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THE PASTORAL DESIGN IN THE SOUTHERN ANTEBELLUM NOVEL

A Dissertation

Presented for the

Doctor of Philosophy

Degree

The University of Tennessee

Jan Bakker

August 1975

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ABSTRACT

A natural form for the novel to take in the antebellum South was pastoral. For to first explorers like Arthur Barlowe and Walter Raleigh, and to eighteenth century writers like Hector Crèvecoeur and Thomas Jefferson and William Bartram, and on to writers of the nineteenth century, Southern land recalled the locus amoenus or pleasant place of bucolic retreat of traditional pastoral. Southern novelists could stand for a while with one foot still in Eden despite the growing restlessness and encroachments of a rapidly industrializing, disrupting age in agrarian America.

Stimulated also by the search for a truly national literature, authors of the Old South looked for themes in their own land. Here the town remained subsidiary to the country, and the old frontier pattern of outdoor activity long remained a way of life. From their search, the more perceptive authors derived their complex pastoral design. On one level, it reflects that image of a peaceful agricultural society which was the passionate ideal for which the South stood and fell.

But in antebellum pastoral the idyll is not the thing. What lies behind it is. The design exemplifies the tendency of American writers to refuse the explicit

and put up a sort of double meaning. Almost invariably, the hopes, disappointments, nostalgia of writers of pastoral in the South juxtapose a real world to an idyllic vision. This contrast creates an irony which sees the doubleness of things. This is the quality of a genuine enduring fiction.

Antebellum Southern romancers created a complex pastoral design that perceives not an artificial world at bucolic rest but a real world in flux. It is a pattern within their tales that links antebellum romance with a tradition that goes all the way back to Theocritus and Virgil. In their handling of pastoral, antebellum writers show an acute awareness of the architectonics of an important though frequently neglected literary form. In their pastoral aesthetic they are able to display not only their creative abilities but their concern for the immediate problems of their country and section. They worried about changes overwhelming America that gave them as increasingly isolated Southerners a feeling of despair, of a lost battle, an imminent doom.

The antebellum design also reveals with ironic and apposite intent and consistency the thread in pastoral illusion that mistakes for a lasting possibility a temporary feeling of safe green repose in a Marvellian garden. Perfect felicity is never the subject of serious

pastoral art. Complacency is not the feeling which it arouses. In romances by such writers as John Davis, Isaac Holmes, John Pendleton Kennedy, William Gilmore Simms, and John Esten Cooke, the ideal serves as a commentary upon the actual.

So it is that pastoral nostalgia in the design is tinged deeply with tragedy. If the recurrent imagery of rural paradise in the South reflects America's most compelling myth, tales of the Southern garden's irredeemable loss are a particularization of the nation's greatest tragedy. The inevitable disjunction of ideal and real in antebellum romance is a revelation of the American tragic vision of life. It is a part of the theme of the failure of ideals that evolves in the pattern of America's most important fiction from Cooper and Simms to Hemingway and Faulkner.

Its allegorical intent gives antebellum Southern pastoral a unique dialectic force. Its contrasts of dream and reality qualify or question or bring irony to bear against the illusion of peace and harmony in a green pasture. This dialectic creates the tension that vitalizes the pastoral novel. It provides a pattern in many antebellum romances that lends them a greater depth than critics heretofore have attributed to them.

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The woods of Arcady are dead
And over is their antique joy;
Of old the world on dreaming fed;
Grey truth is now her painted toy;
Yet still she turns her restless
head. . . .

W. B. Yeats, "The Song of the Happy Shepherd" (1889)

Meanwhile the Mind, from pleasure less,
Withdraws into its happiness:
The Mind, that Ocean where each kind
Does streight its own resemblance find:
Yet it creates, transcending these,
Far other Worlds, and other Seas;
Annihilating all that's made
To a green Thought in a green Shade.

Andrew Marvell, "The Garden" (1681)

Ye pleasant myths of Eld, why have ye fled?
The earth has fallen from her blissful prime
Of summer years,--the dews of that sweet time
Are withered on its garlands sere and dead.
No longer in the blue fields overhead
We list the rustling of immortal wings,
Or hail at eve the kindly visitings
Of gentle Genii to fair fortunes wed:
The seas have lost their Nereids, the sad streams
Their golden-haired habitants,--the mountains lone
Those happy Oreads, and the blithsome tone
Of Pan's soft pipe melts only in our dreams;
Fitfully fall the old Faith's broken gleams
On our dull hearts, cold as sepulchral stone.

Paul Hamilton Hayne, "Ancient Fables" (1860)

INTRODUCTION

The beginning of autumn;
What is the fortune-teller
Looking so surprised at?

Buson, Japanese,
Eighteenth Century

The backward glance of longing at the golden age is an absolute essential to provide a sense of direction in our search for our recovery of it; as time advances, it recedes ever further and further, and yet it beckons from ahead.

Peter V. Marinelli,
Pastoral (1971)

Labors he then for naught, who thus pursues
What you misdeem a vision? Does he build
Vain fancies only, warm delusions up,
And profitless chimeras;--still deceived,--
Cheating himself with hopes which haply cheat
None other than himself?

William Gilmore Simms, "The Inutile Pursuit" (1853)

In antebellum pastoral the idyll is not the thing. What lies behind it is. The design exemplifies that tendency of American writers to refuse the explicit and always put up a sort of double meaning.[1] "The old double," R.W.B. Lewis says. "The ideal and the actual."[2] Almost invariably the hopes, the disappointments, the nostalgia

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[1]D. H. Lawrence, Studies in Classic American Literature (New York: Doubleday, 1951), p. 9.

[2]The American Adam (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1955), p. 24.

of writers of antebellum pastoral in the South juxtapose a real world to an idyllic vision. The contrast between these two creates that pastoral irony which sees the doubleness of things. This is the quality of a genuine enduring fiction. The ideal serves as a commentary upon the real, creating a pattern in Southern pastoral whose ostensible nostalgia is tinged deeply with tragedy. The old double--and Lewis finishes: "For fiction, whether comic or tragic, dramatizes the interplay of compelling opposites: the real peeping around the corner of the illusory, or the real exploding in the midst of the apparent."[3]

The strength of pastoral lies in its power of suggestion, for its escape element really provides no escape at all. It is an old story: idyll and loss of idyll--a bucolic land in flux because of the restlessness of men and the willy-nilly incursions of history; and the conflict of good and evil in nature itself. These are the patterns that make up the duality which provides "a particularly clear setting for, or machine for imposing, the social and metaphysical ideas on which pastoral depends."[4] Perfect felicity is never the subject of

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[3]American Adam, p. 91.

[4]William Empson, Some Versions of Pastoral (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1966), pp. 34, 31.

serious pastoral art. Complacency is not the feeling which it arouses.[5] The antebellum design is true to this subtle pattern. Its threads of realism and disillusionment make it so.

But perhaps the image of rural paradise is mankind's most compelling myth. It is a past or future sinless place of gardens that never sear, of streams that softly purify.[6] It is all sunlight and mildness and green, with a blue sky where a scattering of warm, white clouds move and birds occasionally pass. It is a place of forgetful, easy living in the meadows, next to water, or under shady old trees watching peacefully browsing herds. There is the music of birds, of people singing; quiet talk, quiet breezes over strawberry fields. Call it the Golden Age, Arcadia, or Virginia, "this paradise of the world."[7] In the minds of men who early saw Virginia, pictorial and emotional concepts of Eden, pastoral, paradise became intertwined.

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[5]Peter V. Marinelli, Pastoral (London: Methuen, 1971), p. 53.

[6]Charles L. Sanford, The Quest for Paradise (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1961), pp. 26-27.

[7]An anonymous reporter of Virginia used this phrase in 1586, as quoted in Alan Smith, ed., Virginia 1584-1607: The First English Settlement in North America (Boston: Charles T. Bradford, n. d.), p. 43.

Until after the middle of the seventeenth century, Virginia was the name given to almost all of the Atlantic

As with Crèvecoeur, Bartram, Jefferson, and the antebellum novelists, the impulse of these first commentators was not toward primitivism. It was toward pastoral. They did not reject civilization in the traditional primitivist urge to fuse their bodies with raw nature in a destructive regression to a supposedly nobler, more Godly pre-civilized life.[8] From the very beginning, Americans have sought to establish "a midpoint between savagery and civilization, to establish a national identity which was neither primitive in the frontier sense nor excessively civilized in the European sense. With respect to this midpoint, the American concept of nature has tended to be largely sylvan and rural."[9] It evolves into an ideal middleground, pastoral-agrarian vision of peaceful rural communities, of prosperous working farms, neat fields, herds, woods, white villages and steeples tucked into gentle hills.

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coast of North America. In 1614 a writer named Howe said: "Virginia, is a country in America lying between the degrees of thirtie foure and forty five of the North Latitude. The bounds whereof on the East side, are the Ocean, on the South lyeth Florida, on the North Nova Francia and New Foundland, as for the West thereof the limits are unknowne. . . ." Alexander Brown, ed., The Genesis of the United States (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1898), II, 748-49.

[8]Michael Bell, Primitivism (London: Methuen, 1972), pp. 14, 39.

[9]Sanford, viii.

From Arthur Barlowe in 1584 to John Esten Cooke in 1856, Southern lands at first glance recalled the locus amoenus, the "pleasant place" of the pastoral dream. But there is also a doubleness in their pastoral vision that combines the pretty rural dream with a grim reality. This combination creates a complex pastoral design that links antebellum fiction with a bucolic literary tradition that goes all the way back to Theocritus. It is linked as well with an important American theme of thwarted pastoral longing that is evident in even the earliest writings about the Southern land.

The discovery of America rekindled the traditional European idea that an earthly paradise lay somewhere in the West.[10] In the sixteenth century and on into the eighteenth, many commentators who saw the new land or speculated upon it at home wrote that the "Garden of the

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[10]Roderick Nash, Wilderness and the American Mind (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973), p. 25. In "Paradise and the Noble Savage in Jeffersonian Thought," William and Mary Quarterly, 26 (July, 1969), 327-28, Bernard W. Sheehan explains this matter as follows: "Western man had never been without the prospect of utopia, and it had always served his dynamic purposes. From the simplest, mundane improvements in the human condition to the most transcendent flights of prospective achievement, the vision of a perfect order, especially if its fruition was earthly, operated as a motor force in the development of civilization. The discovery of the New World and the unfolding of its potentiality in the formulations of paradise only added a dimension of reality to an ancient mythic tradition."

world,"[11] similar to if not the veritable Eden, might be found in a southern region of America. Because of its warmer climate, green meadows, and open forests, the land south of New England was more hospitable to the image of paradise regained. The term wilderness was used "extensively by the settlers of New England to conceptualize their experiences in the New World." On the other hand, the "early narratives, instructions, advertisements of Virginia, Maryland, and the Carolinas simply do not label the American land as 'wilderness.'" The prevailing metaphor in Virginia was the prodigal garden. Like their New England contemporaries, "the writers of early Virginia were driven by and forced into a particular mythos."[12] This mythos of Eden, as we shall see, usually was two-edged.

Imagery describing the South "as a paradise of material plenty," C. L. Sanford writes, "connected it closely with economic motives and easy rewards."[13] It was

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[11]Louis B. Wright, The Colonial Search for a Southern Eden (University: The University of Alabama Press, 1953), p. 28. This description occurred in a sermon of 1609 by Rev. Daniel Price, a fashionable London preacher and chaplain to Prince Henry.

[12]Peter A. Fritzell, "The Wilderness and the Garden: Metaphors for the American Landscape," Forest History, 12 (April, 1968), 17.

[13]Quest for Paradise, p. 83.

a popular belief that "felicity-teeming Virginia,"[14] these "sun-drenched climates" of the South "were most like Paradise and would produce all of the good things which man possessed before the fall of Adam."[15] With the eye of a promoter, to be sure, but going along with the contemporary image nonetheless, Sir Walter Raleigh wrote that Paradise actually had been created in the same latitude as Virginia, "thirty-five degrees from the Equinoctiall, and fifty-five from the North-pole, in a temperate Climate, full of excellent fruites."[16]

This Edenic notion persisted for generations after Raleigh. It was commonplace in promotion literature and in the minds of the colonists themselves. Pastoral

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[14]Edward Williams, Virginia: More especially the South part thereof, Richly and truly valued, in Peter Force, ed., Tracts and Other Papers, Relating Principally to the Origin, Settlement, and Progress of the Colonies in North America (New York: Peter Smith, 1947), III, xi, 19.

[15]Wright, pp. 21, 41.

[16]Clarence W. Alvord and Lee Bidgood, eds., The First Explorations of the Trans-Allegheny Region by the Virginians, 1650-1674 (Cleveland: The Arthur H. Clark Company, 1912), pp. 112-13.

Edward Williams, Gentleman, wrote to Parliament in 1650 that their Oriental opulence, rich soil and mild climate made the "South parts of Virginia" the preferred area of the New World. To support his claim, he reminded his readers that the "most incomparable Raleigh" preferred that "Country before either the North of Virginia or New England." Force, III, xi, 7.

allusion cannot be separated from the excitement generated about the New World[17] and the possibilities it offered of bucolic retreat and redemption. New Edens of infinite goodness lay there across the Atlantic or farther inland. As Louis B. Wright says of the sojourners in the garden, if "they found their present condition hard, they dreamed of better land, and easier life, and certain prosperity in some new valley beyond the settlements, or somewhere across the mountains."[18] Hope for a second chance for humanity, pastoral enthusiasm, commerce: whatever the motivations of its formulators, the rhetoric of Eden stamped the South with a peculiar garden identity and an ambiguity, a contrast between dream and reality, that lingered on into the antebellum pastoral design.

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[17]Leo Marx, The Machine in the Garden (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), p. 38. Marx emphasizes that America's association with idyllic places "was destined to outlive Elizabethan fashions by at least two and a half centuries. It was not until late in the nineteenth century that this way of thinking about the New World lost its grip on the imagination of Europe and America" (p. 40).

The idea behind this study of the pastoral design in antebellum fiction is deeply indebted to the insight and conclusions of Leo Marx, whose comments upon the nature of complex pastoral in works by Thoreau, Hawthorne, Melville apply equally as well to their contemporary and comparatively neglected fellow writers in the South.

[18]Louis B. Wright, The Elizabethans' America (London: Edward Arnold, 1965), pp. 10, 15.

For all their Edenic ecstasies, writers about Virginia recognized that there was something wrong in the new-found land. A real-life ambivalence, the pastoral double vision, quickly appeared in their conception of the American wild garden. On second thoughts, the new land was not all good, like its mythical counterparts in the golden lands of books. Perhaps men--Indians and whites--would not be redeemed in it after all because the exigencies of reality would not sustain the dream. Sadly, some feared, the trouble lay within themselves. When they came to "the goodliest and most pleasing territory of the world,"[19] they brought ruin with them. They were not restored by the garden. They spoiled it and were spoiled by it in turn. In these early writings one sees a worried awareness of a rough outside world, a brutal reality briefly charmed but pressing with terrible urgency upon Eden.

Over and over the counterpoint to praise of the Southern garden is fear that the settlers will both fail in it and spoil it. It was, Leslie Fiedler writes, "A dream of innocence that had sent Europeans across the ocean to build a new society immune to the compounded evil

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[19]Ralph Lane in David Beers Quinn, ed., The Roanoke Voyages, 1584-1590 (London: The Hakluyt Society, 1955), Series II, CIV, 208.

of the past from which no one in Europe could ever feel himself free." But the slothfulness of the settlers, the cruel exploitation of the land, the slaughter of the Indians, the slave trade ". . . provided new evidence that evil did not remain with the world that had been left behind--but stayed alive in the human heart, which had come the long way to America only to confront the horrifying image of itself."[20] However subtle it might be, this awareness creates the tragic irony inherent in the American myth that saw life and history as just beginning in the New World in a "divinely granted second chance for the human race."[21]

In the following study, an endeavor is made to focus on the artistic means, the techniques, that each story-teller uses to create his complex pastoral design. Both "textural" and structural approaches[22] are employed to investigate the language of the tales in an attempt to

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[20]Love and Death in the American Novel (New York: Criterion Books, 1960), p. 127.

[21]Lewis, p. 5.

[22]David Lodge, Language of Fiction (New York: Columbia University Press, 1966), p. 78. Because the critic of the novel, Lodge writes, "is compelled to select more drastically than the critic of poetry . . . the alternative procedures open to him are (1) to isolate, deliberately or at random, one or more passages, and submit them to close and exhaustive analysis, or (2) to trace significant threads through the language of an entire novel. One might label these approaches 'textural' and 'structural' respectively."

isolate the moral threads that establish their designs, their pastoral response to the American experience in the early nineteenth century South.

CHAPTER I

PARADISE ON THEIR MINDS: AN APPROACH TO ANTEBELLUM PASTORAL

Virginia
Earth's only paradise . . .

To whose the golden age
Still nature's laws doth give,
  No other cares that tend,
  But them to defend
From winter's age,
That long there doth not live.

Michael Drayton, "To the Virginian Voyage" (1606)

The Edenic myth . . . has been the most powerful and comprehensive organizing force in American culture.

Charles L. Sanford, The Quest for Paradise (1961)

From the earliest discoveries, down to the settled mid-nineteenth century, there is a consistency in the pastoral design connected with the Southern lands. Gratuitous as this association might seem at first glance, it exists nevertheless. The universal idea in pastoral is the Golden Age which grows out of man's hopeless desire to escape a busy, sordid world. Inevitably, then, the constant element in pastoral--not the neoclassical falsification of it--is the recognition of a contrast, a tension implicit or explicit between simple

country life and some more complex type of civilization.[1] The tragedy in pastoral is that the garden is so vulnerable--more hopeless dream than reality, a doomed moment of respite. "Here is Eden for me," a thoughtful explorer might have said, seated back against an ancient tree, hopeful eyes out to grass. "Here is peace. What will be done to it?"

Of course, the object of this discussion is not to show that antebellum pastoral derived from attitudes found in sixteenth and seventeenth century tracts about the land. The object is only to suggest an approach to the Southern pastoral view. From the very start there is a continuum of doubt, of ambiguity, in the Edenic concept of the countryside. The pastoral visions, even those of Crèvecoeur and Jefferson, are always endangered or compromised. From the beginning, the green, utopian land is marred by some second thoughts and stark realities. The American dream of paradise contained within it elements of tragedy and futility that recur in the pastoral design of antebellum novels, giving them a symbolism and a realism that make them more than a regional expression of the plantation ideal or heroic frontier deeds. This crucial pastoral view provides an important commentary upon the

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[1]W. W. Greg, Pastoral Poetry and Pastoral Drama (New York: Russell and Russell, 1959), pp. 4-5.

meaning of human experience in a fallen world. It gives to antebellum fiction its universality.

This peculiar garden mythos of the South is evident already in the writing of Arthur Barlowe and William Strachey. In 1584 and 1609, respectively, they described the wonderful sweet garden smell that came from the Virginia shore.[2] Barlowe's men found a race of natives who were "most gentle, loving, and faithfull, void of all guile, and treason, and such as lived after the manner of the golden age." His imagery becomes Edenic when he looks at the fruitful earth and is reminded of the toil-free abundance of life "in the first creation."[3]

This land was not the "hideous and desolate wilderness, full of wild beasts and willd men" that William Bradford saw in New England.[4] But it really was not Eden

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[2]Quinn, Roanoke Voyages, II, CIV, 93-94; and Louis B. Wright, A Voyage to Virginia in 1609 (Charlottesville: The University Press of Virginia, 1964), p. 60.

In a mid-nineteenth century steamship approach to the Virginia capes described in Southward Ho! A Spell of Sunshine (New York: Redfield, 1854), p. 105, William Gilmore Simms wrote that he could smell the juleps forty miles out to sea. If the imagery changed over the years, appreciation and delighted expectation certainly had not.

[3]Quinn, II, CIV, 108.

[4]Of Plymouth Plantation, 1620-1647, Samuel Eliot Morison, ed. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1952), p. 62.

either, or, for that matter, a quiet pastoral garden. Barlowe wondered about the "cruel and bloody" Indian wars that had killed so many people and desolated some areas of the country. Most ominously of all, his thoughts paused on how the settlers started so soon to cheat the Indians in trading a few insignificant tin dishes for "fiftie skinnes woorth fiftie Crownes."[5] A year later, Thomas Hariot mused over the diseases the whites had brought to the natives, and how they had started to brutalize the Indians with little provocation. And Ralph Lane in a letter to Sir Philip Sidney complained of unruliness among the settlers themselves.[6]

When Strachey landed, he discovered a ruined, almost deserted Jamestown, whose surviving settlers crawled out of filthy hovels to greet him. His anger turned on the survivors, whose "sloth, riot, and vanity," he wrote, had caused such a sad state of affairs in the colony. Their poverty came from their idleness and not from the land. And he has no pleasant illusions either about "golden age" Indians, who he felt were crafty and untrustworthy despite their physical beauty.[7]

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[5]Quinn, II, CIV, 101.

[6]Ibid, 378-81, 199.

[7]Wright, A Voyage, pp. 63-67.

The pattern emerges. It is one of delight and sorrow: joy glimpsed in the garden but almost as quickly compromised or lost.

At the sight of Jamestown in 1607, two years before Strachey's disappointment, George Percy lapsed into a pastoral reverie that led him straight to thoughts of Paradise. There was "nothing worth the speaking of but fair meadows and goodly tall trees, with such fresh waters running through the woods as I was almost ravished at the sight thereof." From Percy to William Bartram's idyllic description of Cherokee country in North Carolina in the late eighteenth century, an imagery of Eden--and a certain hesitation--flows again and again from the pens of journalistic admirers of the Southern garden. Percy wrote:

> . . . we traced some four miles all, the way as we went having the pleasantest suckles, the ground all flowing over with fair flowers of sundry colours and kinds, as though it had been in any garden or orchard in England. There be many strawberries and other fruits unknown. We saw the woods full of cedar and cypress trees, with other trees which issues [sic] out sweet gums like to balsam. We kept on our way in this Paradise. . . .

Then there is a pause--that pastoral doubt. Not everything in the garden is as good as it seems. An Indian chief planned "villainy against the young settlement," and the Indians were continually at war among themselves. The settlers suffered great privation,

hunger, and disease in the lush garden, relieved only by gifts of food from their "mortal enemies," the Indians.[8]

The settlers should not starve. What is wrong in the garden? John Smith wrote that Virginia would possess the best farm land of any in the world were it fully cultivated and "inhabited by industrious people."[9] And then he hesitated with worry about the laziness of the settlers. An anonymous writer of 1612 correlated farming with the activity in Paradise: it was "that most wholesome, profitable and pleasant work of planting in which it pleased God himself to set the first man and most excellent creature Adam in his innocence. . . ." It is farm work that cures physical ills and makes hearts "honest and upright," enabling a man to "live in honour and die in peace."[10] Here we are looking toward the pastoral notions of Crèvecoeur, Jefferson, and John Taylor of Caroline,[11] who felt that the one great hope for

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[8]Wright, Elizabethans' America, pp. 163, 167-71.

[9]John Lankford, ed., Capt. John Smith's America (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1967), pp. 4, 17.

[10]Anon., The New Life of Virginia, in Force, Tracts, I, vii, 17.

[11]In his 1803 publication of Arator, John Taylor echoes the anonymous writer of 1612 who associated Adam's bucolic work with Godliness. On Judgment Day, Taylor says, farmers will be certain to receive passage to Celestial Paradise: "At the awful day of judgment, the discrimination of the good from the wicked, is not made

all-too-fallible man lay in the land, from which came all virtue and strength.

In tracts written by thoughtful reporters such as these we have considered, there runs a tension between dream and reality. This is the pastoral tension which reflects the fallacy inherent in the pastoral dream and which is evident again in one of the articles of Edward Williams, the seventeenth century's most effusive Virginia propagandist. He hesitates, too. He sees that all is not well in Eden, "a Virgin Country, so preserved by nature out of a desire to show mankinde fallen into the Old age of the Creation, what a brow of fertility and beauty she was adorned with when the World was vigorous and youthfull, and she her selfe was unwounded with the Plough-shares and unweakened by her numerous future teemings." But Williams is disappointed.

Like that first Eden to which he refers, Virginia was marred by man. And again it was sloth, always sloth

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by the criterion of sects or of dogmas, but by one which constitutes the daily employment and the great end of agriculture. The judge upon this occasion has by anticipation pronounced, that to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and give drink to the thirsty, are the passports to future happiness; and the divine intelligence which selected an agricultural state as a paradise for its first favourites, has here again prescribed the agricultural virtues as the means for the admission of their posterity into heaven." See "The Pleasures of Agriculture" in Arator (Petersburg: John M. Carter, 1818), p. 189.

in the sweet new land whose very lushness tempted men into laziness[12]--it was sloth that had made in the country a "desperate" condition of "neglect and poverty."[13] The tension grows between the ideal rural prospect and the reality of failure implicit in this mystified wonder over the beautiful land hurt by that scapegrace, man. The tension derives from William's typical flash of hope and the almost invariable concomitant sense of loss.

Williams does two things in his observation. He criticizes man for ruining the garden of Virginia. He also laments the Fall of man that has made it necessary for him to cut, to harm the earth with ploughs in the first place in order to feed his multitudes. It is ironic that American settlers had to destroy a paradisal, natural garden to create a pastoral middleground which was destined to be ruined in turn. Williams saw this. Bartram saw it too in the deserted farms of Georgia and the destroyed orange groves of Florida.

But the great tragedy to which Williams refers is that of the Fall itself. The hopeful, fleeting image of America actually becomes a punishment for man. For what Virginia has suggested to Williams is a recollection

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[12]David Bertelson, The Lazy South (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967), p. 80.

[13]Force, III, xi, 91, 28, 50.

of lost Eden. What he touches upon is the deep irony, the tragedy that appears later in the antebellum pastoral design.

Another introspective commentator whose name we do not know looked at Virginia in 1610. His words point with almost uncanny precision to the dream-versus-reality pattern that runs through antebellum pastoral. Mulling over the failure of the settlers to take advantage of Virginia's richness, he wrote, sadly and wisely: "It is but a golden slumber, that dreameth of any humane felicity, which is not sauced with some contingent misery."[14]

The Edenic formulas of these early Southern tracts inevitably show the fallen garden. The men who came to the garden did not find peace or resuscitation in it. They brought their own disharmonies with them, that whole teeming, disappointing world from which so many sought to flee. In certain fleeting, hopeful moments, nevertheless, they grasped at the original, most persistent delusion of all: that man might be able to find something good in the static environment of a pastoral dream, seemingly about to come true. They were driven as well by another delusion. This was the "utopian-progressive" spirit based on the idea of the perfectibility of

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[14]Anon., A True Declaration of the Estate of the Colonie in Virginia, in Force, III, i, 24.

man.[15] Quiet Arcadia, after all, is an uneconomical fiction. Things have to be done in the garden. It has to be improved. It must become profitable. Even Williams felt this of Virginia's good land.[16] Unavoidably, however, things are destined, it seems, to fall apart. W. B. Yeats said it in "The Second Coming." These commentators upon the South saw it happening all along.

What especially worried seventeenth century writers of tracts was that man, too lazy or too eager for profit, had failed to improve the natural garden with proper husbandry in order to attain the quiet sufficiency of the middleground. This was supposed to have been the American pastoral compromise--the productive garden, the middling alternative[17] between the ostensibly hostile wilderness of William Bradford or the impossibly healthy, beautiful paradise of George Waymouth[18] and the corrupt, artificial civilization of old Europe.

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[15]Sheehan, "Paradise and the Noble Savage," 330-31, 358.

[16]Force, III, xi, 28.

[17]Sheehan, 328.

[18]Samuel Purchas, Hakluytus Posthumus or Purchas His Pilgrims (Glasgow: James MacLehose and Sons, 1905), III, xviii, 352-356.

What evolves here--and from subsequent observers, too--is an inadvertent, subtle commentary upon the fallacy of man's oldest dream-idyll. Their comments puncture the concept of Arcadia by showing that man will not let it work. But the dream will persist, interspersed with hurt or startled or annoyed comments upon man's failure in the garden. It is a pattern that lies at the heart of antebellum pastoral, providing it with an underlying reality that finally transforms its seeming nostalgia into something more akin to tragedy.

"Have you pleasure in a Garden?" Robert Beverley asked, and he too paused to wonder. His The History and Present State of Virginia (1705) is the first account of the area by a native. He continues the tradition we have so far observed that linked the conditions of life in the South to the European pastoral ideal. It was a sense of kinship used to define the meaning of America since its discovery.[19] Like Barlowe, Smith, Waymouth, and Williams, Beverley used the image of Virginia as a natural garden which he compared to Paradise. And he also saw the breakdown of the American Edenic dream.

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[19]Marx, Machine in the Garden, p. 3. In The Dispossessed Garden: Pastoral and History in Southern Literature (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1975), p. 15, Lewis P. Simpson writes: "The vision of Virginia as a paradise, in contrast to a wilderness . . . appears in the literature of the Virginia Company days, notably

His subsequent wonder fits the pattern of surprise, worry, and subtle insight that develops all through the dream. His story again reveals the dichotomy between dream and reality intrinsic in pastoral design. The Virginians he observed failed to create the middleground, to benefit in the garden. It was as simple as that. Instead, in their lethargy they abused the natural goodness of the land. A profounder statement in Beverley's account reveals his awareness of the irony that it was the very goodness of the land that debilitated the settlers. His wonder at the failure of the reconciliation of nature and cultivation, art, joins Beverley's futile pastoral not only to Virgil's but to that of the antebellum South.[20] Into the conclusion of his Virginia

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in the writings of Captain John Smith. But the appearance of such a vision in a developed form does not occur until nearly a century later, when it becomes a major aspect of Robert Beverley's remarkable work, The History and Present State of Virginia."

[20]Beverley's view and criticism and the dichotomy he creates have a distinct predecessor in another anonymous tract writer of 1609. For him, too, Virginia was an "earthly paradise." What may we not hope from this rich, natural land, he asks, "when Arte and Nature both shall joyne, and strive together to give best content to man and beast?" This is the pastoral view of Beverley and, later, of Jefferson: the idea of cultivating the land as the best course to human satisfaction. And like Beverley, this writer paused. He saw the ideal potential flicker, and he worried that it might be snuffed if the settlers allowed "that bitter root of greedy gain" to settle in their hearts. This is the very greed Beverley held responsible for his ruined garden. Nova Britannia: Offering Most Excellent fruites by Planting in Virginia, in Force, I, vi, 11-12.

idyll creeps that note of criticism inherent in all pastoral.[21]

If anything, Beverley is disarming, even when he pauses to wonder. In his Preface he sets himself up as a kind of frontier-guide figure, the shepherd of pastoral imagery. To impress his reader with his honesty, he writes, in his style he will appear in plain dress. He is going to be like a simple man of the forest, setting out to guide the reader along the green paths of Virginia's history. He goes even further in casting himself as an elemental American: "I am an Indian," he says, with a wistful, genteel sort of primitivism.[22] From this fresh standpoint of empathy not only for the land but also for its natives, he describes Barlowe's arrival in a land where all things were "so delightful, and desirable; so pleasant, and plentiful . . . the Woods, and Soil, so charming and fruitful that Paradise it self seem'd to be there, in its first Native Lustre" (History, p. 16).

So Beverley establishes his Southern idyll. At first his landscape evokes an utopian vision,[23] but his

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[21] Marinelli, Pastoral, p. 12.

[22] Robert Beverley, The History and Present State of Virginia, Louis B. Wright, ed. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1947), p. 9.

[23] Marx, p. 77.

tale ends as a twisted pastoral. The travellers were not bettered in the garden. They did not leave behind the disharmonies of the outside world to find the spiritual rejuvenation that is supposed to be provided by the innocent environment of the pastoral retreat. Instead, they corrupted the natives, who "lost their Felicity, as well as their innocence" (History, p. 233). Here Beverley draws that conflict between town--civilization--and country--innocence--that is essential to pastoral art.[24] What is important in his description is the fact that the town wins the struggle. It is the notion that the vulnerable retreat cannot, finally, withstand the pressure of the civilization on its borders.

But the deeper paradox is that the whites were corrupted by the land as well. Like Crèvecoeur later in the century, Beverley saw that there were debilitating forces at work in the park-like forest. His wonder verges upon a statement of that pastoral dilemma integral to the antebellum pastoral design.

Beverley compared uncivilized Virginia to the land of Canaan, "the land of Promise." Why, when the settlers came their eyes were "ravished with the Beauties of naked Nature," their ears with the sound of brooks and birds, their taste with fine fruits, their smell with the

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[24] Marinelli, p. 12.

perfume of flowers. But this naked Nature was not enough in itself--it had to be cultivated. He looked around himself years after Barlowe's hopeful arrival and saw that not enough was planted in the natural garden. That vision of America idealized into a middleground of peaceful farmers had not materialized. There was little improvement except in tobacco planting, a greedy one-crop system that was ruining the fine land. The settlers he described failed to make good their agrarian opportunities to thrive in the land.

And so Beverley wondered: what was wrong? Then he almost saw with startling insight: he realized but did not quite admit to an awareness of that duality in nature that creates the pastoral dilemma. The fault lay in the garden itself as much as in man. It was the "Liberality of Nature," upon which the colonists depended so much without trying to improve it, that had corrupted them. In their "slothful Indolence" they "spunge upon the Blessings of a warm Sun, and a fruitful Soil, and almost grutch the Pains of gathering in the Bounties of the Earth." It is on such a note of mystified alarm over a pastoral paradox that Beverley ends his history, weakly hoping his criticism will arouse his countrymen to "make the most of all those happy Advantages which nature has given them. . ." (History, pp. 314, 319).

In his praise and wonder Beverley clearly reveals the ambivalence that develops in Southern pastoral. And it had begun as early as with Barlowe in 1584. The Edenic delight stimulated by the natural marvels of the New World is never unalloyed. Almost always there crops up some fear or doubt or regret. The dream is grasped and lost. This ambivalent pastoral view provides a sort of allegorical statement upon the situation of man since the Fall. Thus Beverley's disturbing paradox is inevitable: the garden is both savior and destroyer.

Simply stated, Robert Beverley has touched upon the complex pastoral that evolves in antebellum fiction. Rural paradise was lost long ago and another kind of outdoors replaced it. Images of Eden can color this new land, but they can never make it other than what it is, a fallen land combining both good and evil. Out of the clash of myth and reality grows the ironic element in antebellum pastoral that sees the ideal and actual in nature, the doubleness of things.

Even in William Byrd's rather light-hearted The History of the Dividing Line (1728), a dual view of nature is evident. American appreciation of nature is seldom pure.[25] Beverley's alarm over his dissolute

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[25]Nash, Wilderness and the American Mind, p. 52.

Virginia settlers is reflected in Byrd's disgust for the sloth and physical degeneration of the backwoods settlers of North Carolina. It is a land which "approaches nearer to the Description of Lubberland than any other, by the great felicity of the Climate, the easiness of raising Provisions, and the Slothfulness of the People."[26] Again, the very benevolence of the land is responsible for the degeneracy of the people who practice "bad Husbandry" by allowing their livestock to run wild, who wastefully cut down whole trees only to gather moss for bed-stuffing (Writings, p. 44). It is the unavoidable American pastoral irony.

The waste and debasement that the lush forest generates are epitomized in Epaphroditus Bainton, the wild forester who guides Byrd's surveyors. Bainton spends "all his time ranging the Woods, and is said to make great Havock among the Deer, and other Inhabitants of the Forest, not much wilder than Himself" (Writings, p. 114). Such a character looks ahead to Crèvecoeur's frightening backwoodsman, and on to Davy Crockett. Corrupted as well by the opulence of the land, Crockett like Bainton was a frontier sloven with a lust for

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[26]John Spenser Bassett, ed., The Writings of "Colonel William Byrd of Westover in Virginia Esqr." (New York: Doubleday, Page, 1901), p. 75.

killing and destruction in his blood that made him a waster of the resources of the inland garden of Tennessee of the early nineteenth century.[27]

But out in the forest, away from other men, Byrd cannot avoid some paradisal and pastoral idiom. In using it, he expresses the pastoral dichotomy all over again. The degenerate settlers are balanced against the idyllic land. Like so many of his journalist predecessors, in the untouched wilderness his mind turns to thoughts of Eden: "We had no other Drink but what Adam drank in Paradise. . . ." The water was so excellent that it improved their appetites, sleep, dispositions, ". . . and if we ever dreamt of Women, they were kind" (Writings, p. 128).

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[27]Vernon Louis Parrington, The Romantic Revolution in America, 1800-1860 (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1927), pp. 178-79. Politically, Parrington goes on to say, Crockett was a joke. But as a waster of the land and its animals, he was a hard, unlovely fact. "Wastefulness was in the frontier blood, and Davy was a true frontier wastrel." He was also something of a frontier savage, a primitive--one of those degenerate "bad people" of the forest, "half cultivators and half hunters," of whom the anti-primitivist Crèvecoeur writes with disgust and alarm. See Letters from an American Farmer, pp. 66-68.

After burning forty-eight Indians trapped in a house, for instance, Crockett--or his ghost-writer--tells how he joined his hungry militia men in digging up the potatoes buried under it. They ate them with gusto despite the fact that "the oil of the Indians we had burned up on the day before had run down on them, and they looked like they had been stewed with fat meat." For this grim aspect of the American forest idyll, see A Narrative of the Life of David Crockett of the State of Tennessee (Philadelphia: E. L. Carey and A. Hart, 1834), p. 90.

On his return to the settlements, Byrd has a sudden pastoral vision of America. He sees the middle-ground in the forest. It is the pastoral dream of Crèvecoeur, Jefferson, and the writers of antebellum fiction, regrettably belied by reality:

> On the other side of this delightful Valley, which was about half a Mile wide, rose a Hill that terminated the View, and in the figure of a Semi-circle closed in upon the opposite Side of the Valley. This had a most agreeable Effect upon the Eye, and wanted nothing but Cattle grazing in the Meadow, and Sheep and Goats feeding on the Hill, to make it a Compleat Rural Landscape (Writings, pp. 232-33).

As always, reality intrudes upon the dream. For a moment Byrd seems to have forgotten Lubberland. But his vision evaporates quickly when he comes to the miserable clearing of a wretchedly poor planter, Cornelius Keith. An ugly reality takes the place of the envisioned middle-ground. Keith lives in a mean log cabin; his fields are half cleared, his children half naked. And yet, sloven that he is, he seems content, beguiled into sloth and dissolution by the easy life of the doomed Edenic land. His wants "proceed from Indolence," Byrd says, focusing now on the spoiled garden so far removed from his sudden vision of the ideally cultivated valley. In Virginia, too, there are lazy farmers, he admits. The soil is so good there "that very little Labour is required to fill their Bellies, especially where the Woods afford Plenty of Game" (Writings, p. 241).

Perhaps it was with this contrast between the dream and the actual in his mind that several years later he used the Edenic reference to America in his A Journey to the Land of Eden (1733). Eden is an area of North Carolina which he has once before called Lubberland. The recollection provides a frame of irony for his short account. It is the dream versus reality again. Since the Fall, earthly Eden usually has been seen popularly as a kind of Lubberland, Schlaraffenland. A soft country of easy living, a lot to eat and no work or intellectual or spiritual demands. Byrd is not even contemptuous, however, in the Journey.

He jokes about the hardships he and his companions suffer riding through the forest on their way to survey some of their holdings in Eden land. But he has no more pastoral visions in the forest's valley clearings. It is only while sleeping at night that he dreams of "Elysian Fields" (Writings, p. 307). His one-time vision of Eden in the actual landscape seems far removed now from the realm of actual possibility. It is relegated to the accidental realm of sleeping dreams. The journey itself is not described with any of the old pastoral élan. The skies are dark and stormy most of the way. There is a dearth of wildlife where once it was so plentiful. A beautiful river is marred now by gray, dead canes all

along its banks. The forest is not very joyous any more. With a sense of quiet fun, Byrd would seem to resign himself to pastoral disorder in the land.

It is important for us to look at Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur, although he was not a Southerner, or a native-born American, for that matter. In his Letters from an American Farmer (1782), he formulated the pastoral ideas that came to him on his New York farm. His is the first extensive writing in America which systematically projects the traditional pastoral ideal onto a local scene.[28] His book is more fiction than fact. It is practically a pastoral novel. So it is that we may give it a broad application: it is a statement not so much of life and ruin on a New York farm, as it is a revelation of the whole eighteenth century American pastoral dream that held over well into the nineteenth, especially in the primarily agricultural South. Furthermore, there is a close relationship between Crèvecoeur's agricultural ideas and those of Jefferson. Both looked with utter conviction to the soil as the source of the nation's moral and material well-being.

What is of particular importance for this study is that Crèvecoeur's design looks directly toward the pastoral

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[28]Marx, p. 108.

that developed in the novels of the antebellum South. In the Letters he affirms the ideal of the middle landscape. But in his eagerness for the rural ideal, he creates more of a pastoral fantasy than an image of reality. He is forced to realize this himself in his final letter. He too reveals that flash of doubt, that awareness of ambiguity that is so much a part of the American pastoral experience. He too pauses as he sadly describes his garden's ruin, and lapses then into a wan hope of starting anew in the wilds of the West.

The old dream is nearly attained by James, the farmer. Then it is lost, destroyed by those relentless, inward-pressing forces on the farm's periphery. This familiar story of the destruction of pastoral hope Crèvecoeur accomplishes with an irony and a sense of tragedy deeper and more subtle than in any other previous work--description, promotional tract, or history.

For Crèvecoeur, cultivating a pastoral garden seemed a sensible means of escaping the difficulties of the imperfect world.[29] The contradiction in his tale is that, finally, there is no escape. This is his major albeit subtle and despairing point. Like the soft natural garden of Barlowe and Waymouth, James's farm is too

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[29]Sheehan, 339.

vulnerable a retreat. Nevertheless, as Crèvecoeur plays with his farmer's delusion, the reader is caught up in a wonderful, fragile Virgilian dream.

In his first letters, James writes how a man is free on a farm, where he lives in harmony with nature and is the master of his own fate. Through its "race of cultivators" the American nation is made "prosperous and flourishing."[30] Farming makes a man gentle, gives him simple manners and inoffensive ways (Letters, p. 69). In the cultivated countryside, a man will not become brutalized as he so often does in city or forest. James shudders when he looks to the wild frontier on the periphery of his farm. Here he sees that threat in nature that Beverley and Byrd had described in somewhat different terms. For Crèvecoeur a danger lies in the ferocity of primitive frontier life that corrupts men.

He establishes his pastoral contrast when in Letter III James describes those half savage frontiersmen, "ferocious gloomy, unsociable," who in neglecting their farms have not been regenerated by the land but rather demoralized by it. They have denied the civilized pastoral and reverted to the primordial hunting stage of

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[30]J. Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur, Letters from an American Farmer (New York: Duffield, 1904), p. 9.

man's development. Men who live in the uncultivated woods find their actions regulated by its wildness, and they become at worst as wild as the wild flesh they hunt and eat (Letters, pp. 66-70). Crèvecoeur's grotesque description of such human carnivores, such barbarized frontiersmen, provides a foretaste of the unsavory, often horrible backwoods characters who in antebellum fiction are sometimes contrasted with the worthy frontier-guides.[31]

This awareness of the good and bad in the natural garden, of the fallibility of man, leads inevitably to the complex pastoral view. If it is mildly cultivated--not exploited--the garden provides hope, betterment and peace for man. If it is neglected, it creates savagery,

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[31]One of the strangest of the barbarized whites who appear in the antebellum novel is Hark Short of James Hall's The Harpe's Head (1833). Hark was brought up in the Georgia pine barrens, living all alone with a debased crone of a mother who bore him out of wedlock. He has an obsessive drive to kill snakes, which he crushes to death under his bare feet. He is an untameable boy with none of the potential of Huck Finn. At the end of the tale, he disappears quietly like an underfed animal into the darkening forest, refusing the chance to return to Virginia to be cared for by the gentleman of the story, George Lee. Another peculiarly debased backwoodsman is Wat Adair of John Pendleton Kennedy's Horse-Show Robinson (1835). Wat is a Tory and, of course, a sneak. He lives with his miserable family on a ramshackle North Carolina mountain farm. In an unforgettable scene he skins alive a wolf he has trapped, refusing the gold the gentleman, Arthur Butler, offers him to kill the animal mercifully.

restlessness, and the rapacity and injustice stimulated by need. So says Hector de Crèvecoeur (Letters, p. 69).

