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I am submitting herewith a dissertation written by Sandra Lynn Ballard entitled "Harriette Simpson Arnow's Central Novel: Hunter's Horn." I have examined the final copy of this dissertation for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, with a major in English.

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HARRIETTE SIMPSON ARNOW'S CENTRAL NOVEL:

HUNTER'S HORN

A Dissertation

Presented for the

Doctor of Philosophy

Degree

University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Sandra Lynn Ballard

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for Bobby

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## ABSTRACT

Harriette Simpson Arnow's second novel, Hunter's Horn is central to her published writings. It develops characters, motifs, and themes from at least five of her early short stories ("A Mess of Pork," "Marigolds and Mules," "Washerwoman's Day," "The Hunter," and "The Hunters") as well as from her first novel, Mountain Path. Hunter's Horn introduces the Kentucky setting, characters, themes, and literary techniques which appear in her third novel, The Dollmaker. Arnow's Hunter's Horn reflects her interest in historical accuracy and shows parallels with her two social histories, Seedtime on the Cumberland and Flowering of the Cumberland. Her two final published novels--The Weedkiller's Daughter and The Kentucky Trace: A Novel of the American Revolution--also develop important themes, motifs, and characters from Arnow's second novel. Though often overlooked, Hunter's Horn integrates the writings of Harriette Simpson Arnow and deserves reevaluation as her central work and as an important novel in American literature.

## PREFACE

This study offers reasons for placing Harriette Simpson Arnow's Hunter's Horn at the center of her writings.

Chapter I introduces Harriette Simpson Arnow as a writer: it surveys her works and their critical reception and relates her biography to her writing, particularly as these details are relevant to Hunter's Horn.

Following this introductory chapter, Chapter II focuses in more detail on the plot, characters, technique, and themes of Hunter's Horn. It examines the literary critics who often compare this novel with other American literature, especially that involving "the hunt." This chapter provides all of the necessary background for the subsequent chapters.

Chapter III initiates the argument for the importance of Hunter's Horn in the Arnow canon by discussing five short stories and the elements in them which foreshadow Hunter's Horn.

Chapter IV examines Mountain Path and its characters to show how the ideas introduced in the novel are developed and extended in Hunter's Horn.

Chapter V extends the argument for the importance of Hunter's Horn as the work which introduces the themes, as well as such techniques as skillful descriptions and unsentimental characterizations, which appear in The

Dollmaker. Arnow's concern with the exposure of hypocrisy, the struggle of the individual to live in nature, the challenge to maintain family unity, and the conflict between individual conscience and social conscience all track forward from Hunter's Horn to this novel.

Chapter VI concludes the study by discussing Hunter's Horn in connection with Arnow's two non-fiction books, Seedtime on the Cumberland and Flowering of the Cumberland, and her two final novels, The Weedkiller's Daughter and The Kentucky Trace. Arnow's interest in historical accuracy, evidenced in her non-fiction, reflects an even earlier concern with historically accurate descriptions in Hunter's Horn. This chapter examines the reflections of Hunter's Horn in the form and substance of her other writing and summarizes the merits of Hunter's Horn which make it worthy of reevaluation both in the Arnow canon and, more broadly, in American literature.

The well-deserved attention which Arnow received for The Dollmaker dramatizes the public's unfair perception of her as a one-novel author. For too long, Hunter's Horn has been passed over as a lesser accomplishment. However, anyone who reads the novel cannot help but see its unflinching realism and universality. It deserves attention not as a regional or Appalachian novel, but as a distinctive American novel.

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## CHAPTER I

### HARRIETTE SIMPSON ARNOW'S IMAGINATIVE BEGINNINGS

Harriette Simpson Arnow often admitted that for as long as she could remember she had wanted to write. She explained that her family's storytelling and reading stirred her imagination long before she was old enough to go to school:

I think my reason for wanting to write came from stories that I was told in the evenings before bedtime. My sister who was two years older than I also read; she read the stories I heard. My paternal grandmother came quite often for long visits. Her stories almost always had unhappy or horrendous endings; however, I soon learned it was better to think up better endings to the stories in my head than to cry myself to sleep or shiver over a ghost tale half the night. So I began to write stories in my head. I could change stories that I couldn't abide. (Arnow "Writing and Region")

To illustrate her point, Arnow recounted to Detroit News interviewer Alex Kotlowitz the first story her grandmother ever told her.

It was the tale of a woman who, on her way to visit a neighbor, encountered a herd of wild hogs. Frightened and trapped by a fence, the woman flung her baby to the hogs, which was eaten alive while she climbed the fence and escaped.  
(18)

Because that story caused her to cry herself to sleep as a five-year-old, she "rewrote" it in her head so that it had a

happy ending, though happy endings have not been typical of her fiction.

Arnow's fiction often forces readers to face harsh realities, some of which are based on real experiences; her stories are the canvases on which she paints bold strokes colored by memory and imagination. This chapter will introduce this writer by surveying her works and their critical reception as well as showing the relevance of her life to her writing.

Her grandmother's grim, haunting tale reappeared in one of her earliest short stories, "A Mess of Pork," published in one of the "little magazines" of the 1930's--The New Talent (1935). Published before she was married, under the name Harriette L. Simpson, it is the horrifying story of a young widow whose husband, "a good man" who "made good whiskey," was left by "the law" in an inescapable box canyon to be eaten alive by wild boars. The couple's son knew well the story his "granma" always told about that canyon: she said "a neighbor woman" had gotten lost with her baby in the box canyon where his father had died.

They found the buckles on her shoes, and pieces of the baby's dress. It was red lindsey-woolsey. Hogs--them hogs will eat anything. They're hard to kill too. If you do shoot one there's a dozen others." (The New Talent 7)

The young widow in the story, the mother of six, cannot rest until she takes revenge on the law officers who killed

her husband. She is raising a large black boar that will "make a fine mess of pork" (6) as part of her elaborate scheme which plays on the officers' greed and ultimately leads the law men to the same fate her husband met. After she tricks them into entering the canyon where the wild hogs live, where the rock walls are too steep to climb out once they have entered, the men scream wildly; when the woman's accomplice, the narrator, removes his hands from his ears, he reports,

I listened and I heard them. Their teeth made crunching sounds. The black boar's teeth when he ate walnuts had sounded that way. I knew there were no walnuts down there. (The New Talent 11)

Arnow was twenty-six years old when "A Mess of Pork" was published; she was not yet six when she first heard her grandmother's story. But her own shocking story shows at least three characteristics important to her later fiction: first, like most writers, she did not hesitate to transfer and transform in her writing those experiences which made their mark on her memory and imagination. Second, vivid descriptions and unsentimental characterizations are qualities which became even more evident in her novels. Third, she likes to jolt readers at the end of a story or novel.

Another of Arnow's early short stories also clearly shows these traits. "Washerwoman's Day" was accepted by

Robert Penn Warren for the prestigious Southern Review (Winter 1936) and was later anthologized both in Brooks, Purser, and Warren's An Approach to Literature and in their Anthology of Stories from "The Southern Review". Harriette L. Simpson's "Washerwoman's Day" exposes a community's sanctimonious reaction to a poor woman's death and introduces a theme and situation which receives fuller treatment in her novel Hunter's Horn, a comparison which will be discussed at length in Chapter III.

Arnow's imagination was fed by others. Her grandmother was not the sole storyteller in her family. She credited her father with telling "wonderful ghost tales as well as humorous stories," such stories as "The Man Who Thought He Could Do His Wife's Work Better Than She Could" ("Personal Recollections" 11) and "what we today call folk tales such as Old Granddaddy Grumble" and "Jack and the Beanstalk" (Address 1). Arnow not only enjoyed her father's stories as a child but also admitted that the years had enhanced her appreciation for him:

Our father also recited much of the verse he had learned as pupil and teacher; and better yet, sang a great deal, not the mournful hymns so beloved by our mother, but sometimes a rollicking tune such as "It's a Long, Long Way to Tipperary"--I'm not certain that is the name--or "Ride Around the Canebrake" which our mother declared to be a sinful dance tune unfit for the ears of young girls. Other times he sang sad songs on the order of "The Letter Edged in Black." He also knew many riddles. I never at the time

appreciated him, or much of anything else heard from others. I felt that all learning would come from school and books. ("Personal Recollections" 11)

Arnow recognized the impact of these stories and songs on her choice of writing as a career: "now, I feel things heard as a very young child influenced my wish to write more than any other one thing" ("Personal Recollections" 11-12).

Arnow's earliest memories were of Wayne County, Kentucky, where she was born on July 7, 1908, and Pulaski County, Kentucky, where she and her family lived when she was a child. In Old Burnside (OB), an autobiographical history of the town where she grew up, Arnow described her childhood and explained that her father had once been a country school teacher, as had her mother for ten years before her marriage, though "the low pay had forced him to try other work," even before he had married (OB 30).

Elias Thomas Simpson had married Mollie Jane Denney in 1905 and worked as a tool dresser in the Wayne County oil fields, where he first took his family to live. Oil royalties from his father's land supplemented his regular income (OB 29). Then, in March of 1913, when the oil fields in Wayne County were "drilled out," he took a job at a veneer mill and moved his family from Bronson to nearby Burnside, Kentucky, in Pulaski County, where they lived first on the edge of town, then on Tyree's Knob, overlooking Burnside. There they raised five daughters and a son;

Harriette was their second child (OB 31). The family's life in Burnside was interrupted once, from 1918 to 1921, by a move to the oil fields of Lee County, Kentucky, where Elias Simpson again took a job as a tool dresser.

But in 1913, the move to Burnside especially pleased Mrs. Simpson because the town had a good grade school and a high school. She had enrolled her eldest daughter in rural schools since the age of four or five, and at age seven, Elizabeth was already in the fourth grade (OB 32).

Harriette Simpson began first grade in 1914 when she was six. Because Mrs. Simpson had already decided to prepare her daughters to be schoolteachers, as she and her husband had once been, she pushed the children to do well in school.

Mrs. Simpson's mother, "Granma" Denney, saw to another part of her granddaughters' educations--their religious training. Arnow recalled one of her grandmother's visits when

Granma Denney had been pleased to learn I could recite the Beatitudes and the Lord's Prayer, but was scandalized when I could repeat only two, the shortest ones, of the Ten Commandments, and could get no further in the twenty-third Psalm than 'green pastures.' I went to work first on the Ten Commandments. [And] I often studied [the twenty-third Psalm] under Granma's supervision when my afterschool chores were finished." (OB 98)

Arnow's training shows in her novels, which include characters who obviously have studied the Bible. There are

Bible-quoting characters in each of the mountain trilogy novels--Louisa's landlady, Corie, in Mountain Path; Milly Ballew in Hunter's Horn; and Gertie Nevels in The Dollmaker, characters that will later be discussed at length.

Because of, or perhaps despite, the constant pressure from her mother to excel in school, the young Harriette did well--in every subject except penmanship (OB 94). In fourth grade, she enjoyed the shift in emphasis from penmanship to composition. Miss Amelia Saunders had her students write many compositions, and "best of all," Arnow thought, "some could be imaginary" (OB 115). As a nine-year-old, she received her first recognition for her writing with a story about "something I'd always wanted--a writing desk" (Berea Alumnus 7). She described a big writing desk full of cubby holes and drawers and wrote of what she imagined had happened to it throughout its life (Eckley 25). When Arnow's teacher liked the story and read it to the class, it was the first attention and encouragement she received for her writing.

Arnow admitted she "remembered less of the fourth grade than of events at home during the year," for on April 6, 1917, the United States declared war on Germany. Newspaper accounts of the war often dominated the adult conversations at home. The veneer plant where her father worked was busy "cutting veneer to be used in airplanes needed for what everybody called 'the war effort,'" and all over Burnside

"store windows were filled with posters of Uncle Sam asking YOU to do this or that" (OB 112).

A disturbance more important to the family than war rationing was her father's change in jobs. With the price of oil ever increasing, his royalty checks from the oil fields in Wayne County, KY, were also larger. A few weeks after Christmas in 1917, Arnow's father told the family that he had been offered a job as a tool dresser in an oil field in Wolfe County. His pay would be considerably more than at the veneer mill, but he would have to live away from home.

Another major disturbance in the Simpson household was a death in the family. Arnow recalled the day in June of 1918 when she heard "a strange cry and sobbing" coming from their mother, who had just received the news of the death of her mother, "Granma" Denney. Mrs. Simpson said between sobs, "I have no mother now" (OB 115). Mrs. Denney had died in her sleep, at the age of sixty-seven (OB 116).

Arnow comments that her mother called Granma Denney's death "untimely" and "unexpected" because her own grandparents had lived into their eighties (OB 116). Though Mrs. Simpson thought "it didn't seem fair," Arnow points out that

mama was forgetting that Granma Denney had been born Harriette Le Grand Foster; she had lived with or among Denneys for forty-two years, but was, I thought, still Harriette Le Grand Foster when she died." (OB 116)

Ten-year-old Harriette Simpson was soon to become acquainted with other deaths in the late summer and fall of 1918 as the Spanish influenza epidemic swept through Burnside. In a sense, Arnow remarked, her childhood ended in 1918. Arnow remembered,

the opening bell for school rang on a bright September morning while I stood behind the barn and cried. Mama had decided we should stay at home because the Spanish influenza epidemic was spreading. No, we wouldn't get behind in our studies; she'd teach us at home." (OB 117)

But being taught by her mother brought no particular pleasure because, she explained, "Mama often reminded me that Elizabeth, only two years and a few months older than I, was four grades ahead of me" (OB 118).

Then, to make matters worse, her father left home to start the job he had taken as a tool dresser in the oil fields of Lee and Wolfe counties. Arnow wrote that "Papa's absence left a hole nothing could fill," though "his many letters helped," and she recalled

I found some consolation in writing to him. He somehow managed to read my miserable scrawls, for he always commented on what Elizabeth and I had written. Yet all the letters in the world could not take his place. (OB 114)

In 1918, when the separation grew to be too much for the family, Elias Simpson moved his family from Burnside to

live with him near his work, outside of Torrent, Kentucky. Since there were no schools there, the girls continued to study at home for the rest of the school year. There on the oil field, Harriette Simpson was exposed to the sights and sounds which she would later use as the raw materials for her first published short story, "Marigolds and Mules." It appeared in Kosmos (1934), one of the little magazines which paid in complimentary copies. It is the disturbing story of a boy, the son of an oil driller, who learns first-hand the dangers inherent in working and living on an oil field.

The story suggests that its writer clearly knew of the dangers: in Old Burnside, Arnow described the oil field hazards she learned of while her family lived on Bobbie's Ridge, near the site of what is now Kentucky Natural Bridge State Park (120). She wrote:

There were accidents at various drilling rigs, and men were killed by the unexpected explosions of the natural gas that came from all the wells. The most dangerous work was hauling or mixing nitroglycerin; there were many stories of men blown to bits by the stuff. If a cartload blew, nothing was left but a wide hole in the road; horseflesh could not be distinguished from manflesh. (OB 121)

In "Marigolds and Mules," the character Mrs. Madigan, whose husband Joe is a co-worker of the boy's father, picks a bouquet of marigolds to send with the boy for her husband, who hates the look and smell of oil, but enjoys the smell of marigolds "after the oil" (3). Mrs. Madigan naively has no

fear for Joe's safety, though the narrator has lost a sister to an oil storage tank explosion, and his mother, when she sees the marigolds, comments that "there is no place for flowers. Not here" (3). The boy's mother knows the danger when she hears that Joe's horse has been lamed and he has borrowed mules to haul the oil. She says, "It is good there are no children. . . . No, . . . he is not dead. But his wife gathers flowers for him before he is home. He drives rough mules. The mud is deep" (3).

Just before the explosion that kills Joe, the narrator finishes his job of sawing wood and looks up at a star:

It looked so high. Away up there above the gas and the oil and the dirt. It was a big star, orange red. It made me think of marigolds. It looked the way they smelled. (6)

Having finished his task and his musings, the boy learns of Joe's death and goes to the scene of the explosion. Along the way, he find bloody pieces of mule and one of Joe's hands. One of the oil men at the scene where these parts are being burned declares, "Hell will be an oil field," to which the horrified narrator responds, "Hell won't be so bad. . . . There won't be any God damned stars there. . . . Pretty stars to shine on bloody mules and dirty, bloody men" (6).

"Marigolds and Mules" shows Arnow's early treatment of a recurrent theme in subsequent writings: that is, the

coexistence of beauty and ugliness. Over and over in her fiction, Arnow unflinchingly juxtaposes the attractive and the repulsive, a theme which will receive more specific examination in the course of this study. Her earlier comment about exercising her prerogative to change what she couldn't "abide" suggested that she would write happy endings, but as this discussion shows, she examined harsh realities even in her earliest published fiction.

Arnow did not receive any encouragement to write from her mother, who was more interested in her command of grammar and other school subjects. After a year of study under her mother, Arnow learned that "during that year I had apparently done two grades" because in 1919 her mother entered her as a seventh grader when she and her sister Elizabeth were sent to a small boarding school named St. Helens. Arnow repeatedly referred to St. Helens as a "cram school," where she finished seventh and eighth grades in one year but, nevertheless, "knew nothing" when she left ("Personal Recollections" 13).

In any case, her mother was pleased to have a twelve-year-old daughter ready to enter high school. Harriette began high school at Stanton Academy, a Presbyterian school in the county seat of Powell County, where one of her teachers gave her praise and encouragement for her writing.

