. Business was dull, but then the sleeping was good.\footnote{4}

The traditional treatment reaches its height here in the portrayal of the aboriginal heritage attributed the Negro:

Tater felt a strange feeling of contentment, almost of joy at the beauty of this spot by the river and the swamp. He did not understand. He did not know that to the black man whose roots were torn from Africa and embedded deep in this new land of the South that a garden and a cabin

\footnote{1}{Ibid., p. 25.}
\footnote{2}{Ibid., p. 20.}
\footnote{3}{Ibid., p. 47.}
\footnote{4}{Ibid., p. 90.}
and a cotton field" are his simple and ultimate goal. They are his black heritage. 1

For all of his Hagare class consciousness, Tater is made to realize that "A nigger love de cotton fiel's. He love snatchin' off de cotton and tossin' it into de sacks. He love to sing wid all his people and he love ridin' in de night to de gin." 2

His ultimate and innate desire is to remain close to the soil:

"Town ways is smart and I likes to be hot stuff same as de res, but Jedus, I'd like to be as smart as I is, and a dirt farmer out on de island too. Das somethin! De island people too dumb to know what dey is missin in town and can't even enjoy it when dey comes heah. An de town people too smart to know dere ain't nuthin in de worl like habbin yo cotton fiel and gyarden patch. . . ." 3

In his estimation, there "Ain't a nigra in de worl what don't like to grub in de dirt. . . ." 4

He accomplished his ultimate desire when he went to live in the country where he saw Negroes who "... were tired, and bent from stooping over a hoe since dawn, but laughter rose from the groups which straggled down the road." 5

The last picture of Tater discloses him in "a white shirt with the collar spreading out on his shoulders and his sleeves rolled up. He wore a pair of overalls." 6 There on the Island, he became completely resolved to the traditional customs of the Island people, and was happy and contented in his resolution. Now one of them, he sat with the people out

1Ibid., p. 170.
2Ibid., p. 166.
3Ibid., p. 81.
4Ibid., p. 282.
5Ibid., p. 147.
6Ibid., p. 286.
in the opening around a huge fire, where spirituals were sung and even he participated in the traditional "shout".

This, then, was their church. The fire was their altar. The weaving back close to the burning logs was their priest.

From their throats mellow peans of joy rose in a silver chant. Then it would change. Joy would melt into sorrow and then fuse into joy again. The rich timbre of male voices, the thin metallic tone of the women filled this primitive cathedral.¹

In his total abandonment of the new social order, Tater represents a complete victory of traditionalism over realism and all the characteristics that distinguish the Negro in the new movement. Thus, from the pen of Richard Coleman, despite the innovation of a new social order, the realistic treatment surrenders to the deeply rooted, dominating traditional one, which, as yet, has not been entirely eliminated from any of the novels of all the South Carolina writers.²

¹Ibid., p. 287.
CONCLUSION

Auntie peered at the sketch she had made of their cabin and shook her head. The cabin needed propping up, it was true, but it was not toppling over as it was in this picture of it. Her goats were not that thin, nor were her vegetables in the neat little garden so bedraggled. Sukra were queer. They drew pictures of things but they could not see for looking.1

"They drew pictures of things but they could not see for looking."

Coleman, essentially traditional in his treatment of the Negro, pronounced his own sentence — as well as that of most of his South Carolina contemporaries — in the words of a traditional old, Negro woman.

That there has been a cultural awakening in the South is evidenced by the sociological, political, educational, economic, and literary intimations that have been pointed to in this study. That these indices are obvious is proved by the fact that they have motivated much of the writing, both fictional and non-fictional, in the South today. Dabney's Liberalism in the South, Couch's Culture in the South, and Mims' The Advancing South are outstanding examples of non-fictional books in which intimations of a cultural awakening are manifested. Jonathan Daniel's A Southerner Discovers the South, and the Agrarian's I'll Take My Stand illuminate the opinions that certain southerners themselves have, relative to this cultural awakening; the former is objective, the latter is reactionary. An article like Edward Twig's recent "Charleston: the Great Myth" reveals, if in a somewhat exaggerated way, what a typical southern city is like today. Kendrick's The South Looks at Its Past reveals what it was like in yester-years. However, it may be concluded from the material herein examined that, whether objective or reactionary, whether nostalgic or realistic, the general tone of the recent writings

inspired by the Cultural Renaissance in the South is colored with enlighten-ment. Aware of the fact that the South occupies such a place in the geographical whole of the nation as that accorded the Negro in the South, writers of and about the South today generally concede that "the tyrants and the plutocrats and the poor all need teaching. One of them no more than the others. All are in the warm dark, and whether they like it or not -- white man, black man, big man -- they are in the dark together. None of them will ever get to day alone." 1