But Crèvecoeur is doing more here than commenting on unpleasant frontier individuals or making a statement about negative forces in the uncultivated forest. There is a graver symbolism in his degenerate frontiersman, whose ferociousness actually reflects the duality latent in civilization itself.

To James harm does not come from the savage frontier. It comes from the civilization which also exists on the edge of his garden, and which reveals the ferocity hidden under its urbanity when it goes to war. Then it is that the wild law of the forest becomes the law of the land. Then, in tracing the course of their degeneracy, what James says of his wild woodsmen might be said of civilized men: they become killers out of self-defense in the surrounding hostility of the forest, which "immediately puts the gun into their hands . . . and thus by defending their property, they soon become professed hunters . . . once hunters, farewell to the plow" (Letters, pp. 66-67). James's story of the savage frontiersman becomes a parable of the savagery of civilization when war "puts the gun into" men's hands for reasons, invariably, of national or personal self-defense.

The plight of James in Letter XII follows that of

Meliboeus, who loses his farm in Virgil's First Eclogue. The discord of the outside world encroaches upon the farmer's green retreat as the Revolutionary War grows around him. His house fills with refugees. Everything in his once peaceful life is disrupted. It is by now a familiar pattern: the pastoral middleground is first threatened from outside and then wrecked by it.

The tragedy in Crèvecoeur's story is not only that James loses his farm to the soldier-hunters of rapacious civilization. It also lies in his strange failure to realize that one cannot, after all, cultivate his garden, because the great world will not allow it. This is the idea implicit, for instance, in Candide's statement at the end of Voltaire's novel. And it is a statement whose import becomes less cryptic the more one understands the critical nature of pastoral.

With a bitter, almost childlike disregard for the moral degradation his resolution portends, James says his family must now learn the art of hunting in the forest, for there they will move. It is as if, for an anguished moment, he has a self-pitying, destructive vision of himself and his sons as murderous, fierce frontier hunters after all, driven to their rapacity not by the forest's uncultivated land and trees but by the disruptive forces of urban civilization. This is a

further reflection of Crèvecoeur's deep pastoral conviction, despite his half awareness of its futility. It is not only loneliness and necessity in the forest that make beasts of men. The pressures of non-agricultural urban civilization can bring this about as well. Finally--and here is the deeper irony of James's tale and Crèvecoeur's delusion--the farmer relapses into his vain pastoral dream.

James persists. He will leave his farm, he writes in his final letter, and journey into the wilderness where his industry and labor will not be disturbed. "As long as we keep ourselves busy in tilling the earth," he says, "there is no fear of any of us becoming wild" (Letters, p. 316). James appears already to have forgotten the lesson that is rumbling around his farm. What is to keep the wilderness from coming to him again even in his new middleground? True, a worry nags him, alternating with his pastoral optimism. He wonders again and again what lies in store for him in the forest. His hope and his worry recall the mixed emotions of the hypothetical first settler we saw long ago sitting under his Virginia tree. He wondered what would happen to the garden he saw green and freshly beautiful all around him. He wondered about the garden--and about the people in it.

Willing or not, Crèvecoeur gives his answer, as do the antebellum novelists in their own way. The answer is the very antithesis of the pastoral dream. No man should feel secure in a changing world. James, the mild farmer, had been too content, too peaceful, too removed upon his farm. In the end he insists on looking for the same lost bucolic ease and joy all over again. His idea reveals that westering theme which occurs over and over in American aspirations and in antebellum fiction. It is the vision of a hopeful, ever-new garden of redemption, the second chance across the mountains. There a man can start afresh, in a land as doomed as the old.

No, Crèvecoeur unwillingly, halfheartedly admits, a mild man cannot exist anywhere undisturbed. James shares this insight when suddenly he thinks of compensating for his loss by becoming a hunter, savage like those forces of revolution that are hounding him from his retreat. Then he just as quickly forgets, preferring the delusion of the hopeless bucolic dream. And so Crèvecoeur smothered his startling, acute insight into the pastoral fallacy. Like Jefferson, he persisted in looking for the nation's well-being in the cultivation of the prodigal good earth that had so attracted the first settlers and commentators, and from which forthcoming Southern novelists were to spin their own sad pastoral dreams.

In the eighteenth century the Edenic vision of early explorers and colonists mellowed into the more realistic concept of the working pastoral landscape of Crèvecoeur and Jefferson. In the eyes of newer dreamers, America became less of a paradise and more of a cultivated garden. The land thus idealized was a middleground of peaceful farmers who--temporarily at least--could escape from a world pressing them closely with violence.[32] Thomas Jefferson, to name one such dreamer, did not foresee the enormous industrial development of the United States. As President, however, he did modify his agricultural position slightly when he stated that the greatest prosperity of America depended "on a due balance between agriculture, manufactures, and commerce."[33]

Jefferson really wanted this middleground compromise. His worry over the corrupt, oppressive influence of the city was easily translated into the fear of the industrial dominance of the North, which, joined to an almost whimsical pastoralism, led the antebellum novelists into their futile bucolic dreams, their backward glances. Like Jefferson they saw the danger of the encroachments of industrial power upon the freedom

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[32]Sheehan, 341.

[33]Jay B. Hubbell, The South in American Literature, 1607-1900 (Durham: Duke University Press, 1954), pp. 125, 134.

and virtue of the land. But they sensed, too, that a doom for the rural South lay in the growing economic might of the busy, manufacturing North.

Jefferson's "due balance" was only a dream. It was little different from the one Crèvecoeur's farmer had. The North-South sections that developed in the New World were very real. They were workaday, political, social, economic entities, not pastoral utopias. The two sections grew away from each other, and the South itself was tainted by the restlessness of commerce in the dynamic growth of the cotton culture in the Southwest in the first quarter of the nineteenth century.[34]

If instability were--or is--the essence of the American nation,[35] it was against instability that the Southern pastoral ideal of country repose was invoked. In Jefferson's pastoral ruminations the restless, dangerous forces of industry join the traditional image of the city as the peripheral threat to rural peace. In his Notes on the State of Virginia (1787),[36] the only

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[34]Frank Lawrence Owsley, "The Irrepressible Conflict," in I'll Take My Stand, Louis D. Rubin, Jr., Introd. (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1962), pp. 78, 83.

[35]Howard Mumford Jones, O Strange New World (New York: The Viking Press, 1964), p. 275.

[36]Thomas Jefferson, Notes on the State of Virginia, William Peden, ed. (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1955).

book he published in his lifetime, Jefferson clearly states the pastoral bias that runs through his subsequent writings and letters.[37] Because he felt that essential social and moral values were evident in it, Jefferson saw country life in its traditional role as an alternative to ambition, disturbance, oppression.[38]

What he presents is an idea of rural society as a bulwark against the pressures of an ominous new age. Nowhere else in American literature is there a more appealing, vivid, thorough statement of the case for the pastoral than in the Notes.[39] It is an old idea with which he plays, this vision of a rural republic. The pastoral hope: a summer afternoon dream of the supremacy of the countryside over the urban, commercial forces that threaten it. It is right in line with antebellum pastoral.

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[37] The panoramic technique which Jefferson uses in his description of the confluence of rivers at Harper's Ferry (Notes, pp. 19-20) also suggests that mixed, ambiguous feeling of Americans toward nature, where the tumultuous or dangerous mingles with the peaceful and the good. It is, perhaps, a reflection of Jefferson's particular awareness of the duality, the dichotomy in the land. It is, perhaps, a reflection of the pastoral double vision.

[38] Raymond Williams, The Country and the City (London: Chatto and Windus, 1973), pp. 24-27.

[39] Marx, p. 118.

Jefferson felt all a nation's, a people's good came from the land. The unspoiled American landscape was peculiarly conducive to the nurture of man's moral sense. In "Query XIX" of the Notes, he establishes his ideal pastoral in terms of the conflict between country and town. Industry is the villain in Jefferson's piece. Since America has so much arable land, he writes, it is best that all its citizens be farmers. His notion is pastoral, however, rather than agrarian.[40] He advocates the rural ideal not with its profitability or practical economic feasibility in view. For him it is good because of the tranquility it will bring the people and the subsequent "happiness and permanence" that will devolve upon their government (Notes, p. 165). America's workshops--the industrial towns--should remain in Europe, even if this means higher prices for commodities. Industrial cities are destructive cankers in a republic. They have no place in a pastoral environment.

What Jefferson has in mind is the middle state of small rural, working communities as the best attainable human condition. It is a notion appropriate to the green, untouched, vastness of America. He propagandizes heavily for the farmer. Jefferson tries to show the need

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[40] Marx, p. 126.

for compromise in the natural garden, where one lives close to the land while improving but not abusing it. This desirability of a reconciliation between the animal and rational, the natural and civilized conditions of man is inherent in the pastoral ideal.[41] It is a philosophic base, too, of the Enlightenment, of which Jefferson was a holdover in the American spaces. As such he was practical. His farmers are workers, not the bucolic idlers of neo-classical pastoral. He writes:

> Those who labour in the earth are the chosen people of God, if he ever had a chosen people, whose breasts he made his peculiar deposit for substantial and genuine virtue. It is the focus in which he keeps alive that sacred fire, which otherwise might escape from the face of the earth (Notes, p. 164).

There is, as we have noted, an echo of Crèvecoeur in Jefferson's design. It is a design that orders itself, finds value and meaning in the contrast of two modes of life, the rural and the urban. The urban is Jefferson's force outside which foreshadows an important element in antebellum pastoral. In his contrast Jefferson creates the inevitable pastoral tension. Social corruption--that old threat to the garden--is not the fault of the farmer but of the manufacturer, the city merchant who depends for his subsistence not on the soil but "on the casualties

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[41] Marx, p. 102.

and caprice of customers" (Notes, p. 165). These men are dependent. The farmer, Jefferson and Crèvecoeur agree, is free.

Jefferson pictures the ominous city pulsing dangerously at the garden's edge:

> The mobs of great cities add just so much to the support of pure government, as sores do to the strength of the human body. It is the manners and spirit of a people which preserve a republic in vigour. A degeneracy in these is a canker which soon eats to the heart of its laws and constitution (Notes, p. 165).

The national manners and spirit of which Jefferson speaks are found in the simple virtues, the harmony and peace of countrymen who derive their strength and character from the good earth, self-sufficient and free from the market's threatening tyranny. Later on Jefferson was to modify but never abandon his distrust of large cities and their inhabitants of diverse nationalities.[42]

This theme of country versus town and of rural moral superiority is continued in Jefferson's letters. In 1803 he thought of the European-like slums created by unassimilated immigrants who had failed in the country. He saw the city's threat and wrote of it in disgust, criticizing men, not the garden: "The general desire of men to live by their heads rather than their hands, and

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[42]Notes on the State of Virginia, footnote p. 292.

the strong allurements of great cities to those who have any turn for dissipation, threaten to make them here, as in Europe, the sinks of voluntary misery."[43] Farmers remain for him "the most valuable citizens . . . the most vigorous, the most independent, the most virtuous . . .," as he wrote once to John Jay (Writings, XVI, vi).

Yet the pestilential city persists and grows, always a peripheral danger to the order of the farmer's country retreat. The inhabitants of America's commercial cities

> are as different in sentiment and character from the country people as any two distinct nations, and are clamorous against the order of things established by the agricultural interest. Under this order our citizens generally are enjoying a very great degree of liberty and security in the most temperate manner (Writings, X, 356).

But perhaps, after all, there is an element of the pastoral dilettante about Jefferson. Perhaps Leo Marx is right when he observes that behind Jefferson's syntax of the middle landscape there is no serious intention of going all the way.[44] A peaceful but static pastoral community was not a possibility in a nation which thought of itself in an utopian idiom that case a progressivist

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[43]Andrew A. Lipscomb, ed., The Writings of Thomas Jefferson (Washington: The Thomas Jefferson Memorial Association, 1903), X, 431.

[44] Machine in the Garden, p. 121.

spell over its most mundane activities. Jefferson, too, thought in terms of developing the land. His age was "pregnant with the anticipation of physical and moral improvement."[45] Such progressivism is the very antithesis of the traditional pastoral dream, which posits the contentment of man in a life of quiet, complacent repose in a beautiful, tranquil garden.

This brings us back to the fallacy of the original Edenic vision of America. And to the essential pastoral dilemma it helped to create. America simply was not Paradise. That was lost with the Fall. It was not a place of repose and forever mild weather, of swains and sheep (those envisioned herds) and fresh green. So, perhaps, Jefferson's whimsical, economically impractical insistence on the inviolability of the land, on the moral and material superiority of the farmer in his always threatened rural retreat, is the perfect expression after all of the American--and surely the Southern--pastoral ethos.

This vulnerable dream of Jefferson looks up to Crèvecoeur in New York, ahead to the antebellum period, and back to Beverley and beyond to Barlowe's first day in Virginia. It is a never-ending and never-attained dream,

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[45]Sheehan, 357, 336.

this vision of the harmonious, generous, doomed garden where men would stay put, quietly and diligently tilling the soil. It is a hopeless dream of men undisturbed by discontent within themselves or turmoil outside the boundaries of their bucolic place.

One could go so far as to say that the quality of pastoral dilettante becomes evident in the remarks about an "amateur's" appreciation of a rural vista which Jefferson wrote to Charles W. Peale in 1811. Is Jefferson thinking of himself as this onlooking amateur, since elsewhere he has made so much ado over the need of wholesome, diligent husbandry? He thinks of trim fields, neat fences, cared-for buildings and herds. Notice how he complains. His voice reminds one suddenly of Beverley, who was perhaps an amateur onlooker as well. Ah, Jefferson says, the lack of labor has made the farms of Virginia slovenly, minus "that style of beauty which satisfies the eye of the amateur." And finally, when in the same letter his pastoral dream gives way to a vision of mere gardening, one is reminded of the country gentleman, for whom farming is an avocation, rather than of the farmer, for whom agriculture is a hard livelihood.

For the instant, Jefferson seems intent on removing himself from the pastoral association. Like Virgil in his

Tenth Eclogue,[46] he seems to detach himself from the rural environment, identifying himself with a departing onlooker. Like Theocritus and Virgil, both city-based observers of the land, Jefferson is not truly one of the bucolic folk. With the whimsy and enthusiasm of a happily fantasizing amateur who sees only the rosy prospects of the garden--its sweatless ideal removed far from the reality of rural Virginia--he writes:

> I have often thought that if heaven had given me choice of my position and calling, it should have been on a rich spot of earth, well watered, and near a good market for the production of the garden. No occupation is so delightful to me as the cultivation of the earth, and no culture comparable to that of the garden (Writings, XIII, 79).

How far removed in time yet how close in sentiment this observation seems to that first reflection of Arthur Barlowe. In a fleeting, bright moment he actually thought he saw Jefferson's quiet, imaginary garden as he looked inland from a weary-hulled ship off the shore of Virginia--a flash of rural Paradise, all green and gold and blue, gone then like a dream.

It was for Beverley to wonder, Crèvecoeur to think fearfully, and Jefferson to turn from the corruption of the New World's natural garden. The ambiguity of the

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[46]Harry Levin, The Myth of the Golden Age in the Renaissance (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1969), p. 7.

Edenic-pastoral image is that inevitably it must be drawn in terms of its fallen state. It is best relegated to dreams. Kept down in myth, like that created in the antebellum pastoral design. The observations of Beverley and Crèvecoeur anticipate the awareness of later Southern novelists of a fallacy in the paradisal dream in America. This provides them that thread of tragedy that runs sometimes so startlingly through their romances.

The loss of the garden felt by Beverley is seen also in William Bartram's musings in his Travels (1791) over the abused farmlands of Georgia and Florida. Yet he thought that, despite all the waste he saw, a gentle productive middleground could be made out of the pristine land just the same. In his often almost poetic and always pleasant journal, Bartram echoes the delight and awe of America revealed in earlier accounts. He records some of the doubts as well.

He is enamored of Georgia and Florida lands untouched by the hands of man, especially the vast green savannahs and great live oaks, clear waterways and pure crystal springs. The feeling of tranquility he experiences in the forest becomes a constant theme in his observations. Untouched nature claims him. In the uncommercial garden his wants are simple, few. He glides into a dream:

> . . . and meditating on the marvellous scenes of primitive nature, as yet unmodified by the hand of man, I gently descended the peaceful stream, on whose polished surface were depicted the mutable shadows from its pensile banks; whilst myriads of finny inhabitants sported in its pellucid floods.[47]

Along the way he regrets the wastefulness caused by bad farming of settlers, a blight upon nature's "almost inexpressible air of grandeur." And how he regrets the destruction of the orange groves. In place of one such "venerable grove" are deserted fields "like a desart . . . terminated . . . by frightful thickets, and open pine forests" (Travels, p. 102). If Bartram had been given to sarcasm, which he was not, one could perhaps have heard him play upon the words of Beverley: "Have you pleasure in a ruined garden?" What he sees is an American version of the ruin of Eden. Description of the natural beauty of Florida's pristine garden becomes the leitmotif in his account of his journey there. A contrapuntal theme is provided by his unhappy awareness of the despoliation of the land by plantation owners who have failed, leaving a scrubby, sandy desolation behind them.

Bartram says, however, that Florida could be changed

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[47]William Bartram, Travels Through North and South Carolina, Georgia, East and West Florida, Mark Van Doren, ed. (New York: Dover Publications, 1928), p. 65.

into a prosperous and "delightful region" if proper commerce and agriculture were introduced (Travels, p. 199). Like Beverley, Crèvecoeur, and Jefferson, he wants to see the natural paradise modified by good husbandry. He is progressive, not primitive in his outlook. The idea of the American garden included progress, too.[48] The problem is how does one correlate progress with pastoral repose? How does the white man attain such seeming peace as that enjoyed by Bartram's Cherokees in their strawberry fields, cool mountains, and quiet green valleys?

Bartram's record of his trip into the North Carolina mountains provides one of the finest descriptions of an eighteenth century American nature-idyll. The following is a particularly lyrical passage. It is the poetry of the undefiled American Eden, which even as Bartram wrote was undergoing irreversible change. There was a trader present with him whose horses were pastured in these hills. Eventually the mountains will be his. Meanwhile, Bartram saw something beautiful:

> Proceeding on our return to town, continued through part of this high forest skirting on the meadows: began to ascend the hills of the ridge which we were under the necessity of crossing; and having gained its summit, enjoyed a most enchanting view;

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[48]Sheehan, 334.

> a vast expanse of green meadows and strawberry fields; a meandering river gliding along through, saluting in its various turnings the swelling, green, turfy knolls, embellished with parterres of flowers and fruitful strawberry beds; flocks of turkies strolling about them; herds of deer prancing in the meads or bounding over the hills; companies of young, innocent Cherokee virgins, some busy gathering the rich fragrant fruit, others having already filled their baskets, lay reclined under the shade of floriferous and fragrant native bowers . . . disclosing their beauties to the fluttering breeze, and bathing their limbs in the cool fleeting streams; whilst other parties, more gay and libertine, were yet collecting strawberries, or wantonly chasing their companions, tantalising them, staining their lips and cheeks with the rich fruit (Travels, pp. 288-89).

But the landscape contains its inevitable ambivalence, too. Back in the beautiful Georgia and Florida country there were "crocodiles" lurking in the pools that Bartram said looked like hideaways of guardian spirits, but were "actually the possession and retreat of a thundering absolute crocodile" (Travels, p. 156). These creatures did more than lurk and thunder. They came out at night to startle and threaten him, trying to sleep, mosquito-bitten, in his camp. In the Cherokees' mountains--before he came on those wonderful strawberry fields--he felt desolate and very lonely, almost frightened, when his travelling companion left him. In his solitary condition, his emotions were mixed. True, in the mountain grandeur around him he had already noticed the pastoral quality of neat valleys, green fields. The great mountains themselves, on the other

hand, suddenly appeared dreary and threatening, inducing his melancholy mood (Travels, pp. 227-29).

These great, rolling mountains, though, are the real, permanent things. We still see them. The frolicking Indians, shaded, breeze-touched, are part of a passing dream. Their children's fate was the Trail of Tears. Such retrospect lends a pastoral tension to Bartram's Indian idyll. His worry about planter depredations in Georgia and Florida gives a double edge to his idylls there as well. In a subtle way, they can become part, then, of the disappointed, perceptive observations of writers like Beverley, Byrd, and Jefferson--all looking to the great theme of the lost garden in antebellum fiction.

Thus from Barlowe to Bartram, from all our disparate observers, we can grasp an approach to the Southern pastoral of the nineteenth century. A particular notion about the idyllic South spilled over unavoidably into the complex pastoral design of the antebellum novel. It is a tragic design, part of that universal myth of man's perennial and heartbreaking search for the lost paradise from which he had been expelled so long ago in the mythic past.

As they investigate the meaning of human experience in a fallen world, comparatively obscure antebellum

novelists depict a spoiled pastoral that places them and their idea in the mainstream of such better-known contemporaries as Charles Brockden Brown, James Fenimore Cooper, Nathaniel Hawthorne, and Herman Melville. The antebellum pastoral design prefigures and becomes a necessary step in the development of what Charles L. Sanford calls the main theme in twentieth century American literature: "the dispossession from paradise, America's abandonment of the security and innocence of an earlier day through some essentially sinful act, an act most frequently associated with industrialism and the commercial ethic."[49]

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[49]Quest, p. 255.

CHAPTER II

THE PASTORAL DESIGN IN THE ANTEBELLUM NOVEL

Into my thoughts, as wakefully I lay
On a green sod of June,
At a sweet hour when Night stole down on Day,
Led by a crescent moon,
Came, clear as life, an old Arcadian scene--
Valleys of shrubby herbage traced between
Hills, forested with oaks of glorious green.

Philip Pendleton Cooke, "Pan and Echo" (1848)

Doom! Doom! Doom! Something seems to whisper it in the very dark trees of America.

D. H. Lawrence, Studies in Classic American Literature (1922)

A natural form for the novel to take in the antebellum South was pastoral. Southern writers could stand for awhile with one foot still in Eden[1] despite the growing restlessness and encroachments of a rapidly industrializing, disrupting age in America. The pastoral impulse ignites the creative imagination particularly in times of stress, rapid change such as occurred in the quickly industrializing England--and expanding America--

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[1]Edwin Muir, One Foot in Eden (London: Faber and Faber, 1956), p. 46.

of the nineteenth century.[2]

Stimulated also by the early nineteenth century search for a truly national literature,[3] novelists of the Old South looked for themes in their own land where the town remained subsidiary to the country,[4] where "not a single factor operated to break up the old pattern of outdoor activity laid down on the frontier."[5] From their search, the more perceptive authors derived their complex pastoral design. It reflected that image of a pleasant agricultural society which was the basic passionate ideal for which the South stood and fell.[6]

In a sense, they extended and refined the garden imagery and pastoral ambiguities of Strachey, Williams, Beverley, Bartram, and the others whose observations

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[2]Michael Squires, The Pastoral Novel (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1974), p. 19.

[3]William Ellery Sedgewick, "The Materials for an American Literature: A Critical Problem of the Early Nineteenth Century," Harvard Studies and Notes in Philology and Literature, 17 (1935), 141.

[4]Francis Pendleton Gaines, The Southern Plantation (New York: Columbia University Press, 1925), p. 143.

[5]W. J. Cash, The Mind of the South (New York: Doubleday, 1954), p. 106.

[6]F. L. Owsley, "The Irrepressible Conflict," pp. 69,91.

inadvertently but inevitably and significantly point to antebellum pastoral. For example, one can see a surprising affinity in many seventeenth and eighteenth century accounts of the South and a statement of Virgilian pastoral that appears in the antebellum design as well. It occurs when the simple, natural goodness of life on the land is contrasted to the vanity and ambition--or shiftlessness--of an outside, urban world that somehow threatens it. This design is vital to pastoral, whose relevant meaning and values are ordered around the contrast between two styles of life.[7]

Like the English pastoral novelists George Eliot, Thomas Hardy, and D. H. Lawrence, of whom Michael Squires writes,[8] Southern antebellum novelists had a deep affection for the country and outdoors people. They identified with country life. They felt nostalgia for its sense of community, for its peaceful, circumscribed world which at its best recalled the Golden Age. They regretted the countryside's demise, however. They disliked encroaching cities and mistrusted modernism.

The philosophical and critical nature of pastoral, its conventions and design, helped antebellum novelists to express crucial aspects of their experience--their

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[7]Leo Marx, Machine in the Garden, p. 94.

[8]Pastoral Novel, p. 18.

awareness of a dichotomy between good and bad in nature; their response to changing times and the plight of their area. The agrarian South was becoming increasingly isolated, its thinking people more and more politically and economically insecure in the rapidly changing America of the 1840's and 1850's.[9] The nation was moving quickly away from the pastoral dream of Jefferson.

Thus antebellum pastoral is more than a story of idealized country people. Pastoral provides for a serious reflection upon the dreams and contradictions of real life. The ideal of retired rural contentment is not posed as an attainable but as an informative ideal.[10] Its double vision places pastoral as close to the grimness of the world as to some idyllic pure garden. Modern pastoral is essentially realistic. It is a variation of the conventional genre. The pastoral novelist uses its potential to express complex attitudes toward human experience rather than to allow the traditional convention to dictate the form of his fiction.[11]

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[9]Clement Eaton, The Mind of the Old South (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1967), p. 67.

[10]Albert R. Cirillo, "As You Like It: Pastoralism Gone Awry," English Literary History, 38 (1971), 22, 38.

[11]Squires, pp. 42, 5.

There was more behind Southern pastoralism than a desire to preserve or to look nostalgically back upon the old simplicity that was threatened by what W. J. Cash calls the "conflict with the Yankee" and his innovations.[12] There was more behind the pastoral design than the desire to retain the Southern rural traditions in the face of outside pressure to change. The structure of their pastorals shows that Southern novelists saw the irony of their wish-fulfillment imagery of a past or future Southern garden that had been doomed from the very beginning. Even in their contemporary South, the rural calm was being disturbed by the restless economic excitement of the expanding cotton culture.[13]

There was something wrong inside the Southern garden as well as out. Such an awareness had started, of course, with Barlowe. And much later William Bartram was disturbed by the "unbenign consequences"[14] of human work in the landscapes of Georgia and Florida. To James Stirling in the mid-nineteenth century the Southern land seemed wild, desolate, isolated. He was an English

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[12]Mind of the South, pp. 108-109.

[13]Henry Savage, Jr., Seeds of Time (New York: Henry Holt, 1959), p. 56.

[14]Bernard W. Sheehan, "Paradise and the Noble Savage in Jeffersonian Thought," 328.

traveller, and in one of his letters he writes: "Every step one takes in the South, one is struck with the rough look of the whole face of civilization. The country is nowhere well cleared; towns and villages are few and far between, and even those which you see have an unfinished look." In another letter he says that "there is a curse upon the land."[15] And Harriet Beecher Stowe in Dred comments through her heroine: "What is the reason when we get down South, here, everything seems to be going to destruction, so? I noticed it all the way down through Virginia. It seemed as if everything had stopped growing and was going backwards."[16]

By the 1830's and 40's many thinking Southerners had become obsessed by social decline and dissolution. How did they, for instance, account for the decline of the Tidewater? They developed a conviction that the civic values and ideals of the Revolutionary generation had been eroded by a half century of Jacksonian democratic change and territorial expansion. They grasped for symbols of stability and order to offset their feelings

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[15]James Stirling, Letters from the Slave States (1857; rpt. New York: Kraus Reprint Co., 1969), pp. 177, 58-59.

[16]Harriet Beecher Stowe, Dred: A Tale of the Great Dismal Swamp (Boston: Phillips, Sampson and Company, 1856), I, 182.

of drift and uncertainty, to quiet their uneasiness about iniquities and troubles in their own society.[17] And the symbol the antebellum novelists developed was an incisive pastoral design whose intricacy and perspicuity actually reveal the shattered image of all their hopes, past and present. Their design is typical of modern pastoral, which is "ironic and ambiguous . . . an inverted pastoral, presenting a bucolic aspiration only to deny it."[18]

Both North and South were touched deeply by the romantic movement of the time. In the North it manifested itself in a passion for making over society according to the dreams of perfectionists. The permeating romanticism of the South looked to the past for its inspiration.[19] The backward-looking element in romanticism suited the Southern desire to preserve the landmarks of the past in their changing world. Southern romanticism resented the effects of time. The Southerner looked back

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[17]William R. Taylor, Cavalier and Yankee: The Old South and American National Character (New York: George Braziller, 1961), pp. 146-47, 322.

[18]Renato Poggioli, "The Oaten Flute," Harvard Library Bulletin, 11 (1957), 176-77.

[19]Clement Eaton, Freedom of Thought in the Old South (Durham: Duke University Press, 1940), p. 317.

to the hope of the old rural paradise, now hopelessly lost in the first half of the nineteenth century.[20]

As a matter of fact, pastoral idyll is a part of the structure of romance. Since reality is not essential to it, romance has a tendency "to plunge into the underside of consciousness." Thus, the best American novelists have found profound uses for romance--and in the South for its element of idyll--far beyond the escapism, sentimentality, nostalgia, fantasy usually associated with it.[21] It is the point of this study to show how in the antebellum novel the double vision of pastoral provides one of the most crucial statements of the American tragedy.

The essential art of literary pastoral is the art of the backward glance, depicting some Arcadian vision that was the product of wistful and melancholy longing. The writer of pastoral reverses the process of history. A reflective form, pastoral is written when an ideal, or at least a more innocent world, is felt to be lost, although not so entirely lost as to destroy its memory or to make impossible some imaginative relationship

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[20]Eaton, Mind of the Old South, p. 312.

[21]Richard Chase, The American Novel and Its Tradition (New York: Doubleday, 1957), pp. viii-ix.

between present reality and past perfection.[22] The distinctly Southern pastoral of antebellum novels is expressed in quite subtle terms of failed or thwarted longing. The design is a general allegory within the thematic structure of the novels which alludes to the lost American dream of rural paradise and Edenic innocence.

Since the theme of looking back is central to pastoral tradition, it is appropriate that most antebellum pastoral novels are historic romances. These novels are never mere nostalgia. As in the later tales of Thomas Hardy, their very nostalgia triggers a critical perspective by making possible "an interplay between past and present in which each becomes a premise for the criticism of the other."[23] Antebellum pastoral does not deal with a far away mythical Arcadia, but with the simpler life of a familiar Southland in a not-too-distant past. Because pastoral is a literature that deals with the complexities of human life against a background of apparent simplicity,[24] life in colonial or Revolutionary or pre-cotton culture days often seemed a proper arena for pastoral fiction.

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[22]Peter V. Marinelli, Pastoral, p. 9.

[23]Irving Howe, Thomas Hardy (New York: Macmillan, 1967), p. 2.

[24]William Empson, Some Versions of Pastoral, p. 25.

But an irony of the pastoral approach to the past lies in the very elusiveness of pastoral experience. Far away or near at hand, pastoral hope or wish-fulfillment is a momentary experience always receding, going back to what might have been.[25] Pastoral is a literature of loss. And social criticism is latent in its very form--the movement "away from an unsatisfactory time and place to another time and place that is imagined to be superior."[26] So it is that in their pastoral designs, antebellum novels reflect better than any other source what William R. Taylor refers to as the attempt of the South to wrestle with the nineteenth century and with itself.[27]

On the surface the dream seems, however, to persist. Barlowe's Virginia garden of the Golden Age--the unifying idea in pastoral--was kept alive in the dream of the Southern plantation. This was an ideal of country attainment that stood as a kind of Southern embodiment of the Golden Age, of an era of happier things.[28] The possibility of that ephemeral middleground remained, even if as only a waning dream or future hope

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[25]Chase, p. 183.

[26]Marinelli, p. 12.

[27]Cavalier and Yankee, p. 299.

[28]Gaines, pp. 145-46.

of pastoral novelists. It persisted, for up to the Civil War the Southern landscape retained the potentially idyllic conditions or hope, at least, associated with the new frontiers seen by Beverley and Byrd.

In Rambler 37 Samuel Johnson gives a characteristically practical definition of pastoral. And it fits the pattern of the antebellum design. Pastoral, Johnson writes, is a poetry "in which any action or passion is represented by its effects upon a country life." Whatever may happen commonly in the country may provide a subject for pastoral. Any kind of character can appear in its action or setting, no matter of what rank, because "persons of all ranks inhabit the country" which "excludes . . . not any elevation or delicacy of sentiment." In his criticism of the neo-classical pastoral artificialities of the school of Pope, Johnson makes it quite clear that pastoral is not a literature that disregards real life and nature.[29]

In one antebellum novel after another, actions occur outdoors in a land of woods and fields, cultivated or wild, serene or disturbed. The picture of life created here employs what Michael Squires calls the pastoral

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[29]The Yale Edition of the Works of Samuel Johnson, W. J. Bate and Albrecht B. Strauss, eds. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1969), III, 201, 203, 205.

device of "sympathetic realism which combines elements of idealization and realism" in order to strip country life of its coarsest features and to make it palatable to readers in urban society.[30] And a wealth of characters meet in field or forest of antebellum pastoral romance: gentlemen, yeomen, backwoodsmen; ladies, slatterns; Tories, Continentals; heroes and cheats; Indians, boys a-growing; slaves and renegades; matrons and maidens; blacksmiths and dragoons. Men and women ride or walk over green fields, into rich rolling forests, past herds of wild or domesticated animals. In often quiet, often menacing or menaced land, they hunt or play or fight, admire and dream and love.

Frequently certain characters have visions of an inland wilderness modified by cultivation and architecture: trimmed meadows, white church steeples or peaceful villages or plantations in the trees, amid quiet hills framed by looming mountains. In the settled areas there are mellow old plantation houses, too, surrounded by great trees and singing, dutiful slaves. There are delicate, noble young ladies and trim, stalwart young gentlemen to play in scenes of bucolic courtship.

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[30]Pastoral Novel, p. 18.

The shepherd is dressed in a hunting shirt.[31] He is the frontiersman, the backwoods hunter, the guide into the wilderness. He is an integral part of the antebellum pastoral design. Concerned only with the simple essentials of life, he lives close to nature. He is the guide of civilization into the wilderness. He thus helps destroy the untouched land he loves. Teacher, rescuer, guide, he usually disappears into deeper forests at the end of the frontier tales. He is fearful of the debilitating, destructive forces of the very civilization he has led into the woods.

And the hunt--which does not usually occur in traditional pastoral--has an important significance in the antebellum design. Its life and death activity lends a dynamic realism to the novelists' nostalgic backward glances to the forest activities of a more innocent, more optimistic time in America. Action, resolution, killing were necessary then to survive in the forest, which was not a safe, easy paradise after all. More important is

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[31]In her editor's Introduction to Pastoral and Romance: Modern Essays in Criticism (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1969), p. 2, Eleanor Terry Lincoln writes that the "shepherd" in pastoral is never strictly speaking a shepherd. He is a fisherman, king, child, poet, musician, priest, prince--or, in the antebellum design, a hunter. His circumstance is made pastoral because he is separated by mountain, field, sea, forest or by his youth from commitment to the sophisticated and active world of strife.

the metaphoric implication of the hunt. It becomes a symbol of restlessness and loss. It implies that continuing search for a newer Eden out of which will be created a new middleground because the one already established in the older regions has been tarnished or lost.

In the antebellum pastoral novel there is a wonderful, strange dynamism at play. All the forward movements associated with hunting into untainted forests or exploring new lands are really futile moves backward to recapture the lost middleground dream. There is a strong irony, too, in antebellum pastoral. Guided by the frontier-hunter figure, settlers or adventurers move west with a dream of a new beginning, of regaining that Edenic hope which had been irretrievably lost even when Barlowe thought he had seen it off the untouched shore of Virginia.

Thus a key device within antebellum pastoral allegory occurs in the traditional pastoral trick of irony, of ironic revelation.[32] In the complex pastoral design the source of the irony rests in a crucial paradox in which the ideal world of pastoral--in

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[32]John W. Stevenson, "The Pastoral Setting in the Poetry of A. E. Housman," The South Atlantic Quarterly, 55 (1956), 492.

Christian writers a remembrance of Eden--must be pictured through imagery drawn from the real, imperfect fallen world. So it is that the rhythm of action in the Edenic myth is tragic.[33] The Southern pastoral dream, in short, is based upon the recollection of man's greatest loss. The design's major tragic thread is spun from this allusion to man's situation since the Fall. Edward Williams suggested this American theme a long time ago in his observations upon Virginia.

The potential harmony in antebellum pastoral is always somehow threatened by disturbances from inside or outside the garden. If the Southern novels' recurrent imagery of rural paradise reflects America's most compelling myth, their various tales of the Southern garden's irredeemable loss is a particularization of the nation's greatest tragedy. The inevitable disjunction of ideal and real in antebellum fiction is a revelation of what C. L. Sanford calls the American tragic vision of life.[34] It is a part of the theme of the failure of ideals that evolves in the pattern of America's most important fiction from Cooper and Simms to Hemingway and Faulkner.

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[33]Sanford, p. 26.

[34]Ibid., p. 253.

An important aspect of the complex pastoral design springs as well from something that D. H. Lawrence observed. He said that an awareness of a dichotomy in nature between good and bad is a "rudimentary American vision."[35] Melville, for instance, felt that nature was highly ambiguous--no more good than bad, both terrible and magnificent.[36] In the antebellum design this notion creates what I will call the pastoral dilemma. It is a question of how really good is the land; how really bad. In nature there is always some threatening presence. Of course, on its surface the discordant element in antebellum pastoral is a reflection of the romantic reaction to the harmonious, stable, beneficent natural world of the Enlightenment.[37] But let us look deeper.

In antebellum fiction the sun-glanced, bird-toned trees and rivers and fields hide hostile Indians or Tory foes. Farther inland there are dark, dangerous forests and great blue gloomy mountains. There are frightening

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[35] Studies in Classic American Literature, p. 35.

[36] Henry Nash Smith, Virgin Land: The American West as Symbol and Myth (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1970), pp. 78-79.

[37] Eugene L. Huddleston, "Topographical Poetry in the Early National Period," American Literature, 38 (1966-67), 309.

animals, and the danger of savage debasement among whites who are themselves far removed from the restraints of civilization. Crèvecoeur's Farmer James made this point about the degenerative influence of life deep in the forest. Beverley and Byrd were aware of it, too, and William Strachey long before them. It is an aspect of the ambivalence that is the very essence of pastoral.[38]

Antebellum pastoral concerns the real life plight of man. It is nothing like that cold, unnatural debasement in the English genre which E. W. Gosse says it is the critics' prerogative to stone.[39] Only insofar as its ironic intent might be concerned has the antebellum design anything in common with Alexander Pope's artificial Pastorals. In his "Discourse on Pastoral Poetry," Pope states that the form is merely an image of a Golden Age that can be held up to a less fortunate time. His neo-classical idealization was only supposed to reveal the "best side" of the Arcadian shepherd's life in songs celebrating his felicity in the fields. His shepherds, young Pope goes on to say, are not like real shepherds but like those of the Age of Gold when only the

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[38]Marinelli, p. 40.

[39]Edmund W. Gosse, "An Essay on English Pastoral Poetry," in Alexander B. Grosart, ed., The Complete Works of Edmund Spenser (London: Hazell, Watson, and Viney, 1882), III, ix.

best men tended sheep.[40] For him pastoral existed only in its surface forms. It was a diversion; a sunny spring morning game. One is tempted to think of Jefferson's garden.

Unless one could go so far as to say that a relevant contrast between ideal and real is implied in his bucolic mirror thesis, Pope's brittle, sentimentalizing idylls, his bucolic little games overlook the vital element of pastoral integral to the antebellum design. Pastoral is not an escapist's literature.[41] It is critical and complex. It offers allegorical commentary upon the human condition in a troubled world. It is involved, as we would say today.

The tradition of antebellum pastoral goes back a long time. Even in the Idylls of Theocritus, who invented the pastoral form,[42] the allegorical potentialities of the genre are apparent.[43] Theocritus's amiable,

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[40]Alexander Pope, Poetical Works, Herbert Davis, ed. (London: Oxford University Press, 1966), p. 10.

[41]Hallett Smith, Elizabethan Poetry: A Study of Conventions, Meaning, and Expression (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1952), p. 41.

[42]The Idylls of Theokritus, Barriss Mills, trans. (West Lafayette: Purdue University Studies, 1963), p. vii.

[43]Donald M. Friedman, Marvell's Pastoral Art (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970), p. 6.

gently idealized Sicilian shepherds and country scenes pose a contrast--the pastoral tension. His idylls grew out of a contrast of recollections of a peaceful rural island childhood and the crowded social and intellectual life of Alexandria.[44] His poems contain that tension which makes pastoral a commentary upon the rigors of life, not a superficial nostalgic or sentimental defense against reality. In Theocritus's Tenth Idyll, for example, Milon's realistic view of the farmer's life makes Boukaios' lovesickness seem ridiculous. His clumsy love song for Bombyka keeps up a mood of gentle irony. Asphalion's dream of golden fish in the Twenty-First Idyll is offset by his friend's earthy view of the fisherman's lot.[45]

For all its trappings of sun and fields and sheep and shepherds and maids and songs, pastoral in the end presents only a vision of harmony made discordant by man's sinfulness, his callous self-absorption, his consequent busy-ness, his unwillingness to let things be.[46]

It was Virgil who really developed the allegorical

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[44]W. W. Greg, Pastoral Poetry and Pastoral Drama, p. 5.

[45]Idylls of Theokritus, pp. 39-41, 75-77.

[46]Friedman, p. 14.

pastoral.[47] His Eclogues postulate a search for order that is rarely attained. This too is the "larger" allegory of the antebellum pastoral design. For example, Tityrus in the First Eclogue has found his rural repose. But he keeps it only because he has connections among politicians in Rome outside his retreat. They are taking land away from old landholders to give in reward to returning soldiers. Meliboeus, his neighbor who has no connections, has lost his farm and sadly moves away.[48] Rome here represents that pastoral counterforce, that peripheral danger that invariably threatens rural repose. Virgil's point is that even an inhabitant of the ideal pasture must, for the sake of survival, keep a contact with the outside world from which he has turned but which can destroy him still. In the pastoral vision there is no true escape.

Nothing is solved at the end of the Eclogue. Meliboeus must go. Tityrus remains. But the threat to peace--like Jefferson's cankerous city--remains also on the outside, encroaching upon the garden, endangering what remains of it. And the final question is: How long

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[47]J. E. Congleton, Theories of Pastoral Poetry in England, 1684-1798 (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1952), p. 5.

[48]The Works of Virgil, John Dryden, trans. (London: Oxford University Press, 1961), pp. 3-6.

will Tityrus himself be secure? Like Shakespeare's tragedies, Virgil's Eclogues and the subsequent design deriving from them call upon the reader to ponder the place of traditional ethical values in a fluctuating, disordered world subject to the necessities of history--time and death.[49]

In the Renaissance, E. K. in his Epistle to Spenser's Shepheards Calendar stated that the major purpose of pastoral is "to unfold great matter of argument covertly."[50] This too is the purpose of ante-bellum pastoral. Its form always needs and assumes some "external circumstance to give point to its actual content."[51] The outside circumstance, the source of the allegory, is not a matter of minor hidden parallels, political or personal. Pastoral allegory calls up larger issues, like the one suggested in Meliboeus's dispossession from an endangered rural paradise. Virgil's First Eclogue contains matter that looks back to man's loss of the Golden Age. For Christians, it looks back to the expulsion from Eden.

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[49]Michael C. Putnam, Virgil's Pastoral Art (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970), pp. 12-13.

[50]Edmund Spenser, The Complete Poetical Works, R. E. Neil Dodge, ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1936), p. 6.

[51]Greg, pp. 4, 67.

Its allegorical intent gives pastoral a unique dialectic force. And it provides a design in many antebellum novels that lends them a greater depth than critics have heretofore attributed to them. As Leo Marx phrases it, the pastoral design manages "to qualify, or call into question, or bring irony to bear against the illusion of peace and harmony in a green pasture. . . . The design brings a world which is more 'real' into juxtaposition with an idyllic vision."[52] This dialectic creates the tension that vitalizes the pastoral novel.[53] In the antebellum pattern there is a flow of images and actions that symbolizes this "real" counterforce that manages to bring disharmony into the garden. Let us look quickly at a few examples.

An antebellum counterforce is symbolized, in one instance, by the destructive "whirlwind axe" cutting away at the peaceful doomed forests of James Kirke Paulding.[54] It is seen in the ominous, diseased and smoking cities of William Alexander Caruthers. And it is evident inside his garden too in the danger of the

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[52]Machine in the Garden, p. 25.

[53]Squires, p. 25.