Arnow recorded the event because "it never happened again" in school.

Her family then moved back to Burnside where she entered Burnside High School in the fall of 1921. At the age of thirteen, she "felt so old, so changed during the almost three years" that she had been away from Burnside; "somewhere, sometime, childhood had slipped away" (OB 123).

Though Arnow's mother did not approve of her daughter's writing, she believed typing was a useful skill and so offered an agreeable deal to the thirteen-year-old Harriette, who wanted a typewriter because, she privately thought, editors would not be able to read her handwriting. Years later, Arnow told a Detroit News reporter that her mother had bought a second cow and said, "You learn to milk this cow and sell the milk and buy a secondhand typewriter." With such incentive, she did learn to milk and soon had her typewriter (Warfel 24 May 1949).

During her junior year in high school she wrote the first story she submitted for publication. "The creeping iris and other wild flowers in the woods served as my characters and gave the action, though some of that action came from a thunderstorm." She then

sneaked out some of mother's writing paper, typed it single-spaced on that paper, using an old Oliver, folded the thing up as it shouldn't have been, and sent it to Child Life. (Address 4)

Her story was returned in a big envelope, typed double-spaced on standard sized typing paper. She described the the editor's response:

There was a letter saying they had liked the story but couldn't use it now. Would I please try them again? They had retyped the story because someone, in handling it, had torn it. Years later, I wondered if the story had been torn because what Child Life had done, in addition to writing a letter asking to see more material, they had shown me how to prepare a manuscript for submission to an editor and how it should be mailed and so forth. At that time, I didn't have sense enough to know that a letter was a great deal better than a rejection slip. (Address 4)

Arnow felt "cast down" by the rejection, and when her mother found out what she had done, her reaction did not make Arnow feel any better:

Our mother was furious, and I had a great lecture: here I was wasting my time, her writing paper, and money for postage on scribbling, which would never bring me, anybody, anything except disenquietment [sic] and sorrow. She was telling me this, she explained, only for my own good because it would be far better to have a steady job like teaching school, as she had done, ten years, for ten years before her marriage, than wasting time on scribbling. (Address 4)

Despite the lecture, Arnow remarked, "I continued to want to scribble" (Address 4), and understandably, she thereafter did her writing "chiefly in secret" ("Personal Recollections" 13).

Unable to change her mother's determination that her daughters would be schoolteachers, Arnow believed she was destined for teacher's training at a Normal School after graduating from high school at the age of sixteen. However, she was able to convince her mother to allow her to go to Berea College.

I had chosen Berea mostly because that school required fewer hours of education for an elementary school teaching certificate than did the state's normal schools. This gave me an opportunity to take botany and geology as electives. (OB 125)

Arnow said that from 1924 to 1926, she "put in two years at Berea," where she "met neither student nor teacher interested in writing" ("Personal Recollections" 13). In fact, she recalled rooming with women students who actually wept when they had a paper to write. Arnow admitted, "I got so tired of their complaining I offered to write their papers for free. I loved to write" (Address 5).

Nearly eighteen, with teaching certificate in hand, Arnow "could find no trustee who was interested in a young teacher with no experience" (Address 5). She would have continued in school if she had had the money. But at last, the Pulaski County school superintendent called about a job vacancy. Arnow recalled:

He gave the school a pretty name which I have forgotten, but I soon found myself in what was locally known as Possom Trot school district.

Only nineteen students were enrolled in the school. Older ones often had to stay home to help in some way. They were the sons and daughters of small or subsistence farmers. Young ones . . . couldn't walk four or five miles to school in bad weather, especially since some didn't get shoes until late November and early December. Mail came twice weekly, as I had come, by muleback. (Address 5)

Arnow described the rural area where she went to teach in 1926 as a place with few roads, no cars, and no electricity: "country schools like the churches and the home had to depend on kerosene and carbide lights" (Introduction to Mountain Path vi). She described "the average school" as

a one room frame building, a miscellaneous collection of seats its sole equipment, no toilets of any kind, water from the closest spring, hogs sleeping under the floor, and almost no help from the State of Kentucky." (MP vii)

Education, when Arnow began teaching, was

on the whole considered a local problem. The back hill child, if he wanted any beyond the eighth grade, had to come from a family affluent enough to pay the expenses of studying away from home. (MP vii)

Usually the local teacher of the one-room school boarded with the family of one of the students, as Harriette Simpson did. Despite the hardships caused by the isolation of the place, Arnow described her first year of teaching as a "delight" because "it was not only a most interesting place, but there was time to read and try to write" ("Personal

Recollections" 13). There was also time to learn a great deal.

She noted the similarities between the speech of these people and that of Shakespearean characters:

I soon realized that my landlady was perfectly correct in saying and telling me that her husband was 'carrying' her mule and the wagon to town. That meant the county town many miles away. Because, by then, after hearing 'carrying' used in such ways, I had to look it up in the dictionary. It means, meant, 'to take with,' as Falstaff was carried. Nobody picked him up; he went with a man. (Address 6)

The young teacher "began to realize that most words had more than one meaning, and a perfect synonym for a word was almost impossible to find." These Kentucky people helped her to realize how "rich" the English language is (Address 6). As will be discussed later, Arnow's prose demonstrates that awareness.

Living with these people taught her about their poverty as well as their riches. She learned that "no hill community is or ever was a homogeneous unit of society":

Families with enough good land for corn to fatten hogs, cattle and sheep on the open range, might, and on the whole did, live with a fair degree of comfort. It was almost invariably with such families or at least among the more prosperous in the community that I and other teachers boarded. The very poor we seldom saw. Their children did not come to school. Even among these the poverty of our great cities was not there: a man did not need money to keep his family warm when all around was wooded land. (MP viii-ix)

Arnow explains that some might suffer from poor nutrition and inadequate clothing, but the small farmer's family did not starve or die from exposure. The young teacher also learned that the lack of students with glasses did not mean that there was no need for them; she explained, "food they could grow; shoes and optical fees they could not" (MP ix). Furthermore, "they could not even dream over shoes in a mail-order catalog, for even then in the booming twenties mail-order companies wasted few catalogs on back hill people with no cash" (MP ix).

Despite the hardships that she watched her students and their families face, Arnow saw "much that was beautiful" in this remote Pulaski County community:

For those who like open fires, hounds, children, human talk and song instead of TV and radio, the wisdom of the old who had seen all of life from birth to death, none of it hidden behind institutional walls, there was a richness of human life and dignity seldom found in the United States today. (MP viii)

Realizing the rarity of the time and place where she had lived, Harriette Simpson Arnow wrote years later, in the Introduction to a new edition of her first novel, Mountain Path (1963):

The world I first saw in the summer of 1926 is gone; more completely vanished than ancient Greece and Rome. Different from Pompeii under the ashes, it cannot be excavated and re-created. Pine and sassafras roots destroy, instead of

preserve, as do ashes; and anyway, who can excavate a fiddle tune, the coolness of a cave now choked with the water of Lake Cumberland, or the creakings and sighings of an old log house? (MP xiv)

Arnow knew very well one way that she could preserve this place and time; she could try to capture it with words. By 1936 she had translated that first year of teaching experience into her first novel, Mountain Path.

Harriette Louisa Simpson's Mountain Path is the story of Louisa Sheridan, a young schoolteacher from Lexington, who accepts her first teaching position when she cannot afford to continue her education. She travels to a remote place that she cannot locate on any map--Cal Valley in the Kentucky mountains, where she arrives on muleback and boards with Lee Buck Calhoun's family, known as the Cals. Lee Buck Cal, who is husband to Corie and father to Louisa's student Rie, is a farmer and a school trustee. "Teacher" instructs a small number of eager pupils in the one-room school and learns that "illiterate" does not necessarily mean "ignorant." She also slowly learns about mountain ways and the mysterious "old trouble," a feud between the Cals and the Barnetts.

Mountain Path received appreciative reviews in the New York Herald Tribune, Saturday Review, and the New York Times. The Tribune's Alfred Kazin recognized that "Louisa is something of a self-portrait, but it is that

very closeness that gives the book its intimate revelation and occasional power" (6 Sept. 1936 X10). Though he criticized Arnow's use of such stock material as a mountain feud and expressed his hope that there would someday be a "Kentucky novel" without a feud, he praised her realistic descriptions and her sympathetic but uncondescending treatment of hill characters. He praised Louisa's narrative as one that carries "weight" and "conviction" (6 Sept. 1936 X14).

Saturday Review's Curie Cabot claimed that Mountain Path's "restrained intensity" makes it "a book to remember" (13). She praised the novel's "distinct individuality," its "fine, simple prose," its "authentic picture of mountain people," and "its story, beautifully told" (13). Cabot wrote that "certain incidents, touching old chords of mountain superstition, seem to release long vibrations of legend"; she called Mountain Path a novel of "stark beauty and sharp impact" (13).

In addition to writing short stories and her first novel in the 1930s, Harriette Simpson also wrote a guide to Ohio for the Federal Writers Project, where she met Harold Arnow in 1938. He was one of her editors; it was, she said, "the first and only time anyone told [her] what to write" (27). They married in 1939 and moved to a farm they bought near Keno, Kentucky. They called their home the "Submarginal Manor" and planned to do subsistence farming

and to write. But the Arnows soon learned that all they had time for was subsistence.

When World War II began, Harold Arnow left the farm to take a job as a reporter in Detroit. Harriette Arnow said about their farm that she "despised the life" but "loved the place and the people." She "not only learned much, but in trying to do what the hill people did with ease," she said, "admiration grew with understanding" ("Personal Recollections" 14). She admitted to feeling particular frustration because an editor from Macmillian had contacted her and wanted to see a novel manuscript (14). (Covici-Freide, publisher of Mountain Path, had gone out of business.) Arnow did "practically no writing" there, "though Hunter's Horn was in [her] head" (14).

She did not confide to many all that had happened to them while on their Kentucky farm. Her friend and confidante, John Flynn, says that "seldom did she discuss the death of her babies," though there are two small graves beside her husband's and her own in Kentucky. She told Flynn that she "was just no good at child bearing," that their first child, a son, was stillborn, and that their third child, a daughter, died a few hours after birth (Flynn unpub. ms. 18).

In between, in 1941, their daughter Marcella had been born healthy, though Arnow often worried about her,

especially since they lived in such an isolated place. When Marcella was nearly three years old, she became ill with a high fever and "quivered as though she might go into convulsions." Arnow, alone with her because Harold was at work in Detroit, knew that "no car could get out of that road from the farm to the top of the hill." As she told Flynn,

I carried her up the hill, so muddy I couldn't have gotten her out any other way, and got a ride in a coal truck, which took her to Burnside. There she was doctored. (Flynn 18)

Readers of The Dollmaker no doubt recall the novel's unforgettable opening scene in which Gertie Nevels carries her three-year-old child Amos by muleback to the highway, where she stops a car to take them into town to a doctor. Before they can travel to town, Gertie must use her carving knife to open her son's windpipe so that he can breathe. When Flynn asked if there were a connection between Marcella and Amos, between Gertie and herself, Arnow replied, "I couldn't have cut into Marcella's throat . . . I don't think" (Flynn 19). But few acquainted with Arnow could doubt that she was as tough as Gertie.

Determined to prevent the recurrence of such an emergency, Arnow arranged to rent a place for herself and her daughter in Burnside. Then she went back to the farm and sold the heating stove and the beef cattle to

raise enough money to live in town. Her husband was disappointed, she said, because he had wanted to return to live on the farm, but he had been able to come back "once, only once, during the year or more" before she and Marcella joined him in Detroit in 1944 (Flynn 17).

In Detroit, living in the Emerson Housing Project, wartime housing, Harriette Arnow both finished writing her second novel, Hunter's Horn, and became one of the immigrants that she would write about in her third novel. Before beginning Hunter's Horn, she had spent some time on a novel, Between the Flowers, a manuscript which she eventually abandoned and which remains in the Arnow Special Collection at the University of Kentucky. But fortunately she did not abandon Hunter's Horn, which she began before Marcella was born and continued to work on until her daughter was more than seven years old. By then Arnow also had a two-year-old son, Thomas, and had already published two stories from the manuscript. In July of 1942, Esquire magazine published "The Two Hunters."

The Atlantic Monthly published the second story, "The Hunter," from the manuscript of Hunter's Horn. Arnow honored her husband by naming him as co-author of this piece. A note in Atlantic Monthly identifies "H. Arnow" as "the pen name of a husband-and-wife collaboration" (Nov. 1944 79). Harold Arnow, for nearly forty-five years, assumed many of the traditional duties of a writer's spouse; he was his

wife's typist, editor, and best friend (Kotlowitz 18). He told a reporter that "Harriette doesn't care if she gets the publicity or not, but I like to see her get it" (18).

In 1949, she did receive publicity for her second novel when Hunter's Horn became a best seller. It was offered as a Fiction Book Club selection and named by the New York Times Book Review as one of the year's ten best novels. Saturday Review's national critics' poll called it the Book of the Year, despite competition with George Orwell's 1984.

This story of a poor Kentucky family and their struggles to survive while the father, Nunnely Ballew, relentlessly pursues a red fox called King Devil, was praised in the New York Times for expressing "the warmth, the beauty, the sadness and the ache of life itself" which "are not even once absent from her pages" (28 May 1949 4). The reviewer was "deeply grateful for the experience of reading something that has the feel of a classic about it" (28 May 1949 4). Reissued in a paperback edition which is now out of print (Avon 1979), and more recently in hardback (Univ. Press of Kentucky 1986), Hunter's Horn still has that feel of a classic about it.

Arnow's third novel, The Dollmaker, published in 1954, received overwhelmingly favorable reviews and great popularity. The story of Gertie Nevels and her family, who live first in the Kentucky hills and then in wartime housing

in Detroit, is a powerful, artful work. In 1954 it was runner-up to Faulkner's A Fable for the National Book Award. Saturday Review's national critics' poll voted it the best novel of the year, and Arnow received a number of other honors and awards for the novel. In 1971, Joyce Carol Oates acknowledged it as "our most unpretentious American masterpiece" (NYTBR 24 Jan. 1971 2). It has been continuously in print since it was first published and has been translated into seven foreign languages, in addition to "six or seven more" in condensed editions of the work (Snyder 341-2).

Despite the great popularity of The Dollmaker, particularly since the revival of interest caused by the 1984 ABC-TV adaptation starring Jane Fonda, Arnow often defended Hunter's Horn as her best book. She was understandably unhappy that the popularity of The Dollmaker had caused the public to perceive her as a one-book author. But more than that, Flynn explains, as a result of various publishing agreements she had entered, "rights to her books had been tied in knots, preventing Mountain Path, Hunter's Horn, and The Dollmaker from being printed in trilogy form," as she had intended (unpub. ms. 41). (Though she did not live to see it, she would have been pleased to know the University Press of Kentucky has untied the tangle of publication rights so that readers can now have her trilogy

as a matched set of books on their shelves.) Flynn claims that

more than the money she never made, more even than the fame that never came her way, she was most aggrieved that the young people who asked her questions about Gertie Nevels, who was from Ballew, Kentucky, had not been introduced to Nunn Ballew, from Hunter's Horn. (41)

He reports that

by her own measurement of a great novel--'one where the reader lives with the characters, like Fathers and Sons--Hunter's Horn was a greater achievement than her most famous work [The Dollmaker]." (42)

Comparing Hunter's Horn to The Dollmaker, Arnow commented:

there is much more to 'the Horn' than The Dollmaker. Nunn is a more interesting character than Gertie. He had a dream to bring his farm back and an obsession that overcame the dream. (Flynn 42)

She blamed herself for liking Nunn more than Gertie. She said,

I don't know why I made Gertie such a contrary piece of human flesh. . . . She talked so little and hated so much. I had to fill in with passages from the Bible where she said so little. Had I to do it over again, I would not have written through her mind alone. Then I could have told more about the other characters as I had done in Hunter's Horn. (Flynn 44)

Though the writer's opinions alone may stand as an insufficient reason for reevaluating a novel, the judgment of such a talented writer as Arnow that Hunter's Horn is her finest book should not be ignored. Arnow's opinion serves as only one of the reasons this study will offer as grounds for reassessing Arnow's second novel, Hunter's Horn.

Even before The Dollmaker was so well received in 1954, Arnow had begun work on a non-fiction manuscript, a social history titled Seedtime on the Cumberland, published in 1960. She had developed an interest in historical research since the work she had done on the history of Ohio for Roosevelt's WPA Writers Project before her marriage. Seedtime on the Cumberland received an award of merit from the Tennessee Historical Quarterly, which applauded its "meticulous documentation, painstaking research, and colorful writing" (299). When a storyteller as talented as Arnow turns her hand to history, history comes alive. In 1961, the Tennessee Historical Quarterly recognized Arnow's for her article, "The Pioneer Farmer and His Crops in the Cumberland Region," awarding it the Moore Memorial Award for the best article of 1960 in the Quarterly.