It may be concluded that the literature of the old South was less qualitative than quantitative. Of that period, the primary novelists of national renown and whose works have been of lasting literary value -- of such value as American fiction can boast -- are William Gilmore Simms of South Carolina, John Pendleton Kennedy of Virginia, and, not quite in their class, Augustus Baldwin Longstreet, claimed by Georgia and South Carolina alike. Though only in the background, the Negro entered the novels of these and minor writers of the old South. With the appearance of Kennedy's Swallow Barn in 1832, the plantation tradition was begun and through its fixation thereafter, Negro stereotypes set a precedent. The old-time Negro was loyal, emotional, farcical, philosophical, musical, diplomatic, improvident, lazy, contented, and primitive. The plantation "mammy", the "uncle", the "genuine darkey", and the "ageless child" are all stock figures that were used to serve both pro-slavery and anti-slavery purposes. Though in the background, they were indispensable to the romantic fiction of the region.

The year 1870 ushered in a new movement in southern literature. More romantic than the pre-Civil War romanticists, and more sentimental in their traditionalism, the novelists of this period were intent upon the glorification of the old régime. Outstanding among these writers were Thomas Nelson Page and Joel Chandler Harris. During this period came also
George Washington Cable, first to question the validity of the plantation tradition. Later, Ellen Glasgow followed the pattern set by Cable. The only innovation made with reference to the treatment of the Negro during this period was a new realism in speech (dialect), and local color.

Indications of a literary Renaissance in southern letters is manifested by the appearance of new magazines, literary groups, investigators and collectors of folk-lore and folk art, establishment of university presses, and a more prolific output of novels, some of which adhere to the new surge of realism which is conjectured to have originated near 1920. Outstanding among the contemporary novelists of southern states other than South Carolina are Erskine Caldwell, William Faulkner, Thomas Wolfe, Stark Young, Margaret Mitchell, T. S. Stribling, Hamilton Basso, Ellen Glasgow, and Marjorie K. Rawlings.

In the new current of realism, the Negro has become one of the most popularly used subjects. Transcending the incidental role of a complement to white characters, the Negro has emerged into full view, playing the role of a foreground character in modern southern fiction. In no other state has he been more utilized in contemporary fiction than in South Carolina.

South Carolina was until recently, except for Simms, practically barren in the field of literature. Today, with such nationally acclaimed writers as DuBose Heyward and Julia Peterkin to represent her, South Carolina has won, as to both quality and quantity, an enviable place in the literary Renaissance of the South. With a Pulitzer Prize winner in Julia Peterkin, and a Dodd, Mead Competitive Prize winner in L. M. Alexander, South Carolina shares the laurels of contemporary American fiction as a whole. Let us examine the primary meaning of the word laurel and, by applying it allegorically to the literature of South Carolina, see what deeper significance it has relative to that State. Primarily, laurel
refers to either of two kinds of southern European trees. The laurel bay's foliage was used by the ancient Greeks as a mark of distinction. May the laurel bay tree represent the literature of South Carolina — the foliage, the national distinction the literature has acquired — but what is the source of the tree's nourishment? The rich, fertile soil in which this tree is rooted and from which has developed the foliage of distinction is the Negro folk material. That some of these authors have risen to fame on the exploitation of Negro folk material is well and good for them. But what about the validity of their treatment and the prevailing effect resulting therefrom?

The novels included in this study have conformed mainly to two classifications, regional and historical. They have been treated under two distinct divisions: "The Plantation Negro" and "The Negro in Other Settings." The treatment of the Negro within these novels has been found to conform to three patterns — an adherence to the traditional treatment, a modification of the traditional treatment, and a departure from the traditional treatment. Analytical research has discovered the treatment of the Negro in these novels to be predominantly a modification of the plantation tradition.