[54]James Kirke Paulding, Letters from the South (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1835), I, 71-72.

incendiary slaves of the South Carolina plantation, Belville.[55] For John Esten Cooke the real, threatening world outside the rural retreat occurs in the people-controlling steam whistle that regularly burns through the peaceful air of bucolic Marburg.[56] This is the same sound that disturbs Hawthorne's pastoral reverie one day in Sleepy Hollow, "the long shriek, harsh above all other harshness . . . [bringing] the noisy world into the midst of our slumbrous peace."[57]

For William Gilmore Simms the real comes as a call for action. "Stagnation . . . is death," says his Lieutenant Porgy of The Forayers. We need storms to agitate, to restore our equilibrium.[58] Simms rejects the pastoral theme of retirement from the great world. His counterforce, action, is an accommodation to the unyielding restlessness of men that will not allow them finally to enjoy the static, intellect-deadening

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[55]William Alexander Caruthers, The Kentuckian in New York (1834; rpt. Ridgewood, New Jersey: The Gregg Press, 1968), I, 33; II, 66-67.

[56]John Esten Cooke, Leather Stocking and Silk (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1854), pp. 8, 244.

[57]Nathaniel Hawthorne, The American Notebooks, Randall Stewart, ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1933), p. 104.

[58]William Gilmore Simms, The Forayers (New York: Redfield, 1855), p. 529.

retirement of the tranquil village of Charlemont. His retelling of the Kentucky Tragedy is actually a variation on the pastoral theme of loss deriving from his awareness that the harmony sought in idealized country retreat cannot be found at all. Pressures inside and outside the Southern garden are too great.

One of the essentials that shapes pastoral mode is withdrawal to a place apart--an untouched frontier or a quiet village or plantation--from which a perspective may be had of what man has made of man.[59] But one has to return, perhaps strengthened, enlightened. Pastoral action points back into active engagement in the imperfect world where nothing has changed. The pastoral retreat recedes, invariably, into dream. The design becomes nothing more than a vehicle for man's acceptance of his fallen condition.[60]

What pastoral actually reveals is that there is no hope of attaining harmony and peace, the illusions it holds up. Thus the essential design, the antebellum design looks back to the tragedy of Adam and on to the

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[59]Walter R. Davis, A Map of Arcadia (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1965), pp. 34-38.

[60]Lincoln, p. 3.

continuing tragedy of man. He is doomed to restlessness--the American "Faustian amor fati," as Leslie Fiedler says[61]--in a restless world whose harmonies are helplessly vulnerable to that law of mutability which asserts that until Eternity "all that moveth doth in change delight."[62]

And so it is in the antebellum pastoral design itself, with its delineation of the flux between real and ideal. Harmony compromised by disharmony; harmony sought, grasped--always that transitory hope for a mitigation of disharmony and struggle. This pattern of movement, this ambivalence and contradiction in antebellum pastoral creates its subtle dialectic. It comes from the design's consistent backward and forward glances at the Edenic middleground, and the ultimate sad realization of its utter loss.

Then in novel after novel there is the renewal of the futile hope of still finding the serene, restful garden in the future somewhere over that distant range of uncrossed mountains. The frontiersman-shepherd goes off, farther away into the uncut trees. He goes away like Natty Bumppo. In The Prairie (1827) he is found by

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[61]Love and Death in the American Novel, p. 127.

[62]Spenser, "Two Cantos of Mutabilitie," p. 677.

Ishmael Bush, the squatter--the force of time, of American history moving in upon the land. Bush's action scars what is left for Bumppo of rural paradise in the barren prairie. Ishmael's sons cut trees needlessly for kindling. Natty, tired old Leatherstocking, watches. His feeling is one of hopelessness: "As tree after tree came whistling down, he cast his eyes upward, at the vacancies they left in the heavens, with a melancholy gaze, and finally turned away muttering to himself with a bitter smile, like one who disdained giving a more audible utterance to his discontent."[63]

In antebellum fiction the dialectic occurs in a similar stress of that bitter awareness of reality that ultimately tinges its pastoral nostalgia. Tension between hope and its loss is inevitable because in the tragic design of the complex pastoral the ideal is inseparably linked to its opposite.[64] This link helps form a pattern in the antebellum pastoral novel that reveals what Richard Chase has to say of the American literary imagination which creates "a profound poetry of disorder." It seems "less interested in redemption than in the melodrama of the eternal struggle of good and

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[63]James Fenimore Cooper, The Prairie (New York: Rinehart, 1959), p. 13.

[64]Marx, p. 318.

evil, less interested in incarnation and reconciliation than in alienation and disorder."[65]

From Barlowe to Bartram, from John Davis to John Esten Cooke, observations and stories of the South reveal with ironic and apposite intent and consistency that tragic thread in pastoral illusion that mistakes for a lasting possibility a temporary feeling of green repose in a Marvellian garden. The Old South's novelists created a pastoral design that perceives not an artificial world at bucolic rest but a real world in flux. In their handling of pastoral, antebellum novelists reveal an acute awareness of the architectonics of an important though frequently disregarded literary form. In their pastoral aesthetic they are able to display not only their creative abilities but their concern for the immediate problems of their land. They worried about changes overwhelming America that gave them as increasingly isolated Southerners a feeling of despair, of a lost battle, and an imminent doom.[66]

And so the twisted pastoral of antebellum fiction might be regarded as a revelation, too, of the deep

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[65]Chase, pp. 2, 11.

[66]Henry Nash Smith in Robert E. Spiller, et al., eds., Literary History of the United States (New York: Macmillan, 1946), p. 609.

tragedy that runs through Southern history--a history that for all its glory, romance, crudeness is "in the main tragic beyond words."[67] The antebellum pastoral design reflects as well the contradictions of opposed forces, those radical disunities within the national experience which have shaped the creative imagination that has produced the best and most characteristic American fiction.[68]

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[67]Savage, Preface.

[68]Chase, pp. 1, 7.

CHAPTER III

HAWK WINGS IN THE GARDEN: THE DESIGN AND JOHN DAVIS

They mark each quiet nook, each grassy
glade,
And spreading oak of broad, inviting shade,
In endless woods, with eager pleasure roam,
And hail with joy the promised Western
home;
While chiefs and kings the wondrous stranger
greet,
And lay their presents at the white man's
feet;
But vain the hope!

William J. Grayson, "The Hireling and the Slave" (1856)

With joined hands, Smith and Pocahontas conduct you naturally to Jamestown. . . . We should all of us, once in a life, at least, make it the object of a pilgrimage.

William Gilmore Simms, Southward Ho! A Spell of Sunshine (1854)

"To be a hunter means that one knows a great deal. . . . It means that one can see the world in different ways. In order to be a hunter one must be in perfect balance with everything else, otherwise hunting would become a meaningless chore."

Don Juan in Carlos Castaneda, Journey to Ixtlan (1972)

John Davis was an English traveller and tutor in America around the turn of the eighteenth century. Jay B. Hubbell feels that he might almost be claimed as the first

Southern novelist.[1] His short novel, The First Settlers of Virginia (1805), tells of the colony at Jamestown. The reader is there with John Smith at the beginning of permanent Southern settlement. And here in Davis's imagination the tragic thread of pastoral starts to unravel in the doomed American wilderness of antebellum fiction. Davis also uses a fitting image to start a study of antebellum pastoral. He describes the New World rising before Smith's seamen "like a new creation from the sea."[2] Davis has Genesis in mind, and the irony of the Europeans' having seen the American wilderness as a new Eden, a second chance.

A similar image of land arising Eden-like from the sea is used later in his American epic poem, The American Mariners (1822). The sailors are relieved to see England's shore after a long voyage from the United States. One of them says:

> Was ever sight so fair!
> The crag, the cliff, the promontory steep,

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[1]The South in American Literature, p. 196.

[2]John Davis, The First Settlers of Virginia (New York: I. Riley and Co., 1806), p. 16. It is interesting--and, perhaps, amusing--that this creation image is used earlier to describe New York as seen across the Long Island Sound. It occurs in a letter from Davis's friend, Lucas George, reprinted in Davis's Travels of Four Years and a Half in the United States of America; During 1798, 1799, 1800, and 1802 (London: R. Edwards, 1803), p. 151.

> Trees, groves--all Eden springing from the deep (VI.xii.4128-4130).

Captain Delancey's reply to his crew's enthusiasm is that such an appreciative, optimistic view of the land is mere delusion--"shadows of a shaping brain" (4132) tired of the sea. The land is not Eden at all, but a place of fallen men who experience only "visionary joys"[3] (VI.xiii.4266).

Like the novel's characters, the story of First Settlers is simple. It takes the reader from the optimistic arrival to the disgusted departure of Smith. And it ends with the ominous inland cruise of Captain Argall. The tale describes the exploring, hunting, and tree-clearing activities in Jamestown and its environs. It describes the gradual dispossession of the Indians. There is also a rather speedy, almost neglectful narration of Pocahontas's rescue of Smith from Powhatan's axe-man. Davis is more interested in using detail in loving descriptions of the forest and its mockingbirds than he is in describing the destructive deeds of his men. As in most subsequent antebellum novels, Davis's characters are "simple and flat," to use E. M. Forster's phrase.[4]

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[3]John Davis, The American Mariners: or, The Atlantic Voyage (Salisbury: Printed and Sold by Brodie and Dowding, [1822]), pp. 216, 223.

[4]E. M. Forster, Aspects of the Novel (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1927), pp. 77-78.

Davis's people are limited or defined by their surface actions and appearances. The reader never gets into their minds; their actions never surprise.

It is the theme of the novel that is most important. It is all involved in the critical nature of pastoral, and the pastoral philosophy of the doubleness of things. The theme is the loss of Eden--the American Eden that Barlowe, Strachey, and the others thought they saw. Davis's voice becomes bitter at the end of his tale as he writes of the early demise of the American dream.

First Settlers is the story of another start for man and another fall. It formulates for antebellum fiction the American myth of a new beginning[5]--that hopeless dream of those early explorers of the world's "starting up again under fresh initiative in a divinely granted second chance for the human race. . . ."[6] The trouble with Davis's myth lies in his statement that humanity's second chance in America was lost as quickly as Adam's first chance in Eden. It is the tragic thread that runs through antebellum pastoral design, this theme of the "American dream in reverse, or

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[5]Marx, Machine in the Garden, p. 228.

[6]Lewis, American Adam, p. 5.

retrospect."[7] His pastoral is complex, like all allegorical pastoral from Virgil's First Eclogue to John Esten Cooke's The Last of the Foresters (1856).

The dual vision intrinsic in pastoral is suggested by Davis's creation image itself: fresh Virginia is doomed as Eden was. It is a restless man who arrives in the garden. A busy world presses from outside. The pastoral double vision provides the realism within antebellum fiction that inevitably circumscribes its illusion of idyll. It is the old pastoral trick--Davis's ironic revelation. Pastoral repose is only a vulnerable, quick dream.

Smith's ships enter the Chesapeake in an effective, brief scene further implying the novel's themes of hope and tragedy. Sails beat into the bay and the camera--the author's cinematic eye--moves away from the ships to scan over the "peculiarly beautiful and sublime" green land and great rivers reaching far back into the haze (First, pp. 16-17). The picture is like an approach to Eden. It makes one think of Milton's Satan sinking tired from the sky outside the walls of the Garden. With the

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[7]Richard Beale Davis, "The Virginia Novel Before Swallow Barn," Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, 71 (1963), 278.

arrival of the English, of course, trouble has come to Paradise.

Davis's perspective closes in again: the focus returns to the sea-weary ships nearing land. This is romantic descriptive technique. Movement goes from the broad, general scene to the particular. Ships and men are greeted by Indians, whose delight and awe and fear are a reflection of the Englishmen's.

The arrival scene of First Settlers quickly provides a tragic underpinning for Davis's apparent pastoral nostalgia. At the end of the story it is sad to reflect how drastically delight and good-will in the New World are superseded by betrayal and unhappiness. Much more important than such a reflection, however, is that irony in the scene which underlies the whole myth of a new beginning in America. The garden is not Eden at all. It is only another sea-gripped land where good and bad conflict, this time in a virgin forest.

The Indians are thrilled, then terrified at the firing of the ships' cannon. A pathos of innocence is created, an ominous foreboding of doom:

> The shores were now lined with the natives, who gazed with ineffable astonishment at the squadron under sail, and prostrated themselves at the thunder of their cannon. Their wonder may be conceived at the sight of a ship. They were scared out of their wits to see the monster come sailing into their harbor, and spitting fire with a mighty noise out of her floating side (First, p. 18).

There is good technique in this short passage. There is motion. The point of view slips from the English aboard watching the confusedly moving natives, to the Indians themselves looking at the gently rocking ships, canvas mostly slack, squat hulls weatherbeaten, suddenly thudding white clouds of smoke across bright water. This action--the moving back and forth--suggests a number of patterns involving the pastoral dialectic that develops in the novel. It establishes an awareness of the dichotomy between the startled, innocent Indians and the aggressive, battered ships. It is the pattern of conflict between the uncivilized and the civilized, the country versus the town. The arrival of the vessels off the land suggests, too, the hunting journey that opens new gardens in the wilderness. This movement evolves into an important pastoral design in Smith's numerous journeys inland. And finally Argall's.

With the white man comes the fate of the Indians, doomed like their forest because of their integral association with it. Both the wilderness and the Indians are to be improved to the inevitable destruction of each.[8]

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[8]In "Paradise and the Noble Savage in Jeffersonian Thought," Bernard W. Sheehan argues that the American dream of paradise was a dynamic, a progressive dream that posited the transformation of the wilderness into something

Here is another aspect of tragedy in Davis's pastoral, with his real world inexorably pressing in upon his ideal one. The Indians' helplessness before the cannon fire--they have never seen such force--looks to the ruin of the virtually defenseless wilderness. Structurally and thematically, the arrival scene is effective, for these prostrate Indians are the first generation to be debased by the white man.

The scene prepares for the particular debasement of noble Nantaguas, Pocahontas's brother, friend of the settlers, and a handsome, princely Indian, proud carrier of the native hunter's bow and arrow. He associates too closely with the English. Gradually, his Indian gear changes--in the end he wears an unappealing costume that makes him look more like a rowdy than an Indian prince. Noble Nantaguas leaves Davis's tragic stage in a dirty shirt and Smith's cast-off laced hat cocked over one eye, taught to wear it so by the English soldiers. One can imagine how the next step downward for him--so enamored is he of the white man's disreputable ways--is probably rum and the pathetic, lonely end of Cooper's

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better than it was. But the notion of the "paradisiac economy" was delusive because it adhered to the idea that perfection could be attained on earth. And in the effort to attain this perfection, this middleground, the red man, the white, and the forest were not actually improved but ruined.

Indian John, drunken, aged Chingachgook of The Pioneers (1823).[9]

In his earlier account of his travels in America, Davis also has critical and worried remarks to make of the city's destructive encroachment upon the innocent land. He reflects on the evils of urban affectation upon the fresh countryside of South Carolina where he was tutor at Coosahatchie plantation. It is the old pastoral town-country contrast that appears in his musing. It is similar to the critical observation William Wirt made in 1803 about the imposition of the "artificial and elaborate" decorum of civilization which "buries nature under a load of hypocritical ceremonies."[10]

Davis sees a fresh innocence, a bucolic ease going out of the land, pressed as it is by the urban environment on its edges. He recalls how once he saw a great lady all dressed up in a coach followed by liveried servants. This apparition passed by through a virgin forest. He had "looked up with sorrow at that luxury and refinement, which are hastening with rapid strides to change the pure and sylvan scenes of nature into a

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[9]James Fenimore Cooper, The Pioneers (New York: James G. Gregory, 1864), pp. 179-81, 202, 443-44.

[10]The Letters of the British Spy, Richard Beale Davis, ed. (1832; rpt. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1970), p. 133.

theatre of pride and ostentation."[11]

In First Settlers John Smith is a pattern for the development of the frontiersman-hunter, the shepherd figure in antebellum pastoral. Romantic outdoorsman: Smith is as distinct and as viable a prototype of the hunter-guide figure in antebellum fiction as is Cooper's Natty Bumppo. Paulding in his Letters from the South (1817) pictures the Captain as the archetypal resourceful, generous American woodsman.[12] Like Smith, the typical antebellum frontiersman has an innate sense of propriety or gentleness under his rough exterior. Smith looks like a man who is capable of both violence and moderation. He is strong and graceful. His eye is ready "to command, to threaten, or soothe" (First, p. 37). He has self-control. He is decisive, industrious, intelligent. He is courageous, humane, and good-humored.[13]

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[11]John Davis, Travels in America, 1798-1802 (New York: Henry Holt, 1909), p. 73.

[12]Paulding, Letters, II, 11. For himself, Paulding actually created his own Smith-like character in the woodsman-guide, Ambrose Bushfield, of Westward Ho! (1832).

[13]Smith's gentlemanly qualities relate him not only to the rough frontiersman. He is related also to the gentleman-outdoorsmen of later antebellum novels: Nathaniel Beverley Tucker's George Balcombe, for example; and Paulding's Langley Tyringham of The Puritan and His Daughter (1849).

Most significantly of all, Smith serves as the new settlers' guide into the wilderness. In terms of pastoral tradition, as frontier-guide figure he is the shepherd. At work, Smith is "the most active . . . neglecting his own lodgings to procure them for his comrades" (First, p. 20). Activity and resourcefulness are the two most important traits of the woodsman. They are what a man needs to survive in the wilderness. And Smith possesses them.

Like many antebellum hunter-outdoorsmen, the worthy Captain remains unmarried. He gives Pocahontas to John Rolfe. Like later frontiersman-guide figures, Smith leaves the settlement he has helped create and which has become a threat to his peace and his forest. The point is that Davis's Smith is more at home--or surely more content--in the wilderness than in the settlement. In Jamestown he is irritated by demands to settle disputes, punish sloth, fight rebellion. There he has to struggle against the ungrateful and dangerous malice of disgruntled colonists who accuse him of all people of crimes against the settlement. But in the forest, after dealing with the Indians, he can relax. This never happens in Jamestown.

In the forest, Smith, the hunter-guide, laughs for the first and only time in the novel when three young

settlers are driven from their rowboat by a bear. He not only has his laugh, but as rescuer of the colonists he shoots the bear. Lulled by this diverting adventure--it is the pattern of the hunt as diversion--they journey on down river, back to the troubled town. But in the forest there is a momentary peace: they glide quietly on slow water, moss-hung tall trees rising in soft green darkness all around where the mockingbirds sing. Smith lights his pipe and tells the story of his life, resting there in the boat, slipping back out of the forest for a moment, recalling hardships of other days. It is the design of the restorative journey into the wilderness, and the return again to the active life of the debilitating town.

In Jamestown there is no harmony, no middleground ideal pastoral life in the modified wilderness. The rebellious settlers lay the groundwork for the tragic destruction of a forested land whose soft, Edenic qualities are evoked in all but the first and last of Davis's nature descriptions. As the forest seems more beautiful, though, the Indians grow increasingly hostile. Life in the forest grows harder. The trees look less innocent. But they never were really innocent. Davis is not writing neo-classical pastoral. He is writing allegorical pastoral.

In First Settlers the ideal is inseparably linked to its opposite. A "tiger heart," to use the words of Melville, beats beneath the "grassy glades"[14] of Davis's New World idyll. Melville's insight into the conjunction of good and bad in nature is also revealed in Davis's Walter Kennedy (1805). When Kennedy pauses to enjoy a pleasant spot on his journey up the Mississippi, his peaceful reverie is always interrupted by a terror from the green. His pleasure in the moon and peace at night is ruined by a hungry "crocodile." His rest on a gentle savannah is ruined by an annoyed rattlesnake.[15] These creatures, unloved and feared by man, are part of the natural scene, however--moving, living, ominous in their terrible reptilian way. It is this ambiguity in nature that inevitably makes pastoral complex rather than merely sentimental.

Thus terrestrial paradises are threatened from within as well as from without. Quiet rural retreats carved out of the forests are invariably marred by their opposites: human restlessness, forest cruelties and creatures, driving greed, wanton destruction of men and

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[14]Herman Melville, Moby Dick (New York: Rinehart, 1959), pp. 484-85.

[15]John Davis, Walter Kennedy, an American Tale (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, and Orne, 1805), pp. 32-35.

trees. However subtle or unconscious it might be, an awareness, then, of a dichotomy in nature lies at the crux of Davis's pastoral. At times his design takes on the quality of dilemma.

Edenic landscapes, snatched moments of repose, such as Smith enjoys on the river back to Jamestown, are transitory, illusory. They are doomed by incursions from outside or dangers inside the place of retreat: from settlers on the periphery, axes somewhere chopping trees. Or from angry Indians in the forest itself. Davis is aware of that pastoral irony which can lead one to mistake for a lasting possibility the dream of rest and security in a gently cultivated garden.[16] But he plays with the dream nevertheless. It is necessary to do so in order to achieve the tension between the real and ideal that is basic to the pastoral dialectic. There is power under Davis's seeming nostalgia. In it one sees the unfolding of the usual lost-Eden theme, and he is also made to feel something of the tragedy of its loss.

One method Davis uses to reveal his pastoral tension occurs in an important architectonic device of First Settlers. Real life--the events of history and business--he describes in the spare style of journalistic

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[16]Marx, p. 360.

reporting. The forest refuge he describes in the high-flown rhetoric of romance. He juxtaposes hard style to soft. Through this stylistic device, Davis depicts the irascible movement of history, and the tragic fallacy of the American hunt for repose in the land.

In First Settlers, hunting scenes involve not only diversion or survival. In metaphor the novel's hunts are also searches for new, fresh lands to settle over again after the first have been spoiled. The purpose of Smith's trips into the idyllic wilderness is both to get food and to seek new areas for colonization. The real moves in upon the ideal. The bucolic forest intervals are only restful, lazy dreams between more numerous, busy, factual events in the novel. Business presses with irrevocable force, in simple direct phrases, upon a wilderness purposefully described in the lush terms of artificial pastoral romance.

The forest must be modified before the pastoral ideal can be attained. So, early in the story the "busy hum of men," healthy earth-labor provide a delusively hopeful, harmonious contrast to the uncultivated landscape that seems to glower at the edge of the camp: "regions of awful silence which had before been disturbed only by the screams of the eagle, and the roar of the cataract" (First, p. 20). The forest's "awful silence"

ripped by the cry of a predatory animal or a river crashing down on rocks is a wilderness inimicable to the settlers. Or so they think. They have yet to be beguiled by the unspoiled fresh greenness of the land, by the mockingbird's song in tall trees, or the whip-poor-will's in tranquil moonlight. But in terms of the complex pastoral, Davis's nature cacophony is a part of the real wilderness that must, of course, be accepted with dreams of the ideal.

Although the Indians have been kind or indifferent so far, the settlers' minds are "filled with the barbarity of the natives" (First, p. 21). An unpleasant tension between forest and settlement is created at the start. Again, its source is the pastoral double vision--that linking of the real and the ideal. Virginia first rises like a new-created Edenic land. This is a false vision. It is only a relieved first impression of the land after a long sea voyage. It is a wishful dream of what the New World might be. Quickly, necessarily, the dream is superseded by the world of commerce symbolized by the "clearing axes" in the forest at the start and end of the story.

A disturbing axe image also appears in Davis's The Farmer of New Jersey (1800). The sound of an axe chopping in a gloomy forest adds a note of horror to a

night scene. The noise represents a work of man in the trees that counterpoints the whip-poor-will's song. And here again is that recurring pastoral dichotomy: the birdsong abets the mood created by the axe, for the "axe of the negro felling trees was heard from the woods, and conspired with the note of the whipper-will to throw horror upon the scene."[17]

Terrified of the forest once they are in it, Smith's settlers feel it must not be modified but crushed. The next step after some shelter-building is the extirpation of the savages. Smith himself leads the first depredation against the Indians when he carries "terror through the country" to prevent them from attacking Jamestown. But he is acting merely with characteristic frontiersman dispatch and brutality to an unpleasantness of the forest. Its beauties, on the other hand, he enjoys with the eye of a romantic dreamer. His is, of course, the eye of Davis, whose pastoral nostalgia is a method of his ironic revelation. Part of this irony lies in the fact that the destruction of the forest, with its hopes for a fresh start, begins with the futile attempt to establish a pastoral middleground in its place.

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[17]John Davis, The Farmer of New Jersey; or, A Picture of Domestic Life (New York: Furman and London's Type, 1800), p. 53.

This is Davis's statement upon the destructive inevitability of the thrust of history. The pastoral environment never evolves because the settlers among themselves are too envious, treacherous, greedy, slothful. They are human. Their attempt to build another colony up the James is also a failure. It is peopled by a group of Jamestown malcontents--"profligate . . . desperate . . . dissipated" (First, p. 157). They steal from the Indians, kidnap their women. The Indians attack the dissolute town. The English retaliate, burning a defenseless village, bayonetting its women and children. Back in Jamestown disorder grows as well. Physically ill and disgusted by false charges against him, Smith gives up and leaves the colony.

And so it goes: increased disharmony instead of pastoral peace comes to the wild garden. Hope for a new start has been grasped at there, and lost. This is Davis's history lesson. But he pauses to go back to the dream. Despite its dangers, it is his forest that takes on the aura of pastoral refuge in the face of the encroaching ugliness of civilization. Davis's ostensible romance lies in his poetic descriptions of what he imagines to have been the untouched Virginia landscape. His pastoral tragedy is revealed beyond doubt in his final regretful complaint at the inevitability of its loss.

The forest is the arena of tragic action on both literal and symbolical levels. Literally, it occurs in the hunt and death of animals for diversion and sustenance; symbolically, in the hunt for the newer virgin lands out of which to carve the envisioned but never actually attained middleground. As a result of the increasing terrors of white and Indian, the forest becomes a kind of evanescent retreat. In its uncultivated state it becomes a passing source of spiritual and physical resuscitation like the locus amoenus of pastoral tradition.

But there are outraged Indians hidden among the trees. There is a troubled, tree-cutting settlement on the shore. Historical fact lends an ugliness to his forest. At the same time the pattern of movement in his tale gives Davis's forest that seeming aura of pastoral romance as well. The movement goes from troubled settlement, Indian or white, to peaceful, majestic forest, back to troubled settlement.

In this movement, the wilderness grows delusively benevolent. It creates the design of pastoral ambiguity. The eagle's cry at the start of the story becomes lost now in the song of the mockingbird. The cataract becomes bright, silent rivers from which the relaxed adventurers watch noble trees, lolling deer, tame wolves. In the wild

forests of Davis and later antebellum writers, there are always clearings--meadows with grazing animals that suggest pastoral landscape.[18] Thus the rawness of the untouched land could take on the delusive quality of idyllic dream. Between ugly scenes of danger, unhappiness, the forest seems to become Eden again: admired, slipping by, glimpsed and gone.

Davis interrupts his history lesson, for example, with a typically poetic description of the restful forest after Smith is saved by Pocahontas. Nantaguas guides him and some followers back to Jamestown. Danger among hostile Indians melts into a scene that gives an impression both wild and pastoral. Wild verdure is modified by quietly grazing animals, sun-lighted flowers, and fields:

> Their road lay through a country well stocked with oaks, poplars, pines, cedars, and cypress. The theater of nature could be scarcely more magnificent. For here rose tall forests, there rolled a large river, and herds of wild animals were seen browsing on its banks. The whole country displayed an exuberant verdure; the dogwood was shedding its blossoms in the wilderness and the wild strawberry purpled the woods, the fields, the plains (First, p. 52).

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[18]As we have seen, such natural clearings in the Southern landscape delighted the eyes and stimulated pastoral ruminations in real-life explorers other than Davis's Smith and friends. For further evidence of this, see Quinn, The Roanoke Voyages, pp. 341-42; Purchas His Pilgrims, pp. 435, 441; and Alvord, The First Explorations of the Trans-Allegheny Region, pp. 141, 156.

Finer precision and movement are given to the scene as perspective goes again from general to particular. Geese fly overhead while a mockingbird sings in a white thorn. The focus rests on the mockingbird, whose melody becomes like physical movement--a harmony moving away from danger, "melting into the softest strains" (First, p. 96). Its songs correspond to its flight, which has the spatial, gliding quality of music.

An earlier mockingbird sang for Davis in "Coosahatchie," the first work in his Poems (1779).[19] The poem opens with a description of the melancholy, dangerous elements in a "lofty wood": the gloomy owl, the hungry wolf, the rattlesnake which threatens a traveller. But these bad things dissolve into the "blithe" mockingbird song. The snake's rattle becomes the bird's song in a skillful juxtaposition of good and bad in the forest. The mockingbird's warble then blends into the soft call of a dove, and finally into a picture of the poet peacefully teaching school.

Nonetheless, a grim nature remains on the periphery of this soothing pastoral. It hovers there in the background as a disturbing recollection of the owl and wolf

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[19]John Davis, Poems, Written at Coosahatchie, in South Carolina (Charleston: T. C. Cox, 1779), n. p.

and snake and threatened man of the opening lines. The melodic birds are distractions, pleasing interludes that call one's attention away for a little while from the bad aspects of the forest. The animal figures of "Coosa-hatchie" suggest the imagery in First Settlers, in which two predatory birds--eagle and hawk--bracket the delighted, soothing descriptions of Davis's mockingbirds.

Animal and human sounds--singing--are part of the landscape of pastoral. And like subsequent antebellum novelists, Davis uses the mockingbird to help mitigate the roughness of the forest, to soften a scene, resolving it into restful pastoral. But when Pocahontas's song replaces the bird's, a different mood is created. Suddenly and ominously at the end as Argall's ship sails through the country in a final, sad forest excursion, the quiet shadow of the hawk appears on the river and the mocking-bird is silent. It is reality versus the dream again, creating the tension that lies at the heart of antebellum pastoral.

The most poignant and important of Davis's nature interludes occur during Captain Asgall's journeys up the James after Smith has left the colony. Here the theme of an alien world, the pastoral counterforce, encroaching into the garden--"a second Canaan," Smith has called Virginia (First, p. 59)--is carried out with quiet

dramatic force and a deep tone of regret. On Argall's journeys, an increasingly tragic vision of the fate of the fresh, innocent world grows among scenes and symbols of its inevitable loss.

After Pocahontas has been kidnapped by the English to be exchanged for the guns and equipment Powhatan has stolen from them, Argall's men stop along the river to feast on turkey they have shot along the way:

> It was an open spot. But before them was a forest of tall trees, and from tree to tree the long moss extended, waved by the noon-tide breeze. The steady breezes gently and continually rising and falling, filled the high lonesome forests with an awful reverential harmony, inexpressibly sublime, and not to be enjoyed anywhere but in those native Indian regions (First, p. 212).

Here already the song of the bird has been replaced by a melancholy soughing of wind in trees. The mood is "reverential," almost solemn.

The forest John Davis describes in The American Mariners also has a clear element of reverence associated with it. It is an attitude that looks toward the romantic pantheism of Paulding and Simms. The poem's groves of old cedars are "sacred," for instance. The following passage makes one think of a tall cathedral of arches, rosettes, stained glass filtering the changing light of clouds outside moving across a bright sky. And there are powerful but muted organ sounds rolling from a great loft:

> Primaeval the spot, where overhead
> Gigantic oaks their twilight shadows spread,
> Cinctur'd with roses, the magnolia towers,
> The ancient cedars wave their sacred bowers
> And Nature only, in her sylvan tone,
> Wakes with the breeze through green arcades to moan (I.iii.16-21).

The new forest mood in First Settlers lacks the sensual joy and uninhibited freedom of the woods Smith enjoyed. It now suggests that there is something holy in the trees. The tragedy of loss takes on a quality of sacrilege. In one phrase, "reverential harmony," Davis's wilderness becomes sacred. It adumbrates the enormity of Argall's mission. He is under orders to "burn all" if the Indians do not return the stolen property.

More poignancy is given to this forest interlude by the sad song that Pocahontas sings after everyone has eaten. It is an elegy to the lost wilderness and its natives. One does not ask how Pocahontas learned the words of Psalm 137. It is a dramatic device "peculiarly appropriate," as Davis says, to a moment in history that pauses on the verge of the loss of the dream of settlers and Indians alike. Pocahontas sings: "'By the rivers of Babylon there we sat down. Yea, we wept when we remembered Zion. For they that carried us away captives, required of us a song; and they that wasted us, required of us mirth'" (First, p. 213).

Repose, peace in the forest go out with this song. There are no more mockingbirds. Pocahontas's dirge replaces their melodies. Et in Arcadia ego: Even in Arcady I, Death, hold sway.[20] The song lingers in the background in the solemn music of the wind in the leaves and rigging as Argall's ship goes up the river, past a forest that is no longer fresh and beautiful at every turn.

His eye on the ruined Eden even while he draws its remaining beauty, its nostalgia-evoking remaining potential for harmony and delight, Davis describes a burned Indian village ashore. It belonged to a tribe that refused to join Powhatan in an effort to drive the English out of the land. Internecine fighting in Jamestown has found its counterpart in civil war among the Indians. Sadly now as Argall's ship sails on, the vision of the bright New World persists. The white-sailed English bark

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[20]Erwin Panofsky, "Et in Arcadia Ego," in Lincoln, ed., Pastoral and Romance, pp. 25-46. The phrase which Panofsky discusses, Et in Arcadia ego, is the inscription on the tomb in Arcady first encountered in the early seventeenth century in a painting of Giovanni Francesco Guercino. It reveals a vulnerability in Arcady's trees, grass, water. And it suggests a "mellow meditation on a beautiful past" (p. 40). The unpleasant--the inevitable course of time--and the pleasant join in the pastoral dream-idyll, join in the Virgilian pastoral tradition. Death is in the fallen, still lovely garden. There is no way now of excluding the harsher aspects of life from the green pasture. The phrase provides a kind of encapsulation of the complex pastoral idea of linked opposites that runs throughout antebellum fiction.

glides upriver between banks of huge trees, the sun on green leaves and white sails. Indians follow along on the banks while the white men aboard, confident, lounge on the shoreward gunwales, looking out into a veritable green paradise.

The action symbolizes an alien world slipping into the garden. The ship moves over water that has never felt such a weight before. The orders of the Captain carry over the land. The creaking ship and commanding voice pass irreversibly into that juxtaposed ideal world of strawberry fields and Indian maidens ashore. The moving ship and voices then blend into the grim image of a fish hawk that flies close by over the river, hovering for prey, moving along with the ship.

The hawk replaces the mockingbird in the doomed forest. It looks back to the fearful aspect of the wild garden the settlers felt at first in the echoed cry of the eagle. An imagery of predatory birds brackets the action of the novel. Slowly, tragically, as the real world presses in upon it, the ideal world loses its charm. The hawk symbolizes the despoiling mission of the hunting ship, which casts the shadow of its sails over the passing trees as the bird's wings shadow the water. It is the shape of commerce, the busy life that casts its shade into the sunny garden. Appearing here at

the end of Davis's doomed-forest idyll, the hawk also represents once again that dual quality of nature which embraces the cruel as well as the gentle. Davis keeps his eye on harsh realities. The hawk's symbolism carries a double weight.

The following scene is close to Fitzgerald's statement of America's lost hope in The Great Gatsby (1925). Henry Hudson's men of the Half-Moon look out in silent wonder on the new land that passes by their ship on another American river during another pause in time.[21] The descriptions of Davis and Fitzgerald look back to the rush of futile hope created by the idea of a fresh start in a new world. The words of each writer are intense with awareness of the lost dream. Davis's moving description is an anticipation of Fitzgerald's. It shows a moment that hovers like the wings of a ship or a hawk on the verge of realization and loss:

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[21]F. Scott Fitzgerald, The Great Gatsby (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1953), p. 182. Davis understood as well as Fitzgerald over one hundred years later that the history of America's lost hope was comparable to the design of failed pastoral . . . that the virgin, Edenic new land was the site of the "last and greatest of all human dreams." No sooner was the New World seen and experienced than it was lost, over and over again. The sentiment of these two novelists is the same disappointed hope that lies in back of antebellum writers' perceptions of their region.

> They now weighed their anchor and stood up the river. The sun was approaching the meridian. A light breeze distending the canvas, enabled the tall ship to sail gently along the shore, covered with awful forests. . . . "Steady!" was called by the captain, and repeated by the helmsman, while the echoes multiplied the sound on land. Every person had come on deck. The Indian princess was reclining against the quarter-rail, surrounded by Sir Thomas, West, Percy, Holcroft, etc. Captain Argall was pacing the deck, conning the ship by some point on land and either repeating "Steady so! Steady a-long!" or calling "Starboard a little! Mind your starboard helm!"
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> . . . Here and there the magnificent pine forests opening their vistas, discovered to the ravished eye meadows purpled with strawberries, flocks of turkies strolling about, and herds of deer wantonly prancing. Companies of young Indian girls were also seen, some busy gathering the rich fragrant fruit, and others, having already filled their baskets, reclining under shade of the weeping willow. The nimble cat-fish sometimes jumped above the water, while the fish hawk hovered over the surface watching its prey (First, pp. 218-19).

The harmony ashore is very much like Eden, overwhelmed by a ship and scotched by a fish hawk. The innocence and peace and beauty still on the banks have already been lost. Nantaguas has donned his dirty shirt and ridiculous hat. Indian villages have been burned. Strawberry fields have already given way to tobacco plantations. Pocahontas herself is a prisoner aboard the ship. These are juxtapositions that make the tragic irony of Davis's pastoral.

The First Settlers of Virginia creates a rippling of tragic and nostalgic patterns of the hunt, hunter, and nature that recur in antebellum fiction. These

patterns constitute the antebellum pastoral design. It was as if John Davis cast a pastoral pebble--not into water, but into print. And quiet rings spread, rippling into inevitable design.

CHAPTER IV

SOME OTHER VERSIONS OF PASTORAL

. . . I feel a new-born freedom of the mind,
Nursed at the breast of Nature, with the dew
Of glorious dawns. . . .

O! genial peace of Nature! divine calm
That fallest on the spirit, like the rain
Of Eden, bearing melody and balm
To soothe the troubled heart and heal its pain,
Thy influence lifts me to the realm of joy. . . .
Paul Hamilton Hayne, "Nature the Consoler. An Ode" (1860)

". . . I slept happily, where my eyes could look up through the branches of the pines and the beeches, to the very dwelling of the Good Spirit of my people. . . . But the axes of the choppers awoke me. For a long time my ears heard nothing but the uproar of clearings. . . . I besought me to get beyond the accursed sounds."
Natty Bumppo in James Fenimore Cooper, The Prairie (1827)

. . . They will bring
Forbidden sounds into the silent brake,
And banish thence the birds, and blight
the spring. . . .
William Gilmore Simms, "The Widow of the Chief" (1839)

A little more than a decade before John Davis published The First Settlers of Virginia, Gilbert Imlay produced The Emigrants (1793).[1] This is an epistolary

[1]It is likely that Imlay, a New Jersey-born adventurer who settled in Kentucky and eventually died in

novel more concerned with socio-political issues--women's rights and pantisocracy west of the Ohio--than with depicting American forest life. What scenes it does describe lie in an unrealistic Kentucky-Ohio frontier. Here cultivated lands, touched with "flowered breezes," are laid out in the usual pastoral "orchards and gardens" (Emigrants, pp. 269, 62). The Emigrants amounts to a stiff fantasy. It is an American Arcadian dream-tale whose scant nature descriptions read like a promoter's tract that looks back to the earliest ecstatic accounts of America's garden.

Imlay's theme involves the old pastoral conflict of town versus country. England and the settled east coast regions of America represent the evil, debilitating town. The fresh frontier represents the innocent, rejuvenating country. This town-country theme, tied in with the notion that salvation lay in America's doomed, non-commercial western lands, is developed later with force of truth and tragic irony in James Kirke Paulding's

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Europe, actually did not write The Emigrants. His mistress, Mary Wollstonecraft, probably did. There is much in the letters of the need for women's rights, especially the right to divorce. There is much about the oppressiveness of degenerate European society. See Robert Hare, Introduction, Gilbert Imlay, The Emigrants (1793; rpt. Gainesville, Florida: Scholars' Facsimiles and Reprints, 1964), pp. ix-xii.

Letters from the South (1817) and Westward Ho! (1832), and in William Alexander Caruthers's The Knights of the Golden Horseshoe (1841).

What is particularly significant in Imlay's strained pastoral is its self-conscious deadliness. He describes a locus amoenus at the end of his story that is utterly cut off from outside life. He tries to create a one-dimensional pastoral free from the tension of the double vision that gives importance and tragedy and life to the form. He fails. His design becomes a neurotic insistence on withdrawal from reality that inevitably recalls not a rediscovery of Eden but an agonized awareness of its loss. This is the irony inherent in all pastoral. Imlay cannot escape it.

Most importantly, his vision looks toward the disturbing, deadly dream-parks that Garame creates in Henry Ruffner's "Seclusaval" (1839), and Ellison in Poe's "The Domain of Arnheim" (1847). In these two short stories, as in Imlay's short novel, the American pastoral dream of the bucolic, working middleground is virtually twisted out of recognition into an image of gardens that are strange and cold.

A portion of the action in The Emigrants adheres to the traditional pastoral pattern describing a restorative journey from outside to inside the secure

"pastoral circle"--the site of Captain James Arl-ton's utopian community--and back out again.[2] The family of the ruined English merchant, Terpin, emigrates by river-boat from Pittsburg to the Louisville frontier. His daughter, Caroline, is kidnapped by Indians while her sister, Eliza, suffers the abuse of a gaming--and losing--husband in London. To advance himself socially, he seeks to prostitute Eliza, who finally flees to America after he has committed suicide. Accompanying her is George, her brother, who is also ruined by the vices of London.

Caroline is rescued by a faithful mountaineer friend of Arl-ton, her lover. Caroline and Arl-ton marry and settle with Eliza and rejuvenated George in the ideal colony of Revolutionary War veterans which the Captain organizes on the frontier. Here he and his followers will "promote . . . agriculture and all useful arts," and "discuss upon the science of government and jurisprudence" (Emigrants, p. 295).

Imlay's American rural ideal is stilted, depicted only in the familiar and trite terms of pastoral delusion. As a result, his vision is dishonest. It reminds one of the bucolic games youthful Pope plays in his stylized Pastorals. Arl-ton feels that in America's

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[2]Walter R. Davis, A Map of Arcadia, pp. 34-38.

middle provinces a "new creation" is "bursting from the shades of the wilderness into a populous state." Here there will exist "a Golden Age" (Emigrants, pp. 55, 294). New creation and Golden Age: Imlay is not convincing. His pastoral is flat.

Even more fanciful than Imlay's spokesman, Arl-ton, is the latter's friend, Il-ray. On the Kentucky frontier his thoughts go right to Arcady and stay there, lost in an idyll of piping shepherds. Later, when we discuss William Gilmore Simms's Captain Porgy, we will see how debilitating Simms says such pastoral rumination can be. Like Porgy, Il-ray looks over the American eighteenth century landscape and thinks of

> Arcadian days, when the tuneful shepherd used to compose sonnets to his mistress . . . and when the charms of love, were propitiated in sequestered groves, and smiling meads. . . . Here we find all the cheerful idleness that plenty gives; and while the sprightly youth in festive dance, chase away the gloom of the surrounding forests, the neighboring plantations are cultivated to a perfection, that I have scarcely seen equalled in any part of America; and the hospitality of the inhabitants, who make large quantities of wine, renders it one of the most interesting places I ever knew. . . (Emigrants, p. 259).

The emphasis in Il-ray's description is on playfulness, sloth, conviviality. This is a dream of pastoral ease that simply does not work in real life. Beverley shows that he saw this truth in the final pages of his History and Present State of Virginia. John Pendleton

Kennedy hints at it in Swallow Barn (1832), Caruthers in his Knights of the Golden Horse-Shoe, and Simms in Woodcraft (1852). Imlay does not want to see the other side of his idyll.

Still, Father and Mother Terpin leave Arl-ton's garden to return to business in England. It is as though they, elders with the wisdom of age, accept reality. To cope with the world, one has to face it head-on, or at least keep some contact with it. The old couple leave the young people to their withdrawn Arcadia in a landscape that is ultimately doomed to the ruinous speculation Isaac Holmes sadly describes in his Recreations of George Taletell, F. Y. C. (1822), or to the axe and exploitation that Paulding bitterly deplores in Westward Ho!

Holmes's novella is a first person narrative--a plantation pastoral--in which a rural ideal is juxtaposed to a rural reality in South Carolina. Recreations of George Taletell, F. Y. C. contains what is probably the first extensive treatment in Southern fiction of the plantation house.[3] This is the country mansion of George Taletell's uncle. The story is simple. George, a

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[3]Guy A. Cardwell, "The Plantation House: An Analogical Image," Southern Literary Journal, 2 (Fall, 1969), 5.