Arnow's second non-fiction book, Flowering of the Cumberland, appeared in 1963. Comparing it to Seedtime, she explained that it covered the same time period, so it was not "a sequel," but rather "a companion piece." She did some of the research in libraries, but most of it she did in

courthouses, railroad stations, graveyards, and family records. About conducting the research, she later said, "I began to be afraid that all I would do for the rest of my life would be research." But she also claimed to have found the research "extremely interesting" because such records "tell you things you do not ordinarily find in history" (Commonwealth-Journal 24 July 1983). Arnow relied on her research, some of it begun long before her most successful novels, to add to her fiction the historical accuracy which set it apart from that of "regional" writers who often rely on stock descriptions and situations.

In 1977, Arnow wrote a third non-fiction book, Old Burnside. It is partly a history of the town of Burnside, Kentucky, and partly a personal reminiscence of her family and her growing up, written about her hometown for the Kentucky Bicentennial Bookshelf. She complained that what started out as a history turned out, at the insistence of her editors at the University Press of Kentucky, to be a more personal, biographical work than she had planned. She described it as manuscript that used the first-person pronoun entirely too much: "one of those awful I, I, I books."

When Arnow spoke of her next novel, The Weedkiller's Daughter (1970), she acknowledged that it had not been a critical nor a popular success, though she reported that she

got letters from readers who told her it was the best book she had ever written. This novel, set in a Detroit suburb in the mid-1960s, focuses on the Schnitzer family, with a tyrannical father obsessed with killing weeds and destroying nature, a cold superficial mother, a neo-Nazi young son, and Susie, a rebellious independent teenager with a social conscience. Despite the change in setting, there are definite indications that Susie is a more modern character modeled on, developed from, Suse, the teenaged daughter in Hunter's Horn, a comparison which will be more thoroughly discussed in Chapter VI.

Arnow's final novel was published in 1974--The Kentucky Trace: A Novel of the American Revolution. She must have been disappointed by its cool public reception, though she hardly ever mentioned it in interviews. In it, she turned once again to Kentucky as her setting, telling the story of Leslie Collins, an American patriot who faces a challenge he views as important as his battles with Tory and British soldiers: he plots to rescue and adopt a baby unwanted and neglected by its mother. Glenda Hobbs describes the plot as "intricate, ingenious, and hilarious, demonstrating Arnow's gleeful appreciation of that era's customs, rituals, and language" (6). This novel "comes closer to the power and immediacy of Arnow's earlier fiction," Hobbs contends (6). Thus, this novel also reflects such qualities from Hunter's

Horn as Arnow's concerns with characterizations, description, and history.

Despite the recent renewed interest in Arnow, the scholarship on her life and work throughout the years has been scanty and scattered, from 1936 to the present, from the New York Times to the Kate Chopin Newsletter. Over the years, a handful of theses and dissertations have appeared, along with one book, Harriette Arnow (Twayne, 1974), which is poorly written, in places inaccurate and patronizing. Arnow complained that its author, Wilton Eckley, had gone through her papers in the Special Collection in Lexington and interpreted everything with an "I" to be strictly autobiographical; "he gave me no credit for imagination," she said.

The focus of most critical studies has been the mountain trilogy, and the conclusion reached time after time is that the third novel, The Dollmaker, represents the culmination of Arnow's career and her talents. This study, however, will focus on the often overlooked novel Hunter's Horn, arguing its centrality and importance in the work of Harriette Arnow.

## CHAPTER II

### RE-SOUNDING HUNTER'S HORN

Harriette Arnow's second novel, Hunter's Horn, deserves to be rescued from relative obscurity. It has received much less attention than Arnow's third novel, The Dollmaker, which has undergone a revival of interest. In 1971, Joyce Carol Oates praised it in the New York Times Book Review, and Jane Fonda's award-winning performance in the 1984 ABC television film version of the novel also stirred interest in Arnow's work. Arnow voiced her fear that she was being "ridden to fame on Jane Fonda's coattails," and at times she seemed to resent the questions of interviewers who wanted only to ask about The Dollmaker, for she objected to the public's perception of her as a one-book author.

As worthy as The Dollmaker is of attention, it need not overshadow the power and importance of Hunter's Horn. Indeed, Hunter's Horn, not The Dollmaker, should be seen as the centerpiece of Arnow's canon; it is the work which develops or introduces all of her important literary themes and techniques.

Originally published by Macmillan in 1949 and having gone through its fourth printing by 1958, Hunter's Horn was issued in paperback in 1979 by Avon, though that edition is

now out of print. In 1986, the University Press of Kentucky issued a handsome hardback reprint.

Arnow chose the Kentucky hills as the setting for Hunter's Horn and continued her chronicle of the encroachment of roads and "progress" on the Kentucky hill communities. She wrote Hunter's Horn as a kind of sequel to her first novel, Mountain Path (1936), and for a time considered The End of the Gravel as the title for the second novel (Kotlowitz 28). She explained in an interview that her work chronicles the irreversible changes that roads make in a community. "At first," she said, "it was only a path, then a community at the end of a gravel road that took men and families away, and finally, where the gravel led to a highway, the highway destroyed the hill community." Arnow considered using The Highway as the title for The Dollmaker (1954), the third novel of her mountain trilogy (Baer 117).

Arnow's Hunter's Horn is primarily the story of Nunnely Ballew's family. Nunn, the head of the household, has returned from the coal mines to Little Smokey Creek, Kentucky, still miles from a gravel road, to buy the farm his great-great-grandfather had owned. His land--over one hundred sixty acres--has timber, hillsides, and level fields, though most of it has "gone pretty much to brush and gullies" (2). To support his family, though not very well, Nunn farms and raises sheep. Because he doesn't have

much fencing, he lets the sheep range most of the year in the government forest that joins his farm. Nunn's neighbors think of him more often as a hunter than as a farmer, for he spends much of his time fox hunting. As a result of Nunn's hunting, his farm and his family suffer, though Arnow presents the impoverished setting without sentimental comment.

That is not to say that Arnow depicts the family as unaware of their poverty; they are often painfully aware of the material things they lack, particularly as a new graded gravel road brings the outside world closer. Nunn dreads the coming of the road, dreads having the world "close in his face," dreads the inevitable exposure of his poverty to others besides his family and the neighbors. He knows that the road "would be a handy thing to take things out, but what could take out could bring in . . . strangers to see his run-down farm and ragged children" (250).

Changes are occurring outside the mountains as well as in the Little Smokey Creek community. The time period the novel covers is nearly three years, apparently from the fall of 1939 to spring of 1942, from the late Depression years, when New Deal programs touch on the life of the community, to after the American entry in World War II. Though Arnow does not designate these exact time references, such clues as the ages of the children and

references to historical events allow readers to deduce this time frame. Suse is twelve at the beginning of the novel, in the fall (6), and in Chapter 35, in the spring, she is "going on sixteen" (378). The children miss a day of school so that all the men in the community can come to the Deer Lick schoolhouse to register for the draft, and then Blare Tiller, a neighbor, comes with the news of the bombing of Pearl Harbor. He asks, "Nunn, what does th United States own that ain't in the United States and it begins with a P?" He had heard on the radio that "someplace had been bombed" (319). So with this news that the United States was involved in "th war across the waters," readers can move back in time as well as forward from December 7, 1941, to measure time from season to season, as the Ballews and their neighbors do.

The community in Hunter's Horn--the Andersons, Ballews, Cramers, Cookseys, and other neighbors--all are beginning to feel the encroachment of the outside world. Olen Anderson, who joined the armed forces, was stationed in Hawaii, and was thought to be safe there, away from the fighting in Europe. Nunn Ballew is the first one in his district to join the AAA and take the free government fertilizer and discounts on seeds. Thus, he is afterward held responsible for bringing "the law" into the community,

where the law had no business to come meddling . . .  
if Nunn Ballew had never joined the AAA the law

most like would never have come--it wouldn't have known who to come to and how to get there. (185-6)

But the game warden has come investigating fish dynamiting, and Rans Cramer has had to leave the hills because "the law" is after him for stealing dynamite from his WPA job and "dynamiten th river fer fish . . . a pentitentiary offense" (183). Rans has gone to work in Cincinnati, and his brother, Mark, has found a job in Detroit. Willie Cooksey has taken his family to Indiana for the summer to make cash money picking tomatoes. Though he begged Nunn to go along and Nunn refused, many other farmers with big families to feed were making temporary or permanent sojourns from their homes to northern cities to find work. The pre-war migration from the previously isolated Kentucky hills had already begun and only increased as World War II escalated and created jobs.

These and other historically accurate details are at least partially responsible for the favorable reviews Hunter's Horn received in 1949. One reviewer praised Arnow's "evocation of a time and a place" (Christian Science Monitor 16 June 1949 11). The New York Herald Tribune praised Arnow's depiction of "the realities of the life of the Ballew family under a rigidly exacting culture and a hard environment" (Bullock 5). And Herschel Brickell wrote in the New York Times that Harriette Arnow had achieved

the truest feat of the imagination in fiction. . . to create and people a private world. . . . She writes, or seems to write, as effortlessly as a bird sings, and the warmth, the beauty, the sadness and the ache of life itself are not even once absent from her pages (29 May 1949)

However, some of the most effusive praise held more than a trace of condescension. R.W. Henderson called Hunter's Horn "a really remarkable regional novel--our candidate for the Pulitzer Prize" (735). A Chicago Sun-Times reviewer declared that Harriette Arnow gives readers "one of the most real portraits, of that section of the country" available (Feikema). Another declared that "this is a pastoral of the Kentucky hills and one of the finest 'grass roots' novels written in many a year" (Preece 18). Victor P. Hass of Saturday Review went even further to suggest: "neither William Faulkner nor Jesse Stuart, I think, has done better for the people of the South, and it is my guess that Mrs. Arnow's book will have wider appeal for people everywhere than the books of either" (20). Though history has not been so kind to Harriette Arnow as the reviewer anticipated, there were--and still are--good reasons for him to have made his claim.

One reason for the popularity of the novel, as reviewers have often recognized in one way or another, is Hunter's Horn's distinctive "realism," seen in Arnow's historically accurate descriptions, universal themes,

credible characterizations, graphic childbirth scenes, authentic language, and details of the hunt. Even though some reviewers have been dismayed by "the sting of its realism" and by "too many birth-scenes" (Christian Science Monitor 16 June 1949 11), it is that sting of realism--her attention to historically authentic details--which makes the story vivid, impressive, and memorable. She created and peopled an imaginative world, and such critics as Hamilton Basso of The New Yorker had good reason to observe that Arnow "brings to her task a considerable amount of what is obviously first-hand knowledge" (87-8).

For this novel, Arnow supplemented her first-hand knowledge with research in courthouses, graveyards, and library archives; she obviously researched such practices as fox hunting, home remedies, midwifery, household and farm chores, whiskey distillery, and more--all of which are subjects covered in subsequent non-fiction works she called "social histories," Seedtime Comes to the Cumberland (1960) and The Flowering of the Cumberland (1963). A reviewer for Time noted, "there is no question of her success in picturing the profane and pious old people, the backwoodsmen with fine old names like Ballew and Hull. . . ." (11 July 1949 96). And New Republic's John Farrelly called Hunter's Horn "an unusually good book of its kind . . . partly because the details of life in rural Kentucky are described with authority" (27). "Her Kentucky men and

women are less grotesque than Jesse Stuart's," a Commonweal reviewer wrote; "I suspect that her picture of life in those inaccessible hills is even more authentic" (Skillin 226).

But Arnow's purpose was not merely to document the regional practices of such subjects as the sport of fox hunting, but instead to discover the universality of the emotions in the conflicts of a specific hunter and his family. In her Harvard dissertation, Glenda Hobbs agrees that "no local color story or novel transcends documentation and dramatizes universal dilemmas such as Nunn's" (83).

Nunn's dilemmas become universal as readers recognize the difficulties involved in separating themselves from the influences of family and community in order to make free choices. Personal expectations often clash with the expectations of others, and confusion results. Personal strength and determination to meet a goal can accelerate into obsessive behavior. Then, self-criticism and emotional reactions can distort perceptions of the self as well as others and interfere with rational judgments. Nunn faces these and other problems, which develop as central themes of the novel because such dilemmas affect the quality of his life, the lives of his family members, and the lives of readers everywhere.

Arnow's narrative technique also allows her to draw readers close to her characters. The thirty-seven chapters of Hunter's Horn give a basically chronological account of the events that affect the Ballew family. With only occasional flashbacks in time, Arnow's characters move steadily forward and readers watch their growth. Chapters are generally episodic, focusing on an event such as a hunt, a birth, a brawl, a fire, a day of plowing or setting fence posts, the arrival of an outsider, or a revival. But the event itself is subordinate to its effects on the life of each character. With a third-person omniscient narrator, Arnow shifts point of view frequently to reveal the unspoken worries, frustrations, and observations of each of the Ballews, except for the youngest children. Her narrative technique offers comprehensive, though non-judgmental, delineation of characters.

The universality, authenticity, and narrative technique of Hunter's Horn are certainly features that set it apart from much "regional" literature that promotes stereotypes of mountain people or offers patronizing, sentimental treatments of people and places. In addition to the fact that members of the community are affected by such historically authentic activities as the WPA, AAA (Agricultural Adjustment Administration), and draft registration for World War II, the neighbors also play important roles as characters in the story. Arnow's

characterizations make it impossible to dismiss this novel as one which only documents the changes in the region, for her characters are complex personalities which help readers intimately understand the world and the choices that her characters face. Besides the central character, Nunn Ballew, Arnow creates a core of credible, well-rounded characters, particularly the old midwife, Sue Annie Tiller.

Seen from the point of view of the Ballews, Sue Annie, the old gossip and midwife who is always interested in the health and activities of all of her neighbors, keeps her finger on the pulse of the community. When she brings the early morning news that "th super-in-ten-dent is on his way to visit th school" (133), she sets in motion an hilarious sequence of events as the children prepare the schoolhouse and their teacher, Old Andrew Haynes, to make a good impression on their visitor. Having delivered the message, Sue Annie "took a chew of tobacco with the vicious jerk of a hound tearing into a fox" and asked for a cup of coffee.

She stopped, poured out a saucer of coffee and blew on it slowly, staring at the oilcloth in sad reflection. "You know, Milly, it's hard when a body gits old like me an Andrew. They's many a woman a sayen now that I'm gitten too old to bring babies any more, just like they's many a one . . ." she looked darkly at Milly, "an Nunn's amongst em, that says pore old Andrew's too old and no good to teach school." (134)

Though Sue Annie has no first-hand knowledge from which to accuse Nunn of being responsible for this school

inspection, he is responsible because of an off-hand remark he made about "old Andrew" to his fox hunting friend, Elias Higgenbottom, a member of the school board. Sue Annie's intuitions and judgments are sometimes off-target, but not in this instance. She knew of Nunn's acquaintance with the important man from town, of Nunn's opportunity and inclination to express his opinions freely, especially when he had had a drink, and her conclusion was accurate in this case.

She also somehow knew when Nunn had begun his first run of moonshine. "She studied Nunn with a narrowing of her sharp black eyes, and Nunn, already wondering if she had hunted greens about the storehouse and had smelled anything [like sour mash], felt uneasy under her sharp glance and turned away to go on with the plowing," claiming concern that rain might interrupt his farming.

Sue Annie looked up at the pale-blue, bone-dry sky and made exaggerated squintings and rollings of her eyes, as if searching for a cloud, then giggled and rubbed the back of her hand hard across her nose as she looked again at Nunn. "I can think uv a lot worse things that could happen to a man in yer business, honey, than a spell a dry weather"... and she smiled again at Nunn, a pleased smile like that of a woman finished planting a rare seed in fertile soil where she is certain it will grow. (166)

Sue Annie obviously knows Nunn's "business" before anyone else, and undoubtedly she has helped to spread the word to

the neighbors. But it is she who later comes to warn Nunn that some men are looking for him, on "government business" (173). She urges Nunn to run, though he refuses, expressing concern for his wife: he couldn't "leave em go to Milly and skeer her to death--she's in no shape to be skeered" (174).

Sue Annie's range of reactions to Nunn's circumstances clearly shows Harriette Arnow's skill in creating richly human characters. Sue Annie's responses change rapidly and convincingly from curiosity, superstitious predictions, and honest concern to self-interest and fear. First, at Nunn's suggestion that Milly is pregnant again, "Sue Annie's professional interest in Milly's condition, of which she had not known, only suspected, for an instant outweighed her concern for Nunn. 'Jesus God, it's liable to make her miscarry.' She shook her head darkly" (174). Then she predicts, "Th law a comen into this valley where it ain't never been before's goen to be bad--them that's got little babies ull be so skeered their milk'ull cause colic, an them in the family way'll miscarry over fretten on marken their youngens" (174).

Abandoning her self-importance and expressing her genuine concern for his safety, Sue Annie tells Nunn, "you've been like my own born youngen to me," and "her old eyes begged him hard" (174). She declares, "Oh, Nunn, I cain't stand an see you tuck away by th law," and he

notices "Sue Annie's face was old and sad and her hard black eyes were soft and gray with tears, like limestone rocks in a spring rain" (174-5). She tries to do what she can to help him hide the evidence of his moonshining.