Of the regional writers, DuBose Heyward and Julia Peterkin are pioneers, standing out as leaders of South Carolina and other southern writers in the field of regional realism. Among the writers whose books fall under "the plantation Negro" division, Julia Peterkin is most outstanding. In a picturesque portrayal, she reveals the sea-island Negroes to be quaint in their uniqueness and exotic in their isolated setting. She writes of the love, religion, humor, superstition, and simplicity of the primitive Negro. Her delineations are faithfully rendered and her treatment is apparently objective. While her treatment of the Negro is a modification of the traditional one, her objectivity is an indication of realism. Her interest
in the Negro is seemingly artistically sincere. By an objective and valid treatment of the customs, folkways, and institutions of the Negro in an unchanged community, Julia Peterkin's novels become historical. They have more than a human interest; they are scientific in value. Though these characters appear only in modification of the traditional treatment, it is because the people about whom she writes have changed but little. Such a conclusion will perhaps be disagreeable to some. If so, it is because the characters themselves are portrayed in a disagreeable light. If the portrayal is humiliating, it is only because the culture about which she writes is remote, fast diminishing, and practically inconceivable by the new Negro. The sea-island culture, a continuity of the plantation system itself, has no place in the world today, and to the New Negro, it represents only absurdity. Likewise, and because of that fact, Mrs. Peterkin's novels have no place in the library of many of the Negroes today. However, it is misrepresentative to refer to Julia Peterkin as the interpreter of Negro character; rather, as she herself specifies the setting, she writes about a unique group of people on an isolated island. Concerned with this group alone, she writes with authenticity and understanding.

Though many critics speak of Julia Peterkin and DuBose Heyward in the same breath, from an analysis of their works, the writer challenges that connection. Similar because they both are regional writers, and because both write intimately about the Negro, they differ in their treatment of the same type of Negro in different settings. Heyward's characters lack the quaint, exotic, picturesque coloring of Julia Peterkin's. In an entirely new social order, his characters are more universal in their appeal. In his novels, emphasis is placed upon character development. His interest in the Negro — like his style — is purely artistic. In conveying their universal human qualities, Heyward treats the Negro from
the lowest strata of life with no condescension. For all of his objectivity and lack of sentimentality, however, he has not departed completely from the traditional treatment. Though he is able to portray in one instance an entirely new Negro in a new social order, within the same book, a modified traditional treatment prevails. Only in a portion of Mamba's Daughters and in the method of handling material employed by all the authors, is there a complete departure from the traditional treatment of the Negro.

Two of the three contemporary historical novels of South Carolina that are treated here are almost romantic in their adherence to the traditional treatment of the plantation type of Negro. The one exception, A Sea Island Lady, reveals a meager amount of realism, but all three have little value relative to a new treatment of the Negro.

With an inheritance of a deeply rooted traditional treatment of the Negro from many successive generations of the past, it is no wonder that these novelists who tend toward realism find it difficult to break away entirely from the set pattern. The Negro stereotypes that were invented largely as political tools necessary in defense of, or criticism against, the slavery system have since been used widely for literary purposes alone. Though the validity of the tradition has been questioned, and though it has been modified, admitting the innovations of realism, the complete elimination is yet to come. It is unquestionably true that much of the traditional treatment is true. One can certainly look about him and see, even today, living individuals who resemble various stereotypes of the plantation tradition. It is not desired that such realities be omitted or submerged. The main criticism made here of the treatment is the one "Auntie" made when the white artist painted her cabin. In searching through the Negro literary material, the writers cannot see for looking. Realism is often as exaggerated as traditionalism; hence, the great southern
novel depicting the well-rounded Negro -- as is true of the middle-class whites -- is yet to be written.

It must be remembered, however, that any treatment whatsoever of the Negro in southern fiction is comparatively new, just as American fiction itself is relatively new. Centuries go into the making of a great body of literature. So whether with reference to the treatment of the Negro in southern fiction, or to southern fiction as a whole, or to American fiction as a whole -- all of which are in their infancy -- the same challenge prevails: A DELINEATION OF THE WHOLE.
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