Charleston lawyer and politician like Holmes himself, describes a December journey along the Ashley River to his uncle's for an old-fashioned Christmas holiday. On the road, however, some troublesome thoughts occur to him. And Holmes reveals his insight into the Southern pastoral dilemma. Here the story achieves what depth it has.

As George starts his journey out of Charleston and into the country, he thinks of the garden orderliness of the English countryside he once visited. He recalls a rural ideal there of tastefully located country mansions with sweeping views, and tidy villages with square church towers rising amid trees. Manors and villages, in his mind's eye, are arranged to enhance the beauty of the green and undulating countryside. He thinks of country games--sporting diversion, horns and hounds--and of "the pleasures of still and quiet life."[4] George leans back in his chaise, slacks his reins, his eyes on another landscape. . . .

But he never once thinks of Arcady. Holmes is too much concerned with real issues to let his persona slip too far into pastoral reflection. There are no

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[4]Isaac E. Holmes, Recreations of George Taletell, F. Y. C. (Charleston: Duke and Browne, Printers, 1822), pp. 15-25.

shepherds, singers or swains, in George's fields. Very cleverly, and with subtle meaning, Holmes brings George back to life: "So entirely rural were my feelings," he thinks, "that the cawings of the crow from the distant oak harmonized with them more entirely, than the mingled tones of many wind instruments. . ." (Recreations, p. 31). A crow's call is not really a pleasant or relaxing sound. It brings him back to his bumping chaise and to some disharmonious "feelings." He takes up his reins and looks around.

George is not in a garden. His narrative opens with a mere garden recollection that grows out of his happy anticipation of a country week at his uncle's pleasant place. It is, perhaps, only natural that his mind should play with pretty bucolic thoughts as he makes his way to the plantation. Holmes possesses some psychological insight, as well as narrative skill. George is passing through a countryside whose idyllic qualities are sadly tarnished. This is reality, and both author and character know it.

Even if Holmes allows Taletell to go from dream to dream, one realizes that between dreams there must be a spell of waking. Thus waking, George rides through a monotonous landscape made doubly dreary by the land's curse, the busy-ness of progress and commerce rushing to

and fro past his little vehicle on that December road:

> Yet a traveller is disappointed who, having heard of the richness of our lands, passes through the country along the public roads, which are laid out over extensive flats, or pine barrens--so that notwithstanding the beauty of the roads, a ride of many miles through the low country is felt to be monotonous. The neat cottage and trim garden, so cheering to the travellers along the English road, together with the roll of stage coaches and the rattling of post chaises, are entirely wanted to animate the ride, whilst a few log houses scattered over the sandy plain, together with the long lines of heavily laden wagons and jingling horse bells, but serve to make the scene more oppressively dreary (Recreations, pp. 32-33).

Here is Holmes's criticism, his perspective upon real life, even if at the end of the journey he pampers the sentimental reader with a picture of plantation felicity. He is, however, no mere plantation idealizer. He is in touch with his time and its ugliness. Holmes is as critical of the do-or-die American commercial, progressive spirit as is Paulding. This is the spirit that such thoughtful Southerners as Caruthers and John Esten Cooke saw destroying the peaceful Jeffersonian-agrarian ideal in both the South and the North. The landscape in Holmes's story--like that around Dangerfieldville at the end of Westward Ho!--reflects the disconcerting and hasty nineteenth century changes that were coming to Southern and Southwestern lands because of cotton speculation, increasing internal slave trade, and

the brutal, speculative exploitation of the land.[5]

There is a tragic sense of loss, of mutability, at the heart of Holmes's story. He makes doubly certain of his point by creating an English and a plantation pastoral to bracket George's journey through the truth. Neglected plantation gardens are Holmes's symbols for the goodness of rural order and tranquility passing out of Southern life with the coming of hurried and noisy commerce on the road. Around slowly dilapidating old plantation houses, George sees ruined gardens where cotton now grows. The avenues leading to the great houses are leafless. The wind there makes a solemn music to accompany George's melancholy thoughts.

City-oriented business, Holmes implies, drives beauty from the land. George thinks in his chaise:

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[5]Vernon Louis Parrington, The Romantic Revolution in America, 1800-1860, pp. 139, 141; Frank Lawrence Owsley, "The Irrepressible Conflict," 78, 83; Henry Savage, Jr., Seeds of Time, pp. 57, 69-70. And see, for first-hand accounts, Joseph G. Baldwin, The Flush Times of Alabama and Mississippi (New York: Sagamore Press, 1957), pp. 62-66, 174, 184; Friedrich Gerstäcker, Wild Sports in the Far West (1854; rpt. Durham: Duke University Press, 1958), pp. 50, 367, 276-277; Augustus Baldwin Longstreet, Georgia Scenes, Characters, Incidents, Etc., in the First Half Century of the Republic (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1852), p. 76; Ralph M. Aderman, ed., The Letters of James Kirke Paulding (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1962), p. 41.

> . . . you may now visit on the banks of the Ashley, many splendid remains of former grandeur, extensive gardens, whose pendant willows bend in mournful silence over the still waters of a neglected basin, and seem to weep its impoverished founts . . . it is not uncommon to see the snowy fleece of the cotton plant cheering the hopes of the young planter, on those very spots where his father walked among cooling shades and "long protracted bowers" (Recreations, pp. 68-70).

The harsh spirit of commerce is the usual counter-force in American pastoral. And Holmes puts his finger on it. But his design is a little more universal than its overt criticism of land-ruining American business suggests. What he is writing about is the inevitability of change. George is on a traditional journey into the pastoral center, his uncle's idealized plantation. He must go back later on, however--back to the city and reality. Holmes faces this truth whereas Imlay does not, except accidentally in the return of the senior Terpins to England. Imlay wants his reader to believe that Arl-ton and his followers can find eternal solace and security in an American Arcady.

With all the busy change going on outside its protective fields and meadows, Uncle's well-kept, neatly gardened plantation becomes only another threatened pastoral retreat. It is a pretty place, and the single one of its kind in the neighborhood. But despite all the transitory holiday cheer of partying and hunting whites

and blacks on Holmes's plantation, one cannot forget that slice of real, chaotic life outside through which George drove--and through which he will have to pass again and again as he goes from dream to dream. Impermanence and loss: these are as much on Isaac Holmes's mind in Recreations as is any nostalgic evocation of the plantation.

In "Seclusaval" (1839), the Rev. Dr. Henry Ruffner, Virginia clergyman and educator, offers a different kind of pastoral. With Poe's "The Domain of Arnheim" (1847), which Ruffner's story might have influenced, it is an unhealthy effort to create a perfect garden. It is true that Holmes cuts himself off from the real world to indulge in some plantation pastoral at the end of his Recreations. But at least he does pause along the way to pay some worried and serious attention to the outside. In "Seclusaval," Ruffner tries to turn away from it entirely.

The story is all a dream. One feels trapped in it, almost smothered by its unmitigated pastoral affectation. More, perhaps, than any other antebellum Southern story teller, including John Esten Cooke, Ruffner exemplifies that quality of the nineteenth century Southern literary mind that "sought to symbolize its opposition to modernity

in an image of pastoral permanence. . . ."[6]

"Seclusaval" is a sequel to "Judith Bensaddi" (1828). Taken together, these two stories constitute a novella. "Seclusaval" is significant for its pastoral stasis, and "Judith Bensaddi" because it is most likely the first tale in American fiction dealing with the minority problem posed by Jews in the United States.[7] In this story, Ruffner's hero, Garame, a William and Mary law student, meets Judith and her brother, Eli, on a ship excursion. Eli drowns at sea. Garame consoles Judith, and they fall in love. She returns to England with his proposal of marriage. He returns to his Shenandoah Valley home. There he starts to worry about how his community will react to Judith's being a Jew. He neglects to write her, and heartbroken she eventually marries another.

"Seclusaval" continues the story. Garame, now a successful attorney, has made a fortune in the Georgia gold fields. He is sad, though, because his heart is still with Judith. Riding home to Virginia over the

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[6]Lewis P. Simpson, The Dispossessed Garden, p. 70.

[7]Curtis C. Davis, "'Judith Bensaddi' and the Reverend Doctor Henry Ruffner," Publications of the American Jewish Historical Society, 39 (September 1949-June 1950), 117.

mountains, he discovers a beautiful secluded valley. He decides that this is the retreat for him. After purchasing it, he names it the Vale of Seclusa, or Seclusaval. He hires a gardener and creates a park in the valley, staying busy to keep his mind off Judith. Coincidentally, she comes to the periphery of the valley to serve as music teacher in the school Garame has endowed. She is a widow. He invites her into the transformed valley, and there they marry and live happily ever after in artificially idyllic seclusion.

Artifice and seclusion--these are the twin problems posed by "Seclusaval." They are posed, too, by Poe's "The Domain of Arnheim," an understanding of which might help one to see what strange work Ruffner has done in the Vale of Seclusa. "Arnheim" is a garden-vision written when Poe was ill and depressed.[8] Like so many of his tales, it points to a withdrawal from earthly cares into a safely, often diabolically enclosed dream-like realm.[9] In "Arnheim," a landscape gardener, Ellison, wants to remake creation in the image of his

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[8]Arthur Quinn, Edgar Allan Poe: A Critical Biography (New York: D. Appleton-Century, 1942), pp. 528-531.

[9]Robert Hillyer, "The House of Poe" in Anniversary Lectures (Washington: Library of Congress, 1959), pp. 24-25.

spirit, or intellect. He wants to build a perfect garden free of the disproportion that mars uncultivated nature.[10] His ambition condescends to God's earthly design.

What Ellison creates, then, is a Godless landscape permeated not with an elevating sense of Deity and peace, but with "an exquisite sense of the strange." The Spirit has gone out of Arnheim--as it leaves Seclusaval. What is left is merely the physical, the decorative. And a nagging sense of dread. In Arnheim the nose is oppressed by a "strange sweet odor"; the eye with "dream-like" trees and miraculously floating "semi-Gothic, semi-Saracenic" architecture, the "phantom handiwork" of pagan "Sylphs, of the Fairies, of the Genii, of the Gnomes" ("Arnheim," pp. 191-196).

One is confronted by a dream that verges on nightmare. And Arnheim reeks of death. Nothing moves in it. There is not a single plant or animal placed in it to support human life. It is all shadowy and insubstantial and doomed. The same is true for Seclusaval. The static gardens that are created in these stories can lead one--if he knows the picture--to think of the torpid, hazy-floating, afternoon sun and silent landscape

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[10]Edgar Allan Poe, The Complete Works (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1902), V, 184.

of yews and mausoleums in Böcklin's painting of the end of life, The Isle of the Dead.

One does not know what Ruffner's frame of mind was when he wrote "Seclusaval." When he discovers the Vale of Seclusa, however, Garame is still depressed and melancholy as he was in the last pages of "Judith Bensaddi."[11] Pastoral thought--like the concept of Arnheim for Poe--provides a way out of unpleasant reality for him. In its wildness, Seclusaval at first looks like "a terrestrial paradise." But it is not good enough this way. Garame thinks that it requires "only the hand of man to prune and dress its profusion, to make it outvie all the pastoral beauties of Arcadia in the golden age." What he sees in Seclusaval--and this is important--is "a hiding place from the storms of life" from which he might "look forth upon the outer world of insatiate passions and self-tormenting hearts. . . ."[12]

Ruffner is as far from pastoral truth as Poe or Pope. His design reveals a surprising and distressingly steady, life-denying backward glance to the neoclassical

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[11]Rev. Dr. Henry Ruffner, "Judith Bensaddi: A Tale," Southern Literary Messenger, 5 (July, 1839), 500-504.

[12]Rev. Dr. Henry Ruffner, "Seclusaval; or the Sequel to the Tale of 'Judith Bensaddi,'" Southern Literary Messenger, 5 (October, 1839), 641.

notion that pastoral is supposed to represent the undisturbed felicities of the Golden Age.[13] Under the direction of Baylor, Garame's imported English gardener, Seclusaval assumes "the appearance of a park. Whatever was unpleasant to the eye was disappearing from the noble woods; sweet lawns, winding and branching in various ways . . . opened to the eye . . . the most delightful views of trees, hills, and mountains on every side" ("Seclusaval," p. 643). To this scene of pretty ground, Garame adds "a shepherd's cot . . . a romantic place at the foot of a precipice, on the opposite side of the valley, for I designed to give little of my beautiful grounds to the plow; but to make Seclusaval a pastoral scene, where flocks and herds might graze . . . and the sounds of the shepherd's pipe might mingle with the song of birds and the chime of waterfalls. . ." ("Seclusaval," p. 643).

Criticizing its beautiful lifelessness, John Keats rather emotionally calls the picture on his Grecian urn a "Cold Pastoral!" So might one label Ruffner's idyll. It is a facile mockery of Eden, actually, and of man's tragic dream of somehow regaining it. One thinks, too, of the artificial picturesqueness of Pope's Second

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[13]J. E. Congleton, Theories of Pastoral Poetry in England, 1684-1798, p. 116.

Pastoral, "Summer,"[14] when Ruffner describes Garame's finished product:

> The meadow, sprinkled here and there with trees, single and in clumps, was clothed with a luxuriant sward of the deepest green. The pure waters of the lake were inhabited by a thousand sportive fishes. . . . The neighboring hills and dales differed from the meadow, only in being more shaded with the native forest trees, which had been selected to remain for their stately magnificence, their beautiful forms, or their rich verdure: but among these chosen remnants of the forest, a green turf grazed by flocks and herds began to cover and adorn the ground. Lawns here and there permitted the eye to penetrate into the bosom of the park, and afforded glimpses of beautiful groves and retreats, that enticed the imagination as much by what was hidden as by what was revealed ("Seclusaval," p. 651).

But Ruffner slips. One doubts he was aware of it, of course. Something not so nice is hidden in his mysterious groves. Ever so lightly, another element creeps into his fantasy. It is that virtually inescapable underside of pastoral. First, he seems inadvertently to admit to the falsity of his idyll. Garame's original impression of the Vale of Seclusa is of a natural "terrestrial paradise." Looking on the valley, he describes a more or less realistic woodland scene of the kind that frequently appears as a sort of pastoral relief in the nature interludes of antebellum Southern fiction.

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[14]Alexander Pope, Selected Works (New York: The Modern Library, 1948), pp. 7-10.

After he has transformed this natural garden, however, Judith comments that the park is "a sweet image of paradise" ("Seclusaval," p. 662). Seclusaval is no longer earthly. It is a mere image of something else--a variable paradise left only in the human imagination. Her revealing statement and the fact that both Judith and Landon, Garame's friend, say that there is "enchantment," magic at work in the valley betray, perhaps, a slight subconscious hesitation in Ruffner to have the reader believe that he actually feels his picture of Seclusaval is anything more than an idle thought, a pastoral lark ("Seclusaval," p. 659).

The word "enchantment" recurs as the story ends. Briefly one actually sees Garame as a sort of kindly trickster rather than a neurotic rich man fleeing reality into an enclosed garden. Admiring the domain of which she will be mistress, Judith calls him a "benevolent" enchanter ("Seclusaval," p. 659). Suddenly, with all this talk of enchantment going on in a jewel-like garden, one thinks of Shakespeare's Prospero, who changed a wild island into a place like Eden. And when the image of Prospero is evoked, the image of Caliban cannot be far behind.

Ever so gently, almost imperceptibly, nature finally reasserts a neglected part of itself in

Seclusaval. In the "Echoing Glen" at the dark, grotto end of his artificial lake, Garame blows a bugle. The echo sounds "as if ten thousand shrill-mouthed demons had set up a yell" ("Seclusaval," p. 662). The other side of nature--the terrible, Caliban--slips into Ruffner's dream. It is heard in the grotto's cacaphony. Caliban is hardly noticeable, but he is in the garden. Doubtless an accident in Ruffner's design, he lends a little life to the Vale of Seclusa's otherwise sterile pastoral.

James Kirke Paulding took a much sharper look at life in his pastoral pattern. Like Simms, he was a realist in a romantic, sentimental age.[15] But he would have agreed with Isaac Holmes that, however threatened it might have been, an agrarian-pastoral ideal of American life was to be found in the Southern land. With his beloved "great West . . . the depository in which is to be cherished and preserved, the genuine characteristics of Americans,"[16] he felt the South stood as a bastion against the growing industrialism of nineteenth century America.[17]

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[15]Amos L. Herold, James Kirke Paulding: Versatile American (1926; rpt. New York: Ams Press, 1966), p. 109.

[16]Aderman, Letters of James Kirke Paulding, pp. 189-190.

[17]Leo Marx, The Machine in the Garden, p. 176.

Paulding was a Northerner, a New Yorker whose heart was in the South--in Virginia in particular.[18] He loved nature and farming.[19] He was a Jeffersonian in the fundamentals of his social creed--his physiocratic leanings, his deep distrust of all middle-class programs, his preference for simple country ways over city economy.[20] So, rural Southern life where villages were few was for him an obvious and welcome antipode to Northern urbanization. He felt one feature of American life that needed "correction was the trend toward urban life with all its attendant evils of speculation and capitalistic exploitation of the working classes."[21] This conviction lies at the heart of his almost desperate and sad pastoral evocation of the Southern and Western lands in his novels.

The South repaid Paulding for his affinity. His work remained popular there while it was being forgotten in the North. In 1855 he wrote to George Pope Morris, although "in the North I cannot boast of any great

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[18]Herold, p. 2; William R. Taylor, Cavalier and Yankee, p. 227; Alexander Cowie, The Rise of the American Novel (New York: American Book Company, 1948), p. 195.

[19]Herold, p. 123; Letters, p. 413.

[20]Parrington, p. 214.

[21]Cowie, p. 195.

popularity, I have many warm friends in the South, and have been more than once applied to by Southerners in the quarter to know where my works could be purchased."[22] He was, for instance, admired by Simms as a "downright sensible writer, hearty, frank, and unaffected. . . ."[23] In 1854 Simms himself wrote Paulding, assuring him of the South's regard: "You are too well known, and too much honored in the South . . . than to be thought of as a foe of the South."[24]

Each of the two works of Paulding we will briefly consider involves a search, a hunt for an American frontier Eden. He is not thinking of the false pastoral gardens of Imlay or Ruffner, or even of the plantation idyll of Holmes. Paulding's feet are planted firmly on the ground. In one direction, his mind is on the concept of the functional, productive American middleground. In another direction, and of major importance in his pastoral design, is his description of the danger to and ultimate loss of his rural ideal. Technology and the so-called progress which is often nothing more than

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[22]Letters, p. 553.

[23]The Letters of William Gilmore Simms, Mary C. Simms Oliphant, Alfred Taylor Odell, T. C. Duncan Eaves, eds. (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1952-1956), II, 320 footnote.

[24]Letters of William Gilmore Simms, III, 335-336.

interfering innovation or exploitive business speculation: together, these are his anathema, the real-life pastoral counterforce he saw in the America around him.

What is tragic in Paulding's pastoral is that in his honesty and his dismay he is forced to admit that the machine and the innovators will triumph in the end. For Paulding there is no withdrawal from this harsh fact, not even in his fiction. He sees the bucolic bastions in the South and West crumbling. His realization and despair lead him to reveal a streak of misanthropy in his epic poem, The Backwoodsman (1818), the story of Farmer Basil's move from the Hudson Valley across country to the West. The machine, after all, is man's creation. So it is man himself, Paulding bitterly states, who is "The serpent of this blooming Paradise."[25]

Letters from the South are the result of Paulding's trip in the summer of 1816 from Norfolk to the Virginia springs. The book is a series of random essays loosely held together by the fiction that they are written by a delighted Yankee traveller to a friend, Frank, in a Northern city.[26] Paulding's writer is a good example of the kind of nineteenth century pastoral traveller whom

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[25]James Kirke Paulding, The Backwoodsman. A Poem (Philadelphia: M. Thomas, 1818), pp. 36-37.

[26]Herold, p. 54; Taylor, p. 237.

Robin Magowan describes. He is not an exile who stumbles on a pastoral retreat. Rather, he is a vacationer of leisure and good humor--like John Pendleton Kennedy's narrator, Mark Littleton, in Swallow Barn (1832). Such a sojourner identifies sympathetically with his bucolic environment, which enables him to criticize the outside world from which he has come.[27]

The Letters are even more deeply united by Paulding's leitmotif of the soil. The countryside, where man is free and at peace, is superior to the city, where he is driven by restlessness and pursuit of money. In his praise of farmers, he calls to mind Jefferson and Taylor of Caroline: "No wonder that the cultivators of the land are those who constitute the real wholesome strength and virtue of every civilized country; since they daily look to the Heavens and to the earth alone for their support. . . ."[28] This is the wish-fulfilling theme of the Letters.

Paulding's traveller goes West, away from the exhausted Tidewater where trade and industry are further ruining the old plantation ways (Letters, I,

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[27]Robin Magowan, "Fromentin and Jewett: Pastoral Narrative in the Nineteenth Century," Comparative Literature, 16 (1964), 334-335.

[28]James Kirke Paulding, Letters from the South (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1835), I, 140.

41-42). He journeys into a landscape that grows ever more invitingly pastoral. Like others who describe it, even the realist Paulding cannot help himself. Whether it occurs in an imaginary superimposition of idyll on a wild scene, as with Byrd in North Carolina, or as a depiction of the actual thing, as in Paulding's thinly disguised travel account, the process of describing Southern landscape is virtually a formula.

The persona of the Letters draws what is as much a traditional pastoral locus amoenus as a real landscape. In the end he idealizes the scene. For in creating his picture, he is led to thoughts of the first Creation that imply a parallel of the Valley of Virginia to Eden itself. The morning mists roll backward toward the mountains, and

> the imaginary sea became a fertile valley, extending up and down, as far as the eye could reach. In the midst of the green foliage of oaks and solemn pines, were seen rich and cultivated lands, and comfortable farm-houses, surrounded by ruddy fields of clover, speckled with groups of cattle grazing in its luxuriant pastures, or reposing quietly among its blossoms. . . . Here was seen a little town, and near it a field, animated with sturdy labourers. In one place two little rivers, after winding and coquetting through the meadows, sometimes approaching, sometimes receding, sometimes hid, and sometimes seen, joined their currents, and finally disappeared in the distant woods, beyond which a high peaked cliff, towering above the ascending vapours, glittered in the beams of the morning sun, like a giant capped with a helmet of burnished gold. It seemed as if a new and blooming world was gradually emerging from chaos, and assuming the most

> beautiful arrangement, under the hand of some invisible agent in the mist of morning (Letters, I, 90).

This is Paulding's rural America at its best. It only awaits the intruder. This is on his mind, too. But now and then, hiding in his persona, he allows himself vicariously to enjoy the dream.

Sitting in a country church near Staunton one Sunday morning, the traveller looks outside on a stream and mountain view that is "a path for man's thoughts to ascend to heaven!" After the service, leaving his pew, he reflects:

> I don't know how it is, but there is something in the repose of the country, and particularly in the silence and shade of deep groves, that is allied to religious emotions by some inscrutable tie. Perhaps it is because almost every object we see in the country is the work of Deity, and every object common to cities the work of man (Letters, II, 67-68).

Sounding like Simms, he says, "Nature is, indeed, the only temple worthy of the Deity" (Letters, II, 13).

But there is a "winged Charriot" hurrying up behind Paulding's sojourner as he travels West. This is the destructive restlessness of Americans symbolized by the rapacious settler's axe that "is like the whirlwind, which levels the tallest trees of the forest in a twinkling." Americans are like Indians who pull up stakes and move on to new hunting grounds when the old

are depleted (Letters, I, 71-72). So, disillusionment and bitterness entwine themselves into Paulding's bucolic motif. At one point his persona complains in fatalistic disgust: "every thing in this country has been, for two centuries at least, growing downwards, like unto a cow's tail" (Letters, II, 61).

Worse than the American waste of the land, even more terrifying in Paulding's amazing prophetic eye, was the kind of technological progress he felt was the spawn of the cities. If for some Americans the steam engine was regarded as a positive symbol of progress in the first half of the nineteenth century,[29] for Paulding, as for Hawthorne and Thoreau,[30] it was a terrifying, disruptive new force that bruised the tranquility of the of the landscape and deprived man of his freedom and humanity. The "vulgar profusion" of goods caused by the machine attracted people away from the virtuous soil into the evil cities, "to the exclusion of every nobler pursuit and all rational economy" (Letters, I, 49). Thus are men debased through a machine economy that threatens

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[29]Kenneth J. La Budde, "The Rural Earth: Sylvan Paradise," American Quarterly, 10 (Summer, 1958), 153.

[30]Henry David Thoreau, Walden and Other Writings (New York: The Modern Library, 1937), pp. 105-107.

a bucolic way of life. Paulding may be the first significant American writer to use the image of a machine as a composite sign of degenerate times.[31]

One night in Virginia, Paulding's writer has a nightmare of an "Isle of Engines" whose superior beings are steam-powered machines. This is a bitter allegory of the fate of the nation. On the Isle humans have been made obsolete by technology (Letters, II, 20-27). Appropriately, the dream occurs while he sleeps at Fincastle. The beauty and rural calm and happiness of the people of this village provide a silent and a meaningful commentary upon its terror. Machine technology, then, is Paulding's great pastoral counterforce. His sojourner, reporting his dream while looking out from within the pastoral place, describes a deforested America ruled by machines. His prophecy does not seem very far from the mark.

The ideas that ramble through Letters from the South appear in Paulding's novel, Westward Ho!, one of the best nineteenth century depictions of frontier Kentucky.[32] Simms was so pleased with it and its

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[31]Gerald E. Gerber, "James Kirke Paulding and the Image of the Machine," American Quarterly, 22 (Fall, 1970), 741.

[32]Ernest E. Leisy, The American Historical Novel (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1950), p. 115.

predecessor--Koningsmarke (1823), a story of the seventeenth century Swedish colony in Delaware--that he wrote to Paulding in 1839: you "are one of the fathers of our forest literature,--a leading Pioneer."[33]

The theme of Westward Ho! at first seems to be Western rejuvenation. But as one reads on, one sees a tragic pastoral unfold. It is another story of the loss of an American middleground through the exploitation and innovation of city harpies and planners who inevitably follow settlers into fresh forests.

On one level, Westward Ho! describes the redemptive journey of Cuthbert Dangerfield away from Virginia civilization to the Kentucky frontier. He is a profligate but good-hearted Tidewater planter who finally loses all his estate in attempting to regain it through one big bet on a horse race. He must leave his home. He almost seems relieved to have to do so. With him and his cavalcade of wagons and slaves go his patient, forgiving wife, his lovely daughter, Virginia, and his comically indolent cousin, Littlejohn. The novel provides a working out of the theory in the Letters that the hope for America lies beyond the Western mountains--"the extremest verge of the civilized

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[33]Letters of William Gilmore Simms, I, 144.

world. Beyond was all forests, wild beasts, and wild Indians. . . . It was a region of danger, of adventure, of romance . . . this wild and dangerous solitude."[34]

In Kentucky Dangerfield has to rely on his own resourcefulness. He becomes a pioneer again. In order to survive he must be active. His character changes: it "resumed that native sagacity and vigour which wealth, indulgence, and, above all, idleness had lulled to sleep. . . . His mind rose with the exigencies of the occasion. . ." (Westward, II, 39). Of course, he is aided by Ambrose Bushfield, a native of North Carolina and Paulding's contribution to the ranks of the typically capable, sturdy, reliable frontiersmen-guides of antebellum fiction. Woodsman Bushfield is "free as the air he breathed . . . hardy as the trees of the primeval forests . . . not ignorant or vulgar. . ." (Westward, I, 68).

With Bushfield's guidance, Dangerfield carves out a new plantation for himself and his family. He fells trees and builds a log house. He plants and hunts. He is restored. So is mysterious Dudley Rainsford, a psychotic young man who lodges with the Dangerfields and falls in love with Virginia. He goes mad in the

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[34]James Kirke Paulding, Westward Ho! A Tale (New York: J. & J. Harper, 1832), I, 66.

forest, but finally comes to his senses. He and Virginia marry.

Still, Paulding does not have a happy ending in mind. Around Cuthbert's plantation a community develops. He calls it Dangerfieldville. And in its growth Paulding points out the doom of the forest idyll. This is the crux of the story. He is not writing about the attainment of a frontier Arcadia. His pastoral is too realistic for that.

On the flooding Ohio the Dangerfield family pass through an untouched country that "teemed with danger and death . . . melancholy, yet was delightful" (Westward, I, 74). The two faces of nature: then they arrive at "a spot where the strata of rocks disappeared, and a paradise of nature opened to their view . . . an open forest of gigantic trees." Here grew no underbrush on the "shady meadows and the whole was one carpet of blossoms opening to the spring air" (Westward, I, 84). They settle in this natural Eden. And nature's demise begins for the sake of the middleground. They erect their tents on the grass. The flowers are covered by the functional dun canvas of man.

Despite himself, Paulding becomes sentimental. He is not using a persona now. When the first of the untouched trees are cut, it is his voice that speaks out

describing the action. Sadly he sees "the first wound given to the primeval forest" (Westward, I, 87). He knows that greater ruin will come to the land in a few years when the city-based improvers come to Dangerfield's isolated bucolic middleground.

Now and then, even in the face of his essential realism, Paulding like Caruthers and Simms cannot resist a little sentimental pastoral. Thus the site of Dangerfieldville

> was such a little paradise as whilom the shepherds haunted in the pastorals once so admired, but now eschewed as fantastic pictures of a state of society which never had an existence. So much the worse, so much the worse; for to us it seems that the very beau ideal of human happiness would consist in this imaginary union . . . of all the simplicity of rural innocence, all the mild excitements of rural scenes, rural amusements, and rural occupations, with gentle manners and intellectual refinement. . . (Westward, II, 11).

So much for wishful thinking. Paulding also lets his reader see the scene as it really was. For if the wilderness was being cultivated by settlers, it was also being desecrated by them. This is a pastoral paradox that emerges from his forest tales. From his bedroom window at the Dangerfield house, Rainsford can look out upon a startling and depressing scene:

> The lofty girdled trees, stripped of their foliage, and bristling the surrounding fields like the tall masts of first-rate men-of-war, gave an air of desolation to the landscape, which was bounded at a distance by a dark wall of gloomy forest (Westward, I, 108).

No, Paulding is never fooled by pastoral. When the Dangerfields leave their circumscribed domain on a trip to New Orleans, they are surprised to see all the new roads in the forest, and all the new villages already built or laid out on speculation. There is not much of the primeval forest left any more (Westward, I, 130). When they stop along the Mississippi, their old French host complains of the Yankee tendency to make improvements that have wrecked the idyllic calm of his village.

The quiet old ways are gone, he says. Nowadays "one has nothing to do . . . but to work all day to be only as comfortable as we used to be without working at all" (Westward, I, 135). This good old man, a gentleman, is Paulding's mouthpiece in the novel.[35] And so, to a certain extent, is Ambrose Bushfield.

The frontiersman's plight at the end of the story is almost comic, as he himself expresses it. But Paulding is very serious in what Bushfield represents,

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[35]Herold, p. 105. Paulding's criticism of Yankee busy-ness is consistent in his fiction. It is always on his mind. He makes similar comments, for instance, about the disturbing work of improvers in Koningsmarke, or, Old Times in the New World (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1836), I, 96-98, 217; II, 77. And in his last and, so he said, favorite novel, The Puritan and His Daughter (New York: Baker and Scribner, 1849), II, 185-186, 252. For his statement about the novel, see The Letters of James Kirke Paulding, p. 538.

and in what his futile final action implies. Although he is a hunter and not a farmer, Ambrose represents that independence of spirit that Paulding feels a man can only derive from the land. The old hunter wants to "live independent. . ." (Westward, II, 183). He feels life is closing in on him in Dangerfieldville. He has a new neighbor now only five miles away (Westward, II, 181).

Gray and tired like Natty Bumppo, he moves farther West--still seeking the elusive dream posited in the Letters--"somewhere in the vicinity of one of our most remote military posts on the Missouri" (Westward, II, 193). But his renewed westering is as hopeless as was Dangerfield's, who left corrupting civilization in Virginia only to discover that it had followed him right into the virgin wilderness. No--it had come with him. Paulding says it in The Backwoodsman: man is the demonic force in America's untouched paradise of trees and flowery meadows.

Ambrose Bushfield, the great free spirit, dies small and lost in the vacant plains, lost "in the interminable vastness of space" like the vanished echo of his gun and dog that he has not heard since he left Kentucky (Westward, II, 194). Sitting upright under a tree, he dies after shooting a buffalo. Bushfield is

not any happier on the plains than is Natty Bumppo in The Prairie. Like Natty, he is defeated. So he has to go away, and there is no place left to go.

Paulding felt defeated, too. The roads and plats and steam machines simply overwhelm the ancient and impossible dreams of Dangerfield and Bushfield. Despoiled American fields--if one might venture such a pun in so serious a matter--are the pessimistic revelation of Paulding's uncompromising pastoral realism.

CHAPTER V

THE LOCUS AMOENUS AND JOHN PENDLETON KENNEDY

Here is a place of disaffection
Time before and time after
In a dim light. . . .
T. S. Eliot, "Burnt Norton"
(1935)

"But slumbers once broken--visions intruded
upon--seldom return in their original felicity.
We may try, but glimpses only come back to us,
telling us not so much what to enjoy, as what
we have lost the enjoyment of."
Lieutenant Porgy in The
Partisan (1835)

But every charm that Nature knows
Shines freshly here--the towering trees,
The sea that sparkles as it flows,
The flowering shrubs, the murmuring bees,
The verdant land, the glassy stream
As placid as an Infant's dream.
. . . A setting for the pictured scene;
Serenely beautiful it lies,
Breathing an air of Paradise. . . .
William J. Grayson,
"Chicora" (1856)

John Pendleton Kennedy of Baltimore loved quiet, rural Virginia life and scenery.[1] He also liked progress. Hence, the ambivalence of the pastoral design in his Swallow Barn (1832) and Horse-Shoe Robinson (1835).

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[1]Charles H. Bohner, John Pendleton Kennedy: Gentleman from Baltimore (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1961), p. 10; Charles S. Sydnor, The Development

They are both critical and appreciative of the Southern pastoral ideal. In an era of national drift,[2] Kennedy was attracted to and repelled by the bucolic middle-ground vision of America. It offered stability and peace on the one hand. On the other, the pastoral state, he felt, was a condition conducive to ignorance and isolation.[3]

Swallow Barn is a fine plantation pastoral, a picture of "Southern Arcadia."[4] But in its gentle satire, Kennedy shows his reservations about the dream of rural retirement in a changing world. In Horse-Shoe Robinson he seems at first to head toward criticism of pastoral once again. In the end, however, the romance is an affirmation of the pre-Revolutionary agrarian-pastoral ideal of the South, the area which becomes

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of Southern Sectionalism, 1819-1848 (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1948), p. 308; William S. Osborne, Introduction in John Pendleton Kennedy, Rob of the Bowl: A Legend of St. Inigoe's (New Haven: College and University Press Publishers, 1965), p. 5.

[2]Clement Eaton, The Growth of Southern Civilization, 1790-1860 (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1961), pp. 33-48; Avery O. Craven, The Growth of Southern Nationalism, 1848-1861 (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1953), p. 3; William R. Taylor, Cavalier and Yankee, p. 186.

[3]J. V. Ridgely, John Pendleton Kennedy (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1966), p. 61.

[4]Lewis P. Simpson, The Dispossessed Garden, p. 44.

Kennedy's metaphor for the nation.

Like William Gilmore Simms, Kennedy was an active man[5] who felt that change was the true American social pattern.[6] But he hesitated. He felt that change should not go too far. It should not be destructive of good old ways nurtured on the land. Again like Simms, he thought there should be a balance between industry and agriculture in the nation.[7] Such convictions make up some of the fibres of realism and sadness in the complex pattern of his tales.

Perhaps the other writers who praised the verisimilitude of Swallow Barn were somehow aware of and even affirmed its uncompromising thread of unflattering yet gently presented truth of life in the Southern country. Each one of these men was deeply, subtly perceptive in his own right. In love with the South or Southwest, pausing in their pastoral designs to look wistfully away from reality but always looking back to the truth again, they also saw the impending doom of the rural ideal in an industrializing America. Kennedy's

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[5]David Bertelson, The Lazy South, p. 185.

[6]Ridgely, p. 137.

[7]Vernon Louis Parrington, The Romantic Revolution in America, 1800-1860, p. 49.

contemporary, James Kirke Paulding, was impressed with the descriptions in the novel. He wrote to his publisher, Henry C. Carey, that it was a picture "drawn from Nature."[8] Simms expressed the same feelings in a letter to Kennedy himself.[9] Later in the century, John Esten Cooke wrote in his history of Virginia that Swallow Barn was "the best picture of Virginia country life in literature."[10]

Swallow Barn plantation seems very close to the undisturbed locus amoenus of pastoral lore.[11] Underneath its idyll, however, there lie some uncomfortable antipastoral facts. Like the Dove Cote retreat in

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[8]Ralph M. Aderman, ed., The Letters of James Kirke Paulding, p. 122.

[9]Mary C. Simms Oliphant, et al., eds., The Letters of William Gilmore Simms, III, 122-123.

[10]Virginia: A History of the People (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, 1884), p. 496. Kennedy's first biographer, Henry T. Tuckerman, The Life of John Pendleton Kennedy (New York: G. P. Putnam, 1871), p. 149, calls it "a living local picture which informs and amuses. . . ." And see Jay B. Hubbell, Southern Life in Fiction (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1960), p. 48; Edd Winfield Parks, Ante-Bellum Southern Literary Critics (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1962), p. 68; Alexander Cowie, The Rise of the American Novel, p. 262; Bohner, p. 74.

[11]E. R. Curtius, European Literature in the Latin Middle Ages, Willard R. Trask, trans. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1953), p. 195, describes the traditional locus amoenus, or lovely, pleasant place, as "a beautiful, shaded natural site. Its minimum ingredients

Horse-Shoe Robinson, Frank Meriwether's estate is an embattled locus amoenus. Swallow Barn is more than a "comic pastoral."[12] It is deeper than even Kennedy himself admits in his self-effacing Preface to the first edition.[13]

His hard line toward Southern pastoral delusion comes out in the satire that sometimes colors narrator Mark Littleton's observations. Through it now and then one gets a whiff of city smells, coarse earth-smells from the barn and quarters mingling with the gentler aromas of tidy old plantation rooms and lawns, wisteria and julep at evening. The theme of Swallow Barn--and to an extent of Horse-Shoe Robinson--is the dangerous debilitation of determined retirement to the enfolding land. For here it is too easy for one to delude himself

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comprise a tree (or several trees), a meadow, and a spring or brook." Birdsong, lowing animals, flowers, breezes may be added to it. Or, in the case of ante-bellum Southern pastoral, a peaceful plantation house. The locus amoenus is, above all, a place of refuge, contemplation, rejuvenation. See Michael Squires, The Pastoral Novel, pp. 66, 204.

[12]Bohner, pp. 83, 85.

[13]John Pendleton Kennedy, Swallow Barn, or A Sojourn in the Old Dominion (Philadelphia: Carey and Lea, 1832). In his brief Preface, Kennedy writes: "The country life and people are at least truly described; although it will be seen that my book has but little philosophy to recommend it, and much less depth of observation."

with the notion that he can make time stand still.

The inevitable outside threat to the Swallow Barn idyll is made evident in the Preface to the 1851 edition. Kennedy comments with mild regret on "the progress" in the nation that is breaking in on the insularity, the "distinctive habits and modes of life" of the country. He wonders if the resulting "insipidity of character" is worth the loss of the old "rough but pleasant flavor" of the land.[14] Here Kennedy is showing the reader the reality of change before he takes him into the ostensibly changeless and secure world of Swallow Barn. If he seems to regret the incursions of progress in his Preface, Littleton, his persona, makes a direct criticism of the lack of it later in the story. One notes that in his Preface Kennedy is careful to use the same easy, genially amused tone as Mark does in the tale. By establishing this similarity of tone with his narrator, Kennedy invites identification with him.

Mark Littleton is the sojourner in the pastoral place. He comes on holiday from New York and goes out again, back to the city. But Kennedy twists his role.

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[14]Swallow Barn, or A Sojourn in the Old Dominion (1853; rpt. New York: Hafner, 1962), pp. 8-9. All references to the text will be taken from this edition.

As sojourner, Mark does not identify with as complete sympathy as he should with the pastoral world he visits. His criticism is directed more to the idyll than it is to the world outside.

Ned Hazard, his old school friend, has invited him to Swallow Barn for several summer weeks. The estate is being managed by his brother-in-law, Frank Meriwether. Mark's story is episodic. He describes an evening of amateur theatricals in the mansion, and later at Isaac Tracy's old house a planters' all night carouse over cards and sack. There is a county court day, presided over by Frank Meriwether in his role as Justice of the Peace. There are country walks and games: horseback rides and praise of horses. There is some comic falconry, and a nighttime opossum hunt of the slaves.

The characters who move in and out of these changeless country happenings are delightful. But they are types--Chub, the parson-teacher; Philpot Wart, the fox-hunting lawyer; gentleman-farmer Meriwether himself; and romantic Ned and his beloved Bel Tracy--changeless types like the Tidewater scenery that dims into summer haze, a warm and protective pastoral landscape that stretches all about them. This is the countryside Mark sees at a Fourth of July gathering at a drowsy riverside landing. It is another soft and restful antebellum idyll:

> . . . that striking repose, which is peculiar to the tide-water views; soft, indolent and clear, as if nature had retreated into this drowsy nook, and fallen asleep over her own image, as it was reflected from this beautiful mirror. The river was upwards of a mile in width, and upon its bosom were seen, for many a rood below, those alternate streaks of light and shade that are said to point out the channel, where its smooth surface was only ruffled by the frequent but lonely leap of some small fish above the water. A few shallops were hauled up on the beach, where some fishing-nets were stretched upon stakes. . . . Far below, and seemingly suspended in air amongst the brilliant reflections of the heavens, lay a small schooner at anchor, fixed as by a spell, and, nevertheless, communicating a sense of animation to this tranquil world by its association with beings that trod its noiseless deck (Barn, p. 161).

There is no doubt that this picture is beautiful. But it is soporific, dangerously static in its summer heat. It is like Tennyson's Lotus-Eaters' land. Even nature sleeps, stopped in her course of change, unfruitful here, narcissistic. The sailors aboard the heat-wavering schooner are no more alive than the trees, sky, or water. They move, true. But their movements are silent, like those of ghosts. One is tempted to refer to this scene as a sort of Midday Gothic, frozen in sunshine like Seclusaval.

On another occasion, Mark describes a walk with Ned through Goblin Swamp. The details he uses in this instance look toward an important rejection of the one-sided vision of idyllic harmony that is part of the pastoral design of Simms's romances. Kennedy like Simms

pauses to create a gothic inversion of the details of traditional pastoral setting.

The evening falls as the two young men walk through "distorted shadows [that] fell from every weed, bush, and tree, and contributed, with the forlorn aspect of the landscape, to impress us with an undefined and solemn sensation, that for a moment threw us into silence" (Barn, p. 250). Night deepens, capturing great swamp trees "in lurid shade" as a "chilling vapor" rises from oozing marsh. A hawk darts up "with a hoarse scream into this fading light"--frogs, whip-poor-will reiterate melancholy cries. And

> The foxfire,--as the country people call it,--glowed hideously from the cold and matted bosom of the marsh; and, far from us, in the depths of darkness, the screech-owl sat upon his perch, brooding over the slimy pool, and whooping out a dismal curfew, that fell upon the air like the cries of a tortured ghost (Barn, pp. 260-261).

Idyll is only a part of Kennedy's plantation pastoral, as it is with Isaac Holmes. Mark knows he must return to New York. His longing for the grassy, woody peace of Swallow Barn is only philosophical, he says. It is an idle thought. And he makes a joke of his pastoral impulse even as he expresses it. Shortly after his swamp walk, with its overtones of nature's dichotomy, he thinks, unbeguiled and satiric: "Ever since I have been at Swallow Barn, I have entertained

a very philosophical longing for the calm and dignified retirement of the woods."

In his extravagance he makes a mockery of his wish, and pokes some quiet fun at the whole plantation ideal of a self-contained, bucolic life:

> I begin to grow moderate in my desires; that is, I only want a thousand acres of good land, an old manor-house, on a pleasant site, a hundred negroes, a large library, a host of friends, and a reserve of a few thousands a year in the stocks,--in case of bad crops,--and, finally, a house full of pretty, intelligent, and docile children, with some few et ceteras not worth mentioning (Barn, p. 311).