But her advice and industry soon yield to self-interest as she asks,

"Mind if I take a little sip, Nunn? It smells right good." . . . Sue Annie took a long swallow, and when she had finished she stood holding the half-gallon jar in her two hands, appraising it with tilted head and a little smile. "Why, Nunn, fer th first try you've done good, real good. . . . A body can tell it's strong, powerful strong. . . but it's smooth, curious smooth. . . . Nunn, honey, don't you think it ud be a pity fer all this to git broke up? . . . Raiders allus break ever jar they can find." (175)

She asks the price as she picks up two half-gallon jars and explains, "I been a wanten some good safe whiskey fer my doctoren fer months" (176). Readers who smile at Sue Annie's interest in the quality of the whiskey, as well as her method of testing it, will also find comical her efforts to return it as soon as she catches sight of "th law." But when she holds out the jars and begs Nunn, "Take these quick," he responds, "They ain't mine no more, an anyhow they ain't time to unlock th storehouse an hide em" (179). Sue Annie's distress causes her to "breathe hard" and "tremble," and "sweat popped out between her bare toes and made blobs of wetness on her dusty feet" (179).

Dropping the jars into a water bucket and sending Sue Annie to the nearby spring, Nunn thinks quickly and saves them both, though he soon learns that the deputy game warden has come to investigate some fish dynamiting, and he clearly knows nothing about Nunn's illicit whiskey. Sue Annie fears outsiders as she fears no one else in the community.

However, fearless outspokenness is more typical behavior for Sue Annie. When she goes to care for Lureenie Cramer, a neighbor woman who nearly starved during her pregnancy and is dying in childbirth, she declares the need for "a man doctor from Town" (314). She does not hesitate to argue with Keg Head Cramer, Lureenie's father-in-law, who "said it was against the Bible" (314). She

cursed him something awful and said that, Bible or no, Lureenie needed a doctor, for she was sick to begin with, and that it was the \$30 or \$40 a Town doctor's trip would cost that worried Keg Head more than the Bible. (314)

Then later, when Lureenie's husband, Rans, finally returns home from Cincinnati after his wife's death and claims he has "walked with God," Sue Annie says, "Well, God or devil or whatever you've walked with, it's too bad you couldn't a come in this direction a little sooner and mebber kept your wife frum starven. . ." (348). Rans' response, "It was God's will," and his pulling out of a big Bible, which he says cost \$31.95, prompts Sue Annie's explosion: she cursed him then; the blackest dirtiest oaths the devil

ever brewed flew in her head and out her mouth; she couldn't help it. The thought came to her that \$31.95 would have got a doctor for Lureenie, and that fine store-bought suit and the long-tailed overcoat [Rans' clothes] would have kept her in grub half the winter. (348) Though Sue Annie could also be self-serving, she never claims higher authority than her own good sense for her actions, and she often openly, even vehemently, holds in contempt those who do.

From her unique perspective as an old woman who is not a "born-again" church member, she is able to offer a number of insightful observations. Though she is not a church member, she attends the visiting Preacher John Brand's revival at Deer Lick Church and has evidently studied the Bible more than most because she alone noticed how Samuel, the regular minister,

frowned each time Battle John quoted a verse of Scripture from which he left out a word or so the better to drive his point home, or ran verses of two different books of the Bible into one, or quoted half a verse as a whole, and Sue Annie had noticed, too, that when Battle John spoke of Lureenie, Samuel's frowns were blacker still. (339)

Sue Annie knows, as does Preacher Samuel, that it was not God, but people, herself included, who let Lureenie starve when Lureenie was too proud to let her neighbors know that she and her children were hungry.

Though Sue Annie is called an "infidel" by a church member (340), she seems more faithful in some ways than many of the "saints." That is, she shows her faith in human reasoning and responsibility when she rejects the idea that people can negate or defer their own moral responsibilities by attributing their choices to "God's will." Sue Annie has her flaws, but Harriette Arnow creates in her a thoroughly credible, well developed character whose actions and reactions are felt throughout the community, and throughout the novel, though she is not a member of the Ballew family.

It is to Arnow's credit, too, that even the Ballew children are strong individual characters. The eldest son, Lee Roy, for instance, has a mischievous side as well as maturity beyond his years. At the beginning of the novel, he is ten years old, and at the end he is past twelve, though he suffers and takes on adult responsibilities long before he should have to give up being a child.

Lee Roy is the boy who taunts his older sister by throwing hen manure in her hair and teasing her about the flowered fabric for her new dress, saying "you couldn't hang flowers on a freckled bean pole and make a sweet petunia out of it" (132). He is the one who conceives of a conspiracy to scare off the new schoolteacher, Miss Burdine, who has hurt his sister's feelings.

This same boy feels ashamed of his father's hunting

and drinking but, instead of taking up his father's habits, takes on the farm work himself. When he is still a child, Lee Roy willingly assumes responsibility for a man's work. When Nunn abandons his plowing to go and chase down his young hunting dogs, he returns to find Lee Roy in his place:

. . . he heard a boy's gees and haws, thin-voiced and tired, mixed with a few oaths which, when the boy tried to make them sound loud and strong as a man's, became shrill and faintly piping like a child's. The plow handles were breast-high on Lee Roy, and his sticklike arms were puny things behind the heavy plow and Maude, but his red head rode proudly on his narrow sweat-soaked shoulders. As Nunn watched, the plow hit a rock and jerked out of the ground; Lee Roy's body swayed as he struggled to stop Maude and jerk the plow back to balance, but in an instant the plow point was biting into the earth again, and both Maude and the plow were obedient to his will as they made a straight furrow down the field. (160)

When Nunn goes hunting, Lee Roy cares for the sheep:

Nunn, when he came home from the hunt, would look in on the sheep, and often, no matter what the time, dawn or midnight, he would find Lee Roy there, and at other times a lamb, dry and warm and well, that had not been there when he left at sundown. He would feel grateful to Lee Roy, but at the same time there would come a disturbing sense of loss: only a little while ago Lee Roy had been his child, his little boy, but now at times he seemed more the man of the house than Nunn did, though he was not yet twelve years old. (247)

Despite his youth, without supervision or instructions from anyone, Lee Roy not only works hard, but he also

repeatedly tries to protect or shelter members of his family: by taking down the gun to cover Nunn when "the law" comes to talk to his father (189), by diverting his mother's attention from the smell of sour mash in the storehouse because he knows about Nunn's moonshining but doesn't want his mother to find out (169), by keeping the young children busy outside when the neighbors come to confront the family with Suse's pregnancy (407). Lee Roy knows the closeness, anger, and frustration that come with being part of this family. Though he accepts much hardship without complaint, he emerges as a mature and complex young character.

Suse Ballew, Lee Roy's sister, is also a strong, important character. She is intuitive, intelligent, and imaginative, with a restless longing for freedom and a wisdom and understanding beyond her years. A keen observer of life around her, she knows from the sounds of the hunters coming home that a hound has been killed in a hunt. Without anyone telling her, she knows that her mother is pregnant again, that her father is making moonshine, and that he will never have enough money to send her to high school.

Suse has distinguished herself as a good student who is eager to learn. She loves to read and always asks, when her father returns from a trip to town, "Did you bring a paper, Pop?" She abandons her work to read even the

government bulletins and brochures that Nunn brings home. And she is pleased by her paternal grandmother's gifts of books at Christmas. One year she receives the novel Lorna Doone, and another year, a dictionary, a book Suse has "long wanted" so that she could be "like the pupils she read about in her schoolbooks who were always consulting their dictionaries" (240). Though she is not the only thirteen-year-old girl in the community, Suse is one of the two eighth graders at Deer Lick School because the others have been held back, unable to make the grade. Nunn looks on Suse with pride as his "readenest youngen" (13).

But when the graded gravel road comes close enough to make it possible for Suse to attend high school, the family's finances make it impossible, for it would cost fifty cents a week for her to ride the school bus, plus the added expense of school clothes and shoes. Nunn regrets that he cannot afford to send Suse to high school and feels ashamed when he realizes that "for the first time Suse understood how poor he was, too poor to keep her in Sunday shoes, much less send her to high school" (263). Despite her understanding of her family's finances, Suse refuses to give up her dream of seeing life beyond the hills. When she listens to her friend, Lureenie, tell about seeing movies, Suse "trembled with anticipation," for "she, too,

would see such things, and more, before many years were over" (213).

Throughout the novel, Suse longs for freedom. From the scene in the first chapter when she runs outside at night to watch an airplane pass overhead (12), Suse shows her attraction to those things that are unconfined. She thinks "it would be fun to run and run forever, like King Devil through the windy, silvery night, to be held by nothing, worried by nothing, not even God and the neighbors" (31). She watches wild geese fly overhead and feels

something inside her, like the spirit of God that came on Milly at church, rising and flying with the birds, straining after them, crying and calling fit to burst her heart, but soundless and wordless, because there were no words that could tell the thing, only the knowing deep inside her that she, Suse, would go away into new fine country, as the wild geese were going now. Only, the wild geese would come back with the spring, and they went together; but when she went, she'd go alone and she'd never come back. (294)

Suse desperately wants to escape the physical and social restrictions of being a young woman in Little Smokey Creek, Kentucky. Looking at the neighbor women, "Suse studied them, then shivered and looked away; she would never be like that, dull and dead and uncaring" (200). She thinks of her own mother and wonders,

Had she or any of them ever heard the trains blow far away and sad, calling you to come away, calling so clearly you wanted to cry? Or had they ever wanted to run and run through the woods on a windy

moonlight night in spite of what God would think  
and the neighbors say? (200)

Suse already knows, "It was hard enough to be a girl child shut off from the world," but she wonders, "how would it be to be a woman like Lureenie, married with little youngens, but wanting still the outside world. . . and always knowing that you could never get away until you were dead?" (228). Suse determines that "she wouldn't be like Milly and she wouldn't be like Lureenie; she'd make her own life; it wouldn't make her" (228). Suse's declaration of independence made to herself contrasts sharply with the thoughts of her parents, who regret the inevitability that Suse's high spirited youth will soon be over. Milly knows, "poor child, soon enough would come the time when not just her body was tied down by work, but her mind, too, with troubles and worries--it seemed sometimes like God made women for trouble" (158). And her father "didn't want his Suse broke to plow, but everybody had to be" (207).

Suse maintains her resolve to determine her own future, even though much happens in her life to limit her control over her own life. In fact, daily hardships take their toll on her youth in much the same way that a steady stream of water wears down granite. As a girl of twelve, when she wakes to hear her father coming home drunk from a fox hunt, and "she sighed like a tired old woman and got out of bed" (49). Even before her mother's pregnancy, but

especially while her mother is pregnant, Suse assumes much of the housework, cooking, and child care and is as "kind and patient with Milly as some wise old woman" (211). Her mother notes that on occasion Suse acts "sour an sullen as a ole woman" (378).

Despite her youth, she repeatedly shows she has the understanding and sensitivity of one much older than herself. When her youngest brother, Deb, does not know why Milly becomes upset when he asks for a drink of milk, Suse knows that their cow Betsey is not giving enough milk for the family, so she assumes adult responsibility for making what they have go further by denying herself milk as well as butter, and she worries about her mother's health:

somewhere she had read that women who were going to have babies needed milk, and there were times when she hated her father because there was no milk. He had sold the black heifer; he had spent money for dog feed that might have gone for cow feed. Worse yet, he would sit all unnoticed, with a big glass of milk in his hand, holding it up, maybe, while he said something. And Suse would see Milly's eyes, like hungry birds, dart swiftly to it, and then as swiftly dart away. Deb and Lucy would study the glass with unhidden longing when their own small ones were empty, but they never asked, and Nunn, who never touched Betsy or handled her milk except to drink it, never knew. (213)

Recognizing her father's lack of sensitivity to her mother's needs, Suse demonstrates maturity and indicates with such concerns as these that a lack of necessities has

clearly forced her to abandon the carefree years of her childhood.

Nunn, unaware of this particular act of self-denial, knows of another of Suse's sacrifices:

he thought of how she had sat hour after hour pulling burs from the wool, and the way she had vomited and vomited but never complained when she had to stand straddled over a half-rotten sheep in the hot spring sun and jerk the wool from the stinking flesh and so save a little from King Devil's destruction. (263)

With a life of such hard work and sacrifice, Suse cannot always remain silent about her resentment of those forces which limit her growth and independence. When Milly scolds Suse for neglecting housework and tells her that "she ought to be thankful" for "a good home of her own," reminding her daughter that she had had to work in other people's houses when she was Suse's age, Suse "got real sassy" and said, "'You got paid an you had clothes an shoes'" (262). Suse can see that she gains neither adequate material necessities nor independence in return for all of the adult responsibilities that she has assumed. She makes the same point to her father when he tries desperately to reassure her that he is "aimen to send her to high school." Suse answers him angrily, "You'll never have enough to send me in decent clothes to th post office, let alone high school. You're always aimen; never finishen nothen--" (319). With good reason, she feels deprived of most

everything that is important to her--clothes and shoes that she doesn't have to be ashamed of, an education, the opportunity to see life beyond their valley.

Suse's frustration often leads her to question the fairness of life around her and to expose hypocrisy in her family and in the community. Once, tired of listening to Milly dispute the propriety of something as mundane as drying mutton, Suse blurts out: "Jesus God, Mom. You worry more over what that ole Sue Annie Tiller thinks than about God" (168). Then later, concerned about a much more serious subject, after watching her friend, Lureenie, dying in childbirth, Suse vehemently denounces Lureenie's father-in-law's self-righteous prayers and her father's efforts to quiet her. She declares, "God damn him, an you too, Nunnely Ballew. You let her starve. An God damn the God-damned God for setten around and letten you do it" (319). Suse "cursed Nunn and God and Jesus Christ and the world with the same oaths he had so often used and a few of Sue Annie's dirtier ones. They hit him like stones" (319). She tells her father,

You couldn't do no more harm than you've already done me, couldn't hurt me no worse--th meanest thing you've done fer me was bringen me into th world. It's too bad Mom couldn't a had a pair of sheep shears that'd cut my head off when I was borned. (319)

Nunn warns her to stop her "dirty talk," that if she doesn't, she will "end up a bad woman," but Suse answers, "in a Cincinnati whorehouse, you mean. Well, it's a pity Mom couldn't a gone to one when she was my age; she'd a had a sight easier time" (319). The accuracy of her assessment is evident in her father's reaction: her words give Nunn "the sickish feeling that he lied and she spoke the truth" (319).

Suse exposes hypocrisy in the church as well as in the community as she struggles with her religious questions. Before Lureenie's death, Suse's Bible reading had led her to think that "much of what she read had seemed kind and clear and comforting, like the words of someone very old and very wise and kind--kinder than Nunn and Milly" (338). But the church people's tears and prayers for Lureenie's soul, "not for the cruelty here on earth that made Lureenie want to die or maybe even killed her," all had the effect of making Suse wonder "about the whole pattern of sin and immortality" (338). As Suse listened to the revival preacher, Battle John Brand, she "hated him, and felt herself an outcast and a sinner, knowing that if he spoke the truth and Lureenie was in hell, she hated God also, hated Him almost as much as she did some of the people around her who had during the revival talked about Lureenie, with her soul lost to perdition, in sly tiptoeing

voices, the pitying but self-satisfied voices of women bound for heaven while Lureenie screamed in hell" (338).

When pressed by her mother and a neighbor, Hattie Tiller, to answer the invitation to accept the Lord, not to be "like Lureenie" and wait too long:

Suse's clenched hands moved suddenly outward and her bent elbows struck both her mother and Hattie, for it seemed like a ball of fire shot through her head when Hattie--the lying gossip-- . . . spoke in slobbery pity of Lureenie. "Lureenie," Suse said, "was a God damn sight better'n a lot a th sanctified sinners that let her starve an can't quit talken about her even when she's dead." (340)

Like Sue Annie, Suse has openly refused to join the church and she is unafraid to expose the empty self-righteousness of church members. The comparison with Sue Annie does not escape Suse's notice either. In fact, Suse "wondered if when Sue Annie was a girl she had ever quarreled with God as she quarreled now" (343).

The fundamental religious question Suse struggles with is how God could be more cruel than people. She believes that "she could never love God, not after Battle John's sermon," which put Lureenie in hell. Suse asks herself, "Was that right, now? And God seemed unjust and cruel, more cruel and unjust than Milly or that lying Hattie could ever be" (342-3). So Suse believes God has violated her trust and the sense of justice and compassion with which she had previously credited him. After this episode of

swearing in church, Suse eventually rebels again against community standards and her family because she resents the compounded pressure of alienation she feels as well as the weight of the responsibility of caring for her younger brothers and sister.

Denied the freedom to be a young girl without the burden of children, Suse's act of rebellion is a one-time sexual encounter with Mark Cramer, Keg Head Cramer's son who is home from his job in Detroit and who has secretly courted Suse with letters and small gifts delivered through his sister-in-law, Lureenie. During the revival meeting, when Milly instructs Suse to take the younger children home, Suse "hated Milly for sending her home now--Lee Roy would get to hear the shouting and the unknown-tongue talk while she had to take the babies home like an old married woman" (342). She turns to Mark for comfort when he follows her out of the church, takes her home with the children, and stays to seduce her. She feels he understands her and her dreams to escape poverty and make a new life in the city, but she doesn't love him, though "she lay lonesome in his arms, her thoughts like birds flying past him" (349). Suse becomes pregnant and hides her secret for months.

Even when her condition is discovered, she stubbornly refuses to marry Mark because she holds onto the hope that her future holds some measure of independence. "What she

had done was done--it was over--sin it was, but for one sin only she wouldn't pay her whole life--all her life" (349). So in the presence of the neighbors, Suse looks to Nunn, who knows she had "never lived by God and the neighbors no more than he" (411); she wants him to say that she can continue to live at home, that she will not have to go and live with Mark's parents as Keg Head's "hired girl," to do "the never done work" and to be "tolerated and shamed and prayed over" (411). But her father dashes her hopes. In an isolated attempt to do "th decent thing," he tells her, "Suse, I ain't a holden th wrong you've done agin you--but this fire--it's never warmed a bastard" (411). Thus, with his first attempt to meet community mores, he effectively banishes his daughter to a life of servitude and ends her hopes of an education and making a better life for herself in the North.

Ironically, Suse's pregnancy has trapped her much as the pregnancy of the vixen known as King Devil has resulted in its capture. To remind him of the parallel between his proud, strong, bright daughter and the spirited red fox he has respected and pursued for years, just after his final words to Suse, Nunn catches a glimpse of "a brightness, a shining thing like fire. It was the fox hide on the farther wall, King Devil's hide; he'd stretched it on a board and Suse had hung it there. It made a bit of

brightness, she had said. . . and so it did" (412). The brightness of the fox hide reflects not one life which has ended, but two; it serves as a reminder of the creature and the daughter he has deprived of freedom.

In addition to her accomplishments in realistic characterization, Arnow faces head-on the problems of poverty and pain and writes of them without sentimentality. Without flinching, she writes in Hunter's Horn what I believe are the most gripping and graphic descriptions of childbirth in all of American literature, though no reviewer in 1949 saw that in her favor, and it seems that no one since then has called attention to that distinctive feature of her writing.

Readers can judge for themselves from this excerpt in which Nunn's eldest daughter, Suse, observes the childbed scene of her friend and neighbor, Lureenie Cramer, a woman suffering a difficult birth which finally kills her:

Suse had seen sick people and dead people and people in pain, but never a face like Lureenie's; it no more than the scream seemed to belong to Lureenie or have anything to do with the mounded belly under the dirty quilt or the blood on Sue Annie's apron or with anything that had ever been or would be again. . . .

Sue Annie [the midwife] lifted the covers on Lureenie's drawn-up knees and shut away Lureenie's face, but Suse still saw those hopeless, ever-searching eyes. She watched while Lureenie had another labor pain. Her head came forward from the pillow. . . . Lureenie pushed with her feet and pulled with her hands. . . her stomach arching upward, her shoulders forward and her head, in spite of Ann Liz Cooksey's hands, going backward

and backward until it seemed that her eyes, pushed out of their sockets by the pain, were searching for something in the back of the bed. In the pitying, wincing silence of those about the bed, Suse heard the breath suck in through Lureenie's open mouth and out again in that gurgling, inhuman grunt of agony.

When it seemed that the sound was something that had begun at the beginning of the world and would go on into eternity . . . it stopped. All the strength went from Lureenie's body . . . and she seemed to grow smaller and shrink away, and her eyes once more looked into things on the other side of the ceiling.

. . . Sometimes she cried out and Sue Annie would chide her, "You're wasten your pains, child." And the next time it would be only a grunt. Sometimes [Suse] heard her talk in disconnected scant hoarse words, as if her very tongue was tired and full of pain . . . . At other times Lureenie would beg to be killed, beg for a doctor. . . . (316-7)

It is clear the woman needed a doctor, but no one sent for one because her father-in-law begrudged the money it would take and insisted instead that "God's will" be done.

Rather than acknowledge the haunting power of such scenes, reviewers often complained about them, presumably because of a squeamishness about the subject of childbirth, and, in particular, because of Arnow's use of "objectionable" language. For example, when Lureenie's father-in-law, Keg Head Cramer, left her in pain to go outside the cabin to pray loudly, Arnow writes that

Suse, with the quickness of a darting bird, bent and picked up a rock. . . . Nunn heard the whing of it. . . . Keg Head's prayers stopped and Suse said, not loudly, yet with no attempt at whispering: "God damn th ole stingy son of a bitch." (318)

Several reviewers agreed that with such scenes Arnow showed "frequent lapses in good taste" (Catholic World Aug. 1949 401). And a Time magazine reviewer offered the helpful hint that Harriette Arnow "seems to have forgotten that people seldom like to hear a woman swear" (11 July 1949 96).

Such criticism notwithstanding, Arnow superbly handles language in Hunter's Horn. John Farrelly obviously admired Arnow's accomplishment, for he said that she rendered the local dialect "exactly . . . with no suggestion of parody, while its rhythms and colloquialisms are subtly and appropriately adapted to the narrative prose" (27). But perhaps the New York Herald Tribune reviewer expressed it best when she wrote,

Mrs. Arnow has written her novel entirely in the idiom of the mountain people, as graphic, pungent and articulate a language--at least in her hands!--as you could hear anywhere. (Bullock 4)

Harriette Arnow spent thirteen years in the writing of Hunter's Horn, and she revealed to a friend and confidante, John Flynn, a former reporter for the Detroit Free-Press, that she rewrote the first chapter seventeen times, "till she had risen as close as humanly possible to the style which she aspired to," a style she described as "not exactly bleak, but not wordy, a narrative with no adverbs and few adjectives, a style of self." She explained,

"Language, if you use it right, doesn't need an adverb. Like, 'He yelled angrily, "Get out of here!"' If he yelled, of course he was angry" (Flynn unpub. ms. 45).

Arnow specifically expressed her concern with authenticity in the language of Hunter's Horn. She remarked that Nunn and his family and neighbors "used several words that Shakespeare's characters had used," some from "Nineteenth Century English literature," and some she had learned "from the writings of Rachel Jackson, old Andrew's wife, who wrote the language as it was spoken in her time. The poor thing couldn't spell a lick. From livin' with Andrew, I reckon. So it was the old, inherited language" (Flynn 45-6). Arnow gave some examples of expressions she had in mind: "saying of a young couple, 'They're walking together.' 'Plant corn when an oak leaf is as big as a mouse's ear.' A 'dry moon' was 'slantwise in the sky' because the water had run out of it. A 'wet moon' was curved like the water hadn't run out of it. 'Sun dogs' meant bad weather. At home, we children said 'bull.' Some in the hills said it was a 'cow brute'" (Flynn 46). Arnow used many of these and other examples of authentic dialect in Hunter's Horn. A New York Herald Tribune reviewer claimed that Arnow's "close observation" of the speech and ways of these mountain people and "her skill in recording it all" give the novel "delightful narrative appeal" (Bullock 5).

Readers can get an idea of how Arnow handles dialect from a short passage taken from the end of Chapter 1 of Hunter's Horn:

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

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

She ran back to the house then without answering her mother's advice to quit wasting coal oil and go to bed; the paper Nunn had brought from town would keep till morning. Nunn shook his head and smiled. "She is th readenest youngen," he said, with more of pride in his voice than complaint. (12-13)

Arnow's narration comes alive with her skillful use of authentic dialect.

In their attempts to understand Hunter's Horn, critics have pursued the meaning of Arnow's elusive red fox, "King Devil." In the New Republic, Farrelly complained that "unfortunately, the fox fails to pull the book together." He believed that "as a continuous narrative," the fox is "lost in the multiplicity of incident; as a symbol, the fox is inadequately and only intermittently developed" (26). Such evaluation has often been accompanied by such comments

as "Hunter's Horn invites the inevitable comparison with. . . Captain Ahab's pursuit of Moby Dick," and "Nunn Ballew's chase of King Devil has little of the intensity of Ahab's passionate quest after the white whale. In the end, the hunting down of the great fox is only an interruption in the more interesting story of a family's fight to win back its place in the world" (Farrelly 26). Perceptive readers can recognize that the hunt is much more than an "interruption" in the novel. It is clearly a continuous thread, woven into the whole fabric of the story at angles, sometimes in juxtaposition, sometimes parallel, to each of the plots and subplots of the novel. The hunt is integral to the entire story, but critics who approach Hunter's Horn by trying to measure it against Moby Dick will be unable to see Arnow's achievement.

The analogy between Nunn and Captain Ahab is not particularly helpful nor apt. The reviewer who contended that "his ruinous feud with the fox seems to be Nunn's only object in life" (Commonweal 226) has neglected the complexity of Nunn's character: his self-awareness; his guilt--the conflicts between what he wants for his family and what is within his power to give them; and his obsession with hunting King Devil in contrast to his rationalizations that he can make up to his family later for what he has denied them in order to hunt and feed fox

hounds. Nunn ultimately realizes, however, that he can never make up for his choices that have resulted in irreparable damages to his family.

Kathleen Walsh argues convincingly that Arnow's characterization of Nunn creates an important difference between Arnow's hunting story and those of other American writers. Her article in Southern Literary Journal identifies Harriette Arnow's novel as a "subversive hunting tale." She explains that such American writers as Melville, Hemingway, and Dickey use hunting to show man in search of himself, in search of truth about himself and his condition; the hunt separates the hunter from society. "Hunting tales are superbly suited to validate--and even celebrate--separation" (55). Arnow, however, subverts that purpose: she juxtaposes Nunn's hunts with childbirth scenes and other domestic events, and thus focuses on the cost of the hunter's absence rather than the challenge of the hunt (Walsh 55). Arnow holds taut the tensions between acting on individual impulses and meeting the family's and the community's expectations. Hunter's Horn is an unusually powerful novel because of those tensions, which should be examined here.

Nunn suffers for his obsession in a way that Ahab never does. Nunn is painfully aware that those he loves most, his wife and five children, pay a high price for his hunting. On the morning that he leaves for town to sell

the family's cow and other livestock to buy twin pedigreed fox hounds, "Nunn ate breakfast quickly, hardly knowing what he chewed, putting bites into his mouth and swallowing with the hasty guilty air of a man eating stolen food. . ." (78). He thinks of explaining to Milly what he plans to do, "but when he tried to find words for the telling, the thing he did seemed yet more nightmarish and unreal, the act of a man gone crazy--taking food out of his children's mouths he was" (78). Then later, after further expenses for the pups, Nunn tells himself, "The money that had gone for the pups, their feed, and their medicine by rights belonged to Milly and the children," for one look at his family tells him that they "needed everything" (162). Yet, even with that awareness of the impact of his actions on his family, Nunn goes ahead with his plan to do what he believes is necessary to catch King Devil.

Despite his self-deceptive rationalization that "he would manage and his family wouldn't suffer" (162), he recognizes that they do. Nunn feels shame and guilt because his wife, Milly, must often do the work of a man, and their oldest son and daughter must assume adult responsibilities for the farming and the family. Arnow writes that "more and more it hurt his pride to come home after breakfast [from hunting all night] to find Suse doing her mother's work in the kitchen while Milly and Lee Roy

worked outside at hauling and spreading manure, patching fence, or at some other thing" (248). The intensity of Nunn's emotions is clear in the scene when he returns from hunting his young fox hounds that ran away and finds a neighbor supervising Lee Roy, who has taken over Nunn's chore of plowing:

Nunn felt himself flushing; anger or shame or disgust or maybe all three boiled up in his insides so that he could hardly speak, and when he did speak he couldn't make his voice sound like that of a man with an easy conscience, a man who is doing what he ought to do. (160)

His conscience tells him that he has unjustly left his young son with a man's job to do.

Not only does his family do his work, but their industry and need also make Nunn ashamed of himself because he is a poor provider. As he watches his wife and daughter prepare for Christmas morning,

Nunn remembered with a hard choking hurt how he had noticed once or twice at breakfast lately that Milly and Suse never ate fried eggs. . . each saying she was tired of eggs; there was no meat now, and no fried chicken, nothing but a few eggs--and they had done without eggs and sold them . . . for Christmas candy. (102)

Nunn despairs to learn that "through the winter Milly had been cold and hungry, colder and hungrier than he had known" (249). His younger children and his farm must also suffer the strain of his absences for the fox hunt.

The members of his immediate family are not the only ones to concern Nunn, for he dreads the disapproval of the community too. His greatest fear when he is moonshining is not that "the law" will discover his still, but instead that he will have to bear the judgment of his neighbors:

John was an outspoken man--he would remind him he was a grandson of Aunt Marthie and Preacher Jim; Samuel's silent disapproval would be worse than John's word thrashing; Samuel might pray for him in church--not by name--but people would know. (162)

People clearly do know the reference is to Nunn when Battle John Brand, looking at Milly, challenges the church women, to ask if their "family circles be unbroken" in heaven: "what about your husbands? Ah-h-h, will you see them in heaven--drunken, carousen, fox-hunten. . .?" (335).

While Nunn's fox hunting for King Devil began as a justifiable enterprise because the fox was killing his livestock--and his neighbors'--the hunt became for him an obsession. Nunn's determination to kill the fox intensifies when his hound, Zing, dies in pursuit, but despite Nunn's hatred and curses for the creature who led his hound to its death, he cannot shoot the fox when the others give him a rifle, encouragement, and a spotlight. He declares he will "take him fair and true with a foxhound" (48) and then vows that he will allow nothing to stand in his way:

I hope the good Lord God in heaven sends me to brile in hell through eternity without end if I

ever stop chasen that fox till I git him. I'll git him if I have to sell ever last sheep I've got to buy me a hound an sell my mare and my cow to feed him. I'll chase him till I'm crippled an blind an bald an. . . ." (48)

Indeed, Nunn's pursuit of the fox drains his energy and makes his days seem "futureless," "all dimmed and dulled by the long shadow of King Devil" (106); he measures time by marking each season "as another milestone in his long failure to get King Devil" (246). Nunn knows that "the big red fox had to run--he had to chase him; and this being so, he and the red beast were tied together with a bond stronger than any made by God or man, be it the link between a man and his child or his wife or his land" (247). Nunn's perception thus creates a stronger tie between himself and the animal he hunts than between himself and anyone or anything that previously held importance to him.

With Nunn's view of the fox having already reached exaggerated proportions, the image of King Devil expands beyond all reason after its attack on sheep that have been turned out to range in the government forest reduces Nunn's flock from ninety-seven to twenty-nine (258). Nunn's view is that "there was no chance to any of it; it was planned, all planned. King Devil had waited years for this, careful to kill his sheep and leave those of the other men" (259). The fox becomes a maniacal force, "a red madness that would not let him rest" which "came into his soul" (259). Nunn's

increased hatred motivates him to adjust his view from identification with King Devil to a recognition of the fox as an evil force, and Nunn's self-indictments become accusations levelled at King Devil.

Nunn credits King Devil with stealing much more than livestock; it has robbed him of his peace of mind. He blames the fox for a confrontation with Suse about his own inability to provide her with decent clothes. "King Devil took Suse as he had taken the sheep and his money--and his life's strength and his hopes and his plans and the peace that was the right of every man who worked and did no wrong" (267). After his neighbor, Lureenie, dies, he feels overwhelmed:

the thoughts that tormented him, crazed him at moments when he was half drunken or half asleep, struck him like new pains from old wounds; he knew he could have saved his two dead children. (327)

He recalls when his children had been sick:

King Devil had barked in the hills and his mind and his body and his heart had gone out after him. King Devil had caused his children to die and his farm to stay in the brush and briars. King Devil had made Zing die, and he, Nunn, had got drunk that night and fought with the Cramers; and because he was mad at the Cramers, he had let Lureenie starve, and she was dead now. And that Red Devil of a fox that had ruined him still was alive in the hills. (327)

Nunn's transferral of responsibility does not hide his desperate sense of guilt.

When Sam and Vinie, Nunn's fox hounds, finally catch King Devil, they are not with Nunn, but with Milly, who has gone to help Sue Annie deliver a baby. Milly discovers King Devil should have been called "Queen Devil," as she was a vixen about to have pups (396). When Nunn looks on the fox, "Milly saw that his hands were shaking; and there was a puzzled wonder in his voice, like a disappointed child's, when he said, 'But he's so little--so little'"(398). Though Sue Annie points out that "she's uncommon big fer a fox," Nunn says, "He allus seemed big somehow--bigger lots a times than anything else in the world" (398). The red fox, indeed, had loomed to larger-than-life proportions in Nunn's mind.

But now that the animal has been caught, ending Nunn's long chase, the effects of hunting King Devil apparently continue to distort Nunn's judgment. For Nunn, who had agonized over his family's suffering as a result of his hunting, fox hunting had always been a sin, but one he could not abandon as long as King Devil was alive. With the object of his sinful obsession gone, Nunn determines to change, and in his judgment, he believes he needs to replace his independent thinking with a submission to community standards. But in doing so, he moves from self-interest to a commitment to the community, bypassing family commitments.

In his efforts to gain the approval of his neighbors, he loses all understanding of his family's needs. When he sells his fox hounds for an enormous sum, enough to get him out of debt and supply his family with many things he wants them to have, he is met not only by Milly's tears, but also by her "hard anger and a disgust for him as a man he had never seen, not even after a long drunk" as she tells him that "th hounds was th onliest real fine things we've ever had" (412). Furthermore, Nunn allows his newly adopted values to lead him, who "never seemed to mind before what God thought an th neighbors said," to the decision that "th decent thing" to do is to reject his daughter, Suse, because of her pregnancy with an illegitimate child, and condemn her to a life of hard work and abandoned dreams as a servant of the unwed father's family (411-412). Nunn's years of chasing King Devil and living with oppressive guilt have apparently left him incapable of judging the community's standard of decency. He yields to their standard without evaluating it and, in effect, loses what remains of the respect his family had for him.