This picture ends on a note of ironic commentary upon the complacency and pride of the land-holding rich: "I doubt not, after this, I shall be considered a man of few wants, and great resources within myself."

There is a subtle and pertinent flaw in Mark's idyll, over and beyond its irony. His dream of money in the bank in case of crop failure punctures his bucolic ideal of true self-sufficiency. It suggests that danger from outside--or even inside--the pastoral domain against which the wise shepherd must protect himself. Pastoral calm and dignity are tenuous elements in Kennedy's design.

The orderly calm of Swallow Barn is anachronistic in the forward-looking nineteenth century in democratic America. It is a throw-back to a less pleasant time,

Mark suggests, to a darker age when men actually had less hope and freedom than in his day. This point is made in an early chapter he calls "Traces of the Feudal System." He describes the "feudal munificence" of Virginia planters like Meriwether, with their bondsmen and halls and lavish entertainments. With opulent planter life on vast, supposedly self-sufficient estates, there also comes an insular feeling of independence that often amounts to stubborn backwardness, to "a certain fixedness" of habits "that even reject many of the valuable improvements of the day" (Barn, p. 71). This is Kennedy, the progressive city man, speaking through his persona. Here he belies the regret he feigns over the tradition-destroying "progress" in his Preface.

From this observation upon the pastoral feudalism of Virginia grows further satiric criticism. It is directed toward the selfish bias against change of two lords of the manors, Meriwether and his Revolutionary era neighbor, Isaac Tracy. These are two stubborn, albeit likable men. In them Kennedy's criticism of the delusion of calm changelessness that is part of plantation pastoral attains its sharpest focus. Meriwether, for instance, makes a Paulding-like statement against the steam engine and the movement to national

consolidation it portends. Ironically, his remark reveals an unpastorally dissatisfied frame of mind.

For a moment, Meriwether seems troubled in his garden. Suddenly, briefly, but sharply this generous, intelligent, kindly man sounds not only annoyed but fatuous, opinionated, reactionary. Or perhaps he sounds more lost and futile than foolish. The "home material of Virginia was never so good," he says, "as when her roads were at their worst" (Barn, pp. 72-73). In Meriwether, Kennedy is criticising the backward-looking impulse to resist mechanization that arose among nineteenth century Americans[15] like Paulding or John Esten Cooke, Hawthorne or Thoreau. Later, Kennedy exposes an element of this impulse in himself in Horse-Shoe Robinson.

Kennedy's Swallow Barn satire of the pastoral ideal of green timelessness is even more pointed in the case of old Isaac Tracy. He becomes a restless man without a purpose after change comes into his life. Time and change are the foes of idyll. They are the two great abstractions with which pastoral is concerned.[16] Tracy is their tragi-comic victim.

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[15]Leo Marx, The Machine in the Garden, p. 180.

[16]Peter V. Marinelli, Pastoral, p. 20.

For years he has been in friendly litigation with Meriwether over the ownership of the Brakes. This is a worthless piece of swampland that lies between their estates. When Frank contrives to end the suit by letting Isaac win it, the old man is saddened. A rural pattern has been disrupted for him. A seemingly changeless routine in his life has ended: "He thought sorrowfully over the extinguished controversy. A favorite fancy had been annihilated, untimely cropped, as a flower of the field. He could not realize the idea. The privation left him no substitute" (Barn, p. 322).

He stands by his horse, overlooking the property he has won. He feels disoriented, lost. His are now the restless, disjointed thoughts of cropped flower and privation that Kennedy captures so well in the almost staccato short sentences that describe his agitation. For Isaac Tracy, calm has left the garden for good.

Ned Hazard and time pose a threat to the dignity of the locus amoenus--that dignity of land ownership, of proprietorship worn so well by Frank and Isaac despite their flashes of provincial petulance. Ned is the real owner of Swallow Barn. Meriwether took over its management from Hazard's profligate, overgenerous father who had almost lost it. Under Frank's direction the plantation is starting to prosper again. But one wonders what

will happen to the land after Meriwether dies and boyish, irresponsible Ned takes over. His very name suggests danger--hazard. He will no doubt be like his father. One has a sudden recollection of George Tucker's Graysons and their lost pastoral patrimony, or of the fate of Dangerfield's Tidewater plantation.

Mark mentions a certain "reckless expression" in Ned's character that is heightened by his jaunty German forage cap and by "the half swagger with which he strikes his boot with his riding whip. . ." (Barn, p. 51). He seems less interested in helping Meriwether run the plantation than he is in organizing household theatricals (Barn, pp. 98-99), or mocking opera singers or actors while walking in the woods with Littleton (Barn, pp. 81-84). He is charming but immature, and sometimes thoughtless.

When his negroes tree an opossum, he rescues and frees it (Barn, pp. 410-411). This is generous, for the animal. But it is an unusual and an impractical end to a kind of night hunt that traditionally sees blood and then a dinner of bagged game for hungry hunters. One imagines Ned will be just as impractical, just as improvident--and ultimately thoughtless--in running his plantation when the day of his proprietorship comes.

When he courts Bel Tracy, he acts the part of the "hairbrained cavalier" (Barn, p. 414). He is more of a "jesting careless" friend to her than a beau. One of Ned's friends remarks to Littleton that unless Hazard becomes more serious toward Bel he will lose her (Barn, p. 237). Bel has "certain romantic fancies" of her own that do little to help him keep his feet on the ground (Barn, p. 228). With visions of medieval sport coursing through her head, she tries to tame a hawk for falconry. She fails, of course, even with Ned to help her. One doubts that when they do marry she will be a stabilizing influence on him.

Through the inevitability of Ned's inheritance, then, Kennedy abrogates the duration of Swallow Barn. It is only another doomed locus amoenus, sustained for awhile by Frank Meriwether, but fated to fall prey to Ned's indolence and to grim time, the great enemy of Arcadia.[17]

The "Pleasant Prospects" to which Mark refers in the title of his last chapter do not allude to Swallow Barn. They refer to his final, irrevocable withdrawal from the pastoral domain and its hopeless fight against time. Mark's pleasant prospects are his return to the

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[17]Michael Squires, The Pastoral Novel, p. 148.

real and busy life of the outside world. This is the world of Simms-like activity and war that presses upon Dove Cote, the locus amoenus, the pleasant place in Horse-Shoe Robinson.

Like Swallow Barn, Kennedy's romance of the closing years of the Revolution in Virginia and the Carolinas deals with the theme of change and loss. But in Horse-Shoe Robinson he is less certain in his criticism of the pastoral ideal. Here he looks nostalgically at the agrarian roots of the nation that he teases in Swallow Barn. He longed to believe that change meant improvement. He grew less certain of this, however, as he realized with sad resignation and almost pain that change in America often meant the loss of some cherished aspects of life.[18]

So, Kennedy's design in Horse-Shoe Robinson is connected to the ancient theme of dispossession in pastoral that started with Virgil. It reminds one that history alters the land and destroys the bucolic world.[19] The great unanswered question for Kennedy was what America had progressed from and what it was progressing

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[18]Ridgely, p. 75.

[19]Squires, p. 27.

toward.[20] Strangely, in Horse-Shoe Robinson his glance goes back in history and lingers there, where time is frozen and dead. It seems that for a moment he wants to forget the lesson of the pitiless course of time he subtly poses in Swallow Barn. He slips into a preference for the lost old days--the era of the genesis of Swallow Barn plantation--when Southern landholdings were large and rich, self-sustaining and secure.[21]

Horse-Shoe Robinson is the story of a journey away from pastoral calm through a troubled land and into war. It describes the ride South of Major Arthur Butler and his friend, the frontiersman turned blacksmith, Galbraith "Horse-Shoe" Robinson. They ride away from the transient security of the old-fashioned Dove Cote retreat near Charlottesville, and pass through dangerous Tory-infested countryside and on to the final great battle scene: King's Mountain. Butler is secretly married to Mildred Lindsay. Her father, Philip, a British sympathizer, owns the Cote. The Major is on his way to join General Gates. He is captured by Tory partisans, and spends most of the novel imprisoned while

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[20]Ridgely, pp. 75, 138.

[21]John Pendleton Kennedy, Horse-Shoe Robinson: A Tale of the Tory Ascendency (1852; rpt. New York: American Book Company, 1937), p. 15.

resourceful Galbraith tries to free him.

Horse-Shoe is one of "nature's true noblemen," a natural force of good.[22] He is also one of the best drawn characters in the American historical romance.[23] He is another antebellum frontier guide and rescuer--strong, truthful, modest, capable. He possesses the American woodsman's "real delicacy of mind that lies at bottom of a kind nature," and a blue-eyed glance of "shrewd, homely wisdom" (Horse-Shoe, pp. 9, 18, 55).

Galbraith finally rescues Butler, who escaped once on his own but was quickly recaptured. After the American victory at King's Mountain, Mildred and Butler are reunited. The good wife, she has followed him into war. Kennedy ends his long novel abruptly. It seems as if he suddenly grew tired of it. Or perhaps he saw that his narrative was not going to help provide him with a workable answer to his great question after all.

Along the way, he does make a point of destroying all the pastoral oases he creates in the tale. The war--America's progress toward independence--in Horse-Shoe Robinson is his metaphor for destructive change. Its ruination of the good country places in the romance

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[22]Taylor, pp. 198-199.

[23]Cowie, p. 264.

represents his criticism of the "mischievous interpolations" of commerce and of progress in his own day that were continuing the destruction of the nation's calmer, gentler, more restrained and land-oriented ways.

Dove Cote safe on a mountain: Mildred calls it a "little asylum" where her father wants to remain "undisturbed by the angry passions of man" (Horse-Shoe, p. 120). Philip is a scholarly dreamer who studies the supernatural. Finally, one silver, moonflushed, fantastically clouded night, looking out of his rustic lodge, he sees the ghost of his deceased wife (Horse-Shoe, pp. 90-91). It was she who planned the grounds of the Cote. Her gardens, lawns, groves, exotic potted plants, walks were created with an eye to the kind of beauty that "evinced the dominion which a refined art may exercise with advantage over nature" (Horse-Shoe, p. 83).

Unfortunately for the evolution of his pastoral design, Dove Cote reminds one of Seclusaval. The Lindsay retreat is also an effort to impose containment, stasis, on mutable nature. It is contrived, unhealthy, fragile, and damned. Philip nearly goes out of his mind in the pensive, funerary-garden isolation of his hideaway.

There is no peace for him here both because he is too withdrawn, too self-absorbed in it and because there is no peace in the land outside.

It is, perhaps, with a lingering touch of the satiric irony of Swallow Barn that Kennedy describes this locus amoenus as a place where a philosopher or a wearied statesman can relax and regain his thoughts (Horse-Shoe, p. 95). Only disconsolate thoughts of the dead come to poor Philip, brooding over his mountain view. And the war finally comes, too, when the British Captain St. Jermyn arrives and tries to lure him into open espousal of the English cause. It is St. Jermyn who leads Lindsay to his death at King's Mountain while trying to guide him through the battle lines to join the King's forces.

Allen Musgrove's North Carolina farm is a more realistic pre-Revolutionary American bucolic ideal. It is the prosperous working middleground, tucked among trees, watered by a glistening river. But it is vulnerable the same way Dove Cote is. Time and change will have it, too. Kennedy grows resentful of the thought. Tories come and take over the farm. The rattle and clatter of their drums and weapons overwhelm the pastoral sounds of Musgrove's life-sustaining mill. The grinding of its wheel, the calls of animals, were

the only noises heard there before the soldiers came. The farm is burned by the Tories as they march away (Horse-Shoe, pp. 221, 326).

Wat Adair's mountain farm, on the other hand, bespeaks the ruin that comes to the land through bad settlement. In the grim realism with which Kennedy describes it, it stands in harsh although utterly believable contradistinction to the idyll of Dove Cote or the middleground of Musgrove Farm. Adair's place survives the war. Like the war, Kennedy uses it symbolically. Destructive, ugly progress has a source within the land, too, in bad farming practices.

Wat's settlement is a ramshackle array of log cabins and scraggy fields of corn and rotting stumps and clumsy worm fences. Worst of all is the blight of girdled trees, a field of the dead, Kennedy calls it. This scene is powerful pastoral inversion. It is free, however, of gothic affectation. It is very real: here are trees

> which had been death-stricken by the axe, and now heaved up their withered and sapless branches towards the heavens, without leaf or spray. In the phrase of the woodman, they had been girdled some years before, and were destined to await the slow decay of time in their upright attitude. It was a grove of huge skeletons that had already been bleached into an ashy hue by the sun, and whose stiff and dry members rattled in the breeze with a preternatural harshness. . . . It was a

> field of the dead; and the more striking in its imagery from the contrast which it furnished to the rich, verdurous, and lively forest that, with all the joyousness of health, encompassed this blighted spot. Its aspect was one of unpleasant desolation. . . . (Horse-Shoe, pp. 137-138).

Here is man at work against nature--bucolic progress, a corruption of the dream of pastoral middleground, an abnegation in imagery of idyll.

Early in Horse-Shoe Robinson Kennedy refers to the "hum of industry"--the "wagoner's whip, the rude song of the boatman, and the clatter of the mill"--that since the Revolution has descended upon the land, disturbing its ancient tranquility with its "mischievous interpolations" (Horse-Shoe, p. 15). Through the statements of Arthur Butler, ruminating over his love for Mildred, Kennedy reflects on man's restless, strife-ridden life, existing as he must "in the contentious crowd" (Horse-Shoe, p. 39). Pausing near the end of his story, Kennedy in his own voice criticizes that "pernicious love of change" that has obliterated so many "ancient associations" and "landmarks" in America (Horse-Shoe, p. 487).

One detects a further revelation of Kennedy's post-Swallow Barn feelings in something Philip Lindsay says. It shows a shadow of sudden misanthropy like Paulding's flash of bitterness against humanity when

he thinks of man as the serpent in America's paradise in The Backwoodsman. To Mildred and his young son, Henry, Philip complains about the harmful works of man in the garden: "God has given us a beautiful heaven, my children, and a rich and bountiful earth. He has filled both with blessings. Man only mars them with his cursed passions. . ." (Horse-Shoe, p. 346).

But even if he sounds like Paulding now and then, quite unlike him Kennedy does not look to the West for a fresh start. In Horse-Shoe Robinson he insists on looking back for solace and hope, not ahead or beyond the western mountains. He isolates himself in time. He encapsulates himself in idealized images of a past that is gone. He looks back in an almost resentful rejection of there being any hope left for America at all. He looks back to the countryside of a lost South which exemplifies for him the goodness of the old Republic that was "a chaste, uncomplicated land of rural virtue."[24]

So Kennedy praises the pre-Revolutionary pastoral of Dove Cote. Here "the great Western wilderness smiled with the contentment of a refined and polished civilization, which no after day in the history of this

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[24]Marx, p. 141.

empire has yet surpassed--perhaps not equalized" (Horse-Shoe, p. 84). He describes an army of frontiersmen hurrying to join the battle against Cornwallis in North Carolina. He pointedly praises their rugged hunting shirts--and the hearty outdoor, independent spirit such dress represents--which the "foppery of modern times has been allowed to displace" (Horse-Shoe, p. 499). After reading Swallow Barn, one does not expect Kennedy to sound like an antebellum Miniver Cheevy. But there are times in Horse-Shoe Robinson when he does.

Kennedy's backward glance in Horse-Shoe Robinson is a denial of the persistent American hope of new beginning, of Edenic promise.[25] It is a denial of the present and the future. This is the tragic message of abnegation and regret woven into the novel's designs of pastoral and adventure. In the final analysis, Kennedy was not as progressive as some of his commentators state. In a changeful, restless era, he felt most secure in looking back to the nation's land-based roots.[26]

Whatever hope there might be for the future paradoxically lies in a backward glance--in an awareness and

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[25]Charles L. Sanford, The Quest for Paradise, pp. 158, 176-178.

[26]Ridgely, p. 108.

an emulation of the merits of bygone life in a quiet locus amoenus like the Dove Cote or Musgrove Farm. Horse-Shoe Robinson is an affirmation of the pastoral urge Kennedy gently mocks in Swallow Barn. Sadly, however, like Thomas Wolfe, Kennedy the realist knew that one cannot return to beginnings. One cannot go home again to tranquil mountain lodge or forest clearing or farm. Lost time can only be snatched for a moment, caught and lost again in the pastoral design of historical romance.

CHAPTER VI

THE VALLEY AND WILLIAM ALEXANDER CARUTHERS

. . . the memory of the past . . . brings with it a soothing, gentle pleasure that may well compare with delusive dreams of hope. Wretched, indeed, are those who dare not look backwards, for the future can afford them little consolation for the past.

James Kirke Paulding, The Puritan and His Daughter (1849)

--Alas! the forward vision! a few years
Will see these shafts o'erthrown. The profligate hands
Of avarice and of ignorance will despoil
The woods of their old glories; and the earth,
Uncherish'd, will grow barren, even as the fields,
Vast still, and beautiful once, and rich as these,
Which, in my own loved home, half desolate,
Attest the locust rule,--the waste, the shame,
The barbarous cultivation--which still robs
The earth of its warm garment. . . .

William Gilmore Simms, "The Traveller's Rest" (1853)

. . . Around, above us; in the noon-day glow
How calm the landscape rests!--'yon distant town
Unwreathed with clouds of foliage like a crown
Of rustic honor; the soft, silvery flow
Of the clear stream beyond it, and the show
Of endless wooded heights, circling the brown
Autumnal fields, alive with billowy grain;
Say! hast thou ever gazed on aught more fair
In Europe, or the Orient?

Paul Hamilton Hayne, "Sonnet" (1860)

The Kentuckian in New York (1834) is the first intersectional novel of any importance in American

literature.[1] In it William Alexander Caruthers--Shenandoah Valley born, and finally a physician of Savannah--is interested in airing contemporary social issues. It is an epistolary novel of manners in which he tries to give a realistic picture of life in 1832 in Baltimore and New York and Belville, a South Carolina plantation off the Santee River.[2] In so doing, he wanted to create a mood of amity, understanding, and toleration between North and South during the decade when Southern sectionalism was starting to flourish.[3]

Despite all his sincere efforts at amelioration and good will, however, in the story Caruthers shows his Southern agrarian preference.[4] It is a preference that leads him right to thoughts of idyll.

Thus the country comes out ahead of the city in The Kentuckian in New York. It closes on a note of pastoral affirmation that grows unavoidably out of its traditional bucolic theme of town-versus-land. In the

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[1]Arthur Hobson Quinn, American Fiction: An Historical and Critical Survey (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1964), p. 113.

[2]Edd Winfield Parks, Ante-Bellum Southern Literary Critics, p. 73.

[3]Curtis Carroll Davis, Chronicler of the Cavaliers: A Life of the Virginia Novelist Dr. William A. Caruthers (Richmond: The Dietz Press, 1953), pp. 105, 112; Parks, p. 72; Charles S. Sydnor, The Development of Southern Sectionalism, 1819-1848, p. 339.

[4]Davis, p. 117.

final pages, Caruthers describes a winter idyll in the Shenandoah Valley where his letter writers meet for reunion and marriage to their ladies. Typical of ante-bellum Southern pastoral--and of all serious pastoral[5]--Caruthers's design fuses realistic material with idyll and is, finally, critical of urban life.

The theme of The Kentuckian is the redemptive power of the land, the fresh land of the West--beyond the mountains in places like the Valley or Kentucky. Victor Chevillere, one of the letter writers, expresses this idea in an interesting reversal of the usual direction of the restorative journey in pastoral, where one comes into the idyllic retreat for rejuvenation. Victor writes Beverley Randolph at Belville that when the bucolic-fresh spirit of the West comes East, then the city, the jaded, demoralized areas of the nation's seaboard, will improve. Then, too, North and South will meet and learn to understand each other. Harmony, the ideal of pastoral, will be restored to the land.[6]

The irony in this reversed design is that when the spirit of the West does come East to New York, it

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[5]Michael Squires, The Pastoral Novel, pp. 5, 7.

[6]William Alexander Caruthers, The Kentuckian in New York. Or, The Adventures of Three Southerners (1834; rpt. Ridgewood, New Jersey: The Gregg Press, 1968), I, 54.

cannot wait to get away to the woods again. The Kentuckian, Montgomery Damon, represents the West. He is an ideal, one of those vigorous "yeomen of the west" in whom Caruthers found his chief hope for the nation.[7]

Damon is not a restless frontier hunter or forester like Ambrose Bushfield or Natty Bumppo or even Caruthers's own Joe Jarvis of The Knights of the Golden Horse-Shoe (1841). He is a more settled figure, like the Virginia blacksmith Galbraith Robinson. Damon is a worker, a drover. And he is proud of it (Kentuckian, I, 19). He does not wear leather but rather homespun made by his wife. He is practical and straight-talking. In his letter to Chevillere at the novel's end, he writes that his approach to life is like a "high pressure system" (Kentuckian, II, 207). There is nothing of the laggard or vulgarian about him. He has a touch of chivalry, too. He comes to a young lady's defense at the circus in New York after she has been insulted by some young fops. Damon fights them all at once, and wins (Kentuckian, Im 65-66).

Of course, he never feels at home in the city. Except for the rude fellows he beats at the circus, he

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[7]Vernon Louis Parrington, The Romantic Revolution in America, 1800-1860, p. 44; The Kentuckian in New York, I, 73, 78.

makes no impression on it. He is a critical observer, a sojourner outside of the pastoral place. Somewhere deep in his consciousness, Caruthers realizes the futility of his dream of national salvation coming out of the woods. He knows there is whimsy in his notion of the recolonization of the East by the West. So it is that in the end of his tale he allows his characters to withdraw into a self-contained pastoral oasis whose very beauty and peace are a rejection and denial of everything the city stands for.

In the city Damon persists in dreaming of his "open forest ranges" and recreational deer and fox and racoon hunts (Kentuckian, II, 107). All he sees is fakery in the town, which is exemplified for him in the theater. Caruthers's typically Southern--or pastoral--criticism of urbanization and of the North is well contained in a brief statement Montgomery makes to Chevillere at a play one night. In a letter to Randolph, Chevillere quotes Damon: "'Why, here it's all make-believe; it's all sham; but out in old Kentuck we have the real things which you pretend here; like we do scarecrows in a corn field'" (Kentuckian, II, 108).

The Kentuckian in New York is the story of four journeys. Victor Chevillere and Augustus Lamar are both South Carolinians and recent college graduates who

travel to New York via Winchester and Baltimore. Along the way they meet Frances St. Clair of New York. Victor eventually falls in love with her. They meet Montgomery on the road as well. His is the second journey, the West coming to the East. He is allowed to join the two Southerners because Victor feels a "sincere respect" for him and "his unsophisticated honesty" (Kentuckian, I, 40).

The letters are exchanged between Victor and his Shenandoah Valley friend, Beverley Randolph. He is the third journeyer. He is travelling in the South, away from the Valley. He falls ill at Chevillere's plantation, Belville. There he is nursed to health by Victor's cousin, Virginia Bell, with whom he falls in love. Victor in the North and Beverley in the South: each looks around him and comments on what he sees.

Although his urge ultimately is to pastoral, Caruthers carefully tries to balance his observations of the city and the plantation. For awhile he succeeds. Leaving behind the "quiet and pastoral scenes" of home, Chevillere describes his approach to Baltimore: smoke in the distance and increasing noisy traffic on the road. He experiences melancholy and a premonition of evil (Kentuckian, I, 32-33). From Belville, Beverley writes of a strange underlying dread he feels despite

the plantation's pleasant groves and pigeons flying over "garden and cotton fields," and the perfume of flowers in the air (Kentuckian, I, 111). What worries him, what gives him a "gloomy foreboding for the future" of the South are the alien slaves and their brutal black driver (Kentuckian, II, 71; I, 117-119).

Visiting the quarters in moonlight, he feels he is transported to another dark, ominous world--"into the center of Africa at once" (Kentuckian, I, 118). When the dissatisfied driver tries to kill Randolph by burning down Belville's library, most of the slaves stand idly by not offering to help fight the fire, watching the building burn (Kentuckian, II, 71).

If the South has its oppressed legions of blacks and its miserable poor whites (Kentuckian, I, 54), the city Victor describes to Beverley has its own poor living in squalor in the shadow of fine business-house façades (Kentuckian, I, 154; II, 29-30). It is the corrupting city that draws unsuspecting people from the land and that spawns "the lowest depths of human degradation and misery" (Kentuckian, II, 28). And, finally, if Randolph gets malaria in the bad summer climate of Belville, so does the heat bring plague to the crowded city (Kentuckian, II, 16, 23).

The criticism of North and South seems to be

pretty well balanced. Still, Caruthers is really heading toward the country in his tale. And his direction is South. It is certainly true that he is not writing plantation pastoral. His mind in the end is on classical idyll, a dream-vision of Southern countryside. It starts, for example, when Frances St. Clair compares Hudson River mountain scenery to Southern scenery.

Walking with Victor, she tells him that the Southern mountains are more restful than these "highlands of the Hudson" where "there is such a stir of busy life, such an atmosphere of steam, and clouds of canvass, that one is perpetually called back in spirit to the stir and bustle of city life." Thus do the tentacles of the city reach out to spoil even the bucolic environment of New York. In the Southern mountains, on the other hand, far from the city's blight, "primitive nature seems to have returned upon us with all its balmy delights--quiet and peacefulness" (Kentuckian, I, 49).

Caruthers's pastoral bias comes out too in his attitude toward steam, just as it does with Paulding, Hawthorne, Thoreau, and John Esten Cooke. Frances mentions steam as one of the disturbers of the Hudson's lost tranquility--steam ships on the water and locomotives in the mountains. This is the first time an allusion to steam occurs in the novel. It is firmly

associated here with Northern commerce emanating from cities. So, when a steam allusion occurs a second and last time, the reader who remembers Frances's Hudson River scene is likely to associate it with Yankee industry and progress. One feels that this is Caruthers's subtle intention, rising out of a desire perhaps to mitigate through a counterbalancing allusion to the dehumanization of mechanization the unpleasant scene of plantation slavery Randolph draws at Belville.

It is both strange--and significant--that just before he describes his apprehension of Belville's quarters at night (Kentuckian, I, 118), Randolph's mind should stray to steam, great symbol of progress and urbanization in nineteenth century America. He is associating ideas here. His, and Caruthers's, train of thought might work out like this: if the institution of slavery has created a sullen, potentially dangerous, deracinated race in the South, so Northern industrial machinery creates debasement and servitude among people as well. In his letter to Chevillere, Randolph muses upon how machinery is elemental in bringing man into a "mongrel age" where chivalry and romance are increasingly overwhelmed by the steam engine. The hero of the new age operates a spinning jenny and "sings doggerel to the

music of the hand organ" (Kentuckian, I, 114).

Having seen the worst of each section by the end of his narrative of shortcomings North and South, Caruthers is ready to retire with his characters into a safe, idyllic place far removed from noisy machines and displaced blacks. His effort to ameliorate sectional differences in The Kentuckian resolves itself into a Southern pastoral vision. It rejects the city and turns its back on the plantation. One imagines Caruthers as he writes slowly sinking into some gilded recollection of his own Valley boyhood.

The fourth and final journey in the novel brings all the travellers--except Damon, who returned to Kentucky--to Beverley Randolph's Shenandoah Valley idyll. Crossing the mountains, Beverley looks East, behind him. There he sees ruined estates and deracination. West, in the Valley, he sees the archetypal Southern pastoral dream:

> On the western side . . . a long and happy valley stretches far as the eye can reach, with its green hills and cultivated vales, neat farmhouses, and fragrant meadows, and crystal springs, and sparkling streams, its prosperous villages, its numerous churches, and schools, and happy, happy people (Kentuckian, II, 194).

Randolph seems almost breathless in his list. He is anxious to see it all at once, anxious to get away from memories of Belville. He is anxious to pass quickly down

into the enfolding pastoral place that Caruthers's Governor Spotswood also sees and wants to protect in its original innocence in The Knights of the Golden Horse-Shoe.

They all come to this valley to be married--Victor and Frances, Beverley and Bell, and Augustus Lamar and his New York lady, Isabel Hazlehurst. It is Christmas when for the last time we see the Valley in The Kentuckian. In his description of it, Caruthers emphasizes sounds: the soft wind in trees and dry leaves, sheep bells and cattle lowing. These are all sounds of traditional idyll. His use of auditory imagery here is important in understanding the powerful extent of his pastoral longing in the scene. For writers like Caruthers who work in the pastoral tradition, auditory images carry the "strongest affirmation of man's rootedness in nature."[8]

> . . . the sun was just sinking in the western horizon, behind a long veil of fleecy and dappled winter clouds, tinged with the richest hues of crimson and pink; a gentle breeze was just rippling the red and dried-up leaves along the lawn, and monotonously sounded through the naked boughs of the grove of ancient oaks, which stood around and in front of the venerable domicile of the Randolphs; the hounds had sought the protection of the kennel from the chills of the evening,

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[8]Leo Marx, The Machine in the Garden, p. 58.

> and the solitary bell of the ancient wether, as he led the little flock into the primitive-looking fold, could just be heard above the lowing of the few household cattle which still remained unsheltered; all external objects around the venerable establishment bore that delightful aspect of rural repose which is so soothing to those who yet retain, after the fierce struggles of the world, a heart susceptible of these simple emotions, and a conscience untainted by crime (Kentuckian, II, 200).

In his description of the Valley and its lure in The Knights of the Golden Horse-Shoe, his last and best novel,[9] Caruthers reveals the great impulse in pastoral to recapture the idyllic Golden Age in one's own past.[10] In his eyes, the Valley of the early eighteenth century

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[9]Curtis Carroll Davis, Introduction in William Alexander Caruthers, The Knights of the Golden Horse-Shoe: A Traditionary Tale of the Cocked Hat Gentry (1845; rpt. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1970), p. vii; Mary C. Simms Oliphant, et al., eds., The Letters of William Gilmore Simms, I, 301.

William Gilmore Simms saw the Shenandoah Valley as a kind of pastoral paradise too. His description of it in Southward Ho! A Spell of Sunshine, p. 178, is as rhapsodic as anything Caruthers wrote: "The Valley of the Shenandoah might realize to the youthful romancer his most perfect idea of Arcadia. . . . Her charms are of a sort to inspire the most perfect idylls, and to mature the mind for contemplation . . . a dream of peace, sheltered by the wings of security, seems to hallow her loveliness in the sight of blue mountains, and the smiling heavens." Here the heart feels that "the spirit of man may be as divine as the region in which he finds his abode."

[10]Laurence Lerner, The Uses of Nostalgia (New York: Shocken Books, 1972), p. 236.

becomes Arcadia, "that garden spot of the land" (Knights, p. 27). Here is how the noble, doomed Shawnee chief, Chunoluskee, describes it:

> It is the most glorious land that ever the sun shone upon, there is a valley beyond those mountains, almost a perfect terrestrial paradise, abounding in deer, elk, buffalo, and game of every sort--the land teeming with wild fruits of every kind, and bright with purest fountains of water that ever gushed from the solid rocks (Knights, p. 57).

And when he later sees it for himself in its pristine state, Governor Spotswood, the empire builder, shows a sudden and a strange nostalgic wish to keep the Valley as it is, as Chunoluskee describes it. He shows a pastoral urge to hold back time.

The Knights of the Golden Horse-Shoe is another story of a Southern search for paradise. It is a search, however, that is sustained by irony. Caruthers makes it clear well before the hunt starts that he is, after all, aware of a tragic truth. This is the old truth of the loss of Eden that is familiar in the ante-bellum pastoral design. The tragic irony that lies beneath the surface optimism of discovery and empire-building in the tale is buried--and almost lost--in a long and rather tiresome conversation between the novel's lovers, hero Frank Lee and heroine Ellen Evylin, daughter of Spotswood's physician. Lee speaks the

words that are so essential to an understanding of Caruthers's awareness of the illusion of Eden in America, and in the South in particular.

His observation lends a darker dimension to what otherwise would be merely another romance of exploration and Indian fighting. Bitterly he says to Ellen in the orchard:

> The experience of our race seems to be everywhere the same. Not only was it cursed and condemned to earn its bread by the sweat of the brow, but the sentence extends much farther. . . . We are just allowed to peep into the garden of Eden, and then banished forever amidst the dark by-ways and crowded thoroughfares of busy life (Knights, p. 96).

The novel works out this "sentence" of Eden-frustration that is the plight of man. It is this peep to which Lee refers that Spotswood and the reader are allowed at the end when the Valley is finally reached and lost then to the Indians who are exiled from it and the whites who will defile it with tree-cutting, slaughter, and settlement.

The first chapters of the novel concern the disguise and exoneration of Frank Lee. He is working at Spotswood's Temple Farm as a tutor under the name of Harry Hall. Frank has been accused of complicity in Scotland in a plot of the Pretender. Hence his disguise and flight to America. In Virginia he is accused of

murdering John Spotswood, the Governor's drunken son.[11] John had seduced the Indian beauty, Wingina. It is her brother, Chunoluskee, educated like herself at William and Mary, who did the murder. She confesses this at the trial which clears Frank and allows him to doff his disguise and join Spotswood's Tramontane Expedition that is about to get underway. The rest of the story is about this fabled march to the Blue Ridge.

Governor Spotswood and hunter Joe "Red" Jarvis are two of the novel's best-drawn characters. Spotswood is the idealist who dreams of the Valley as a pastoral place. Describing what it will become to the House of Burgesses, where he has gone for financial aid for his expedition, he says: "Behold the rich meadows, and neat farm houses, and the gilded spires as they point toward heaven" (Knights, p. 123). There is also a strong streak of practicality in him as well as pastoral longing. When he is first seen sitting on the verandah of his elegant, rambling old mansion, he is dressed for the country he loves to walk. He looks like a hunter in his

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[11]As Edd Winfield Parks points out in Ante-Bellum Southern Literary Critics, p. 76, Caruthers gives a wife and four children to bachelor Spotswood. But the romancer warns his reader in his Introduction that he is not writing history but a "Traditionary story." He feels he is "entitled to justifiable liberties of fiction."

gaiters--his feet resting on the railing--and his hunting shirt. His gun leans in a nearby corner; his dog sleeps at his feet (Knights, p. 2). He establishes an immediate rapport with Jarvis, who calls him a "tip, top old feller, in the field" (Knights, p. 197).

Jarvis himself is in appearance, background, motivation the typical frontiersman-guide of antebellum romance. He is a hunter and an Indian killer and a scout. His manner exudes self-confidence. His face is full of "fun and frolic" of "a quiet and subdued sort" (Knights, p. 175). As Spotswood's army of exploration starts out of Williamsburg, he cannot resist a wry comment on the inappropriate elegance of the dress of the young cavaliers who are among its ranks of Rangers and yeoman militia: "Why I was thinkin', Sir," his long musket resting across the pommel of the saddle of his stout small pony, he speaks to Spotswood: "Why I was thinkin', Sir, how all this gold and flummery would look the day we marched in again" (Knights, p. 176).

With tongue in cheek he advises the Governor to turn the rambling excursion into a "great hunting party" for survival (Knights, p. 181). Spotswood smiles. He does not go as far as Jarvis suggests, but he does take some of his advice and delegates certain men to hunt for food each day. Jarvis knows the rigors

of the woods. He teaches Frank Lee woodcraft along the way, showing him how to survive by hunting in the deep forest. In further reference to Spotswood's card-playing, wine-drinking, cock-fighting young followers, he says to diligent Frank: "You'll see who's the best man among us, when we get among the mountains, and when neither money nor larnin' can do much for a man" (Knights, pp. 185-186). Together they blaze a trail toward the Blue Ridge. Together they guard the camp against Indians at night.

When the horses of the expedition start to give out because their hoofs--used to the soft Tidewater earth--cannot stand the increasingly rocky terrain, Jarvis teaches Spotswood and his men how to make horse-shoes. He had the foresight to bring farrier's equipment along with him. And he charges the cavaliers for his services (Knights, pp. 211-212).

Jarvis the guide: by leading the settlers into it, he is helping to destroy the free, wild forest he loves and cannot live without. There is pathos in his voice when he tells Frank one day: "I'm a hunter by trade, and settlements have been crowding on me for some time, and this here mountain scheme of the Governor's--though the old codgers laugh at it--is going to make

things a heap worse with me" (Knights, p. 185).

Dispossession is what Jarvis is talking about. And so is Caruthers under the surface of his romance. His tale of exploration is a chronicle of ruin. A debasing civilization moves westward into the pristine land whose fresh hopefulness diminishes as the explorers cut their way through the forest to the martial sounds of drum and bugle that, to Joe Jarvis's disgust, chase the game away (Knights, p. 195). Here is the cacaphonic panoply of a war-making culture moving in upon Eden:

> The white tents stretching out in picturesque lines against the fading green of the forest; the bright blaze of the camp fires, throwing fantastic shadows of the wagons and the horses, and moving objects around; the merry laugh of those within; the rude jest; the recounting of the adventures of the day; the loud song of the old soldiers of the life guard; the measured tramp of the sentinels on duty; the neighing of the horses in the forest, the braying of the asses and the mules; the lowing of cows . . . altogether presented an enchanting scene amid the primeval forests of nature (Knights, pp. 187-188).

War and dissipation: at every encampment the young cavaliers and the old guard game and drink and sing late into the night (Knights, p. 196). Crime comes into the land with Spotswood's cavalcade. Chunoluskee has fled into the forest to warn the Indians of the white man's coming. He advises them to resist. So murder begins: at the edge of camp in the morning

Jarvis finds a dead sentry, tomahawked (Knights, p. 192). Chunoluskee has become an outlaw. He has kidnapped both Wingina and the white girl, Egenia Elliot. Jarvis, of course, rescues them in the end.

In tracing the laborious trek of Spotswood's train, Caruthers is making a tragic point. The closer the expedition comes to the Valley the farther away Eden seems to withdraw. Complications of abduction, Indian massacre, and revenge and hate ripple out from the army as it moves. To play upon a phrase of Wordsworth, Spotswood approaches the Valley trailing clouds of ruin. Chunoluskee's terrestrial paradise grows dim. It becomes smothered by imagery of disharmony, imagery of war:

> It was a gallant sight to behold that bright and joyous band of cavaliers, in their plumes and brilliant dresses and fluttering banners, not yet soiled by the dust and toil of travel, as they wound through the green vistas fresh from the hands of nature, and their prancing steeds still elastic and bouyant with high blood and breeding. It cheered the heart of the veteran warrior, their commander, to see the columns file off before him as he sat upon his horse and received their salutes (Knights, p. 205).

At the settlement of Germanna they find destruction and death. The Indians have slaughtered and mutilated the inhabitants and burned all the buildings. Jarvis is glad that Spotswood sees the unburied, horrible bodies. He is anxious for a showdown battle

with the Indians in which the Governor will show no mercy. So, trouble grows in the forest. There is an aura of horror now in its leaves, starting to turn into their dying fall colors.

Then on the night of a cockfight in camp, the Indians finally attack. They create an avalanche of rocks that come crashing and tearing out of the once-quiet trees. They light fires around the camp to burn out the soldiers. But the wind changes and turns the flames on the Indians. The whites watch the great show of fire. In it they see a strange image of the death of an imperial-looking city as the flames rush and crack among the once-majestic trees. Now they look like "spires and domes, and huge edifices, encircled with the flames" (Knights, p. 222). It is peculiar for such a startling allusion to the ruin of cities to come on the verge of Spotswood's discovery of his valley, "this future seat of empires," as he calls it (Knights, pp. 122-123). The burning spires are those very ones he described to the Burgesses in Williamsburg. The image in the flames is a portent of doom, the doom that has marched with Spotswood's men all along.

A mockery of Eden is attained finally along a trail of blood and duplicity and rancor mixed with revelry and death. At the crest of the mountain on whose

slopes the battle in the flames took place, the men of the Tramontane Expedition look down on a vale that seems "like a great sea of vegetation in the moon-light, rising and falling in undulating and picturesque lines" as far as the eye can see: "There lay the Valley of Virginia . . . in its first freshness and purity . . . what a solemn and sublime temple of nature was there" (Knights, p. 229).

Spotswood at first thinks of the need for rapid settlement here. Then he is touched. He hesitates to despoil this place held sacred by the Indians and which he has thought of as a temple (Knights, p. 238). The Indians are exiled by his order from their earthly paradise. But what will happen to the temple when the tree-cutting starts? Jarvis wants to start clearing away trees right away for a settlement. The Governor hesitates over his beautiful vision. He will not allow Joe to wield his axe. He wants to keep the Valley as it is, like a place troubled Frank Lee once dreamed of as an ideal--a hideaway from the world, a retreat where "nature in her primitive simplicity and purity reigns forever" (Knights, pp. 241, 131).

But Spotswood's Valley is a fleeting experience no matter how long he wishes to hang onto it. It is a quick glance into a doomed pastoral oasis. Futilely--

and ironically, given the trouble he has brought with him--futilely, he wants to dwell upon the moment of terrific green Eden-tranquility he has seen stretch out below him. From a doughty leader of brave if dissipated adventurers, Spotswood suddenly becomes a sentimental old fool. Caruthers is criticizing his hero's nostalgia, and in so doing mocking his own penchant to pastoral thought.

If he affirms the Southern vision of idyll in The Kentuckian in New York, he rejects it for a vision of reality in The Knights of the Golden Horse-Shoe. History alters the land and destroys the pastoral world. This is Caruthers's final realization and admission. It is what he says in his description of the Tremontane Expedition's discordant journey into the Southern forest. Idyll, Caruthers realizes, is just a hortus mentis, a garden of the mind--a sad dream of green timelessness, a device of head and heart to keep an uncomfortable present away.

CHAPTER VII

PASTORAL DENIED: WILLIAM GILMORE SIMMS AND THE SPIRIT OF GUY RIVERS

The invisible colour
That fades,
In this world,
Of the flowers
Of the heart of man.
Komachi, Japanese, Eighth Century

This is the true sign of ruin to a race--
It undertakes no march, and, day by day
Drowses in camp, or, with the laggard's pace,
Walks sentry o'er possessions that decay;
Destined, with sensible waste, to fleet away;--
For the first secret of continued power
Is the continued conquest. . . .
William Gilmore Simms, "The Decay of a People" (1853)

For only in destroying I finde ease
To my relentless thoughts. . . .
Satan, Book IX, Paradise Lost (1667)

William Gilmore Simms wanted to write about the South in an epic way. Some critics prefer to see his tales as the kind of myth-making that is associated with folk tale or saga.[1] His biographer, William

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[1]J. V. Ridgely, William Gilmore Simms (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1962), pp. 45, 20-21; Donald Davidson, Introduction, The Letters of William Gilmore Simms, Mary C. Simms Oliphant, et al., eds., I, lii.

Peterfield Trent, sees nothing noble, uplifting, or epic-like in the novels. He sees heroism not in the works but in the man--this farmer, father, boon companion, advisor, writer, friend who was able to turn out so many books and articles: over eighty published volumes in his lifetime plus hundreds of miscellaneous, fugitive pieces in magazines.[2]

One may question Simms's broad attempt to parallel his novels to heroic poetry, as he does in his Preface to the 1854 edition of The Yemassee (1835) and a year later in a letter to Evert Augustus Duyckinck.[3] But one cannot deny the similar role of the pastoral design in epic and in his fiction. Insofar as his theme of pastoral denial is concerned, all tied up as it is in the destructive, disquiet spirit represented by Guy Rivers, Simms's romances do contain a deeply integrated epic element. For from Virgil, the master and model of the genre,[4] to Tasso, Spenser, and Milton, pastoral, thwarted,

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[2]William Peterfield Trent, William Gilmore Simms (1892; rpt. New York: Haskell House, 1968), pp. 326, 332; John R. Welsh, "William Gilmore Simms: Critic of the South," Journal of Southern History, 26 (May, 1960), 202.

[3]Yemassee (New York: Redfield, 1854), pp. v-vi; Letters, III, 388-389.

[4]E.M.W. Tillyard, The English Epic and Its Background (London: Chatto and Windus, 1954), p. 19; C. M. Bowra, From Virgil to Milton (London: Macmillan, 1965), p. 11.

threatened, double-edged pastoral, has been a part of epic structure. It occurs as a doomed, idyllic pause between events of myth-making action and allegory. It occurs in garden scenes of transitory respite that accentuate man's fated restlessness. Let us look at a few examples.