Arnold understood, of course, Nunn's obsession and why readers drew the parallel between Nunn and Ahab. Nearly everyone has the potential to be exploited by an obsession. She wrote that "those of a philosophical nature might ponder on Captain Ahab and Moby Dick, and possibly realize that for each of us there is a Moby Dick whom we hunt with

uncontrollable compulsion, so that the long wondering begins of who is the hunter and the hunted" (Hobbs 84). Certainly Ahab and Nunn are both hunters and the hunted; each feels victimized by the beast he stalks.

The crucial difference, however, as Arnow also explained, is that Nunn feels guilty about his hunting and Ahab does not. She said, "well, I don't think Captain Ahab felt guilt while trying to catch Moby Dick. He didn't care for those he made suffer in pursuit of his obsession. Nunn did feel guilty when he was sober" (Flynn unpub. ms. 42-3). Flynn adds that Arnow "believed [Nunn] to be a symbol of the good and bad found in the hill people, damned by his stoicism and saved by his guilt" (43).

But ultimately, his guilt damns him too by leading him to make choices that result in consequences impossible for anyone to live with comfortably. Without being sentimental, Arnow creates in Nunn a character whose actions readers can despise but at the same time feel sympathy for, as we see in Nunn's words which provide the conclusion of the novel. When a "reformed" Rans Cramer describes his Bible reading about the children of Israel on their way to the Promised Land and comments, "what a time they're a haven--what a time--but, praise God, th most a them got there," Nunn stares at the red fox hide and wonders aloud "if'n th ones that got there ever thought

about them that died on th way" (412). Most readers can respond with sympathy to such a character, and it is clear as well that Arnow created him with compassion. Flynn reports that Arnow even admitted: "the more I wrote, the better I liked [Nunn]. I almost loved him before it was all over" (43).

Arnow's comments here reinforce those offered in Chapter I about her assessment that this book was her best novel. Furthermore, those remarks taken together with Walsh's article shed new light on Hunter's Horn and offer reasons for reevaluating its place in the Arnow canon as well as in American literature. That is to say, not only has the novel been virtually unacknowledged as the favorite of the writer of so powerful a novel as The Dollmaker, but also it need not be viewed now as an unsuccessful Kentucky imitation of Melville's Moby Dick. As Walsh points out, Hunter's Horn is an American hunting story which can be more aptly compared with Faulkner's "The Bear," which places the hunt in the context of a community and a family's history (55). Rather than spotlight the lone individual, Arnow, unlike most male authors, focuses more clearly on the cost of the hunt in terms of the family, on the debilitating effect of the hunter's absence, and on the hunter's uncomfortable awareness of the suffering he causes his loved ones. Arnow's emphasis in Hunter's Horn,

therefore, adds an original treatment of the hunting story to American literature.

Hunter's Horn has earned this call for reassessment. The New York Times reviewer called Hunter's Horn "a rich piece of fiction, with all its riches integrated into a work of art by a hand that seems to know instinctively what is right and fitting to do." In 1949, the reviewer "laid it aside a little sad that it was finished but deeply grateful for the experience of reading something that has the feeling of a classic about it" (Brickell 4). He recognized the universality of this novel and asserted that "it should appeal to people everywhere, because its foundation is the relationships between men and women" (4). In the scope of Arnow's work, Hunter's Horn has been too often overlooked, though it may be viewed as the most significant of her writings, as the subsequent chapters of this study will demonstrate. It is a novel that still has the feel of a classic about it.

### CHAPTER III

#### FORESHADOWING HUNTER'S HORN: THE SHORT STORIES

Before attempting to write a novel, Harriette Simpson turned her hand and mind to short stories. She clearly valued precision in word choice, unsentimental characterizations, the juxtaposition of beauty and cruelty, and powerful conclusions; her published short stories all carry these qualities. From 1934 to 1944, she published five short stories in a variety of literary periodicals. A look at scenes, characters, and themes from Arnow's earliest stories reveals that ideas for Hunter's Horn were already taking shape long before she began her important second novel.

In her earliest published short story, "Marigolds and Mules" (Kosmos 1936), Harriette Simpson creates a young narrator, the son of an oil driller, whose observations of the night sky show his naive idealism and seem to anticipate a similar scene in Hunter's Horn. The young unnamed boy in the story gazes above the oil fields and observes a star that "looked so high. Away up there above the gas and the oil and the dirt. It was a big star, orange red," which made him "think of marigolds. It looked the way they smelled" (6). His youthful imagination is reminiscent of Suse's when she hears a plane and stands at night "searching the northern side of the sky" (12).

She declares, "There it comes; see it, like a star a walken, only redder, ever minnit it looks like it was goen to bump into th stars, only a body knows they're lots higher" (12). These characters appreciate those things which represent their hopes of transcending or escaping the immediate surroundings, though each character eventually watches those hopes dissolve into desperate disappointments.

In the short story, the disillusionment happens much more quickly than in the novel. The boy's idyllic reverie vanishes as he learns that his friend, Joe, has been killed on the job, hauling oil which exploded on a mule-drawn wagon driven through deep mud. On the way to the scene of the explosion, the boy finds bloody pieces of mule and one of Joe's hands, and he arrives in time to hear one of Joe's co-workers announce, "Hell will be an oil field" (6). The boy responds that "Hell won't be so bad . . . . There won't be any God damned stars there. . . . Pretty stars to shine on bloody mules and dirty, bloody men (6).

In Hunter's Horn, Suse's disillusionment occurs much more gradually. Her excitement at seeing the plane flying overhead is the earliest indication that she longs to escape the Kentucky hills, and she has high hopes of attending high school and maybe even college as the gravel road comes close enough to make bus transportation possible. Suse continues to watch the sky for planes and

to envy the geese that fly free, observations she makes from Pilot Rock, her favorite place, the highest vantage point around. But even with her vivid imagination which allows her to "ache for things mysterious and unseen, nay, undreamed" (199), she cannot change the life of servitude and hopelessness to which her father condemns her. Her spirit, like that of the young boy in "Marigolds and Mules," soars, only to be forced down to earth, where each character learns the painful conflict between adult realities and youthful high hopes and dreams.

Another early short story which shows a particular point of comparison with Hunter's Horn is "A Mess of Pork," published in The New Talent in 1935 (discussed in Chapter I 2-3). In this story, the most horrifying and memorable sound is the "crunching" noise the narrator notices first on the farm and then later as he cranes over a box canyon where he has helped to lure two law officers among a herd of wild boars sure to kill the men. The narrator recalls, "I listened and I heard them. Their teeth made crunching sounds. The black boar's teeth when he ate walnuts had sounded that way. I knew there were no walnuts down there" (11).

The sounds that create the chilling ending of this story reappear in the concluding scene of Chapter 29 of Hunter's Horn, though readers are more apt to respond to

the episode in the novel with grief as well as horror. Nunn has stopped by a neighbor's house only to find it deserted except for a sick child. As he wonders what he should do, "a little sound, familiar, but hard to place, came to him: from under a little white oak on the edge of the woods it sounded" (309). Nunn then identifies the crunching sound as that of an animal eating:

He heard it again and this time he knew it, and wondered how such a sound came to this dead place. Off in the brush under the white oak he heard plainly a cow or hog crunching, chewing an apple or a sweet potato, more like a pig, a hungry pig, too quick for a cow, but not loud enough somehow for a hog. . . . and it wasn't sweet potato--it was acorns, and what animal would be hungry enough now in the plentiful fall to hunt acorns under the snow?

He walked nearer the tree; the crunching stopped, but he heard a faint rustle, a smothered secretive sort of sound like a man might make caught stealing. . . .

He went into the snowy brush under the oak tree, then struck a match and looked around; a child's eyes stared up at him, big eyes, the biggest eyes he thought he'd ever seen; he saw wisps of tangled hair and streaks of black earth on the this upturned face. . . .

He felt the burn of the match on his fingers and it fell and made a little hissing sound in the snow. The quick low crunching began again. . . .  
(309-10)

Nunn's neighbor, Lureenie Cramer, is outside with her children, digging for acorns, though she explains, "I come out to git some wood an they follered me" (310). But even as she speaks, "one of them, a little one it sounded like, began a loud heartbroken sobbing, 'You've spilt em,

Mommie--I cain't find em'" (310). Then Nunn hears "a little scuffle, silent almost except for the children's hard excited breathing and then an angry outburst of slaps and cries":

"That's mine. He's got my acorn, Mommie. Give it to me. She's got a whole handful."... the quick hungry crunching began again, except for one that pulled at Lureenie's dress and sobbed, "I didn't git any, Mom" (310).

The crunching sound seems even more terrible and poignant this time, as Arnow's character and her readers realize that the animal sound comes from children who have been reduced by hunger to an animal-like state. Lureenie's circumstances--pregnant and hungry herself, unable to feed her children and too proud to beg--are at once horrifying and heartbreaking. This scene in Hunter's Horn echoes a sound used years earlier for dramatic, shocking effect, and this time, Arnow accompanies the shock with unmistakable poignancy.

A third work, Arnow's best-known short story, "Washerwoman's Day," published by Robert Penn Warren in the Southern Review, clearly foreshadows her treatment of a theme she later developed in Hunter's Horn. This story shows the influence of community standards on a poor family and exposes the community's hypocrisy and self-serving piety.

"Washerwoman's Day" is the story of the pious Ladies' Aid Society that arranges for the funeral of Clarie Bolin, a poor washerwoman who dies from pneumonia, allegedly because she scrubbed a kitchen floor in her bare feet. She wanted to save her new shoes. The church ladies consider Clarie and her daughter to be "poor white trash" and are more concerned with who they will get to replace Clarie than they are about what has happened to her and what will become of her daughter, Laurie Mae, and Laurie Mae's illegitimate baby.

Told from a first person point of view by Jane, probably around the age of twelve, the story exposes a young girl's training in "respectability." Though her mother has forbidden her to go to the funeral, Jane lies to her teacher to be excused from school to attend it with her friend, Susie. Susie's father is the local undertaker, who did not "undertake" the washerwoman because he thought "it was a waste of good money to undertake poor people in cold weather. He sold the Ladies Aid the coffin, though" (523).

At the church the girls notice the flowers. Susie knew that "the Ladies Aid sent all the way to Lexington. Two dozen white roses, and it the dead of winter" (523). When Jane looked at the tightlipped face of the dead woman, she "wished in a dim sort of way that she could know the Ladies' Aid had spent three dollars for white roses." Jane is moved by the minister's funeral message, though

Laurie Mae, the dead woman's daughter, stoically sits with her baby on the front row and neither bows her head for prayer nor cries. The minister said that

righteousness had this day been shown by the ladies of the church in their beautiful putting away of the dead. . . . He hoped that the one of the living nearest and dearest to the dead would profit by the affliction that God in His almighty wisdom had seen fit to lay upon her, and change the path of her ways and walk henceforth with uprightness and decency. (524)

His implicit condemnation of Laurie Mae accompanies his explicit endorsement of the hypocritical, self-righteous "ladies of the church" who, after some discussion, have decided to give a half dozen of the white roses to Laurie Mae--"we could give her just a few. . . I think maybe we ought to" (525); they want to keep the rest for their sewing circle meeting on the next day.

"Washerwoman's Day" thus exposes a community's sanctimonious reaction to a poor woman's death and introduces a theme and situation which receives fuller treatment in Hunter's Horn. In Arnow's novel, when the impoverished young pregnant woman, Lureenie Cramer, already weakened by poor nutrition, has been in labor for days, her father-in-law, Keg Head, stands outside the house loudly praying because, he declares, calling the doctor from town is "against the Bible" (314). The old midwife, Sue Annie, knows the danger her patient is in; she also knows the

money a doctor would cost worries Keg Head more than God's will.

When Lureenie dies, her burial is arranged by the same self-serving relative who refuses to send for medical help. Her father-in-law tells himself that her death is "no fault of his, but the neighbors would say, at least with their eyes, that starvation hurried her on. . . but God's will was God's will" (322). The only responsibility Keg Head is willing to assume is that for having a speedy burial. When he sees that some of the neighbors have already begun to dig her grave, he rushes "to hurry things on" because "there was no use to ask for more bad luck by letting the sun go down on an empty grave, and everybody knew there was nothing that would bring bad luck quicker than by letting the sun set on an empty grave" (322).

When Keg Head goes to order Lureenie's coffin, he shows even more selfishness than the Ladies Aid in "Washerwoman's Day." Unlike the church ladies who order the finest flowers at great expense, he only pauses at the best, the "black walnut, dressed and seasoned to a rich nut brown" (322) when he goes to choose wood for Lureenie's coffin. He selects "the cheaper poplar; a man could only do so much, he said" (322). Already he is thinking, "all he'd ever get out of it was the partly paid-for radio, and that was little enough for burying the woman and raising her

children, though the children wouldn't be so bad, especially the oldest girl; his wife had never had a girl child and she needed help about the house (322).

Like the church women in "Washerwoman's Day," Keg Head anticipates a "return" on his investment. With the three dollars the Ladies Aid spend for the dead woman's two dozen roses, not only do they make themselves look good in the eyes of the minister and the community, but they also keep and enjoy a dozen and a half for their circle meeting the day after the washerwoman's funeral. In Hunter's Horn, Arnow sharpens the satire when she has Keg Head anticipating larger and more long-term returns on his expenses; he weighs the cost of cheap coffin wood against his gain of a radio and children who can work as unpaid servants.

Furthermore, Keg Head faces other dilemmas with a singular lack of compassion. He plans no service to accompany the burial (321-2). He hurries to get her buried before sundown: "the coffin wasn't quite wide enough and they had to turn her a little sideways; and by then she was too stiff to do much with her and her head kept turning with her thin wide shoulders and stuck up in the air, and they had to squeeze to get the coffin lid down" (323). Keg Head's solution was to tell a neighbor "Set a little harder on this corner" while he drove the nails "with short sharp blows" (323).

In Hunter's Horn, Arnow gives the sham and shameful behavior much fuller and more complex treatment than is possible in a short story. In "Washerwoman's Day," the naive narrator and her friend unquestioningly adopt the community's assessment of the washerwoman and her family as "poor white trash." The story moves readers because we know we can trust these girls to report accurately what they see, and their naivete does not cloud our own eyes. Like Huckleberry Finn, they often express judgments which give readers surprising insights.

Susie notices the clothes of the washerwoman's daughter: "Laurie Mae don't look so nice. That coat Mrs. Harvey gave her don't fit so good" (523). Jane observes that Laurie Mae "sat alone in the front row before her mother's coffin. Beside her was a long bundle wrapped in a piece of dirty brown blanket" (524). She notices that Laurie Mae is "not even crying," though everyone at the funeral "walked around and looked at Clarie Bolin and the white roses and Laurie Mae" (524). Jane thinks the dead washerwoman

looked mad. . . . with her teeth clamped tight together and her thin blue lips drawn back a little ways. She looked. . . as if she had just come back from a long fight, and had lost in the fight. (525)

Jane watches Mrs. Crabtree, one of the church ladies, make

a bouquet of the roses to give to Laurie Mae after the funeral: "She saw the rose with the petal missing and took it out. Then she took out five others" (525).

When Jane and Susie, thinking to make Laurie Mae feel better, tell her how much the flowers cost, Laurie Mae "stopped and looked at the flowers"; the girls sense she is not pleased and they do not understand. "Her voice sounded full of something else. We didn't know what it was" (526-7). They later hide and watch as she takes "the white roses one by one" and throws them "in the yellow mud of the road. She pushed them out of sight with her foot and raked the mud over them" (527). The girls cannot understand anyone who does not appreciate the good work of the Ladies Aid, but Arnow's readers can.

In Hunter's Horn, Keg Head's neglect and crassness receive even fuller exposure than the Ladies Aid. The community is not single-minded in its condemnation of Lureenie's foolish pride and in its acceptance of Keg Head's actions. There are those who admit "we left her in want an misery. . . . She suffered and it was not Thy will, O God, but man's greed" (326). Characters in Hunter's Horn offer a wider range of reactions to Lureenie's death. As one whose pride kept her from admitting to her neighbors that her husband had deserted the family and that she needed help, Lureenie nearly caused herself and her children to starve to death. When she died in childbirth,

a death due at least in part to her already weakened condition, the whole community (with the exception of her father-in-law) felt responsible. From her earliest stories to her novels, moral and social responsibility are central concerns in Arnow's fiction, though she never preaches. By describing her characters' actions, she reminds readers that individuals have responsibilities they cannot escape, that everyone's actions have consequences for themselves as well as others.

A carefully plotted and heavily ironic story, "The Two Hunters" (Esquire 18 July 1942), dramatizes a confrontation between Lacey, a seventeen-year-old boy, and a deputy sheriff who poses as a hunter but admits he is looking for a neighbor's whiskey still. Lacey also carries a rifle, though he has been hunting flowers for Millie, the youngest daughter of Buck Huffacre, the neighbor whom Lacey's father killed in a feud. The deputy strikes a deal with Lacy, trading the telescope sight from his automatic rifle for directions to the still. The boy uses the telescope to watch the deputy cross the creek, where Lacy shoots him from his mount: "he saw a mule struggling riderless up the path on the other side of the creek while some dark object that might have been a man's hat bobbed down the water" (96). Lacey then "unscrewed the telescope sight with slow fumbling motions as if his mind were hidden from his

hands," dropped it into a deep crevice, and walked away, pale and shivering "at times as if he felt the coldness of the wind" (96).

This chilling story uses stock materials of the feud, secret stills, and the murder of a deputy sheriff who is outsmarted by a "hillbilly." Nevertheless, readers familiar with Hunter's Horn can see in "The Two Hunters" a rudimentary characterization of Lee Roy Ballew. Lee Roy carries flowers to his mother, Milly. He knows the location of his father's moonshining still and diverts attention from it. He hides in the brush with his father's gun to protect his father from being taken by government agents. Lee Roy is no murderer, but he is prepared to kill to protect his father and his family (188). Most importantly, the young men in these works have a conscience and are torn between protecting family members and following the "code of the hills" which decrees one never reveals to an outsider the location of a whiskey still.

The Arnows' short story which connects most directly to Hunter's Horn is "The Hunter" (Nov. 1944), which is no surprise since it clearly derived from a draft manuscript of Hunter's Horn. Atlantic Monthly's "The Hunter," with a few minor changes such as the names of neighbors, basically became Chapter 4 of Arnow's second novel. In it she describes the late fall fox hunt in which King Devil runs Nunn's old hound Zing to death. In the story as well as

the novel, the men urge Nunn to spotlight and shoot the red fox, and Nunn accepts the challenge at first, but he then changes his mind when he looks into the fox's eyes, which look like a man's. Instead of shooting the animal, Nunn vows to take King Devil "fair an' true with a foxhound," no matter what the cost. In the story as well as the novel, Nunn thus adheres to a hunter's "code" of honor which disallows taking unfair advantage of a hunted animal. Without calling it "honor," he struggles throughout the novel with questions of honor. He would like to be a respectable hunter, farmer, husband, and father, but he cannot give each of those equal priority.

From Kosmos and The New Talent, now defunct "little literary magazines" of the 1930's, to the more prestigious Southern Review, Esquire, and The Atlantic, Arnow's short stories show that her early efforts in the genre were successful. Critic Wilton Eckley understandably omitted from his book one of Arnow's stories--"The Two Hunters"--because it was published under the name "H.L. Simpson" in Esquire, and submitted with a photograph of her brother-in-law at a time when Esquire did not readily accept stories written by women. Arnow smiled mischievously when she told reporter Alex Kotlowitz, "It worried me a little, that big lie, but I thought if they wanted a story, let them have it. So I did" (42). It was Arnow's way of getting

back at the male-dominated publishing industry.

Nevertheless, that story along with the others foreshadows  
Hunter's Horn.

## CHAPTER IV

### EXCAVATING A TUNE: HUNTER'S HORN AND MOUNTAIN PATH

In the Introduction, written for the first reprint of Mountain Path (1963), Arnow describes the problems in recreating the past. She asks the rhetorical question: "who can excavate a fiddle tune, the coolness of a cave now choked with the water of Lake Cumberland, or the creakings and sighings of an old log house?" (xiv). In her first novel, Arnow effectively captures the time and place she knew first hand, and in so doing, she also introduces themes and characters that receive further development in Hunter's Horn.

Mountain Path (1936) is the story of Louisa Sheridan, a young college student from Lexington who, like Harriette Louisa Simpson, took a teaching job in backwoods Kentucky because she did not have the money to continue in school. Louisa boards with the Calhoun family, known as the Cals, in Cal Valley, where Lee Buck Cal is the head of the family, a farmer, school trustee, fiddler, moonshiner, and leader of the family feud with the Barnetts. Louisa becomes especially well acquainted with Lee Buck's wife, Corie; their twelve-year-old daughter, Rie (short for Marie?), and Lee Buck's nephew, Chris Bledsoe. She meets with her small group of pupils in a one-room school. And

before the school year is over, Louisa learns much at school and at home.

In her Introduction, Arnow explained that she could see the beginnings of changes in the Kentucky backhills by 1933, the year she began writing Mountain Path. She saw the advent of such developments as "the Cumberland National Forest, WPA roads, more federal funds for county health and agriculture, hope of electricity," things which she "had dreamed for the hills were coming to pass" (xii). Though the WPA was not passed until April 1935, some relief measures, those Arnow refers to, were begun by 1933 (cf. Leuchterberg's FDR and the New Deal). Arnow reports that the changes "more or less paralleled those in all rural regions of the United States; improved roads and increased use of the automobile tended more and more to destroy the rural community, still too backward to attract industry of its own and stay alive" (xiii). Thus, as access increased to places which were previously inaccessible by roads, so did the numbers of people who left the hills to find work. As the isolation of the backhills communities diminished, so did the communities and their ways of life.

When Arnow discussed the importance of roads in her fiction, she admitted that "the very poor road to the family home on the hill above Burnside" may have been the reason that she "saw much of life in terms of roads"

(xiii). Her fiction holds ample evidence that roads are a central concern because the development of roads unifies the trilogy. Roads are also important to the plots and themes all three novels. Path, her original title for Mountain Path, led to her second novel, the manuscript of which she titled End of the Gravel (xiii, xiv). She explained that her second novel was "roughly planned at the same time" as the first one, though it was "never finished until many years later" (xiii). She described Hunter's Horn as

the story of a hill community near the end of a graveled road where the outside world was bringing change to the home community and at the same time taking men and families away. (xiv)

The last novel of the trilogy, The Dollmaker, "centered on a hill family where the graveled road led onto the highway, and ended in a wartime housing development in Detroit" (xiv). Because "the hill community was gone," Arnow commented, "Highway seemed no fit title" for the third novel, so she chose The Dollmaker instead (xiv).

However, when editors changed End of the Gravel to Hunter's Horn, Arnow thought the title to be misleading. She wrote that "many were the disappointed readers" who "had envisioned from the title redcoats and high life with a saddle leather smell only to find the central family with one old mule and not one good saddle" (xiv). Though the

poverty is not as extreme in Mountain Path as in Hunter's Horn, the central family and other human relationships as well as the physical isolation of the community form the heart of Arnow's first two novels.

Mountain Path begins in the office of the school superintendent where Louisa Sheridan examines a map to find the location of the school where she will teach for the next seven months. Though the place does not appear on his map, the superintendent thinks she can get within about sixteen miles of the Canebrake school by bus, and after that, without looking at her, he asks, "Ever ride a mule?" (9). He explains that he has written a letter to Lee Buck Cal, the school trustee, asking him to meet the new teacher, though he admits, "I don't know if he got the letter" (10). Another school trustee enters the office and recalls the school where Louisa has been assigned as "a kind a lost like place in a bend uv Cumberland" (13). Talking to him makes Louisa think of Lexington, her home, and wonder how "a place one hundred and ten miles away could seem to be on the other side of the world" (16).

After a long bus ride, Louisa inquires about Canebrake school, only to discover that the place which did not appear on the superintendent's map evidently has a different name from the one he assigned it. Her inquiries draw the reply, "But thar ain't no Canebrake--not in these parts. I been a livin' here forty yer an' I ain't naiver

heard a no sich. Hit's bound tu be Cavecreek" (22). So Cavecreek is "Canebrake" on the school records in the county office, and as Louisa travels there, on muleback for the first time, riding up and down a diminishing path, she recalls the man who had called it "a sort of lost like place" (31). Reflecting on it, Louisa thinks that "he should have said forgotten too" (31).

Arnow's concern with the isolated setting continues to be significant in Hunter's Horn. Early in her second novel, a central character also takes a bus ride to a remote place. When Nunn Ballew rides a bus home and tells the driver where to stop, the bus driver asks, "Are you sure, buddy, this is where you want off? There's nothen here, no light, nothen" (90). But Nunn knows where "th graded gravel" begins, and he tells the bus driver, "it ain't more'n ten, twelve miles to where I live, an they's a road--most a th way" (90). Thus, at the beginning of Hunter's Horn, set in 1939, the distance from the hill community to the outside world has lessened slightly, from sixteen miles to ten or twelve, though it remains great enough to prevent much outside traffic.

Throughout Hunter's Horn, however, that distance shortens as the WPA brings the road closer. As the road extends, the community declines. Despite the advantages the road brings--the school bus and a way of "trucking out

timber and coal and crossties from their rough hill lands" (302)--more people than ever before are leaving the hills. From the Little Smokey Creek community, Mark Cramer has gone to find work in Detroit (275). The Cookseys left for the summer to pick tomatoes in Indiana (277). Olen Anderson has joined the Army and been sent to train in Hawaii (276). And there is talk that "this war's a goen to take ever man out a these hills; them that can't fight has to go to factories" (376).

As Nunn watches the changes occur in his community, his thoughts seem to echo, with an important difference, those of Louisa Sheridan, who sensed Cavecreek was a "lost place." Louisa, an outsider, enters an isolated, "forgotten" world and sees a "lost place." But Nunn, a native of Little Smokey Creek, has watched his community become less isolated and more abandoned, forgotten by those who knew it, not by outsiders who never did. He worries about the "lost people": he

pondered with a mixture of wonder and sadness on the lost people. Where were they and their children and grandchildren? When he was a little boy only thirty years ago, people had lived in these houses. . . . Where had they gone, those lost people? What were they doing? (308)

As Nunn looks at their empty, decaying houses, he knows that these people "hadn't left the country because they wanted to. They had starved out when the land washed away

and wouldn't grow corn" (308). When farmers can no longer make a living and the cities outside the hills offer jobs, the roads take them away. Arnow's fiction clearly demonstrates how roads, in effect, destroy her hopes for the development of remote communities. Despite the services that roads could bring in, what use are the improvements in health care, education, and farming practices if they take the people away?

The "lost people" of Hunter's Horn thus represent a significant development of the isolated "lost place" of Mountain Path. Arnow's literary vision extended the Path to a "graveled road" in Hunter's Horn and captured the effects of the changes on the people as well as the place.

Most importantly, Arnow argues that those who stay behind will feel the changes more deeply than those who leave. Hunter's Horn ends with a powerful scene in which the central character realizes that one can remain in the community and lose more than the "lost people" if he loses his dreams. Nunn Ballew counts himself among those who never made it to the Promised Land, though he had once viewed his childhood home, "th old Place," as the ideal farm which he would rebuild and restore for his family. By the end of the novel, however, Nunn knows he has failed to meet both his own expectations and those of his family. When he wonders aloud whether any of the Children of Israel who arrived in the Promised Land "ever thought about them

that died on th way" (412), he clearly counts himself amon those unfortunates. Condemned by his circumstances and his<sup>9</sup> own choices, his "death" is a death of dreams, particularly his dreams of becoming a self-respecting farmer, husband, and father. Arnow thus shows an important thematic development in Hunter's Horn as the focus shifts from the physical isolation of the insulated community in Mountain Path to the more complex psychological isolation of a central character in Hunter's Horn.

Certainly, Louisa Sheridan, the schoolteacher and main character of Mountain Path, also feels alienated and lonely, but not to the same extent that Nunn Ballew does. Her alienation is much more short-lived and limited. At the beginning of Arnow's first novel, Louisa clearly views herself as an outsider who intends to stay that way. Even before she arrives at the home of the family with whom she will board, she looks forward to the end of the seven months when her job will be over, when she will no longer be "living with strange people, shut off from all of her own kind" (20). She begins with a strong sense of alienation, as she feels "lost, unwanted, and in the way" (32). Determined to remain uninvolved in the problems of those around her, she makes the conscious decision not to ask questions: "she would not make their trouble her trouble" (76).

However, as the story goes on, Louisa embraces more and more of the life in the Kentucky hills. As her involvement in the Cal family and in the Cavecreek School increases, she realizes that "she had been content to . . . learn from them instead of their learning from her" (238). Rather than remaining aloof, Louisa has learned the ways of the community and has made many of their problems her own. She shares their worries and participates in their lives, once even telling lies to protect Lee Buck's nephew, Chris, who is wanted for murder. Though she often surprises herself with her reevaluations of what is "civilized" and "primitive," Louisa increasingly accepts and relies on the Cal family, just as they gradually accept her, though their acceptance is never complete.

In Hunter's Horn, however, Nunn Ballew begins not as an outsider from the city, like Louisa, but as a native of the community where he lives. Nunn sets himself apart from others because his main preoccupation becomes fox hunting, not farming. Nunn's obsession with killing King Devil causes him increasingly to neglect his farm and his family and serves throughout to alienate him from his family and his neighbors. Apart and alone, he loses even his ability to examine clearly the community's standards which he believes he should follow to become once again a part of the group. In so doing, he rejects his own daughter and loses what remains of the respect held for him by those who

matter most. By the end of the novel, after King Devil has been captured, the object of his obsession which had set him apart from everyone for years has been removed, but Nunn remains more thoroughly alienated than ever before.

The point of interest and significance here is that in Arnow's first novel, *Louisa*, the outsider, moves from alienation to acceptance, as she willingly surrenders her resolve to remain apart and learns to be more accepting of people, their values, and ways of life. But in the second novel, Arnow explores the inverse of this pattern of development as Nunn moves from a position of relative acceptance within the community to one of almost total alienation. In Hunter's Horn, Arnow creates not only a strong, credible male character, but also one whose alienation is the reversal of the thematic development established in Mountain Path: Louisa steadily grows in understanding; Nunn regresses. Because of her steady progression toward acceptance, Louisa is not so complex a character as Nunn, who repeatedly acts in ways which increase his alienation, who makes plans and resolutions, and breaks them. He suffers overwhelming guilt because he has repeatedly failed to meet his resolves to be more of a farmer and less of a fox hunter, to be a better provider for his family, to bring them less cause for shame and more reason for pride.

Though Nunn might be compared with Mountain Path's Lee Buck Cal as a Kentucky hill farmer, hunter, and moonshiner, the similarities basically end there. Nunn is a much less successful farmer than Lee Buck, a much more serious hunter, and a markedly less experienced moonshiner. Nunn does not make his living by moonshining as Lee Buck does; Nunn makes whiskey only once. While Arnow develops Lee Buck mostly with surface details, she creates Nunn as a more complex character who shows readers his tormented inner self.

Nunn represents a significant development of Lee Buck, who was "no different from the rest of the world. The things he hated ruled his life, and not the things he loved" (145). This sentence from Mountain Path is a nearly isolated clue about Lee Buck's inner self, his emotional response to the feud in which his family is involved with those at "the other end." But this single sentence from Arnow's first novel perfectly characterizes Nunn Ballew. In Arnow's second novel, however, she fully explores and develops the range and complexity of Nunn's emotions. His hatred for King Devil consumes him, often to the exclusion of all else, particularly his wife and children. Then when he takes the time to realize that his family runs a poor second in his priorities, when he buys canned dog food instead of sugar and other food and clothes he knows his

family desperately needs, his guilt overwhelms him as much as his hatred and frustration.

Arnow's first two novels share the theme that social and cultural pressure on the individual is inescapable, however how small and isolated the community. But at the same time, Arnow establishes the uniqueness of the individual. Idiosyncratic personal differences seem to transcend cultural ones. Arnow once remarked that she had read many reviews of "proletarian writing," and that learning the definition of "proletariate" led her to think of the poor people she had met in the hills: "I couldn't consider them as members of the proletariat, proletarians. They were all individuals to me, as were characters in my imagination" (Address 8).

To verify Arnow's statement, readers can observe in her first two novels that characters who seem to share similar circumstances can act quite differently because of their individual personalities. The two schoolteachers--Louisa Sheridan in Mountain Path and Miss Betty Catharine Burdine in Hunter's Horn--are similar in a number of ways. Each one is young, born and raised in the city, college-educated, and teaching for the first time in a remote Kentucky one-room school. Each is an unmarried woman who boards with the family of one of her pupils. Each knows little or nothing about the local customs and culture and

brings her ideas and personal things which make her a representative of the "outside world" to the community.

Despite the difference in development of each teacher, that is, the number of chapters devoted to characterizing each one, the character's uniqueness does not rely solely on the size of her role in the novel. Arnow's first novel is, from start to finish, the schoolteacher's story, while the new schoolteacher plays a significant part in only two chapters (18 and 20) of Hunter's Horn, so the range of development is not comparable. However, these characters are comparable as outsiders who emerge as individuals and handle alienation in quite different ways.

Even though she has resolved to remain aloof, Louisa experiences a number of changes during her stay in Cal Valley. Readers can trace her development from an outsider who, at first, consciously recognizes her alienation and chooses to remain a stranger then becomes one who reluctantly reexamines her own expectations and values. And finally, Louisa accepts the individuals around her and feels some measure of acceptance from them.

As a newcomer to the community, Louisa receives constant reminders that she is an outsider when she encounters many curious events about which she feels she cannot openly ask questions. The children she teaches are often as secretive as the adults, but she slowly pieces together enough scattered bits of information to learn that

the community is divided, though she does not understand exactly how or why. One day, a young "peculiarly wild, primitive" girl, Samathetie, mysteriously joins the class and just as mysteriously leaves (107). When Louisa asks her students about the child, she is puzzled by their explanations that "she lives clost tu some a them in th' end" and that "we'd best not have nothin' tu do with her" (109). Acutely aware of her own status as an outsider, Louisa thinks, "Ten minutes ago she had known these children," and briefly, she had

felt the same kinship for them that one of a species feels for others of its own kind. Now when they spoke of the "other end" that feeling was gone, and she was left a stranger, watching and listening to peculiar beings that she did not understand. (109)

Circumstances like these make Louisa aware of her emotional and intellectual distance from the others and enhance the physical isolation she feels: "the long vistas of uninhabited ridges and hills made her too acutely aware of how far away the world was--her world" (171-2).