As in his Eclogues, Virgil in The Aeneid pictures endangered rural retreat when Aeneas pauses with growing restlessness in Dido's tranquil land and then moves on--the force of history and time--to destroy the pastoral calm of rustic Latium. The sensual, static pastoral interludes of certain garden scenes in Torquato Tasso's Jerusalem Delivered were the source for Edmund Spenser's langorous-corrupt Bower of Bliss in The Faerie Queene. This sterile Bower is balanced by the procreative innocence, then, of the Garden of Adonis. The Garden creates a pastoral image of peace and love that is carried over and disrupted in Book VI when an incursion of murderous brigands destroys the Calidore-Pastorella romance in the unchanging, green, and singing countryside of good shepherds.[5]

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[5]Virgil, The Aeneid, Rolfe Humphries, trans. (New York: Scribner's, 1951), pp. 14-30, 87-112, 178-194, 219-220; Torquato Tasso, Jerusalem Delivered, Edward Fairfax, trans. (New York: Capricorn Books, 1963), pp. 299-334; Edmund Spenser, Complete Poetical Works, Neil Dodge, ed., pp. 262-263, 318-324, 370-373, 634-647.

Finally, Paradise Lost imagery of Lucifer and man in a doomed garden exerts a particularly strong influence in Simms's stories.[6] Charlemont (1856), for instance, is a virtual retelling of the Fall in a frontier setting. Satanic villains in the metaphor of serpents move in all of his Revolutionary romances, especially Eutaw (1856). The theme of Eden's loss is somehow suggested whenever he toys with the pastoral ideal of green hills and forests, quiet, and good farms in the Southern landscape. The ideal is always contrasted to and overwhelmed by description of its opposite: wrecked villages and houses in a country marred in field and forest by man's restless spirit. Peripheral temptations and hell come into the garden through man's vain, unquiet will. This is a recollection of Eve, magnified in Guy Rivers and carried over into Margaret Cooper and Hell-Fire Dick and Captain Inglehardt. Simms's green thoughts, green scenes, change into death-seared shadows of themselves.

The pattern of lost pastoral in epic is overlooked by E.M.W. Tillyard and C. M. Bowra in their respective

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[6]For some of John Milton's scenes that Simms obviously had in mind in his pastoral design--serpent Satan, susceptible Eve in the idyllic garden--see Paradise Lost in Complete Poems and Selected Prose (New York: The Modern Library, 1950), pp. 165-210, 265-318, 339-349.

studies of the form. So perhaps it is not so great an oversight for Simms to have neglected mentioning it in his discussions of the heroic qualities in his romances. Nevertheless, allegorical pastoral design lends an important depth to his tales. It provides a pattern that enables him to penetrate more "deeply into the universal problems of human existence" than Clement Eaton would allow. It is Simms's use of pastoral that places him not only a solid step closer to epic than he knew, but also somewhat nearer than Eaton thinks to the insights of his great New England contemporaries, Melville, Hawthorne, Emerson, Thoreau.[7]

Simms's pastoral design shows how the susceptible ideal of garden repose is threatened, ruined by the incursions of real life. For him real life is the need for action. In a letter to Mary Lawson, daughter of his lifelong Yankee friend James, he wrote in 1859 that "Being is nothing without Doing. . . ."[8] But like Kennedy and Caruthers in their way, he pauses in his tales to create idyllic, static pastoral oases. He likes to describe quiet villages, comfortable weathered mansions among trees, sunny meadows. This is his

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[7]The Mind of the Old South, pp. 254-255.

[8]Letters, III, 438.

pastoral lapse. Still he feels compelled to reject the old tranquil garden dream even as he flirts with it. In his fiction he tried to justify that "repining restlessness" George Herbert thought would drive man back to God if not, as Simms hoped, to self-improvement on earth.[9] He feels there is a necessity for change, to be up, about and doing. Love of countryside and thoughts of change: what Simms confronts is the ancient pastoral dilemma of reconciling bucolic peace and necessary activity.

Writing to James Kirke Paulding in 1839, Simms praises "mental restlessness" as the element that keeps a nation strong. But he criticizes the physical restlessness that "makes a nation unstable."[10] He deplored

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[9]"The Pulley" in Seventeenth Century Poetry: The Schools of Donne and Jonson, Hugh Kenner, ed. (New York: Rinehart and Winston, 1964), p. 219. Simms can never let it be: in the very first pages of Southward Ho! (1854), he advocates Northern visits to the rural South--and excuses his own frequent trips to New York--by saying that change is necessary for body and mind.

[10]Letters, I, 144. In 1841 Simms wrote to the Magnolia: "There is a lack of permanence, stability and finish in all that we [Americans] undertake and all that we perform. A nation in a hurry, is scarcely a dignified spectacle at any time, and is sometimes a ridiculous one; yet that is the most frequent and most striking aspect which our people present to the eye of a stranger." See Letters, I, 224. In his Advertisement in Mellichampe (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1836), p. viii, he blames the richness of the land for debilitating its settlers. The attractiveness of the American forests

and sorrowed over the misdirected, wasted activity of his border robbers like Guy Rivers, his destructive South Carolina wars, or the vain ambition of his brilliant, damned Margaret Cooper of Charlemont. Yet in Egeria (1853) he writes: "Better that we should err in action, than wholly refuse to perform. The storm is much better than the calm, as it declares the presence of a living principle. Stagnation is something worse than death. It is corruption also."[11] Inevitably, though, in his novels action gets out of hand and leads to turmoil and ruin of both good and bad in the country.

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causes national instability. Such a surprising criticism of the supposed source of goodness, the garden land itself, recalls Robert Beverley's bemused wonder at Virginia's bad effects on its settlers at the end of his history of that state.

[11]Egeria (Philadelphia: E. H. Butler, 1853), p. 37. This book is a collection "of sentiment and opinion," as Simms says in his Advertisement, gleaned from his reading and his experience. It is a note book, a catch-all of ideas that appear in his romances. His observations--some short, some long--range from politics, morals, labor, to love and women and criminal punishment.

Importantly, the book is permeated with statements and verse praising progress. Simms possessed the progressive as well as the romantic spirit of his age, as reflected in such contemporary works as Carlyle's Sartor Resartus and Tennyson's "Ulysses." Egeria lends succinct support to the conclusions of John R. Welsh in "William Gilmore Simms: Critic of the South." Welsh says that Simms disliked the ruinous economic laziness and intellectual indifference of his South. He felt that some introduction of industry, placed in areas not particularly suitable for farming, would both stave off Northern economic subjugation and aid the arts. See "Critic," 202, 207, 209.

Ruin is the truth he saw all around him and is what he wanted to write about. Simms said his romances "aim at something more than the story." The rule, he said, is to "write truthfully, honestly, without affectation, as we feel and suppose we know." Always, in every age, "To seem like truth . . . has been . . . the object of fiction."[12] This desire for truth accounts for the sense of reality that Hubbell feels pervades the Revolutionary romances, which he also calls Simms's best work.[13] Alexander Cowie finds a similar realism, a "lurid streak" of it, in his border tales as well.[14] It exists, too, in the grim seduction theme of his domestic romance Beauchampe (1842), based on the Kentucky Tragedy.

Both realism and romance spring from Simms's love of the land, the Southern land. In the Charleston Mercury of 1859, John Esten Cooke said that Simms's

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[12]Letters, III, 421, 11. When he writes like this of truth in fiction, Simms's tone rather strangely reminds one of Ernest Hemingway's rumination in A Moveable Feast (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1964), p. 12, over truth in the structure of his stories: "All you have to do is write one true sentence. Write the truest sentence that you know. . . . I decided that I would write one story about each thing that I knew about."

[13]The South in American Literature, p. 588.

[14]Introduction, The Yemassee (1853; rpt. New York: American Book Company, 1937), p. xi.

"books are redolent of the South . . . they smell of the soil. . . ."[15] Simms wrote--in a mood, no doubt, of pastoral lapse--that trees were "sacred objects."[16] Like other romantics, he saw God in nature.[17] With Thomas Jefferson and John Taylor of Caroline, he idealized farmers. Agriculture was "a divine institution" whose "preeminence" enables man to enjoy the Golden Age.[18] But he insisted that he did not like bucolic ease. Even his idea of the pleasure of landscape is dynamic: what charms one in it is seeing something always new.[19] Periods of solitude,

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[15]Letters, IV, 165, footnote.

[16]"The Good Farmer," Ladies' Companion, 15 (August, 1841), 157.

[17]Simms writes of a forest as God's natural temple, for example, in a description of an outdoor preaching in Guy Rivers (1834), I, 167. See also his poems "Flight to Nature," Southern Passages and Pictures (New York: George Adlard, 1839), p. 112; and "Sabbath in the Forest" and "Morning in the Forest," Poems Descriptive, Dramatic, Legendary and Contemplative (New York: Redfield, 1853), I, 12; II, 250.

[18]"The Ages of Gold and Iron," Ladies' Companion, 15 (May, 1841), 12. The noble workers of whom Simms writes in Egeria, p. 150, he identifies as farmers a little further on, p. 155. Like America's twentieth century Agrarians, he was convinced that national salvation lay in a return to the soil, the land, the farm.

[19]Egeria, p. 146: "One great charm in the landscape, which is never spoken of, lies in the fact that our sight of it embodies a discovery. We find pleasure, it is true, from frequently beholding the beautiful; but when the beautiful and the new are found together, the

"unperformance" are only good, he felt, as long as they serve to renew, to prepare the soul for further action.[20]

Unlike James Kirke Paulding and John Esten Cooke, Simms would welcome a little of the machine in the garden.[21] In his troubled, ambiguous pastoral design, he tries to come to grips with the most significant change in nineteenth century idyll. This was the transformation of the pastoral impulse to a recognition, even a glorification of work, of activity.[22] Nevertheless, his most pleasant sustained descriptions are always of some static bucolic scene. He cannot help looking back. It is the conflict of activities--good versus bad--that wrecks his passing idyll and leaves nothing in its place.

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enjoyment becomes twofold, and the freshness of the picture always heightens its loveliness."

[20]Egeria, pp. 28, 48.

[21]Lewis P. Simpson in The Dispossessed Garden, p. 62, states that Simms glimpsed an "image of the South . . . transformed from that of a pastoral garden into that of an integrated and autonomous agricultural-industrial world."

[22]Michael Squires, The Pastoral Novel, p. 48. In praise of workers, Simms writes in Egeria, p. 150: "The workingman is the only substantial citizen, all other things being equal. The nation is strong only in its working men."

Like all the other Southern antebellum novelists, Simms ultimately pictures a hard world pressing in upon the American dream of a new Eden: war brutality, devasted landscape, evil passions on the frontier, around the hearth. In taste and temperament, then, he was surely a realist in a time given to romantic excesses in literature, in an area permeated with the spirit of romanticism.[23] Pessimistic realism, inevitable grim ugliness pervade his pastoral design. As Annette Kolodny says in her otherwise amusing, often annoying Freudian interpretation of the pastoral impulse in Simms's Revolutionary tales, there are always "threatening shadows" in his nurturing, protective dark forest recesses.[24]

Shadows, imagery that recalls Satan in Eden, persist from Guy Rivers and The Yemassee through Charlemont and the last, chronologically, of the Revolutionary stories, Woodcraft (1852). In his pastoral Simms deliberately creates a design of ominous suspense and

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[23]Vernon L. Parrington, The Romantic Revolution in America, 1800-1860, pp. 134, 126; Arlin Turner, "William Gilmore Simms in his Letters," South Atlantic Quarterly, 53 (July, 1954), 412; Lucy Lockwood Hazard, The Frontier in American Literature (New York: Frederick Ungar, 1961), p. 47.

[24]"The Unchanging Landscape: The Pastoral Impulse in Simms's Revolutionary War Romances," Southern Literary Journal, 5, No. 1 (Fall, 1972), 53.

ruinous action with inferences to the Fall that reveals the "deep tragedy" in which he said he delighted.[25] Underlying his persistent theme of pastoral lost is his growing awareness of the tragic heritage of the South, bred not only by Yankee industrial and economic dominance but by Southern indolence and waste of the land.[26] The bleak sunlessness of his warped pastoral is a reflection, too, of that personal sense of ill-fate so deep in his soul that once he wrote James Henry Hammond, "I habitually suspect even the sunshine."[27] So does Guy Rivers, hiding with his painful thoughts in his gloomy forest cave.

In the Preface to the 1855 edition, Simms wrote that Guy Rivers was "the first of my regular novels" whose great popularity made him decide to give up law and politics to become "the novelist and romancer."[28]

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[25]Letters, II, 560.

[26]Simms writes in Egeria, p. 155, that "we must go back to the deserted fields, making our own corn and cabbages, and gathering in the harvest with our hands." David Bertelson in The Lazy South, p. 199, quotes Simms as saying labor is "'one of the first elements of religion, as it is the prime element of human prosperity.'" Simms felt the desire of Southerners to escape labor was one of the main causes for the area's distress. And see Taylor, Cavalier and Yankee, pp. 279, 291-292; and Welsh, 210.

[27]Letters, IV, 112; III, 242.

[28]Guy Rivers: A Tale of Georgia (1855; rpt. New York: A. C. Armstrong and Son, 1885), pp. 10-11.

It is a tale of Georgia," he wrote to James Lawson in 1833, ". . . a tale of the miners--of a frontier and wild people. . . ."[29] The wildest of these men is Guy Rivers himself, the robber chief and the novel's most interesting figure. He is the first of the characters who reveal Simms's tragic sense of man lost in a hurt garden. His spirit of futile restlessness and sterile failure recurs in the destructive forces in all the subsequent novels.

On his way from South Carolina to Tennessee, Ralph Colleton travels into the bleak Georgia countryside where Rivers's bandits lurk. They are attracted by gold like the settlers and squatters of Chestattee town, the ugly village of the story. Guy tries to rob Ralph in the pine barrens. Ralph's horse in flight wounds the robber, who swears to get revenge for it. So we have the vendetta between hero and villain. When the settlers band together to kill a number of Georgia Guardsmen who have come to evict them from the goldfields, trouble comes to the whole community. More Guardsmen arrive. They not only scatter the squatters but they trap and arrest Guy.

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[29] Letters, I, 55.

Earlier Simms's woodsman, Mark Forrester, who becomes friend and companion of Ralph, is killed by Guy. He mistakes Mark for Colleton. Heartbroken throughout most of the action because he was rudely rejected by his beloved cousin's haughty father in South Carolina, Ralph finally wins his lady. Colonel Colleton and Edith, his daughter, come to Chestattee to help Ralph in the end. He has been falsely accused of murdering Forrester. The Colonel sees the error of his ways. He relents and the reunited family returns from the wilderness to the civilization of South Carolina.

In creating Guy Rivers, Simms was trying for a little psychological realism, although no one then knew the term. Guy is fierce. His spirit is wracked with that peculiar demonic urge that motivates all of Simms's villains. Guy's is perverted activity, the ruinous activity Simms deplored. His predominant characteristic is murderous passion. Simms's professed psychological-moral point is that Guy is bad because when he was a child his mother overindulged his petulant whims. With Guy safely in jail at the end awaiting death, Simms says the theme of his novel is to demonstrate the need for the proper education of the young.[30] Well and good.

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[30]William Gilmore Simms, Guy Rivers: A Tale of Georgia (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1834), II, 314.

One would rather find some other theme--something more significant that is lodged, for instance, in his complex pastoral design.

There is no direct serpent imagery in this novel. But there is demon-driven Guy, whom the reader may associate with Satan. Or at least with Mephistopheles, his servant. Simms makes something more of Guy Rivers than a mere spoiled brat grown from shooting puppies to killing men. Like Faust, Mephistopheles's tool, he had "that ambition of one who discovers at every step that nothing can be known, yet will not give up the unprofitable pursuit, because, even while making the discovery, he still hopes vainly that he may yet, in his own person, give the maxim the lie . . . for ever battling and for ever lost" (Guy, II, 111).

Guy Rivers probably is the first representation of the Faust figure in Southern literature. His great inner restlessness, his discontent, cause not only disharmony around him but also ineffable harm to himself. He commits suicide in prison. If one were to take the extreme view of the Christian tenet that prohibits suicide, he could see Guy's final act as damning as Faust's refusal to repent at the end of his life. In his pathetic nihilism, his fruitless striving for knowledge, Guy's actions are a sort of reductio ad absurdum of

Simms's theory of the need of men to be Doing.

Futile, crazed Guy is the nightmare demi-Satan in the garden. He is the center of a blighted land and disquieted men corrupted by a lust for gold. Ralph Colleton enters a landscape that symbolizes the waste of human spirit in the goldfields. The scene of sandy hills and barren pines had "a dreary and melancholy expression, which can not fail to elicit in the bosom of the most indifferent spectator, a feeling of gravity and even gloom" (Guy, I, 2). Melancholy sadness and gloom in nature: this is the antipastoral note upon which the novel opens.

But some beauty is revealed here, too. It comes about through Simms's penchant for pastoral lapse. He cannot help himself in this. He punctuates his grim realities with dream-like idylls. For instance, ugly Chestattee settlement is surrounded by a virgin forest "undishonored by the axe" (Guy, I, 59). This phrase shows the vulnerability of the forest in which Simms takes passing delight. The axe, as we have seen in the pastorals of Kennedy and Caruthers, is the great destructive symbol of man's progress into America's Edenic wilderness.

At the start of his novel there is a statement of the irreconcilable conflict Simms faced between his

respect for progress, Doing, and his love for natural beauty, sacred trees. The work of his active axe is seen in the ugliness of Chestattee at raw midday. It is no passing evening idyll like Charlemont. The blighted landscape seems much more real. It is a place of rudely constructed houses, hacked logs, dust. And it is never deserted like Charlemont. Chestattee lives on as a boom-town at the novel's end. Simms seems willing to live with its unpleasantness.

The critical emphasis in Guy Rivers is upon the debilitating evil, the unthinking passion of the wilderness and of wild men. The emphasis is upon man's ferocious, destructive spirit. Guy himself echoes something Crèvecoeur said. This Georgia land, Guy says, makes the men who come to it as wild as "the wild abiding-place" around them (Guy, II, 210). The unhealthy power of nature here is reflected in the ruinous power of the gold that is in the earth, under the God-touched trees. Gold corrupts not only the squatters and settlers, but it ruins the good woodsman, Mark Forrester, as well. His loss is the dark side of the story.

Mark is Simms's first fully developed frontier-guide. His goodness and ability are found in all of his subsequent woodsmen, such as John "Thumbscrew"

Witherspoon of Mellichampe (1836) or Jim Ballou of The Forayers (1855) and Eutaw (1856). Mark is clearly drawn from the model of an American hero of whom Simms wrote, "Daniel Boone--The First Hunter of Kentucky."[31] Idealized Boone has all the fine qualities we have already noted in other noble men of the American forest in Southern antebellum fiction. He was by nature gentle, "really and strangely gentle"; patient yet ready to act with decision; prompt to lead and to kill cruelly, Indian-fashion. He had an eye for the picturesque, Simms writes, and liked to muse undisturbed in the woodlands. His love of natural beauty, however, his love of peace made Boone restless. And now Simms alludes to his pastoral paradox, his love of quiet nature and his love of progress. For it is almost with sadness that he writes as Boone and his family approach the new green frontier, "The solitude of Kentucky was about to be broken. The seal had been taken from the fountain."[32]

Mark Forrester's restlessness is a touch--as was Boone's--of that Faustian-serpent dissatisfaction

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[31]Views and Reviews in American Literature, History and Fiction, C. Hugh Holman, ed. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1962), pp. 148-151.

[32]Ibid., p. 158.

exemplified by Guy Rivers. It is a spirit that makes men turn away from the all-sustaining soil. Mark loved all "hardy enterprises." The "warmth, excitability, and restlessness which were his prevailing features of temper, could not bear the slow process of tilling and sowing and cultivating. . ." (Guy, I, 106). Thus is Mark doomed.

But insofar as he is good, coming out of the forest to rescue bleeding Ralph, he represents that element of goodness that operates alongside the bad in the antebellum picture of the wilderness. He is the forest's beauty and its hope, its succor and its strength. Ralph has been badly hurt in his first encounter with Guy. True to the saviour role of the frontiersman, Mark takes Ralph to safety. He is a fine fellow, Mark Forrester: handsome, strong, symmetrical, agile. His features are "frank and fearless . . . finely southern," wanting "the calculating lines of cunning." He is good-natured, self-controlled. His eye has a twinkle that promises good fellowship and a heart at ease.

Strange that earlier Simms pointed out how restless Mark is. When he said this he made his outdoor character close to a real-life Davy Crockett, the shiftless Tennessee frontier wanderer who is less

idealized than Boone. At the end of his description of his first woodsman, Simms seems to have slipped into another of his pastoral lapses. Carried away with his dream frontiersman in the American garden, he goes on to say that Mark's is a spirit that begot "at an earlier period of human history . . . the practices . . . of chivalry" (Guy, I, 52-57). This parallel is unfortunate when one considers it. It makes Mark after all less flesh and blood and too much of an ideal. He is only another storybook American forest knight errant, glimmering, singing a frontier ballad ahorse-back as he approaches Ralph dying in the trees.

Mark Forrester is too much of a good thing, like Daniel Boone or Charlemont. So it is that Simms, coming to himself, kills him off. Poor Mark, a passing chimera like Cooke's outdoorsman Verty of The Last of the Foresters, a stylized forester finally more beautiful than real. In Simms's lapse Mark becomes as vague, as unreal in the sunraw Georgia goldfields as any of King Arthur's men are to the unromantic eye riding in the scruffy clearings of barbaric cold Britain.

The realist Simms is not duped by the dream with which he plays. Mark's woodland nobility is compromised. The extent of his gold-corruption is revealed when he helps the squatters in their cruel murder and maiming

of the Guard. He has joined the illegal mining on government land to get money so that he can marry. The Guardsmen are bloodily crushed when a huge rock is pushed down on them as they ride up a baked clay gulley to confront the miners. Mark and the settlers then are stunned and dismayed by what they have done (Guy, I, 214-223).

So it is that Guy Rivers shows a grim picture of American frontier life--violent, frightened, greedy, cruel. No wonder Simms indulges himself in some pastoral interludes along the way. More important even than his ambiguous characterization of Mark Forrester is his description of an outdoor preaching in the uncut forest around blighted Chestattee. Here Simms reveals a fleeting pastoral nostalgia similar to John Esten Cooke's deep vein of it. This scene is typical once again of the pastoral impulse that meanders through Simms's fiction like Coleridge's river Alph in "Kubla Khan." The impulse appears and disappears. It is almost safely forgotten, and then it bursts out not fearfully like the river but with an anachronous soft longing for quiet, green pastoral. It is an impulse, though, that lessens as he writes his way deeper into the Revolutionary romances.

There is a presence of God in nature at the

Reverend Mr. Witter's Sunday service under the trees. For a moment the unpleasant surroundings are forgotten. For a little while the forest takes on a positive aspect. Simms's pastoral lapse appears first in the mind of Ralph Colleton, who is at the preaching that day. Nature can elevate a man, Ralph thinks, with scenes of beauty and peace, power and grandeur. Slowly Simms becomes elevated too.

Ralph imagines that the trees form a temple of leaves more perfect than any built by human hand. Sure enough, his mind runs to the past, to that Arcadian outdoor time when men saw their God in a protective, good nature: ". . . trees, hills and vales, the wild flower and the murmuring water, all the work of his hands, attesting his power, keeping their purpose. . ." (Guy, I, 167).[33] He thinks of the "forms and features of that primitive worship, when the trees bent with gentle murmurs above the heads of the rapt worshippers, and a visible deity dwelt in the shadowed valleys, and whispered an auspicious acceptance of their devotions in every breeze" (Guy, I, 167).

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[33]Simms's direction in this scene seems to point to the spirit or God-in-matter notion of the New England Transcendentalists, whose philosophy nevertheless he felt was "'balderdash, and very bad balderdash at that.'" See Edd Winfield Parks, William Gilmore Simms as Literary Critic (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1961), p. 56.

Ralph's is a whimsical thought, and Simms lets himself be taken in by it. It is his mind now that wanders to shepherds for a moment as he leaves Ralph standing there, creating his temple in the trees. The author's voice creeps in, wanting to enjoy the green thoughts, betraying pastoral yearning, nostalgia for dead times . . . turning from the otherwise pervasive spirit of Guy Rivers.

When the frontier women start hymn-singing at the service, Simms forgets Ralph to describe in his own voice how such "strains" must have been heard by "the old shepherds, out among the hills, tending their charges" when God walked among them (Guy, I, 170). This vision of peace, of course, will not last.

The only deity these early nineteenth century goldfield forests know is Mammon. The meeting breaks up very quickly. God in the trees, shepherds of old are speedily forgotten by Ralph and Simms when news comes--welcome news of action--that squatters have moved in on the mines. The congregation dashes away, out of the restful green into the white, hot sandy hills to save the diggings. As always, the outside world intrudes harshly where pastoral reverie is concerned. Simms is committed to an ancient pattern. And he does not like repose anyway. Human passions, he wrote,

must "rouse themselves at last and go forth, though it be only to bear a burden and be baffled by defeat."[34]

Simms's next lapse in Guy Rivers is also brief. He pictures a Southern middleground that recalls the dreams of Paulding and Caruthers. His thought here again is pure pastoral, and repose is at its core--green ruminations, green rest. Before leaving Chestattee to die, Mark Forrester meets his fiancé in a quiet dell with giant sycamore and moonlight. In this scene Simms compensates for the ugliness of the landscape he pictures at the start of the story. His fancy strays as he does so. It is almost as if he were seeking some relief, along with his lovers. It is pastoral thought that crops out of the minds of all three.

Sadly, Mark must flee because of his complicity in slaying the Guard. Kate, his lady, is distressed. When will they meet again? There is a moment of peace in the dell. The beautiful scene induces it. Simms is

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[34]Egeria, pp. 88-89. In this passage Simms writes in unmistakable condemnation of the pastoral ideal of peace: ". . . man is no more made for solitude than sleep . . . the repose of the passions must not imply their stagnation. They must rouse themselves at last and go forth, though it be only to bear a burden and be baffled by defeat. Successful or baffled, still the same--their deity is in the struggle. The struggle itself, is the life."

lulled along with Mark and Kate--gold, squatters, Guy and Guardsmen are forgotten. Simms dreams of a rural Southern ideal:

> Whatever be the want of Southern scenery in stupendousness or sublimity, it is . . . more than made up in those thousand quiet and wooing charms of location, which seem designed expressly for the hamlet and the cottage--the evening dance--the midday repose and rural banquet--and all those numberless practices of a small and well-intentioned society, which win the affections into limpid and ever-living currents, touched for ever, here and there, by the sunshine, and sheltered in their repose by overhanging leaves and flowers, for ever fertile and for ever fresh (Guy, I, 264-265).

The usual Simms design of pastoral denial marked by pastoral lapse occurs along with some crucial snake imagery in The Yemassee. Like John Davis's The First Settlers of Virginia, this novel concerns the loss of two paradises: the soft Indian wilderness and the dreamed middleground of the English colonists. It is a story of the early eighteenth century uprising of the South Carolina Yemassee Indians under the noble chief, Sanutee. He resents the omnivorous depredations of the white men. Everywhere, he says, he can see their teeth in the forest's trees.[35]

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[35]The Yemassee (1853; rpt. New York: American Book Company, 1937), p. 75. Of all Simms's novels, The Yemassee is most widely known because it is his one book that has remained in print. Although it is a good novel in its own right, a "carefully written specimen piece" Donald Davidson calls it, its continued presence

In contrast to Bird's debased Indians in Nick of the Woods, Simms's natives are admirable--and sometimes treacherous, too, like Davis's men of Powhatan. The Indians lose the battle, of course. Even the slaves get in on the Indian killing at the end. The novel is a love story as well. But romance here is blighted like the land. Poor Bess Matthews, Puritan pastor John's daughter, loves Gabriel Harrison, who is really Charles Craven, the "Lord Palatine of Carolina" in disguise (Yemassee, p. 394). He flirts with her genteelly, but he has no thought of marriage.

On the surface, The Yemassee is an adventure story, like all Simms's novels except his retelling of the Kentucky Tragedy. There are Indian captivity and custom, escape in the deep woods, romance. There is the great final battle at the blockhouse where we see one of the few vital female characters Simms creates. Mrs. Granger, the Indian trader's capable wife, virtually leads the defense until help arrives: the Lord Palatine to the rescue. The novel's significance lies in the dilemma presented in its pastoral design: the contrast

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has made many readers think of Simms as not much more than a second-rate Cooper. See Davidson, Introduction, Letters, I, li; Trent, p. 89; Hubbell, p. 575; and Alexander Cowie, Rise of the American Novel, pp. 232-233.

of Indian and white dwelling troubled in the forest; the eyes of the snake in the green leaves.

The sight and smell of smoke come early in the story. Its odor persists throughout the action, for Simms's colonial middleground is not a place of good new farms but of fire and torn clearings, burning trees and split-rail clutter and, finally, Indian warfare. Simms the realist is at work here. The spirit of Guy Rivers walks in this land, too. Here is how Simms's first settlement is born.

The whites are chopping in the forest and "the thick groves disappeared, the clear skies grew turbid with the dense smoke rolling up in solid masses from the burning herbage." And here is how the settlement looks. The blockhouse, symbol of fear, insecurity and war, rises in the middle. Around it we see

> a cluster of log dwellings, three or four in number, the clearings in progress, the piled timber smoking or in flame, and the stillness only broken by the dull, heavy echo of the axe, biting into the trunk of the tough and long-resisting pine . . . around the fields the negro piles slowly the worming and ungraceful fence. . . . A turn in the river unfolds to our sight a cottage, standing by itself, half finished, and probably deserted by its capricious owner (Yemassee, pp. 12-13).

A few pages into The Yemassee and the reader is confronted by a picture of a busy though spoiled landscape. It is the theme of rural hope and ruin through

action that patterns Simms's fiction. Essentially, his consistent point is the tragedy of waste--waste of land, like Chestattee, and waste of men, like Guy Rivers. The opening pages of the novel cast a strange ironic reflection upon his Victorian ethic of hard work. Simms, the idealist, makes an effort to cover this by creating nearby an idyll of work. It is an idyll, however, that is not really what it seems.

Across the river from the acrid, scrubby settlement two quiet Indians are busy. A mother plants corn near the shady tree where her papoose is safely strapped to a board suspended from a limb. Close by her husband cures a bearskin in the sun of the riverbank. This family blends naturally into the forest, working in it and not against it. Their activity brings a kind of useful bucolic harmony into the wilderness. Deeper in the woods is their village, Pocota-ligo. It is situated among trees, "almost in the original forest" (Yemassee, p. 19). The settlers' destructive activity is compromised by a scene of peace. But it is a scene that is destined to spin itself out along a path of blood at the story's end (Yemassee, p. 374).

And even while enjoying the quiet Indians, the reader knows that there is no real tranquility in their interlude. The Indians are only marking time, like

their tribesmen in the village. They already feel deep discontent over the smoking English settlements in their land (Yemassee, p. 12). With the villain Chorley's aid, they are already planning to kill off the white men even while the seemingly peaceful couple works so quietly under trees next to the river.

In the settlement there is a deserted cabin that is already falling into ruin. It attests restlessness and waste. Again Simms uses idyll as a counterbalance: in contrast to the cabin is the pleasant rustic house of the pastor, John Matthews. Pastor John does not know it, but his peace is as ephemeral as the Indians'. His whitewashed, cozy house of log and cool verandah enclosed in silent shade trees is a dream (Yemassee, p. 51). Here deluded Matthews tells the gun-runner, Richard Chorley, he has found a "quiet" he never knew in England (Yemassee, p. 117). His house will be burned in the uprising. All the while Matthews speaks--and all through the story--Chorley's dark ship lies ominous and silent offshore, holding weapons for the Indians. It is as symbolical of the destructive force of civilization as is Argall's relentless slow bark in First Settlers.

The forces of action in the opening pages of Simms's romances invariably are negative. What he shows is the evil result of action gone awry. The one voice

to speak out for activity in The Yemassee is that of the young malcontent, Hugh Grayson. He sounds like a slightly modified Guy Rivers. Surprisingly, he also sounds like Simms. He tells his mother that content is an idle thought: "Life itself is discontent--hope, which is one of our chief courses of enjoyment, is discontent, since it seeks that which it has lost." What is the loss to which Simms's strange spokesman is referring here? One is tempted to think of Simms playing once again--but far back in his mind--with some image of Eden, the one place where men knew contentment.

Grayson goes on: "Content is a sluggard. . . . Without . . . a serious and unsleeping discontent--life would be a stagnant stream . . . full of the vilest reptiles" (Yemassee, p. 232).

In the novel's most important antipastoral scene, the human discontent of which Hugh speaks points right back to the Fall of man. The easy contrast between axe-chopping whites and quiet Indians in the South Carolina forest is not the heart of Simms's warped pastoral in this story. Its heart is discovered in a scene rich with reference to Milton. Feeling discontented in a beautiful oak grove one day, Bess Matthews is almost killed by a rattlesnake.

The grove Bess approaches is so idyllic that it takes her mind back to a simpler, more innocent, and more holy time (Yemassee, p. 153). Simms is very careful here. He does not let himself get carried away as he did with Ralph at Witter's open air service. For a while, as Bess muses in the shade, the smoke-smell vanishes into a shimmering vortex of living green and sweet fresh air. Simms wants the reader to think of Eden. But he is not falling into a pastoral lapse. He is perpetrating a pastoral ruse. He wants the reader to be fooled as is Bess by the beauty around her.

Alone in a natural garden, Bess's thoughts wander away from leaves. Charles Craven is late for their meeting. She grows impatient, worried about her future with him. Like self-asserting Eve--she wants to be allowed to go alone into the Garden--after her morning squabble with Adam on the day she meets her snake,[36] Bess Matthews is discontented. It is as she feels nervous, restless, dissatisfied that her eye falls upon "the thick copse spreading before her." There she finds no inducement to restful green thought. Her eye catches the symbolic extension of her own discontentment: she sees the eye of the serpent just as Eve does in

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[36]Milton, Paradise Lost, pp. 291-295.

much the same frame of mind.

In as incisive an image of negative nature as any that Thomas Hardy ever drew, Bess's attention becomes riveted upon the snake which in a "circle of green leaves" seems "to be their very eye" (Yemassee, p. 153). Through human discontent Satan enters the garden and the soul and destroys their peace. Like a lover he seduces Milton's Eve.[37] Like a lover the rattler beguiles poor Bess. From the very beginning in the description of "peaceful" Indians, Simms's leaves in The Yemassee hold as much cruel death as they do the illusion of quiet summer green, dappled forest crystal.

It is with an irony bordering on bitterness that Simms writes how deluded Bess "felt all the poetry, all the truth of the scene" in the grove (Yemassee, p. 152). She sees only a part of the truth. Like Eve, she becomes entranced by the evil in the leaves. Unlike Eve, Bess is saved at the last minute by a drunken Indian, another fallen man of the forest.

The mocking bird that sang when she entered the grove flies off in terror. His song dies. Then come the snake's rattles, approaching Bess in a glimmer of deadly muscular sinuosity. For a little time his eye

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[37]Milton, pp. 297-302.

becomes the sole eye of nature. Everything that glows here--air, foliage, eyes, serpent--becomes a kaleidescope of pure evil. This is a powerful scene. And it is only too evident that in it Simms is thinking of Milton's Serpent approaching Eve in a terrible moment, "his Head/ Crested aloft, and Carbuncle his Eyes . . .," through "rusling Leaves," rainbow light and subtle terror.[38] Bess is transfixed:

> . . . a star-like shining glance--a subtle ray, that shot out from the circle of green leaves--seeming to be their very eye--and sending out a fluid lustre that seemed to stream across the space between, and find its way into her own eyes. Very piercing and beautiful was that subtle brightness, of the sweetest, strangest power. And now the leaves quivered and seemed to float away, only to return, and the vines waved and swung around in fantastic mazes, infolding ever-changing varieties of form and color to her gaze; but the star-like eye was ever steadfast, bright and gorgeous gleaming in their midst, and still fastened with strange fondness, upon her own (Yemassee, p. 154).

Eve and Satan; Bess and the rattlesnake; the power of the dissatisfied demon in Guy Rivers: early in his romances we can see how important elements in Simms's pastoral design descend from the timeless lost pastoral Milton re-created in Paradise Lost. Threads of its pattern coruscate with a deadly glow in all of his novels. It is especially evident in his rendition of the Kentucky Tragedy.

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[38]Milton, pp. 298-299.

The Beauchampe of 1842 appeared as two separately titled volumes in the Redfield edition of Simms's works begun in 1853. Except for shortened paragraphs, omission of superfluous commas, and the addition of chapter titles, some of which rather selfconsciously reflect his Miltonic lost Eden theme, the content of these later books is virtually identical to the first edition.[39] Charlemont (1856) is the more original of the two because in it Simms describes Margaret Cooper's seduction by Alfred Stevens in the idyllic environment of Charlemont village. It owes little to the Kentucky Tragedy except its situation of a rural girl's betrayal by a city man.

Beauchampe of 1856 tells the tragic aftermath

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[39]William Gilmore Simms, Beauchampe, or The Kentucky Tragedy (Philadelphia: Lea and Blanchard, 1842). In his American Fiction, p. 122, Arthur Hobson Quinn straightens out the matter of the rare two volume 1842 edition of Beauchampe and its separately titled derivatives in the Redfield edition. He writes in a footnote: "Volume I and pp. 1-57 of Volume II make up what is now known as Charlemont. The 1856 edition of Charlemont adds a new chapter (XXXVIII) and concludes, "The Chronicle of 'Charlemont' will find its fitting sequel in that of 'Beauchampe'--known proverbially as 'The Kentucky Tragedy.'" This is not, of course, in the 1842 edition.

"Chapter VII of Volume II of the 1842 Beauchampe begins what is now known as Beauchampe, but up to p. 57 the revised version gives new matter, and there are additions distributed through the text. Two pages are added. Simms was therefore entirely correct in calling Beauchampe a sequel to Charlemont."

of satanic Stevens's activity in Simms's Kentucky garden. It follows the Confession of the young law student, Jereboam O. Beauchamp.[40] (Simms adds an e to his name.) He was hanged in 1826 for the murder of Solomon P. Sharpe, the Kentucky politician who seduced Ann Cook. (Simms's Sharpe is Warham P. Sharpe alias Alfred Stevens, and Ann is Margaret Cooper.) Even though he knew what happened to her, Jereboam fell in love with and married Ann after she bore a stillborn child. Cowardly Sharpe refused his challenge to a duel, and there the matter rested until election time brought it up again.

Defending himself from a political opponent's attack on his morals, Sharpe said publicly that Ann's child could not have been his because it was a mulatto. This was the last straw for Beauchamp. He went to Frankfort in disguise to murder Solomon. Public sympathy was on the side of Jereboam, but he was executed for his deed just the same.

What is significant in Simms's handling of the Kentucky Tragedy is the pain he takes to tell the story

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[40]W. B. Gates, "William Gilmore Simms and the Kentucky Tragedy," American Literature, 32 (May, 1960), 160, 162-163. And see The Beauchampe Tragedy, Jules Zanger, ed. (New York: J. P. Lippencott, 1963).

in terms of Eden--lost Eden in an American frontier setting, that marginal area where innocence met its inevitable defeat.[41] His rejection of the pastoral dream and his solution for Fallen man--activity as escape from debilitating recollection of the Garden--are given their most melodramatically direct and strangely ambivalent statement in his Kentucky Tragedy romances.

After her disgrace, Margaret Cooper of Beauchampe (1856) has retired ferocious and vengeful. She lives with her mother in seclusion upon an ugly, barely productive farm while once-Edenic Charlemont, the green village retreat, falls into decay. Moldering in the background as Simms's tale unravels, it is a mockery of pastoral hope. The first chapter of the romance is called "The Ruined Hamlet." It is typical of the spoiled rural locales that occur in all of his novels--wrecked villages, burned mansions, neglected fields.

After a five-year absence, the old teacher Calvert and his ward William Hinkley return to Charlemont. They look down on the sag-roofed, weed-spoiled village. This opening picture of an empty, musty ruin is the tale's only prolonged description of a rural

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[41]Leslie Fiedler, Love and Death in the American Novel, p. 220.

scene. Calvert, too, is the closest character to a hunter-guide in either of the novels. He dismounts above the village with the "freedom and ease of the practised hunter."[42] An unsuccessful lawyer who came to Charlemont for bucolic solace, it is Calvert who has led William away from the morally ruinous "nonperformance" of the pastoral place (Beauchampe, p. 19).

Calvert lectures William as they look down upon the wreck. He refers to restlessness as that "vexing appetite" of men that prompts their abandonment of "rustic solitude" (Beauchampe, pp. 13, 15). Country repose makes men imbecile, he says. It is ambition that enables a man like Hinkley to find out what is in him. It is such ambition--misdirected, of course--that ruined Guy Rivers and his female counterpart, Margaret Cooper.

The Simms paradox of Doing is stated rather explicitly in Calvert's words, talking quietly to William there on that summer hill. Ambition is a "glorious builder and destroyer," he says. It would seem to be as dangerous as the pastoral repose he condemns. His voice becomes a drone. The younger man's

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[42]William Gilmore Simms, Beauchampe: or, The Kentucky Tragedy (Chicago: Donahue, Henneberry and Co., 1890), p. 11.

mind is somewhere far away. Calvert goes on:

> It is ambition that puts in exercise all the agencies of art and civilization. It is ambition that sires all public virtues . . . that glorious builder and destroyer, who makes great empires and achieves great results, and wrestles and toils for the victory, and is never so well satisfied as in the toil and the conflict, without one moment considering the results to self (Beauchampe, p. 44).

In no instance in the Kentucky Tragedy stories is there revealed a positive aspect of Calvert's theory. Its goal, in fact, would seem to be the very peace men found in the hamlet before it was deserted by them. The citizens of Charlemont, like Margaret, lacked the "all-in-all content" (Beauchampe, p. 16). Ambition drove them away from their quiet village to seek a better life. These people are scattered now. And they long for what they had in Charlemont in the first place.[43] What Simms is alluding to is the traditional pastoral dream that Peter V. Marinelli says beckons both from the past and from ahead, always appealing yet never attained.[44]

Calvert had failed as a lawyer. He came to Charlemont to get away from it all. Hinkley had failed as Margaret's lover. He went away with Calvert to

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[43]Charlemont or The Pride of the Village (New York: Redfield, 1856), pp. 18-20.

[44]Pastoral, p. 35.

study law. Now as the old man talks, William's mind drifts to the past. Despite his worldly education, his professional promise, he is trapped in nostalgic recollections of a lost happy time that is centered for him in a ruined hamlet (Beauchampe, pp. 18-19). He will never marry (Beauchampe, p. 402).

There is a terrible futility about Calvert and William looking down on hollow houses crumbling into unkempt trees. There stands the unsuccessful old man dreaming of great deeds he could never perform. There broods the melancholy young man. His mind is much more on the past and his lost Margaret than it will ever be upon the future. He is deprived of his rural heritage, finally; compelled by his ambitious mentor to move ahead while preferring in his heart to stay behind in the dream of what life might have been like in a pastoral valley.

And there is Margaret Cooper herself, hidden on her dreary farm as her two old friends think their separate thoughts. Her vain ambition to be more than a rural housewife led to her ruin by the serpent that entered the garden.[45] Calvert and Hinkley disappear

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[45]The chapter that describes Sharpe-Stevens's return in the 1856 Beauchampe is called "The Snake Once More in the Garden," p. 233. It is the only chapter

after the first chapter. Beauchampe is the story of her sad fate, the tragi-ironic victim of human ambition, of action gone all wrong.

Beauchampe is a young lawyer who seeks practice in the neighborhood of Charlemont. He meets Margaret and falls in love with her. She finally tells him her story. In a melodramatic forest scene of darkening skies and "awful stillness . . . as if the spirits were all listening breathlessly" (Beauchampe, p. 161), he vows to aid her in getting revenge on Alfred Stevens. Simms in this description is toying with the idea of a hostile nature after the Fall. It seems to delight in the prospect of unrest this vow portends. The two marry. Gradually they forget Stevens. For awhile it seems that their peace will last. Nature waits breathlessly. Dreaming of peace is as hopeless as taking of action in this tale.

They fabricate a sad approximation of lost Eden around themselves, living like deracinated Adam and Eve--blighted consciences in a blighted land. Poor Beauchampe lives with mellowing Margaret on the barren farm "in a dream-land like that of Eden. . . ." Their pseudo-paradise is devoid of sun, however. It is a

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title in the novel that refers to the Paradise Lost material Simms uses so pointedly in Charlemont.

twilight shadow of Eden without its tranquility. In a sense, it represents the essence of Simms's denial of the pastoral dream. Beauchampe imagines himself with Margaret "amid groves of unbroken shade" (Beauchampe, p. 163). He knows it is hopeless. Ah, he thinks after hearing Margaret's story, the Serpent had indeed conquered "this world's Eden" (Beauchampe, p. 148). Miltonic references in this novel are only a foretaste of what they will become in Charlemont. Only twice more does Simms allude to Stevens as a frontier Satan: as the "snake in the garden," as "The serpent [that] once more penetrated into the garden" (Beauchampe, pp. 233, 240).

Stevens arrives at the local hustings in search of votes. He stays in the Beauchampe house. With arrogant persistence he tries to seduce Margaret again. Simms the realist does not mince words in describing his Satan at work. He leers and insists, and salaciously alludes to the past. In the sense of the novel's pastoral design, he represents the forces of urban culture working against the rural. Margaret finally reveals his identity and intention to her husband.

In being moved to his revenge at last, Beauchampe, no matter how righteous, is touched by the old demon spirit that was so vividly seen in Guy Rivers.

Serpent-like now himself, Beauchampe enters Stevens's city house under false pretenses. He stabs the defenseless, terrified man to death. And the Devil's work is done: betrayal, murder, loss. City has wrecked country. It is a sad business and an old story.

One can reflect upon some final irony at the end of the tale. In its entirety it presents only three successful actions. Each is dreadful. One is Beauchampe's fateful knifing of Stevens. The other is his hanging for it after failing in his suicide attempt. The third is Margaret's successful suicide in her husband's cell. All the action in Beauchampe points to the Miltonic theme of waste in the Garden. After all is said and done, this is Simms's great theme.

CHAPTER VIII

PASTORAL LOST: SIMMS, THE SERPENT OF CHARLEMONT, AND CAPTAIN PORGY

. . . True that an active life gives wider scope
To all those virtues which renown command,
But do not hearts at peace best understand
Their earthly duty and their heavenly hope?
If skies are brightest when few clouds are there,
And the vex'd wave bear stars upon its crest,
Go view that wave beneath the day at rest;
Only the wood or hill-embosom'd mere
Sleeps in eternal calm, by storms unriven
Fill'd with the image of glad earth and heaven.

Henry Timrod, "Sonnet" (1849)

"It is stagnation that is death."

Lieutenant Porgy in The Forayers (1855)

The story in Charlemont is one of the simplest Simms created. It is free of confusing subplots and briefly met characters such as occur in the Border and Revolutionary romances. "Fancy," Simms writes at the end of the novel, "Fancy a confident country-girl--supreme in her own district over the Hobs and Hinnies--in conflict with the adroit man of the world, and you have the whole history of Margaret Cooper" (Charlemont, p. 401). The romance is structured on the traditional pastoral pattern of corrupt, intruding city versus

innocent, susceptible country. But Simms wants to do a little more with it.

Reference to Paradise Lost is so evident in Charlemont that it seems like Simms's most self-conscious effort to create epic romance. His Edenic inference is strained, however, in imagery that is too contrived. Stevens, for instance, is called the Serpent in the Garden with tiresome insistence. Simms's allusion to the lost American garden is hardly as subtle as is Caruthers's in The Knights of the Golden Horse-Shoe. It is not even as subtle as in Simms's own Revolutionary tales. Still, one gets caught up in his sometimes pretentious effort to elevate the sordid Kentucky Tragedy to myth. One gets especially interested in his characterization of Margaret Cooper despite the novel's literary flaws. It is too bad nevertheless that Simms did not work a little more carefully on it.[1]

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[1]Simms was well aware of his literary shortcomings. He writes of them with manly forthrightness in his letters. His frankness provides a ready and disarming answer to such critics as Vernon L. Parrington, who goes so far as to say that Beauchampe and Charlemont deserve the rubbish heap (Romantic Revolution in America, p. 130). Or Donald Davidson, who says Charlemont is probably the weakest of his novels (Introduction, Letters, I, li). Or William Peterfield Trent, who feels the two novels should not have been written at all (William Gilmore Simms, p. 211).

In 1841 Simms wrote to James Lawson in reference to Beauchampe: "I write like steam, recklessly, perhaps thoughtlessly. . . ." He explained to Albert James

Concern for helpless, deserted Margaret waiting in the church for Stevens is deflected, for instance, by a rather priggish, time-serving intrusion of trite morality at the end of the story. Simms actually pauses in his narrative to list in italics certain steps--like avoiding pride--a young lady must follow to avoid similar betrayal by a city seducer (Charlemont, p. 402). Even if in his day romancers sought justification for their art by including moral lessons in it,[2] surely Simms could have been a little less perfunctory, less blatant in doing so. Margaret's fall and suffering speak well enough in condemnation of human weakness.

One feels rather unwillingly that Simms's cold italics are an effort to shrug off Margaret Cooper too easily. She deserves better than this. In her furious frustration, thwarted ambition, her dreadful forest vengefulness, she recaptures in female form the terrible spirit of Guy Rivers. In her empty romanticism and

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Pickett in 1848: "I seldom rewrite any thing for the press unless it be poetry. But my habit is a bad one--the result of a desultory training and an eager passionate temperament. Most of my faults and failures are due to the carelessness and the impatience with which I work." And again in a letter of 1851 to Nathaniel Beverley Tucker he confessed: "I write so much, so recklessly. . . ." See Letters, I, 178; V, 400; III, 11.

[2]Stanley Bank, American Romanticism: A Shape for Fiction (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1969), pp. 8-9, 13.

bitter failure she is the Old South's version of Hawthorne's Zenobia of The Blithedale Romance (1852).[3] In its attack on pastoral repose, Charlemont amounts to as much of a condemnation of "Arcadian affectation," as Hawthorne puts it, as is Blithedale itself.[4] Like stalwart Mrs. Granger of The Yemassee and clairvoyant "Harricane Nell" Floyd of Eutaw and resourceful Widow Eveleigh of Woodcraft, overreaching Margaret is one of Simms's memorable female characters. How pathetically she wanders doomed in a doomed garden.

The opening pages of Charlemont present a pastoral design that is rich in allusion, irony, complexity, dilemma. At first Simms describes a bucolic ideal. He teases himself and the reader with it. Then, as usual, he denies it in order to show his version of the truth. Man has lost the Garden and will lose it again and again, whatever approximation of it he might re-create. The great theme of this novel lies in the essential pessimism of his idyll.

Two dark horsemen look down from a grassy ridge. They are in silhouette, backs to the lowering sun.

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[3]For qualities of Zenobia that are similar to those Simms gives Margaret, see The Blithedale Romance (New York: W. W. Norton, 1958), pp. 48, 68, 243-245.

[4]Ibid., p. 241.

Demonic, worldly Stevens and his optimistic, dreamy uncle are the first characters to see and comment upon the hamlet, the Kentucky middleground settlement of Charlemont. They look down on neat log houses in a sea of trees, in a patchwork of rolling fields. A white church steeple catches their eye in the green and laughing evening: the American rural ideal. The light grows more red.

Stevens's glance moves over the scene. He is the pastoral counterforce, like Milton's cormorant Lucifer pausing for a moment to look over Eden before seeking Eve. Briefly, though, Simms's spokesman for the ideal is the uncle. It is through him that we are charmed by the pastoral vision spreading out in spring haze below. It is Alfred Stevens who lets us see beneath the surface of the dream.

They ride down into the village, soft and amber-flushed:

> In the winding hollows of those hills, beginning at our feet, you see the first signs of as lovely a little hamlet as ever promised peace to the weary and the discontented. . . . A dozen snug and smiling cottages seem to have been dropped in this natural cup, as if by magic (Charlemont, p. 18).

"Magic" is the key word here. Simms is only weaving a spell, toying with an illusion. And he tells the reader so.

Right after he describes this idyll he points to its wreckage. He is always careful to parallel idyll with ugliness, or reality if you will. Eden is gone even as we see it. The next lines read:

> The garden is no longer green with fruits and flowers--the festoons no longer grace the lowly portals--the white palings are down and blackening in the gloomy mould--the roofs have fallen, and silence dwells lonely among the ruins (Charlemont, p. 18).

These balanced scenes provide immediate feelings of pastoral nostalgia and the sense of loss that is at its core. Simms is creating both pastoral effect and seeking an answer.

Why is the village a ruin now? It fell for the same reason Margaret fell, and Eve: desire for change. Later, teacher Calvert in conversation with Bill Hinkley praises discontent as the heart's hope. He says that "doing is, after all and before all, the great object of living" (Charlemont, pp. 151-152). One reads such lines often in Simms. Calvert feels the isolation of the village is debilitating. Life in it is unreal. It is the cause, for instance, of Margaret's ruinous proud vanity. Together, Calvert's philosophy and Charlemont's pathetic ruin reveal Simms's familiar dilemma--worthy action as opposed to pastoral calm; action as force destructive to peace.

As Stevens and his uncle ride down into the hamlet, Simms hesitates, almost lulled by the scene of rural beauty he is creating. His own voice creeps in, leaving the two to their own thoughts. He criticizes Doing. Discontent is a national curse, the author says. Charlemont "was most probably abandoned . . . in compliance with that feverish restlessness of mood--that sleepless discontent of temper, which, perhaps . . . is the moral failing of the Anglo-American" (Charlemont, p. 19). So, Simms gets another truth out of his hamlet: man is never satisfied with what he has.

Wrecked Charlemont is Simms's gloomy metaphor for both the lost American middleground and the myth of the western Garden of the World.[5] It is a metaphor for all the unrealized hopes of peaceful material fulfillment in humanity's cycle of life and death since the Fall. In no other of his romances is his pastoral dilemma--simultaneous desire and rejection of idyll--so succinctly stated as in the opening pages of Charlemont. A sudden ray of evening sun flushes the village with an even ruddier, warmer glow: "The whole scene was warmed with the equal brightness of the

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[5]Henry Nash Smith, Virgin Land, pp. 12, 123-124.

natural and the human sun." The riders are silent, but only one of them is awed.

There is something almost deadly in this static scene. It recalls Ruffner's too quiet, stiff, and too well-trimmed Seclusaval where visitors are as awed as Alfred's uncle. One thinks of yews and mausoleums. As the red light deepens, one is tempted to think of Poe and the lurid artificial glow of Prospero's last room in "The Masque of the Red Death."[6] The vision of death passes into laughter, and the travellers are invited to stay in the village. He never heard such happy laughter, says the uncle flushed with a stream of "spirit-like" sunshine that spreads out from the hill.

"Spirit-like" is another key word. In using it Simms is again associating the scene with dream. The uncle actually says that everything around them--villagers, houses, trees--is "kindred" with the dimming spirit-light of brief evening. Shrouded in a fading

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[6]Selected Prose and Poetry, W. H. Auden, ed. (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1963), p. 125. In Edgar Allan Poe: A Critical Biography (New York: D. Appleton-Century, 1942), p. 331, Arthur Quinn states that "The Masque" was published in 1842--the same year as the first edition of Beauchampe. It is fascinating to think of Simms, a prolific reader as well as writer, being influenced in this description by the color imagery in Poe's story.

nostalgic glow, details in the scene lose distinctness. The picture becomes as illusive and transitory as the soft summer light of which it is a part.

In all of this golden haze only one figure is given strong descriptive lines. Alfred Stevens stands out. Simms focuses attention on him, ignobly sharp of chin, darkly handsome with "something sinister, in the upward glancing of the eye . . . from the half-closed lids" (Charlemont, p. 21). His is the strongly linear figure in the idyll. And so is Margaret as she suddenly crosses the roadway. The uncle and the villagers have dissolved into the dreamy sunshine deflected from the grass of the hill above. Alfred catches Margaret's eye. There is a terrible sharp pause in the action. She is caught in a searching glance. She looks away and hurries on. Stevens knows he will be back for her.

He now becomes Simms's other spokesman. Uncle becomes insignificant, his dream dissipated by a glance of lust. He fades from the picture like the sun. No, Stevens says. With fitting symbolism a cold night sets in after he and Margaret have exchanged their meaningful look. No, he says. The rustic laughter of Charlemont is no more happy than anywhere else. He has seen entrapment in beautiful Margaret's eye. There

must be discontent, he says, because there seem to be too many men and too few women in the hamlet (Charlemont, p. 30). His cynicism couched in wry comedy bursts the Edenic bubble. The despoliation of the Garden has begun.

Simms's pessimistic outlook on life lies behind the antipastoral bias that is so evident in the first pages of Charlemont. His gloomy worldview was rooted in three things: his notion of the essentially tragic lot of the South, his fear of trouble coming to the nation, and his firm conviction that he was pursued by an ill Fate.[7] In no way could he believe in happy fields. So it is that cynical, negative Alfred is the force that he allows to bring Charlemont into sharper

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[7]Simms saw "degeneracy" all around him in the Southern land. He saw it as well in the increasingly dangerous political climate of the time that was dividing North and South. In a perceptive letter to Duyckinck in 1850, he described the socio-political scene in America as a "cauldron bubbling up furiously, and about to boil over. That it will do so some day, to the great terror of the country, you may be certain." Letters, II, 493; III, 73. In 1851 he told John Pendleton Kennedy that the Abolitionists had done the country irreparable harm by severing the only bond--sympathy--that held the nation together. Letters, III, 122-123.

As for himself, Simms felt he was marked by the scourge, "pursued by a hungry Fate . . . insatiate archer. . ." Letters, IV, 400, 402. See also III, 171-173, 222, 238, 388, 450; IV, 112, 138, 188, 192, 220.

Sometimes when he writes of himself and ill Fate, Simms almost sounds like an antebellum Job. Perhaps he means to sound so, just as he means to sound like a

focus than does his uncle's bucolic rhapsody. Simms feels at home describing things going wrong, delineating doom.

"The world is a sort of vast moral lazar-house," he writes, "in which most have sores, either of greater or less degree of virulence" (Charlemont, p. 276). This truth broods behind the sunny façade. As Stevens works his way with Margaret, Charlemont's woods become "devious." Its moonlight hills become "solemn-shaded" (Charlemont, p. 297). Stevens brings a cruel-world dynamism into the hamlet that clears it of its golden haze. He even drives good William Hinkley to challenge him to a duel and to think sadly in consequence that it is "man's terrible commission to destroy" (Charlemont, p. 55). Simms felt this was man's commission, too.

Destruction comes to the Charlemont garden in Chapter IV, titled "Simplicity and the Serpent." Like Milton's Satan, Stevens, "arch-hypocrite," (Charlemont, p. 300) enters Eden by deceit. Satan tricks Uriel,

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South Carolina Milton in Charlemont. In 1862 he wrote to his good friend James Henry Hammond: ". . . a Fate has pursued me for more than thirty years of loss, trial, trouble, denial, death, destruction, in which youth has passed rapidly to age, and hope into resignation that is only not despondency. It is my chief consolation that I have been able to endure so well; and if the Fate smites, the God strengthens . . . I am patient" Letters, IV, 403.

God's overseer of heaven and earth.[8] On the road back to the village, Alfred meets another kind of holy overseer--the Methodist country preacher, John Cross. He fools the gullible old man by professing a pious wish to be his disciple. Cross is taken in, impressed, and flattered. Such a seemingly good youth needs no credentials. Two horsemen once again enter Charlemont.

Pathetic old Pastor Cross leaves the stage. Stevens will do his preaching for him. Cross is as beguiled as Margaret is to become. Morally, he is almost as culpable as she. He reappears at the end of the story, a touching figure full of increasing, horrified wonder: what kind of a man was it he had led into Charlemont? His peace is gone for good, like Margaret's.

In "The Serpent in the Garden" chapter, Stevens ensconces himself as reverend guest in the Hinkley house. With his unctuous piety, this antebellum Satan alienates William's parents from their son even as he seduces the lad's lady. Instinctively, noble William and his outdoor cousin, Ned, take exception to Alfred (Charlemont, p. 264). William wants to fight him in order to protect Margaret. But father Hinkley prevents

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[8]Paradise Lost, pp. 162-164.

the duel by cudgeling his son to the ground. Mrs. Hinkley cries out then that she does not regard Mr. Hinkley as her husband any more because of what he has done to their son. All the amiable little worlds of Charlemont collapse after Stevens comes, "so adroitly had he insinuated himself into this Eden of the wilderness--bringing discontent and suffering in his train. . ." (Charlemont, p. 237). In grieved disgust, William takes the name of Calvert, his kind teacher, and leaves the hamlet to study law. This chapter is entitled "Exile."

Margaret immediately recognizes Stevens as the traveller who had caught her eye. Their eyes meet again in the hamlet's "Grecian-like temple" (Charlemont, p. 75) church where he is preaching. With further ponderous Miltonic allusion, Simms calls this recognition chapter "The Toad on the Altar." He wants to be certain that his readers remember that it was Satan as toad who first whispered to Milton's Eve in the Garden.[9] He wants to be certain that his readers grasp the grand allegorical pattern of his pastoral.

The "flowers were threatened with blight in [William Hinkley's] Eden," Simms writes. Thus "the Serpent entered Charlemont and made his way among the

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[9]Paradise Lost, p. 189.

people thereof. . ." (Charlemont, pp. 85, 95). He mingles Milton's imagery with the rhetoric of the King James version of the Bible. It is too bad that careless Simms did not strive more often for the original and compelling style he reveals in such passages as the wonderful, fearful, poetic snake-seduction of Bess in The Yemassee. The excuse is that he was always more interested in content, in the "bold and striking idea," than in the form of his writing.[10]

Margaret Cooper is an amazing woman, and an almost profound creation. Her great potential is as hindered by the mores of her time as it is by her proud, furious idleness. An unemancipated woman of her day, Margaret could not easily fulfill herself creatively--at least not in the public way she desired.[11] She is brilliant, dissatisfied, a beauty,

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[10]Parks, William Gilmore Simms as Literary Critic, pp. 46, 67.

[11]Simms recognizes Margaret's plight, of course, but criticizes her for desiring to go too far too fast. In the expanded Advertisement of the 1856 Charlemont, p. 11, he describes what ails her: "Her character and career will illustrate most of the mistakes which are made by that ambitious class, among the gentler sex, who are now seeking so earnestly to pass out from that province of humiliation to which the sex has been circumscribed from the first moment of recorded history. What she will gain by the motion, if successful, might very well be left to time, were it not that the proposed change in her condition threatens fatally some of her own and the best securities of humanity."

and a would-be poet who feels utterly cut off from life outside the hamlet.

Margaret is "the wild, the impassioned. A dreamer--a muse--filled with ambitious thoughts--proud, vain, aspiring after the vague, the unfathomable!" (Charlemont, p. 125). Her joy is in being able to "speak her whole soul, with all its passionate fulness, to understanding ears!" Unfortunately for her peace of mind, she is a talker and not a doer. Margaret's problem, her lazar-house sore, is her unwillingness to work. She criticizes the magazine verse she reads as lacking "originality and strength" (Charlemont, p. 178). But she does not write anything herself. She broods about poetry, letting her vain desire to write feed her alienating sense of superiority over other village women and their mundane kitchen and drawing-room chores.

Stevens's voice fires the ambition that feeds her self-esteem while allowing her to indulge in profitless dreams. Egocentric Margaret feels that hers are "sorrows of the soul" springing from "baffled hopes--defeated aims and energies" (Charlemont, p. 230). Alfred sees through her. He realizes that she is "a creature of impulse, not of reflection" (Charlemont, p. 401). He speaks to her of action in terms of strife,

provocation, and bold triumph. He never alludes to the steady work that really produces accomplishment. Poor Charlemont Eve wants something for nothing.

Most insidious of all, he mocks the very land from which he says she takes her inspiration--the country scenes, "Trees, rocks, the valley, and the hill" that, he says, have ennobled her (Charlemont, p. 309). Talking to her by a lakeside on a summer afternoon, this "mocker" (Charlemont, p. 32) saturates Margaret with flattery. Stevens carries her so far away from reality on a pink cloud of fruitless dreaming, that she actually does not follow what he is saying. With cynical, devilish relish he blandly contradicts himself and insults her. One thinks of the way Mephistopheles sometimes handles Marlowe's Faust, mocking his aspirations to know with foolish answers.[12]

Simms shows masterful craftsmanship in creating this scene: Really to see the world, Alfred says, Margaret must come away with him to the city where she will find the "true source of inspiration and of fame." You do not have real men in the country after all, he says, but only shapes laboring in "hay, turnips, and

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[12]The Tragical History of Dr. Faustus in An Anthology of English Drama before Shakespeare, Robert B. Heilman, ed. (New York: Rinehart, 1958), pp. 371-376.

potatoes." Now comes the subtle insult to Margaret, the country-bound poet of the trees, hills and hamlet. Stevens says: "He who sees nothing but the gathering of turnips will think of nothing but turnips" (Charlemont, pp. 309-311). Stupid turnip-brain, country wench, he is saying. You are no poet. You are landbound. You are only a farmer. He smiles, and Margaret Cooper is far away with literary garlands in her hair.

Stevens tempts Margaret in terms similar to Lucifer's inducement of Eve in Paradist Lost.[13] The chapter containing this episode is entitled "Fall." Outside the Charlemont garden, Alfred says, smiling "artful language" (Charlemont, p. 300), Margaret could be a goddess, a muse of creative, poetic activity. The city, he says standing close to her, touching her, his eye fast on her faraway eyes, the city is looking "to the West for the minstrel and the muse--to these very woods"[14] (Charlemont, p. 179).

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[13]Milton, p. 304.

[14]It is possible in this statement that Simms is being both critical and prophetic, although he probably did not suspect the latter. Stevens says: "Already they look to the West for the minstrel and the muse--to these very woods. There is a tacit and a universal feeling in the Atlantic country, that leads them to look with expectation to the great West, for the genius whose

After news spreads that he has taken Margaret, Stevens flees the village--back to the city, ". . . Back to the Thicket slunk/ The guiltie Serpent. . . ."[15] Like Eve, Margaret is pathetically humbled after she has given in. Her spirit is changed. She loses courage. Her voice is subdued, her step inform, her eye downcast, "no longer uplifted like that of the mountain eagle to which . . . she had bodily likened herself" (Charlemont, p. 316). Margaret: "the story of her fall--the triumph of the serpent--was now the village property" (Charlemont, p. 400).

A pastoral world is turned completely upside down at the end of the novel. Margaret has been

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song is to give us fame."

Buried in Stevens's seductive blandishment of Margaret might be a warning: if the South does not make some sound contribution to a national literature, some other area will surely do so and win American laurels for itself. Simms wrote Philip C. Pendleton in 1841 that "The South has been too slow, sadly slow, in asserting its literary claims in the great circle of the creation." Letters, I, 265. In a letter of 1852 to John Pendleton Kennedy, he regrets the South's indifference to literature and its preference for oratory. Letters, III, 175. And see John R. Welsh, "William Gilmore Simms: Critic of the South," 203.

As for the prophecy implied in Stevens's statement, C. L. Sanford writes near the end of Quest for Paradise, pp. 256-259, that the great writers of twentieth century America have indeed come out of the West, Midwest, Southwest: Dreiser, Lewis, Hemingway, Fitzgerald, Farrell, Faulkner.

[15]Paradise Lost, p. 306.

destroyed as much by the false self-esteem nurtured in her rural seclusion (Charlemont, p. 197) by Alfred Stevens's glib talk. And a beautiful forest scene on the morning when she decides to try suicide does not mollify her at all. The sun is bright, the air clear white, blue, and green. She goes to the lake to die. There she sees a young courting couple pass through the woods. The girl, Simms says in mockery of traditional pastoral names, is one of the local Stellas, Clarissas, Daphnes, Dorises. She is one of those young village gossips who already know of Margaret's seduction and relish it (Charlemont, p. 315).

The young man is a hunter. Their forest tranquility drives her almost mad. Stevens has not only taken her virtue. He has also deprived her of her place in the idyll she suddenly sees before her. On the spot, she swears to get revenge on him. Pastoral setting has lost the magic of peace it once worked on Stevens's uncle. It simply drives Margaret to greater ferociousness.

Like Eden after Eve, Charlemont declines from the time of Margaret's catastrophe, her fall from "her pride of place" (Charlemont, p. 446). At the end of the separate 1856 edition of the Charlemont story,

Simms adds a few important lines that do not occur in the 1842 version in Beauchampe. They recall Genesis 3:17, in which the earth is called cursed after the Fall. With Margaret's disgrace, "Beautiful as the village appeared at the opening of our legend, it was doomed to as rapid a decay as growth. 'Something ails it now--the spot is cursed!'" (Charlemont, p. 446).

The Coopers leave dying Charlemont for a "sterile, lonely, and unattractive" retreat farther away in the country (Charlemont, p. 446). It is like the land of labor to which Adam and Eve of Genesis are driven. Like them plagued body and soul, Margaret cannot find peace. Over her dead baby she swears another oath of vengeance against Stevens that preys as a desperate restlessness upon her mind. So Margaret in rural retirement has "purposes entirely at conflict with any idea of repose and quiet" (Charlemont, pp. 446-447).

A peculiar nihilistic pastoral irony pervades Simms's retelling of the Kentucky Tragedy and his re-creation of the Revolution in the South Carolina countryside. He creates idylls, for example, at Charlemont or at Piney Grove Plantation in Mellichampe (1836) only to disparage them by describing their utter failure. He never leaves anything in place of

wrecked idyll. The wise and gentle William Hinkley longs for his youthful pastoral. The scattered villagers want to return to the static hamlet. Margaret and Beauchampe try to recapture Charlemont's peace on their lonely farm, until Stevens reappears and wrecks everything all over again. From a distance Mrs. Avinger's small estate in Eutaw looks safe and serene and pastoral. Upon closer inspection it lies half in ruin and is susceptible to breaking and entering by satanic Hell-Fire Dick.

In life, Simms thought, "shipwreck and suffering are inevitable."[16] Paradise comes after death. He says this when he reflects upon the neglected cemetery of ruined Dorchester village in The Partisan, seven years before the first publication of Beauchampe. Peace, that adjunct of Paradise, is finally attained in the quiet, cedar-gripped grave.[17] Simms's tragic view of life pinpointed by allusion to serpent-ruined Eden provides a thematic pattern in the Revolutionary romances. Here again country landscapes, rural people, farms, villages, bucolic and forest routines--everything he loved in the Southern land is challenged, circumscribed, and doomed.

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[16]Letters, II, 456.

[17]The Partisan (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1835), II, 98-101.

True, with John Taylor of Caroline Simms looked back upon the American Revolution as a kind of Golden Age when brave men of the soil were Doing. This great struggle, he felt, was the South's most heroic period.[18] At the end of Eutaw he describes a fictitious meeting in 1819 of the surviving characters whose adventures he told in the story. It was a reunion so happy that it seemed "to realize to fact, as to fancy, the glorious delights and grateful simplicities of the Golden Age."[19]

A desire to recapture an Age of Gold in one's own national past is a great impulse in pastoral.[20] But it is strange to say that the aggregate vision that emerges from Simms's eighteenth century South is not very golden, or pleasantly green for that matter. In the final analysis, he was not fooled by his delusion.

The pattern of pastoral ruin in the Revolutionary stories contains increasingly deep pessimism. The old Simms balance between scenes of pastoral delight and

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[18]John Taylor, Arator, p. 26; Loren Baritz, City on a Hill (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1964), p. 201.

[19]Eutaw: A Tale of the Revolution (New York: Redfield, 1856), p. 582.

[20]Laurence Lerner, The Uses of Nostalgia, p. 236.

loss diminishes into Eutaw's predominantly negative imagery of serpents in a swampy wilderness, and Woodcraft's blighted landscape. These are the two most important of the Revolutionary romances.[21] There are few pastoral lapses in either of them. Simms's mind is on bucolic loss. All his successful war action leads to a peculiar peace at Glen-Eberley in Woodcraft. Although written fourth, in the chronology of its action this is properly the sixth and last of the Revolution tales. We will consider its strange idyll as the end to which Simms's pastoral design points.

One cannot escape the implication that for Simms war--no matter how noble its end--was another example of activity gone all out of control. One of the underlying themes of the Revolutionary stories is

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[21]In Woodcraft Simms felt he had written probably "as good an answer to Mrs. Stowe as has been published." Letters, III, 222. Donald Davidson says in his Introduction, Letters, I, xlv, that this romance "is Simms's highest achievement." Trent thought it "the most humorous, and in many respects the best sustained, of all Simms's works, 'The Sword and the Distaff' appearing under the revised but hardly improved title of 'Woodcraft'. . . ." William Gilmore Simms, p. 201. In The Mind of the Old South, p. 253, Clement Eaton regards Woodcraft, Eutaw, and Katherine Walton (1851) as Simms's best work, excelling "in portraying the Southern landscape and in catching something of the spirit of the civil conflict between the Tory and the patriot." Hubbell says that nothing Simms "published after Eutaw added . . . to his reputation." South in American Literature, p. 596.

to show that war degrades rather than ennobles.[22] Its debasing spirit is exemplified, for instance, by mad Frampton. He is a spoiled frontiersman who appears in the opening pages of The Partisan, the first of the war romances. It is the story of the disruption of tenuous peace in defeated South Carolina because of Sir Henry Clinton's unfair decree that all demobilized colonials would have to join the English army to help further the King's aims in the South. Marion is the partisan to whose swamp hideout come patriots who do not want to fight for Britain.

Frampton is a "savage." His is the ugly face and dementia of war. In the swamp where Marion's good men, and Porgy, also hide, Frampton broods over his wife's grave. Although she was pregnant, a British soldier bayonetted her to death. Frampton now howls in the dimness, a horror in the trees. He kills an English prisoner whenever he gets a chance to lay hands on one. Unlucky Sergeant Hastings is such a man. Frampton drowns him brutally, laughing wildly, killing a defenseless man.

Because of this appalling ugliness of war, Simms creates a pastoral lapse among his warriors in The

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[22]Parks, p. 9.

Partisan. It is a short scene, a little relief that actually only accentuates the unpleasantness in the surrounding countryside. Similar lapses create such pastoral irony in the Border tales as well, written about the same time. It is near the end of this romance that Simms stops his hard-riding, brutal narrative to rest with Swamp Fox Marion's men . . . sweaty, boots rubbed white from riding, scabbards dragging dust.

The troopers halt by a beautiful clear roadside spring with trees and flowers around it. The place is like a park. In the midst of cavalry confusion--partisans talking and tired, champing horses in settling dust--Simms makes a tentative antiwar statement. It comes in a quick reference to the harmony of the original Garden. Simms cannot help glancing back at it now and then. Invariably, he muses, man will reject the harmonies of "the bird and the flower" in nature, so bent is he "upon earthly strife" (Partisan, II, 261). In these words lies the germ of the tragic theme repeated in all of his subsequent war novels.

As he creates his inverted pastoral in the Revolutionary romances, Simms's mind is always on the tragedy of loss and death in his region. Imagery,

juxtaposition of scenes, gothic detail, ironic comedy all tell the reader so. Clear allusion to loss and a direct statement of Southern tragedy occur, in one case, in the opening pages of The Forayers. Here Simms thinks how the mysterious second growth thickets and the charred chimneys of a burned house are "gloomy memorials to a tragic history--silent. . . ."[23] This tragic sense is given a powerful statement in the gothic way in which Simms opens Eutaw. The imagery here is permeated with a feeling of death.

One is not certain whether the shadows at the start are men moving at dusk or evil spirits, emanations from the forest. They move quietly at first through trees made to seem even darker than they are by the red sunset in the sky. The scene evokes nightmare. Whatever they really are, the reader knows these shadows symbolize the evil that walks the woods in wartime. The shades pass silently through hushed pines burdened with the "wild and solemn harmonies" of the owl--Simms's "obscene bird"[24]--and the whippoorwill and frog: ". . . gray shapes like so many half-hooded

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[23]The Forayers or The Raid of the Dog-Days (New York: Redfield, 1855), pp. 11-12.

[24]Eutaw, p. 37.

friars, glide away through the long pine-avenues, inviting you, as it would seem, to follow, while they steal away slowly from pursuit into the deeper thickets of the swamp" (Eutaw, pp. 5, 37).

Simms's use of the second person--that phrase "inviting you"--drags the reader unwillingly right into the depths of diabolical darkness. This is a good gothic trick to get the reader involved in the action through his resentment of an ironic invitation to follow where he would rather not go. Eutaw's opening provides another fine example of Simms's writing skill.

All of its parts work with precision to suggest pastoral gloom and discord. Idyll is far from Simms's mind here or anywhere else in the romance. Timid at first, the stars come out like an army "bivouacked in heaven" (Eutaw, p. 7). These are a far cry from the friendly guiding and listening stars of traditional pastoral.[25] And so are the animals in the scene. The owl and the frog are nothing like the companionable animals typical of idyll.[26]

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[25]For an example of this, see Bion, "Hesperos," Greek Lyric Poetry, Willis Barnstone, trans. (New York: Bantam Books, 1962), p. 148.

[26]Thomas G. Rosenmeyer, The Green Cabinet: Theocritus and the European Pastoral Lyric (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969), p. 138.

Suddenly from the distance comes a bugle note. The reader is awakened from nightmare. It dissolves into the familiar clatter of cavalry hoofs rattling fast down a stoney hill, going into a swamp that is "consecrated to death" (Eutaw, p. 183). A torch appears and goes away, "buried from sight, swallowed up in the close embrace of that wilderness of shadow" (Eutaw, p. 7). Shortly we will discover that these riders are bad men, foraging Florida Refugees. They are Tories who had fled to Florida and who have returned to plague South Carolina now because of the temporary British control there.

This brooding, terrifying nature picture hardly suggests the amiable darkness Annette Kolodny sees in Simms's "protective" forest, the all-embracing, all-sufficing mother.[27] His forest holds the sterile darkness of the grave, of a lost land.

Death and loss are even suggested in the wrecked mill to which the horsemen ride. It once helped sustain life by grinding grain for food. Now it is to be the site of a hanging. From the start, Simms's pastoral pattern is twisted. There are no

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[27]"The Unchanging Landscape: The Pastoral Impulse in Simms's Revolutionary War Romances," 53, 66.

beautiful rural scenes at all in the romance. The opening description ends with startled stars:

> Hark! an owl in the old millhouse! What strange mood makes him there, with his wretched whoop, when the sypresses [sic] offer him their arms on every side? But for his discordant cry, how dead would be the stillness of all the scene, the very stars keeping in their breath, as they strain, with all their eyes, to see the deeds which are done in these night-tents upon earth! (Eutaw, p. 9).

Eutaw is a complexly constructed novel and a good one. It is important, too, not only for its gothic inversion of pastoral but because it has another amazing Simms woman: Hurricane Nell Floyd, his first and only girl forester. Those shadows we saw at the start belonged to Lemuel Watkins's men on their way to hang her worthless brother, Mat. She rescues him, but then he joins a group of Tory brigands whose hideout in the swamp is called Muddicoat Castle.

Tenacious Nell is a true-grit, astride-riding woodland version of Margaret Cooper with a purpose. This is to save weak, worthless Mat's soul from the evil influence of satanic Hell-Fire Dick and the other followers of the serpent-smiling traitor, Inglehardt. Even though clairvoyant Nell foresees her brother's death, she keeps on trying to save him.

Like Simms's first frontiersman, Mark Forrester, Nell represents the force of good in nature. She is a

kind of counterbalance to those dreadful forest forces symbolized in the eerie shadows at the beginning of the book. "Her soul rayed out, in its sweet and naked simplicity. . . . She became spiritualized in her sole communion with the woods by day, and with the stars by night" (Eutaw, pp. 400-401). She stands in bright contrast to Dick and his evil fellow woodsmen. Nell is "warm, affectionate, enthusiastic, eager, impulsive . . . just . . . pure . . . an extraordinary and masculine will, and an intensity of mood which wrought upon all her faculties, so that all, in turn, seemed qualities of fire . . . rode, ran, rambled, apparently without fatigue, and seemed to rest only when in motion!" (Eutaw, p. 69). It is disappointing that she, like Mark, is killed at the end by one of the men representing the dark power of the forest.

Nell spends most of her great and innocent energy tracking Mat to Muddicoat. The other good outdoorsman in the tale is Jim Ballou, the gentleman-hero Willie Sinclair's friend. Ballou is busy hunting for Muddicoat, too, and Nell's woodcraft skills astound him. He has been asked by Willie, who is fighting red-coats, to find the villains' lair because Inglehardt has kidnapped the father and young brother, Henry, of Bertha Travis, his beloved.

In a series of gruesome scenes that finally drive old Travis mad, Inglehardt tortures the father and starves courageous Henry in order to force Travis to write a letter directing Bertha to marry him. Hell-Fire Dick's men succeed in abducting Bertha from Widow Avinger's spoiled plantation. At Muddicoat Inglehardt tries to force her to give in to him by further tormenting her father and Henry.

While all the terror in the swamp is being carried out by the evil Tory robbers, Willie is having severe filial difficulties. His father, called the Baron, is loyal to the King. In a beautifully executed scene which contains drama, humor, and harrowing escape sequence, old Sinclair almost shoots his son. From this point his heart starts to soften toward Willie. Sinclair decides to flee to Charleston with some of the ladies of his house. Along the road his ponderous, slow old coach gets caught in a running battle between English and American dragoons. Willie gets the coach off the road--and is almost shot by his father for his effort. They are reconciled, of course, by the end of the tale.

Back in the swamp Travis is driven ever madder while Hell-Fire Dick is led toward salvation. Nightly, Henry reads to him from Pilgrim's Progress. Dick stole

this book from Mrs. Avinger's house in a pathetic desire to get some of the book-learning he feels has given his despised "harryistocrats" their control over him and other humble folk.

Nell finds the hideout and leads Sinclair and Ballou to it. Dick is on guard, and he shoots her as she comes into Muddicoat. Sinclair cuts him down with his sabre as Travis bashes out Inglehardt's brains after being fatally wounded. Bertha and Henry are rescued and the brigands are scattered. As Nell dies, the owl's dismal notes are heard again. Night falls on Muddicoat. The serpent has done his work well. And this brings us to the key image in the romance.

On the one hand, the theme of Eutaw is the beauty of familial devotion in the midst of civil war. Nell continues to love her despicable, cowardly brother. Willie never fails in his love for his gouty, stubborn old father. On the other hand, it has the more powerful and familiar Simms theme of rural paradise lost. In no other of his tales--except his Kentucky Tragedy--is Simms so relentless in calling his villains serpents. He is not satisfied to create an exciting adventure story with its truly memorable Nell Floyd. He wants to give his romance epic proportions by forcing upon

it his favorite allusion to the tragedy that was brought upon Eden by the failing of man and the deviousness of Satan.

Inglehardt and Dick are Simms's most demonic bad men. Kidnapped Bertha calls Inglehardt a "snake that hisses," a "Reptile!" (Eutaw, p. 504). When he tries to seduce her with promises at Muddicoat, the anti-Eden of the swamp, he almost "hissed" in her ears that his passion demanded she marry him (Eutaw, p. 571). He smiles a "serpent-smile" while torturing Travis and Henry (Eutaw, p. 119). Jim Ballou tells Nell that Inglehardt is "the most infernal black-hearted Satan of a refugee dragoon that ever spiled vines with his hoofs" (Eutaw, p. 392). Goaded, tormented beyond endurance by seeing his son starved, old Travis bursts out to their smirking enemy: why have you not "come with hoofs, and horns, and tail, that the world may know you for what you are?" (Eutaw, p. 397). And so the epithets go in the story. Simms wants to be certain to get his point across.

Together the villains live in a swamp whose labyrinthine morass is a kind of vegetable hell, a terrible symbolic parallel to all the complicated strife and twisted passions of the people inside and outside of it:

> Dark mystical woods, deep dismal waters, creek and thicket, fen, bog, quagmire, and stream, all seemed to blend harmoniously in shutting out humanity with the sun of heaven and the breeze of the air. The stars trembled when they looked down into abysses which they dared not penetrate. The winds fling themselves feebly against the matted walls of the forest. The waters crept sluggishly and stagnated everywhere. It was a realm that seemed consecrated to death. Here the owl and the bat had their homes; the serpent and the cayman; the frog and the lizzard (Eutaw, p. 183).

This is the domain of Hell-Fire Dick of Tophet, the "fallen angel" of The Forayers (p. 202). Moving in and out of Muddicoat, he is described as "our Satan" and "our monster par excellence" (Eutaw, pp. 405, 262). His "snaking" or foraging gang are called the "Satanics." One of his men is nicknamed "the Sarpent" (Eutaw, pp. 110, 279). In describing lost Dick, however, Simms does not limit his epic borrowing to Milton.

In one case serpent allusion in Eutaw suggests not so much Satan as Spenser's lustful Cymochles in the Bower of Bliss, "like an adder lurking in the weeds" watching maidens at play.[28] For a moment Dick is almost spiritualized by lust and evil. He virtually becomes that old "tiger heart" that beats too in innocent-appearing leaves. He watches Bertha Travis and Carrie Sinclair, Willie's sister, in an untrimmed

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[28]The Faerie Queene, Book II, Canto V, xxxiv.

meadow at Widow Avinger's. He becomes "A shadow in the sunlight--a reptile among the flowers, a hideous, inhuman aspect, such as the malicious elf appears, when he breaks upon the fairy circle, and puts to flight the gay, bright fantastic legions of the courtly Oberon!" (Eutaw, p. 428).

Dick's sun-effacing, life-effacing shadow remains on the land. At first glance, it seems, almost, to take up its seat with Porgy at Glen-Eberley in Woodcraft, the story of a soldier's return home. Here Simms's pastoral inversion is comic rather than gothic. There is no serpent imagery in the novel. But there is amorous, fat Porgy cast as a rural courting swain. The theme of the novel is the debilitating effect of delusion--pastoral delusion in the case of Porgy.

Woodcraft is Simms's best novel,[29] and his most delightful. Its style is easier, less pretentious and stiff than his earlier romances. Sentimentality and moralizing are replaced in it by the comedy and good humor and subtle tragedy of the witty, philosophical, talkative, companionable gourmet and gentleman planter Captain Porgy. Trent had it on "good authority," he states, that Simms intended Porgy, his "most striking

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[29]Parks, p. 7.

individual creation," to represent himself in various moods.[30] Whether one sees him as a kind of Southern humors character derived from the Jacobean and Restoration drama Simms loved to read, or as partly modeled after Falstaff,[31] Porgy is Simms's warmest and most likeable figure.

He was well received from the time he first appeared in The Partisan. With Tom, his slave, friend, and cook, he has a part in all the Revolutionary novels except The Scout (1841). Simms told James Lawson in a letter of 1836 that Porgy was very popular "with a large majority. He is actually the founder of a sect."[32]

Woodcraft opens with a confrontation between Widow Eveleigh and the British Colonel Moncreiff at the end of the Revolution in South Carolina. He and the novel's villain, McKewn, have become rich during the war by kidnapping and shipping American slaves to

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[30]William Gilmore Simms, p. 109.

[31]C. Hugh Holman, "Simms and the British Dramatists," PMLA, 65 (June, 1950), 351-352; H. M. Jarrell, "Falstaff and Simms's Porgy," American Literature, 3 (May, 1931), 204, 206; Taylor, p. 285.

[32]Letters, I, 82.

the Bermudas for sale. She is in Charleston as the British evacuate the city to demand back her slaves and Porgy's. She gets the blacks, and also manages to pick up a piece of paper that later will expose the Snopes-like, grasping climber McKewn as a Tory traitor.

The Widow is another of Simms's surprising women. She is capable, intelligent, resourceful, independent, and something of an operator. There is nothing demure or faint-hearted about her. She frankly admits to Porgy at dinner that she made her fortune by the war. She willingly sold her grain and livestock to the English and so prevented their making off with her goods, as happened to patriots who refused to deal with them at all.[33] There is not a thing Porgy can say to this forthright admission. After all, with loans of tools and seed and slaves and money, she is helping him to rebuild his wrecked farm.

Despite the general impoverishment of war all around her estate, Widow Eveleigh has attained a pleasant middleground. Hers is a plantation ideal of liveoak groves, orderly fences, and fields and gardens

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[33]The Sword and the Distaff (Philadelphia: Lippincott, Grambo, and Co., 1853), p. 403. All references to the novel are from this edition, heretofore and hereafter referred to as Woodcraft.

spreading around a comfortable, tasteful old manor house. In contrast to her place, Simms later creates the "dreary solitude" of another widow's home in Eutaw. Mrs. Avinger is loyal to the American cause. Yet her farm is in ruins--her animals are gone, her fences decayed, her fields abandoned to weeds (Eutaw, p. 214). And there is Porgy's wasted plantation as well. Simms's point is that Widow Eveleigh's is a tainted middleground gained through a self-serving if practical neutrality during the Revolution.

She is like Tityrus of Virgil's First Eclogue. She has made certain adjustments or concessions to the outside world in order to keep her rural retreat. On the verge of eviction from his land, Porgy resembles Meliboeus. The good Captain's reward for all-out service on the American side is heavy indebtedness and a ruined plantation. Self-made McKewn is the force from outside that threatens his rural repose because Porgy owes him money.

Riding home after the dispersal of Marion's unpaid partisans, Porgy, Corporal Millhouse, young Ensign Lance Frampton--mad Frampton's son--and Tom pass through a "sterile country" that reflects their own strange despondency. The land becomes increasingly

bleak as they approach Glen-Eberley:

> Nor did the solemn, stately, and ever murmuring and monotonous pine-forest through which they rode--by no means enlivened by occasional tracts of scanty oak, stript wholly of its foliage, or by the ruins of ancient farms, and decaying fences--contribute to lessen the feeling of melancholy which sensibly possessed our little group of travellers (Woodcraft, pp. 54-55).

There is nothing grimly gothic in this scene, unlike the one that opens Eutaw. It is simply and realistically gloomy, and the very opposite of landscape idyll. It sets a tone for the romance. Its antipastoral sentiment is implicit in all countryside scenes in the story, as when Simms is being ironic in his picture of Widow Eveleigh's pleasant place, or tragi-comic as when Porgy's thoughts go pastoral and he makes a fool of himself in courting Widow Griffin.

Along the road home, Porgy and his friends rescue Widow Eveleigh and her son, Arthur, from an ambush led by Bostwick, the novel's spoiled frontiersman. He is employed by McKewn to steal back the reclaimed slaves. Foiled by Porgy, he escapes into the swamp to glower and hide until nightfall. As in Eutaw's nightscenes, startled, peering stars come out to look down on the earth. They gaze on Bostwick. For Simms these stars represent an omnipresent, cosmic accuser, cold "watchers" as they are "over the guilty

course of man on earth" (Woodcraft, p. 190). They watch Porgy riding home, too.

Porgy is worried when he arrives at Glen-Eberley. He has not been a good farmer. Like old Colonel Grayson of George Tucker's The Valley of Shenandoah (1824), he has wasted his wealth in easy, irresponsible living. He faces ruin. Simms is being critical here, for the Captain represents those profligate Southern landowners of the eighteenth century who left behind spoiled ground and impoverished families. His weedy, forlorn plantation is a microcosm of the ruinous Southern agricultural system.[34]

Silent and depressed on his tired warhorse, Porgy looks on pastoral desolation dripping from the unkempt, moss-hung avenue of Glen-Eberley. The lane leads to the blank windows of his vandalized house, passing through unfenced, uncultivated fields in December-gray rain and fog. It takes Corporal Millhouse's hard work to bring the farm back to life again. Meanwhile Porgy lapses into his old irresponsible ways of dinner, drink, and talk.

Even his courting of the widows is half-hearted

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[34]Ridgely, pp. 100-101; Taylor, pp. 287-288; Welsh, 206; Avery O. Craven, The Growth of Southern Nationalism (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1953), p. 401.

and dreamy. Millhouse wants Porgy to act, to propose. But he cannot bring himself to do it with any sincerity. Hence, Widow Eveleigh's ladylike but thoroughly honest rejection of him. She says that they will be happier together as open, loving friends than as man and wife (Woodcraft, p. 584). Porgy is probably relieved at her refusal. For, as we shall see, deep down he prefers the circumscribed, static security of Glen-Eberley and his male companions to any other life. There is irony in the fact that it was he who once succinctly phrased Simms's antipathy to the very pastoral mood into which he slips in Woodcraft. It was one night before dinner in The Forayers (p. 529) that Porgy said to cooking Tom, "It is stagnation that is death."

Porgy can act with dispatch, however, when his locus amoenus is endangered by McKewn's foreclosure. He orders his ex-partisans to strap on their old campaign gear. In two wonderfully anti-establishment scenes, he imprisons and then generously entertains the gentlemanly sheriff who comes with proper legal authority to evict him. Ultimately, Porgy would lose this fight against the law.

It is only when the villains turn on each other that Glen-Eberley is really saved. McKewn double-crosses Bostwick. Having stolen the incriminating

paper Widow Eveleigh took from Moncreiff, Bostwick tries to blackmail McKewn, who finally hangs himself after he is revealed as a traitor and a thief. His claims against Captain Porgy are cancelled.

Porgy's pastoral incompetence comes to the fore with comic intensity when he goes to court his other widow, Mrs. Griffin. She is his second choice, for he likes her simplicity and meekness although he fears she is not intellectual enough for him (Woodcraft, pp. 453-454). When he courts her, however, he does not think of her as much as he does of Arcady. He lapses into a self-defeating pastoral delusion in which he sees himself as an idyllic swain. The notion is as ridiculous as it is comic. Porgy gets nowhere with it because it is simply a withdrawal from reality. Truth for Porgy waits at Glen-Eberley.

At Mrs. Griffin's for dinner, Porgy as bucolic lover thinks of Arcadia and not of love. His mind wanders as he sits on that pleasant shady piazza. His sword is on the floor beside him, hands clasped over his great belly, his feet, toes pointed to the floor, ankles crossed, tucked under his canebottomed chair. As a lover Porgy is as static as his vision. The fresh fields, good food, and milk of Widow Griffin's modest

neat house and farm were "welcomed by Porgy with all the enthusiasm of a citizen escaping, for the first time, from dusty walks and walls, to the elysium of green fields and forest shelter."

Millhouse's busy-ness at Glen-Eberley, McKewn's litigation, the difficult Widow Eveleigh, his poverty, his spring-time desire for a wife are all left far behind. Porgy's mind is on a vision of bucolic, self-indulgent ease:

> Notions of arcadian felicity crept into Porgy's mind. Every thing seemed perfect, and perfectly delightful about the humble cottage of the Widow Griffin. The trees had a fresher look; the grounds seemed to shelter the most seductive recesses; even the dog lying down on the piazza, and the cow ruminating under the old Pride of India before the door, seemed to enjoy dreams of a happier sort than usually come to dog and cow in ordinary life. The skies above the cottage appeared to wear looks of superior mildness and beauty (Woodcraft, p. 422).

This is a pretty picture. But there is something wrong with it. The emphasis is all on seeming. Porgy is being taken in by the insubstantial, the inconsequential. Real life is out there in fields to be worked, or on the piazza where the Widow sits. Porgy's mind is on nothing real. His pastoral delusion is as deadly as was Bess Matthews's the day she was beguiled by the gem-like brightness of the serpent in a forest's crystal leaves.

Out of his mockery of idyll Simms creates one of the funniest incidents in the romance. This is the accident that drives Porgy back to Glen-Eberley for good. After being rejected by Widow Eveleigh, the Captain pays another visit to Mrs. Griffin. At her house he again falls into an idyllic frame of mind that deflects him from the serious matter of courting. Dressed in his new blue coat with brass buttons, a leather stock and buff military small clothes, pompous Porgy extends his arms to help the Widow wind yarn on the piazza.

He sits great-bellied and top-booted with his arms wrapped in yarn. She is embarrassed by the ludicrousness, the "grotesque absurdity" of the scene--this veteran humbling himself to aid her in her woman's work. Porgy is oblivious. He has lapsed into "his Arcadian mood" which makes "him obtuse in respect to the queer figure which he cut in this novel employment" (Woodcraft, p. 587).

Unexpectedly, Widow Eveleigh and Arthur arrive. Porgy is mortified to be seen with Mrs. Griffin after just leaving Mrs. Eveleigh's house with her rejection of him. He tangles himself in yarn trying to discard it. Mrs. Eveleigh knows what was going on. She smiles at

the sweating, nearly frantic partisan hero on the piazza rising to greet her while kicking a hopeless tangle of yarn from his feet. The scene is funny as Simms tells it. It is also significant, for as Porgy is tangled in yarn so is he tangled in pastoral delusion.

In Woodcraft Simms twists into wry antipastoral comedy the kind of idyll John Esten Cooke uses in The Last of the Foresters to paint a beautifully delicate if nostalgic picture of Southern life. Simms creates not only a tainted middleground at the Widow Eveleigh's and finally at Glen-Eberley. He also gives the lie to the foolish romantic notions that spawned the dream of an impractical American Eden in the first place.

Beneath its comedy, on one level the action of Woodcraft points to death. It is tragic, as well as ironic, that as his land becomes fertile again under Millhouse's direction, Porgy commits himself to the barrenness of bachelor life. Rejected by the two widows, he returns to Glen-Eberley and promises his old partisan comrades that he will henceforth devote himself to them. At his table with his friends and pipes and "potent floods of sunny liquor," Porgy resolves. They listen with admiration and devotion: hardworking Millhouse, the camp poet Dennison, the quack doctor Oakenburger, and faithful pot-keeling Tom.

"There are women whom I could love," Porgy says. "But for your sakes, I renounce them all. I shall live for you only" (Woodcraft, pp. 590-591). This is the event that Lewis P. Simpson calls Glen-Eberley's "confusing and sterile fulfillment."[35] It is sterile, true, but less confusing if one recognizes Simms's pastoral denial in it.

What Woodcraft amounts to in the end is Simms's swansong for his beloved lost Golden Age. Porgy's is "a world which has no future, for it has no female dimension . . . a world without issue doomed to come to an end."[36] In itself, however, Porgy's renunciation of women is more than a petulant reaction to defeat. He has seen through his foolish self-deception of being a pastoral swain. At the same time, Simms secretly sees through his dream of a Revolutionary Golden Age. He rejects the American dream of an innocent, better time and an innocent, better world.[37]

Rejection of delusions does not mean we cannot cherish them just the same. Simms felt this. Once

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[35]The Dispossessed Garden, p. 60.

[36]Ibid., p. 60.

[37]Simone Vauthier, "Of Time and the South: The Fiction of William Gilmore Simms," The Southern Literary Journal, 5 (Fall, 1972), 19.

found out, they become harmless indulgence--like pastoral lapses balanced by an awareness of reality, which is the way idyll appears in epic and in Simms's romances. Provided one is not taken in by them, delusions can recall with sweet nostalgia man's lost innocence and the waste of his pathetic aspirations. In a letter of 1849 to Nathaniel Beverley Tucker,[38] Simms explains the subtle efficacy of delusions, once they are understood:

> Our delusions are not the less precious because we have found them out. They are perhaps even more valuable after the discovery that they are delusions. They have then lost all power of harm, and we cherish only what was innocent in the influence which at first was far from innocent.

So, even if at worst Porgy's retreat to Glen-Eberley is sterile, it is at the same time an honest acknowledgment to himself of his not being a lover in Arcadia after all. Having pierced his delusion, Porgy finds a private truth of his own: he has lived a man's man and will die a man's man. Peace comes to Glen-Eberley as he faces his bachelor plight with an almost Christ-like commitment to his devoted followers.

Back in the smoky, convivial room, over the tankard-tinged table, Corporal Millhouse actually has

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[38] Letters, II, 511

the final say. He speaks the last lines in the novel: "I sees it all. . . . The grapes is sour!" Sour grapes: Porgy wanted a wife, but his dreamy lassitude prevented him from winning one. So he rejects marriage. Simms flirted with the idea of pastoral contentment, of a past Golden Age which his "deep and articulate pessimism,"[39] which his realism and his theory of Doing and progress compelled him to deny.

Sour grapes: these words could be turned on Simms himself. Perhaps he thought of this. Sometimes he imagined himself as Porgy. The pastoral lapses he indulged in his earlier romances are reflected in Porgy's comic arcadian moods. In the end they make fun of all Simms's whimsical or epic-pastoral, Golden Age thoughts. Quietly, in gentle self-chiding he is saying "sour grapes" to himself.

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[39]Taylor, p. 267.

CHAPTER IX

THE LAST DREAM: JOHN ESTEN COOKE'S AUTUMN GOSSAMER

A strong joy fills--
A rapture far beyond the tongue's cold power--
My heart in golden autumn: fills and thrills!
And I would rather stalk the breezy hills--
Descending to my bower
Nightly by the bold spirit of health attended--
Than pine where life is splendid.
Philip Pendleton Cooke, "Life in the Autumn Woods" (1843)

Bright streams and isles, how memory loves to trace
Its boyish sports in each familiar place,
By wood and wave with joy renewed to dwell,
And live again the life once loved so well . . .
Can ceaseless cares for power and place impart
Scenes such as these to charm and mend the heart?
William J. Grayson, "The Hireling and the Slave" (1856)

". . . those were blessed times! But they are passed, and the change that has come over me will forbid their return. The lake and the mountain are beautiful and sublime as ever--the blight of time falls only on the human heart."
Sidney Romeless in Sara J. Hale, Northwood (1827)

The Virginian from the Valley, John Esten Cooke, regarded Simms as his good friend and literary master.[1]

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[1]John Esten Cooke, John Esten Cooke's Autobiographical Memo, John R. Welsh, ed. (Columbia: University of South Carolina Bibliographical Series No. 4, 1969), p. 29; William Peterfield Trent, William Gilmore Simms, pp. 193-194. Trent goes on to say (p. 194) that Cooke was "the second Southern romancer after Simms, and

Simms reciprocated the friendship. He admired Cooke's works as well. But realizing his own great shortcoming as an author, he advised young John Esten to take his time in writing.[2] Neither man, however, would accept such advice. As with Simms, Cooke's rapidity of composition and dislike for revision were responsible for his chief literary weaknesses.[3] And like Simms he remained the romancer to the end. In the 1880's, a time of increasing realism in American fiction, he was an exponent of the same kind of sentimental romance he had written with such success in the 1850's.[4]

So it is that John Esten Cooke never developed

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perhaps, had he been born twenty years earlier, he might have made the South Carolinian look to his laurels." In Ante-Bellum Southern Literary Critics, p. 66, Edd Winfield Parks says that, with Simms and Poe, Cooke is one among the antebellum Southern writers who deserve to be considered professionals.

[2]Mary C. Simms Oliphant, et al., eds., The Letters of William Gilmore Simms, IV, 215; III, 355; IV, 115, 164-165 footnote, 180-181. In December, 1868, Simms wrote Cooke with touching affection: "We can understand and feel each other by natural instincts of sympathy, independently of all speech." Letters, V, 190.

[3]John O. Beaty, John Esten Cooke, Virginian (1922; rpt. Port Washington, New York: Kennikat Press, 1965), pp. 66, 158.

[4]Carl Holliday, "John Esten Cooke as a Novelist," Sewanee Review, 13 (1905), 216, 219; Beaty, p. 161.

into the writer he had promised to become.[5] His best works remain his softly picturesque, socio-historical pre-Civil War tales.[6] Of these--written in a terrific spurt of creative energy between 1853 and 1856--Cooke himself felt the best were Leather Stocking and Silk (1854), The Virginia Comedians (1854), and The Youth of Jefferson (1854).[7] He neglects to mention The Last of the Foresters (1856). This is a major novel in our study of the antebellum pastoral design. In it idyll is not an interlude or a lapse as it is in the romances of Simms, Caruthers, Kennedy in Horse-Shoe Robinson, or Paulding. In The Last of the Foresters, pastoral is a consistently and intentionally worked out design of a dying dream. The Youth of Jefferson is also pervasively pastoral in structure and imagery. But its pattern is flat, mere decoration. The design of Foresters has something to say.

Leather Stocking and Silk, Cooke's "first serious effort as a novelist,"[8] The Virginia Comedians,

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[5]Jay B. Hubbell, The South in American Literature, pp. 518, 520.

[6]Parks, p. 79; Alexander Cowie, The Rise of the American Novel, p. 467.

[7]Autobiographical Memo, p. 17.

[8]Beaty, p. 33.

his "best" novel,[9] and The Last of the Foresters, an "innocent entertainment" Cooke calls it in his Preface[10]: each reveals two important and familiar antebellum pastoral themes. One is the town-versus-country conflict. The other--and the most significant--is the theme of mutability, of time running out . . . the triumph of time.

Each of these romances shows the attitude toward time as a "frightful entity" that is so prevalent among Southern authors of both the antebellum period, as we have seen, and of the twentieth century, such as Thomas Wolfe, Ellen Glasgow, William Faulkner, Robert Penn Warren.[11] And each of the romances is tinged with

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[9]Hubbell, p. 520; Francis Pendleton Gaines, The Southern Plantation, p. 55; Beaty, pp. 40, 163. Beaty says two other of Cooke's works that approach Comedians in quality are tales of the Civil War, through which Cooke served from sergeant of artillery at First Manassas to staff captain at Appomattox. These novels are Surry of Eagle's-Nest (1866) and Mohun (1869).

[10]John Esten Cooke, The Last of the Foresters: or, Humors on the Border; A Story of the Old Virginia Frontier (New York: Derby and Jackson, 1856), n. p.

[11]C. Hugh Holman, The Roots of Southern Writing (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1972), p. 14. Of this attitude toward time, Holman says: "Time . . . becomes a frightful entity for many Southern writers, whose concern with time reminds us of European rather than American authors. Time is Thomas Wolfe's great enemy. Ellen Glasgow said, 'Within time, and within time alone, there was life,' . . . and thus the relentless passage of time is the decay of death. To

tragedy, with dissatisfaction, disappointment. Despite their surface charms and delicacies, each contains an undercurrent of the kind of melancholy that appears in modern pastoral where death, exile, and unhappy love are important themes.[12]

Champ Effingham of The Virginia Comedians represents the antagonistic and disruptive force of the city in the pre-Revolutionary Virginia countryside. He has been corrupted by his European grand tour. Returning to his father's Tidewater home, Effingham Hall, he affects the manners of a London rake. One of his old acquaintances, the bluff fox hunter John Hamilton, refers to him as having become a "perfect dandy" given to snubbing his former friends.[13] Champ represents that spirit of Old World social oppression that the heroine, Beatrice Hallam, disappointedly discovers in the New (Comedians, I, 84).

Faulkner's Quentin Compson in The Sound and the Fury, time as symbolized by the watch, is the arch enemy. In one of Warren's most original poems, 'The Ballad of Billie Potts,' it is time that gives us identity and carries us relentlessly away from lost innocence." This very experience--finding identity and losing innocence over a period of time--happens to Verty in Cooke's The Last of the Foresters.

[12]Thomas G. Rosenmeyer, The Green Cabinet, p. 227.

[13]John Esten Cooke, The Virginia Comedians; or, Old Days in the Old Dominion (New York: D. Appleton, 1883), I, 171.

Beatrice represents the hopeful spirit of the new land where republican Charles Waters, simple fisherman's son, thinks man will find political regeneration (Comedians, I, 134). He is a dreamer whose utopian reveries are like the impossible vision of an ideal frontier society of Arl-ton and Il-ray in Gilbert Imlay's The Emigrants. Beatrice is a "pure child of the wilderness," Cooke wistfully writes, "in spite of the eternal claims which an artificial civilization" makes upon her. "She rejoiced in the forest, and in the hills. . . ."

Sailing with Charles on the James, "she was free as the bright water." Rejuvenated in the outdoors, she becomes happy and carefree as a child again (Comedians, I, 82-83). Cooke's authorial voice intrudes: how good it is, he says, for man to get away from the bustling, eternally striving city, away from study and business and back into nature (Comedians, I, 80-81). One eye in his stories is always fixed backwards on an ancient and lost pastoral hope.

But bucolic peace never lasts long in antebellum romance. In Williamsburg Charles Waters periodically is lectured in revolutionary politics by a mysterious man in a red cloak. This is Patrick Henry, who seems almost as demonically driven a character as

Simms's Faustian Guy Rivers. Cooke does not idealize Henry. He is restless, deeply troubled, and angry. His is a dark, uncongenial spirit (Comedians, I, 191-195). He speaks to Charles of the decay of the Old World, of abysses of war and mobs (Comedians, I, 189-193). He represents the irreversible and destructive force of history that moves through the novel, and in all of Cooke's pre-War tales except The Youth of Jefferson.

Patrick Henry is the force that makes Cooke muse sadly over the loss of old peace and ways which he nostalgically compares to new and troubled times (Comedians, I, 14, 17; II, 148). The passage of time meant for Cooke the passing away of fine ideals, of ancient hope.[14] Time was anathema to Cooke the pastoralist.

At the theater in Williamsburg one night, Champ tries to seduce Beatrice, who is an actress in her father's troupe of touring players from England. She rebuffs him publicly. Maddened with frustrated passion, he kidnaps her. At the last minute, she is rescued by her beau, Charles Waters. Furious, Champ wounds them both and flees to England because he thinks

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[14]Beaty, p. 33.

he has killed Charles. Waters recovers. He and Beatrice marry and go away from civilization into embittered mountain retirement.

Champ returns to Virginia cowed and modified in a world-weary way. He lives socially and morally exiled in Effingham Hall, where his only friend is his little sister Kate. Here the "healthful voice of nature" speaks "to his heart" and gradually restores his calm (Comedians, II, 155). Eventually he marries his childhood sweetheart, Clare Lee. In the mountains Beatrice dies of a fever. Later Charles remarries. This is the gist of the story. There are other characters and subplots--but the main thread describes pastoral melancholy: unhappy love, exile, and death.

In the happily-ever-after marriages in the final chapter of The Virginia Comedians, Cooke is acceding as usual to the formula of romance. But not too far beneath the surface one sees something else, and is startled by it. Cooke has already alluded to contemporary troubled times when he sadly compares elegant, quiet bygone days to the materialistic and ill-directed present (Comedians, I, 14, 17; II, 148). He was surely aware of the troubles between North and South rising about him in the difficult decade of the

1850's, the early years of which he spent half-heartedly practicing law and happily socializing and writing in Richmond.[15] The Virginia Comedians ends with a disconcerting if melodramatic prophecy of war.

It is not a pleasant scene Cooke pictures before he comes to the marriages. The happiness of Waters and Effingham and their brides is brutally and significantly compromised by it. In Williamsburg as dark storm clouds gather and crackle with lightning on the horizon, Patrick Henry takes on a truly Satanic character as he goads a mad speaker to even greater excesses in addressing an angry mob. The people are incensed over the Stamp Act. Always the political activist, the firebrand, Henry is making the most of it. With wild eyes and bleeding mouth, the rabble-rousing fanatic collapses into his arms. Stamps are burned in the square. Lightning flashes. A churchbell tolls ominously all the while, steadily marking the fleeting seconds as time rushes on to a dread catastrophe.

Of all the frontiersmen-hunters we have met so far, only old John Myers of Leather Stocking and Silk does not regret the passage of time. When young Max

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[15]Beaty, pp. 26-27.

Courtlandt compliments him on the rugged life he has led, Myers seems amused. "They were hard days," he says, living retired now in rural Martinsburg in the Shenandoah Valley at the turn of the eighteenth century. "They were hard days, and I never want to see 'em back."[16] There is irony here, of course. For John Esten Cooke in Leather Stocking and Silk expresses a grave reservation about the course of the present.

Underneath the story's "atmosphere of kindliness,"[17] there is a nagging worry that gives the slight tale a critical perspective. Like Paulding, Kennedy, Hawthorne, Thoreau, and, to some extent, Simms, Cooke feared the drgrading influence of modern technology. Fear of war, fear of progress drove this gentle romancer into the static idyllic escapism of The Youth of Jefferson, and finally into the deep pastoral melancholy of The Last of the Foresters.

In Leather Stocking Maximilian Courtlandt is in love with his cousin, Nina Van Horn. She marries an officious, solemn but promising lawyer, Lyttleton.

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[16]John Esten Cooke, Leather Stocking and Silk; or, Hunter John Myers and His Times (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1854), p. 35.

[17]Beaty, p. 36.

Max's small brother, Barry, loves Hunter John's daughter, Sally. After five years away, Max returns from Paris. He is a doctor now. And he has grown a beard. Unrecognized he wanders the neighborhood of Martinsburg. Barry marries Sally, and Max, revealing his identity, marries widowed Nina. After twenty years she dies, and he marries the friend of his youth, Josephine Emberton. One of Barry's two daughters marries a brother of Josephine. The other marries Maximilian's only son. Leather Stocking is a story of marriage, but somehow old John remains a widower. He dies peacefully in the end.

Bucolic Martinsburg of 1810 with all its rural marital bliss is marred by a machine. An imagery of disturbing steam opens and closes the romance as Cooke describes the once peaceful village as it is today. In the final analysis, Leather Stocking and Silk is a vehicle for Cooke's pastoral complaint against the "cold prosaic hand" of "modern innovation" (Leather, p. 395). As with Paulding in his Letters from the South, the steam engine for Cooke is the symbol of a soul-debilitating modern age that is moving farther and farther away from American, from Southern agrarian roots. Men, Cooke feels, are becoming automatons as a result.

In the first pages of Leather Stocking, Cooke

pictures contemporary Martinsburg as a transformed, prosperous town whose everyday activities are punctuated by a searing, man-controlling scream: "It is now a busy, bustling town, which daily raises its two thousand heads and hushes its two thousand tongues to listen to the shrill steam-whistle of the cars. . ." (Leather, p. 7). Cooke moves away from the present in his story. He looks back to the "thoughtful, slumbrous quietude" of the old that is now "so completely a thing of the past" (Leather, p. 8).

Time the enemy is a rush of passing railroad cars: ". . . the cars had come, arousing with their shrill scream the long dormant echoes of the quiet countryside" (Leather, p. 244). The silent subservience of the townspeople to the train's whistle suggests a total submission that throws an ironic light on Max's closing protestation at Myer's graveside that even if times change the souls of men do not (Leather, p. 407). Dr. Courtlandt speaks for Cooke when he says, "The present is not equal to the bright past in anything. . ." (Leather, p. 300).

Max is Cooke's spokesman for the tragedy of disruptive change. Looking at Martinsburg on a fall day, looking at the coloring leaves and the progressive town, he thinks: "Now who could have imagined that this

beautiful and well-proportioned nature would change . . . but all things change . . . all these leaves so gayly dancing in the wind will soon be gone . . . they grow old and change" (Leather, p. 269).

Enough, enough, Cooke might have said to himself. He determined for one brief interlude to freeze time in America. He does this in an idyll of Jefferson at William and Mary in 1764. Here there is no premonition of war, no tremor of change, no growing old. He creates a cold pastoral and enjoys every minute of it.

The pastoral design of The Youth of Jefferson[18] is intentionally flat. The story is thinly based on an actual flirtation of young Jefferson at Williamsburg.[19] In Cooke's tale he is called Sir Asinus. His good friend is called "melancholy Jacques." Only the name resembles Shakespeare's Jacques in As You Like It. Cooke, of course, is merely making another pastoral allusion. His Jacques is a love-smitten swain who thinks in terms of shepherds' crooks wreathed with

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[18]Before settling on this misleading title, Cooke had thought of two others: Crooks and Shepherds (or "Flowers," according to the Barrett manuscript) and The Arcadians. Either or both of these would have been better, for the tale really has very little to do with Jefferson's youth or college scrapes. See C. Waller Barrett Misc. Literary Collections, 5295, University of Virginia, Charlottesville; Beaty, pp. 48-49.

[19]Beaty, p. 48.

flowers, and bucolic games on well-trimmed lawns.

Asinus and Jacques love Belinda or Belle-bouche or, more pastorally, Amaryllis. Jacques wins the lady. Another love-smitten swain is Ernest Mowbray. His beloved is haughty Philippa. She rejected him once because she feared he was after her money. For awhile she disguises herself as a boy--Charles Hoffland--and becomes Mowbray's devoted friend. She reveals her ruse to him at the May-day party at Belinda's home, Shadynook. And she reveals her love for him, too.

The story is like a delicate painting on frail porcelain. Cooke does not take it seriously. He refers to it as a "relaxation" in his six-line Preface. He revels in pastoral here, escaping from the contemporary wrorries he shows in The Virginia Comedians and Leather Stocking and, finally, in the grave theme reflected in The Last of the Foresters. Without inhibition or reservation, Cooke creates an Arcadia in eighteenth century Virginia. Jacques, for instance, is the shepherd-lover of pastoral lore. When he is near Belinda, he tells her that he imagines himself in "Arcady," the abode of "sylvan queens--dryads and oreads and naiads." He calls himself Corydon and her Chloe. But he is disconsolate. Whenever he tries to propose to her, he is interrupted.

So he mourns: "Chloes are dead . . . and the reed of Pan is still. The fanes of Arcady are desolate."[20]

Looking back, Cooke is intent only on finding a happy pastoral refuge. "Have you never tried to fill your heart with dreams," he asks, "to close your vision to the present, and to bathe your weary forehead in those golden waters flowing from the dreamland of the past?" (Jefferson, p. 127). His whimsy weaves a sunny spell. In the days of the last century there were

> gay shepherds, gallant in silk stockings and embroidered doublets, carrying their crooks wreathed round with flowers; while over all, the sun laughs gladly, and the breezes bear away the merry voices, sprinkling on the air the joyous music born of lightness and gay-heartedness (Jefferson, pp. 127-128).

He knows better, of course. He shows that he does in The Virginia Comedians.

In The Youth of Jefferson, Cooke sounds like an antebellum Pope in prose. His Jacques says to Belinda: "Love, I think, should inhabit the green fields . . . for love, dearest Miss Belle-bouche, is the essence of freshness and delight . . . and the shepherd's life is certainly the happiest. Ah! to love and be loved

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[20]John Esten Cooke, The Youth of Jefferson: or, A Chronicle of College Scrapes at Williamsburg, in Virginia, A. D. 1764 (New York: Redfield, 1854), pp. 63, 65.

under the skies--in Arcady! But Arcady is everywhere when the true heart is near" (Jefferson, p. 64). At the Shadynook May-day he says to her: "Never did shepherd in the vales of Arcady pay truer homage to his Daphne's charms than I do to those of our hostess!" (Jefferson, p. 230). He has brought with him shepherds' crooks wreathed in flowers. He gives them to the guests, for, he says, that was the custom "in Arcadia" (Jefferson, p. 231).

The happy bygone Virginians play at Shadynook. The Youth of Jefferson is a little breath of perfumed air:

> The damsels acted shepherdesses to perfection, and closely resembled the pictures we are accustomed to see upon the fans which ladies use even to the present day. Their little airs of sylvan simplicity were very pretty; and the gallant gentlemen were not backward in their part. They bowed and simpered until they resembled so many supple-jacks, pulled by the finger of a child (Jefferson, p. 232).

Or manipulated by a dreamy author. When Jacques finally proposes to Belinda and is accepted, he whispers the tale's last words into her ear: "Arcadia at last!" (Jefferson, p. 242).

In his next pastoral romance, Cooke faces time's passing once again. For The Last of the Foresters is another story of mutability, as a gossamer fall gives way to gray winter. As usual, pastoral nostalgia here

triggers the pastoral critical perspective.[21] Changes that were overtaking society and transforming the landscape led Cooke--as they did many other Americans of the early nineteenth century[22]--to a fear of being dispossessed from paradise. War rumbles up in The Virginia Comedians, trains wail in Leather Stocking and Silk. And a heavy clock in Squire Summer's Apple Orchard mansion ticks the minutes marking autumn change and deracination from the land and loss of innocence in The Last of the Foresters (Foresters, p. 311).

The story takes place in and around Winchester, Virginia, in the closing years of the eighteenth century. It involves, principally, two bucolic, youthful romances: that of the last forester, Verty, and Rosebud Summers; and that of the rakish young gentleman, Ralph Ashley, and Fanny Temple. Cooke refers to Verty as Strephon or Corydon, to Rosebud as Chloe or Phillis (Foresters, pp. 68, 138). They court and picnic and fly kites in October in the Valley where "all the noble autumn forests moved away in magic splendor--red, and blue, and golden" (Foresters, p. 192).

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[21]Michael Squires, The Pastoral Novel, p. 14; Irving Howe, Thomas Hardy, p. 2.

[22]Charles L. Sanford, The Quest for Paradise, p. 144.

The prevailing symbol in the tale is this bright, whimsical, hazy fall--an "enchanting dream" time (Foresters, p. 225) which is about to succumb to winter. The young people like the season are also in transition. They are leaving childhood for adulthood. And the change comes hard, especially for Cooke.

Verty is a highly idealized, very youthful hunter, unlike any we have seen in the antebellum Southern romance. He is too pretty, too dreamy, too pastoral. He tells Rosebud he enjoys her singing and her lessons more than his hunting (Foresters, pp. 14-15). Here is how he first appears, "a dream . . . a myth . . . a chimera," as Lawyer Rushton calls him (Foresters, p. 351):

> . . . a young man of about eighteen, mounted on a small, shaggy-coated horse, and clad in a wild forest costume, which defines clearly the outline of a person, slender, vigorous, and graceful. Over his brown forehead and smiling face, droops a wide hat, of soft white fur, below which, a mass of dark chestnut hair nearly covers his shoulders with its exuberant and tangled curls (Foresters, p. 12).

Verty lives in the mountain woods with an old Delaware squaw he calls "ma mere." He thinks she is his mother. But she is not. He is the son of gruff Rushton. At age two the boy had been kidnapped by Indians. His identity is discovered at the end in a fine scene in Rushton's Winchester office. Verty has been coming here to read law in preparation for leaving the forest.

Rushton recognizes a necklace Rosebud is wearing--and which a Jewish pedlar stole from Verty's cabin--as the one his lost son had on the day of his disappearance. Verty finds his real identity. Taken out of the forest, he is no longer a myth.

As Rushton discovers his lost son, in the streets outside Irish and German villagers are enjoying their annual patron saint-day riot. This is a good touch: amid the sounds of a rabble fighting in the village, Verty the dreamy forester becomes Arthur Rushton, the town lawyer's son who is to marry Rosebud and take up residence in the town. Cooke's--Verty's--gentle pastoral of free, youthful innocence ends to the sound of a street brawl. Urban civilization's barbarities take the place of the forest's tranquilities.

The Last of the Foresters is an antebellum Bildungsroman. In his Preface Cooke says that his purpose is to show how the "wild nature" of "a young hunter--a child of the woods--was impressed by the new life and advancing civilization around him. The process of his mental development is the chief aim of book." Cooke actually is more interested in painting pleasant pastoral verbal pictures than in analyzing Verty. His intention is commendable, however. His theme of mutability and lost innocence in the American

forest-garden is profound in its grasp of the American myth.

Increasing worry and trouble mark Verty's process of growing up. In the first place he is made to worry about his identity. In the city he is questioned about himself. In the forest he had only to live in harmony with his surroundings. Tragically, Verty becomes deracinated from his congenial woodland home.

When "ma mere" asks him why he wants to find out who he really is, he answers with bemused and mournful discontent:

> Because the winds are changed and sing new songs; the leaves whisper as I pass, in a new voice; and even the clouds are not what they were to me when I ran after the shadows floating along the hills, and across the hollows. I have changed, ma mere, and the streams talk no more with the same tongue. I hear the flags and water-lilies muttering as I pass, and the world opens on me with a new, strange light (Foresters, p. 365).

For Verty, change is a sad moving away from nature--simple things and honest emotions, like the trees, the fields, and the love for a devoted old Indian woman. "I am not what I was," he says to her in the neat mountain cabin filtered now with golden fall sunlight. "The world is open now and I must be part of it" (Foresters, p. 366).

Poor, dissatisfied Verty: when he puts on a plum-colored suit to meet Rosebud, she responds coldly to him.

She is haughty, like a lady. And he looks like a fop with chestnut locks. He feels uncomfortable in his new clothes. When he dresses in his old forest leathers again, he feels better. Rosebud feels better, too. She forgets the foolish ladylike restraint she is taught at school, the spinster Sallianna's "The Bower of Nature." When Verty returns looking like himself again, she holds out her hand to him, "carried back to the old days by Verty's forest costume. . ." (Foresters, p. 208).

The old days--such an idea delights Cooke. There is stability to be found in looking back: "I love to have the old days back again--back with their very tints, and atmosphere, and sounds and odors--now no more the same" (Foresters, p. 290). Earlier in the romance, he waxed ironically eloquent with complaint over the loss of the past and over uncongenial present changes:

> Let us rejoice that we have become more rational . . . and are busying ourselves with rational affairs--Wall-street, and cent per cent, and dividends. Having become men, we have put away childish things, and among them, the encumbrance of the heart. . . . Let us . . . press on, unfettered, in the glorious race for cash. The golden age of Arcady is gone so long--the new age has come! The crooks that wreathed round with flowers are changed into telegraph posts, and Corydon is on a three-legged stool, busy with ledgers. . . (Foresters, p. 161).

Verty and his friends pass through an outdoor dream of youth toward maturity and disaffection in the town. In the colorful outside happy Verty looks like

"some wild tenant of the American backwoods, taken back to Arcady, and in love with some fair Daphne. . . ." Rosebud looks "like some young shepherdess of Arcady" (Foresters, p. 232). Nature refreshes and purifies them (Foresters, pp. 69, 226). But youth, Cooke sadly muses, is an "elysian time which cannot last for any of us" (Foresters, p. 290).

Exiled from the woods and wilds, at the end Verty is aware of what has happened to him, of what he has lost. He knows his parting was inevitable, too, like growing up. On a winter day after his marriage to Rosebud, he wanders back to his deserted mountain lodge. Cooke does not mention how he is dressed. But one imagines he has discarded his forester's shirt for a white pressed one and a shiny stock. He strokes the head of one of his remaining old hounds, Longears. He thinks with wondering nostalgia "on that strange wild dream of the far past. . ." (Foresters, p. 419).

The city--civilization--has encroached upon and destroyed another antebellum Southern garden. Cooke's pastoral world--like those glimpsed and gone in John Davis, William Alexander Caruthers, James Kirke Paulding--is a transitory place. His dream in The Last of the Foresters reflects the old American delusion of innocence, and a deep sense of its loss. He saw that

the "land had come of age, and age was time and tragedy and the end."[23] Cooke's story of mutability looks toward Faulkner's development of the theme of loss in his finest short story, "The Bear." Like Faulkner's spokesman, Isaac McCaslin, Cooke knew the legend of America was false. The New World began with its share of historic, sinful inheritance.

Still, Cooke like Faulkner-McCaslin is tantalized by the notion of original innocence, which he defines in pastoral imagery, idyllic dream-visions. Verty has to accept his place, however, in a sinful, mutable, commercial city world. But he can keep the dream in his heart, too--that Southern dream of land-based stability and a harmonious and continuous order.[24] It is an ancient dream, and a delightful one for all its hopelessness. It is a dream perennial in the human heart, pervasive in the antebellum Southern romance.

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[23]Loren Baritz, City on a Hill, p. 331.

[24]John Crowe Ransom, "Reconstructed but Unregenerate," I'll Take My Stand, pp. 12-14.

CHAPTER X

CONCLUSION

. . . I pine for lulling music, the report
Of low-voiced waters, in some realm between
The perfect Aidenn, and this clouded scene . . .
A pleasant country, girt with twilight calm,
In whose fair heaven a moon of shadowy round
Wades through a fading fall of rain;
Where drooping lotos-flowers, distilling balm,
Gleam by the drowsy streamlets Sleep hath crown'd,
And Care forgets to sigh, and Patience conquers Pain.

Paul Hamilton Hayne,
"Sonnet" (1860)

What might have been and what has been
Point to one end, which is always present.
Footfalls echo in the memory
Down the passage which we did not take
Towards the door we never opened
Into the rose-garden.

T. S. Eliot, "Burnt Norton"
(1935)

This itch to have things over again, as if life were a film that could be unrolled twice or even made to work backward . . . was it possibly the root of all evil?

C. S. Lewis, Perelandra
(1944)

Pastoral flourishes in times of urbanization.[1] And its landscape is impregnated with a sense of loss.[2]

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[1]Frank Kermode, ed., English Pastoral Poetry: From the Beginnings to Marvell (London: George G. Harrap, 1952), p. 15.

[2]Laurence Lerner, The Uses of Nostalgia, p. 214.

Fearful of change, the South and its romancers sadly, futilely resisted the new day dawning in America of financial, industrial domination.[3] Antebellum Southern novelists looked away from their troubled times[4] mostly to a past or sometimes to a future vision of a protected, peaceful idyllic life on the soil.

They felt a pastoral-agrarian way had in itself a positive spiritual good. This is a concept that occurs in the work of every important antebellum Southern author except Poe.[5] It is in their pastoral designs that many antebellum novels lose the superficiality--the refusal to be critical of Southern or national society--that Louis D. Rubin says mars the writing of the pre-war South.[6]

With its roots running far back into observations of the South made in the sixteenth, seventeenth,

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[3]Avery O. Craven, The Growth of Southern Nationalism, 1848-1861, pp. 396-397.

[4]Warren S. Tyron, A Mirror for Americans (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1952), II, 231; Charles S. Sydnor, The Development of Southern Sectionalism, 1819-1848, p. 336.

[5]Edd Winfield Parks, "Agrarianism as a Theme in Southern Literature: The Ante-Bellum Period," Georgia Review, 11 (Summer, 1957), 147.

[6]Louis D. Rubin, Jr., The Writer in the South (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1972), p. 30.

and eighteenth centuries, the antebellum pastoral design is a significant variation of the traditional genre because it deals "finally with the modern world."[7] The man of letters, after all, as Allen Tate says, is a critic.[8] In the critical element integral in its pastoral pattern, antebellum romance deals with problems facing not only the South but also the nation as a whole in an industrializing world that was losing its old rural orientation. Southern writers felt that the machine was endangering the individual dignity of man.[9] Subtly, they complain about it in their pastoral romances.

Like the English pastoral novel Michael Squires discusses, antebellum romances such as those we have considered "provide an index of the transition from rural to urban-industrial modes of life" in America. They offer a perspective on the rapid historical changes of the time. Thus a typical defensive pastoral attitude runs through antebellum romance. For in it, however fleetingly, ironically, tragically, authors like John

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[7]Michael Squires, The Pastoral Novel, p. 211.

[8]Essays of Four Decades (Chicago: Swallow Press, 1968), p. 4.

[9]C. Hugh Holman, "Summary: The Utility of Myth" in "Agrarianism as a Theme in Southern Literature," 162.

Pendleton Kennedy, William Alexander Caruthers, William Gilmore Simms, and John Esten Cooke unavoidably look back with nostalgia from the present they criticize to a happier time and place where life was simpler and more meaningful in an integrated rural community, a unified, quiet culture which have been lost.[10]

In its backward and sometimes forward glances to a lost or future Golden Age, the antebellum pastoral design reveals the tendency to cultural alienation that for two hundred years has been a part of the American literary mind. This is an alienation based on a literary and cultural opposition, again, to modernity. In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries it registers a sense of the loss of traditional classical, Christian values of the West in the face of an increasingly technological and consumption-oriented society.[11]

Even more universally, the theme of the loss of sylvan paradise in Southern antebellum romance ties in to what Northrop Frye describes as the perpetual, systematic re-creation in literature of fundamental myths and archetypes. Taken together, these comprise a mythic representation of human experience on the overall model

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[10]Squires, pp. 218, 85.

[11]Lewis P. Simpson, The Dispossessed Garden, p. 65.

of the Fall and expulsion from Eden.[12] American literature--and particularly that of the antebellum South--is filled with echoes of "an archetypal Paradise Lost . . . symbolic of the . . . discovery that the New World was full of the old flaws."[13] This is the great tragedy in American literature[14] that is woven into the antebellum pastoral design--this sense of the loss of the idyllic, Edenic garden place of green repose and security.

In antebellum romance the Southern agrarian ideal becomes a pastoral design, a recollection of Arcadia, of an Eden that is tragically doomed or hesitantly rejected for the exigencies of real life. No American novelist has been able to escape a direct confrontation with the American dream of the land as a garden of redemption.[15] But the dream is always lost. It is impossible to return to the agrarian-pastoral vision of Robert Beverley, William Byrd, Thomas Jefferson,

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[12]Northrop Frye, Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957), pp. 188-200.

[13]Stanley Bank, American Romanticism, p. 13.

[14]Loren Baritz, City on a Hill, p. 330.

[15]David W. Noble, The Eternal Adam and the New World Garden (New York: George Braziller, 1968), pp. 71, 101, 225.

William Bartram. This is the deep tragic awareness that permeates the Southern antebellum pastoral design from John Davis to John Esten Cooke.

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VITA

Jan Bakker was born in Manhattan, New York, on January 27, 1936. After removing with his parents to Delaplane, Virginia, he attended preparatory school in the Shenandoah Valley--the Massanutten Military Academy in Woodstock. He was graduated in 1954 and entered the University of Virginia. Here he earned the Bachelor of Arts in English in 1958.

He had some commercial experience at Woodward and Lothrop in Washington, D. C. And six months as a Second Lieutenant of Infantry. He returned to the University of Virginia and received the Master of Arts in English in 1961.

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