Louisa's world of the University in Lexington leads her to have certain expectations about life in the hills, expectations which are soon challenged. In the school superintendent's office, for instance, the trustee she met from another rural district had spoken only briefly before she understood that

in this land illiteracy did not necessarily mean ignorance. She felt a disturbing respect for this tall, unshaven man who couldn't read. She felt he knew things, important things about living, had an understanding beyond her own. (13)

Away from "her world," repeatedly facing the limitations of her own knowledge and understanding, Louisa feels uncomfortable and uncertain that she can ever be more than an outsider. Sitting at a silent dinner table when she does not know the reason for the silence, she realizes "she had expected that they would be embarrassed in her presence, not she in theirs" (53), and she thinks that

she and they could never find a common ground on which to meet. They were too different, a difference dependent not upon education or customs of living. . . . It was something else. (54)

When she speculates that the distance results from her knowledge that she knows Lee Buck's nephew, Chris, has killed a man, she tries to dismiss her concern and involvement: "whatever it was, it was a something that would always be between them. It wouldn't matter. She would live with them for seven months, and then go away and forget them" (54).

But significantly, the longer Louisa lives with the Cal family, the more sensitive she becomes to the fact that she needs to question her preconceptions about them. She feels "tormented" by "misgivings about the workings of those things referred to by her own kind as laws and

civilization" (124). She knows that the family she lives with "sent their children to school because they wanted to, and not because of a state law they had never heard of" (124). Confused by people who fail to meet her expectations, Louisa finds "they left her without a yardstick for measuring people and their conduct" (124).

Because she feels attracted to Chris Bledsoe, Lee Buck's nephew, who killed a man in the course of the feud between the Cals and the Barnetts, Louisa reluctantly reexamines her preconceptions about killing. "By all the standards that had been set up for her out there in the world Chris was uncivilized and lawless. Yet to himself and those who knew him he was a lawful man" (124). When Louisa notices that he pauses in his work to look at clouds and autumn leaves, she realizes

this world must hold the same things for him that it held for her: beauty, and long sad silences, and the play of rain and light and mist over the hills. It oughtn't to. He ought to be insensitive and stupid and unthinking. It would be easier that way. (178)

If he were insensitive and stupid, Louisa would have her world view confirmed rather than challenged; she could be more comfortable in her beliefs.

Lee Buck Cal also gives Louisa reason to reexamine her way of thinking. When she admires a well-crafted fiddle that Lee Buck made by hand, "Louisa marvelled at the man's

patience and cunning to do such work with the tools he had" (183). Then, turning to more practical matters, "she thought of gates that needed hinges. . . and steps with missing teeth, and the owner of such things made a fiddle and played it in all probability when there was work to do" (183). Louisa's criticism, evidently based on her upbringing that work should come before play, shows that she cannot escape childhood teachings, but her next thought shows that she is growing:

was he a shiftless and a no-good, or was he merely wise and brave, doing the things he wanted to do because the doing of them gave him more pleasure than firm gates and solid steps could give. (183)

Louisa realizes that the differences between herself and the Cals "all came from a difference in their sense of values," and she wonders "who valued the right things" (213). In a Utopia, she thinks, "every man would be his own judge," but for that ideal world to work, she is beginning to understand that she, as well as everyone else, would have to change in order to see the world as "the dwelling place of individuals, not the home of a nation or a race or a system of culture" (214).

Such is Harriette Arnow's world view, especially in her writing, where she honors the uniqueness of individual characters above regional, social, and cultural alliances. In Mountain Path, Louisa Sheridan begins with self-

assurance that she will remain an outsider in the hill community where she goes to live and teach. But then she "wavered": "she had sometimes failed in being an aloof bystander" (280). Because of that "failure," she succeeds in learning and growing as she encounters one situation after another which challenges her expectations and values. With new understanding, then, Louisa takes a long soul-searching look at herself and realizes that she has not been "an individual, but one of a pattern":

She was what she was through no act or thought on her part, but solely as a result of that combination of circumstances that had constituted her environment. . . . Seeing herself so, she wanted to wreck the mold of her universe, and make of herself a person, an individual with a place in the world of her choosing. (238)

Her own willingness to confront differences, to try to understand them, to break through cultural stereotypes, and to redefine her identity shows she respects and appreciates cultural values as well as individuality.

In Hunter's Horn, Arnow also introduces a schoolteacher who is an outsider to the community. Miss Burdine comes to Little Smokey Creek to replace Old Andrew Haynes, who has lost his job because of Nunn Ballew's idle complaints to a member of the school board. Miss Burdine makes the biggest impression on Suse Ballew, who views her as "a girl-like woman, perfect and pretty as a

great wax doll, untouched by human hands" (198). Suse looks at her in awe:

a little sigh escaped her, not entirely of envy, but more for all the things gathered in the teacher, things mysterious and unattainable: a college education, hands white and delicate as some curious plant grown in the shade, the color of her nail polish, the way her carefully curled hair of a bright rich yellow shone in the lamplight. . .; the innumerable mysteries of her dress, a pale pink silk, short-sleeved with big buttons shaped like ships; silver bracelets on one arm, and on the other a wrist watch. (198)

Without knowing much about her new teacher, Suse sets her up as a symbol of all she desires in the world outside the Kentucky hills. Suse believes Miss Burdine is "a fine though yet unknown piece--of the outside world" (199):

Miss Burdine had had candles on her birthday cake and had eaten from tables set with china and silver on a lace cloth like those in the mail-order catalogue; she had known bathrooms and furnace heat and inner-spring mattresses instead of shuck ticks; she knew water that came from a faucet instead of a spring; had ridden in many automobiles, seen many movies, been in many strange buildings, had know many strange people; she had maybe, if she were not religious, danced in a long full-skirted dress with flowers in her hair, moving her feet in time to the music of many violins. (199)

Suse's speculations about her new teacher lead her to the wishful thinking that "Miss Burdine would be her friend and tell her how those things were--and someday she too would be like that--a part of the outside world" (199). So clear is Arnow's description of Miss Burdine as an outsider and

as a symbol of opportunity that the author might have been content to leave the character without further development. Arnow, however, develops Miss Burdine as a unique individual, despite the relatively minor role she plays in the novel.

To balance Suse's admiration of the new teacher, Arnow records a wide range of others' reactions at the party given in honor of Miss Burdine. Suse's friend, Andy, reveals that his parents do not appreciate the teacher's delicate beauty as much as he does. Andy says, "Mom and Pop don't like her looks one bit, but she's pretty, ain't she?" (198).

But the teacher's dog inevitably attracts more attention at the party than she does. Andy explains to Suse that the teacher has brought her dog with her because "she's never been in th woods an she was afraid. . . . He's a long-haired collie. . . town raised, like she is" (200). People of all ages have much the same reaction to her pet:

The children made way for it with subdued squeals and frightened glances; even many of the women and some of the men drew aside with looks of fear, for few in the Little Smokey Creek country had ever seen such a big fierce-looking cur dog. (200)

One neighbor, Mark Cramer, "who seemed unimpressed by the teacher" remarks that "cur dogs like that make mean sheep killers" (201) and elicits Miss Burdine's "sharp" response

that her dog is "no cur," but is instead "a thoroughbred collie" (201). Lee Roy Ballew's kind smile "at her stupidity" leads to her additional defense of the animal: "Miss Burdine's cheek trembled" as she insisted "he is not a cur dog. . . . Why, he's pedigreed on one side" (201). The new teacher does not understand that, in this community, any dog which is not a hound is a "cur." Lee Roy tries to explain, "But a cur's a cur. He could be pedigreed on both sides, but he ain't no hound" (202).

The scene which follows this conversation illustrates that the dog's "town raised" behavior, like Miss Burdine's, can only generate further confusion in this community. Her collie appears at the the party after having run around the countryside, and when a pack of hounds also enter the house, it becomes clear that the strange dog has been the object of their chase. The "town bred" collie "did not bark or try to join in the fun as a country cur might have done, but whined softly" (204). The ensuing chaos involves barking dogs, buckets of water thrown to scatter them, Sue Annie's warnings not to ruin her featherbeds, people running, and the teacher "standing on her chair, screaming and crying, begging them not to let her dog be killed" (204). Rather than taking charge and leading her scared dog to the back porch where she could have closed the door to the hounds, the teacher, like her dog, is made helpless by fear in these unfamiliar surroundings.

With her dog rescued, the teacher turns her attention to her own appearance. She looks at herself in a silver compact: "Suse watched with fascination while she powdered her nose and straightened her lipstick and so removed all traces of her tears and fright and anger" (206). Mark Cramer looks at the teacher without admiration and wonders aloud "does any of her belong to her by rights" (206). Despite the obvious comedy of the entire scene and the enjoyment we know most everyone will later have from retelling the story of what happened on the night of the party for the new teacher, Miss Burdine's preoccupations with herself and her dog, her ignorance, and ineffectiveness mainly serve to alienate her from the community.

Even though some think she will not return--and though Arnow could have decided the "outsider" teacher has adequately served her fictional purpose--Miss Betty Catharine Burdine returns (208). She does not bring her "big cur dog," but she brings her fears and complaints. Sue Annie's grandchildren replace her dog,

walking with the teacher through the woods to and from school. But even so she cried much and was afraid; she was lonesome, she said; nights at Sue Annie's the screech owls troubled her: days she was restless with fleas from John's hogs under the floor, and seed ticks that seemed uncommon plentiful that year. (208)

Though much continues to separate the teacher from the community, she does manage to perform her duties at school.

Arnow writes that

nobody could deny that Miss Burdine did all the law required; a car brought her early on Monday morning to Samuel's store and came for her on Friday afternoon; through the week she came on time and never left early much. . . she worked in her record book every day, the children said, and filled out all kinds and colors of cards. (208)

More than old Andrew, then, Miss Burdine satisfies the letter of the law.

But her students find her classroom policies much less flexible than those of their former teacher. Less understanding than Andrew about family farm work that must be done, Miss Burdine complains and scolds "if the children missed a day or came late or left at afternoon recess during blackberry picking and corn-laying-by time" (208).

The pupils also have good reason to question their new teacher's competence in teaching their subjects. When Suse and Andy have trouble with a difficult arithmetic problem, Suse suggests asking the teacher for help, but Andy warns, "She don't much like to be asked about arithmetic" (215). Miss Burdine indeed alienates herself further from her students when she reproaches Suse for her simple request. In addition to the "distant, half pitying, half ridiculing.

Suse: "You missed the day I explained the problems and I can't interrupt my work to explain again" (216). Andy

tells Suse that the teacher "didn't explain," but instead only "read out loud what th book said an told me to start worken," but that does not take the sting from Miss Burdine's insulting accusation when she tells Suse: "maybe you're copying from Andy and that's the reason you get the wrong answer" (216). Insensitive to Suse's "angry, embarrassed tears" and to the fact that math "had always been a kind of game" between Suse and Andy, that "copying would have destroyed the game" (216), Miss Burdine turns away and tries to avoid revealing her own limitations in arithmetic, though Andy suspects that "Mom's right. Th woman ain't as smart as old Andrew" (216).

Andy's suspicions prove true when a flustered Miss Burdine tries unsuccessfully to work the problem on the chalkboard, as all of the children watch. Lee Roy's eyes become "pleased and knowing." Then Suse's eyes grow "knowing," though they are not pleased;" Suse's eyes reveal the disillusionment "of a pilgrim who, traveled far to worship at a golden shrine, finds the shrine made of new veneer overlaid with guilt" (217). When Andy corrects some of the teacher's mistakes, she bites her lip and tries to answer (217), while Suse independently discovers the major error which has prevented Andy and her from getting the answer in the back of the book.

Clearly less skilled in mathematics than her pupils, Miss Burdine blushes and looks "hungrily at the eraser" as she arrives once again at a wrong answer. Though Suse "would never have sworn to it," Miss Burdine "said something softly, and it sounded like `Shit'" (218). The teacher declares her own answer correct and quickly dismisses class.

Needing to learn more than math, Miss Burdine forever loses the respect of her class by being more ready to criticize than to admit her shortcomings. She finally leaves the school when Lee Roy leads the class in a mischievious trick to scare her into believing that the hounds are chasing her, rather than the fox scent that he knows to be all around a log where he invites her to sit. In these scenes, however, Arnow does more than match country wits with city pretense to expose real and pretended superiority. She creates a human character who can look like a china doll but display her anxieties and fears and swear under her breath. For Suse, the teacher begins as the object of admiration and the symbol of dreams and wishful thinking but becomes the object of disillusionment. Miss Burdine remains an outsider in the community as well as in the classroom because, unlike Louisa Sheridan, she refuses to acknowledge that she can learn anything from anyone unlike herself.

The differences between these two characters are important because Arnow shows that characters who have similar roles in a community will act and react as individuals, not as predictable types. Each of Arnow's schoolteachers reacts in a remarkably different way to her circumstances. Though each begins as an outsider, Louisa grows and changes as she learns to accept people as individuals. The hill people reciprocate her respect. Miss Burdine remains self-centered and alienated throughout, with the distance between herself and others increasing until she leaves. Arnow thus shows her concern for individual characterizations when she creates in Hunter's Horn a young woman schoolteacher whose surroundings are in many ways identical to Louisa Sheridan's in Mountain Path, but whose thoughts and actions make her distinctive.

Other pairs of characters deserve mention as ones who show developments from Arnow's first novel to her second. The young girl, Suse, in Hunter's Horn, seems an extension of Rie, in Mountain Path. Each girl lives in a world that measures time in a similar way. When Rie overhears her mother explain to Louisa that they don't have a "runnin' timepiece," Rie adds, "Don't let th' time worry ye. . . Atter milkin' time an' when we git th' floors swep, an' th' dishes washed, an' us youngens git ready hit'll be school time" (58). Rie has long ago learned that time in the

mountains is not measured by hands on a clock, but instead by human tasks. In Hunter's Horn Old John is "the only man in the country who carried a watch and kept it wound" (136). Suse and her family mark time in the same way that the Cals do.

Wild-strawberry-picking time in June was hardly finished before it was cabbage-krauting time and the first of the white horse apples were falling, begging to be canned or dried or made into vinegar, and . . . the huckleberries were ripening. (Hunter's Horn 261)

Suse, like Rie, knows that every day and every season brings its own work, that time is measured by work.

School provides each girl with a respite from household chores. Each is a bright and imaginative student who enjoys learning. Throughout Louisa's stay, Rie demonstrates much practical knowledge as she answers Teacher's questions about running a one-room school. Rie shows her imagination, too. One day after a geography lesson in which Louisa described a globe--"a round thing with a colored map on it" (101)--Rie initiates a plan to make a globe by using colored chalk to draw the continents and oceans on the black pot-bellied stove in the classroom.

To an even greater extent than Rie, Suse shows her interest in learning through her incessant interest in reading newspapers and everything other kind of printed material. Nunn declares that Suse is his "readenest

youngen" (13). She reads government brochures and mail order catalogues. Her paternal grandmother pleases her with gifts of books at Christmas. And whenever her father returns from town, she is always the one "wanting to know if he had got a paper" (239). Though her correspondence with Mark Cramer remains a secret from her family, she reads his letters avidly to learn about the place where he lives. As she opens his first letter, "she hoped it wasn't a silly love letter but told something about Detroit" (283).

Suse also demonstrates her substantial practical knowledge of the workings of the school when she orchestrates the activities for the school superintendent's visit. When old Andrew stands nervously before the class waiting for the school officials to appear, Suse takes over and directs,

you, primer class, go an start writen th numbers to a hundred. Rachel, you put 'em on the blackboard fer them to copy real prettylike. Lee Roy, you an Ruby git up to this here recitation bench; bring your arithmetic an tablets an pencils. Now, Ruby, soon's th door opens you stand up an start sayen th fives--th fives is th only thing you do know an you better say 'em all th way . . . . (139)

When Andrew continues to be intimidated by the school officials' visit, Suse again takes the initiative to help him show off the skills of his students. She passes Andrew a note, written in her "large bold hand":

Send me and Andy to the bord and let us work them silo problems, page 271. Then have Rachel's arithmetic, page 167. She's got it real good then have the third grade they've got problums in taking away then have me and Andy up in history, tell us to go to the bord and draw a map of the US and show when each part got there. We do that real good. (141)

Despite her errors in English grammar, her intelligence and ingenuity are especially evident when she solves the math problem that her new teacher Miss Burdine cannot solve. Suse imagines that she hears old Andrew chiding, "You ain't used your heads, youngens; try again. . . . You're letten it skeer you cause it's round; a silo ain't nothen but a rolled-up wall" (217). Thinking thus, projecting what her former teacher would have said and applying that advice to the problem, she finds the correct answer. One of the two students to be promoted to the eighth grade in the Deer Lick School, Suse studies at night "by the broken-chimneyed lamp or by the firelight when they ran out of coal oil, determined to pass the eighth-grade examinations" (241). She passes the exams and longs to go to high school.

Though each girl is obviously interested in school, Suse seems a more active participant in her own education than Rie. Though the girls are about the same age, twelve to thirteen, Arnow makes no mention of Rie's grade level. Also Rie does not do schoolwork at home nor does she hope to attend high school, but Suse does both, as she takes her studies much more seriously. Though Rie helps the new

schoolteacher know how to manage many grade levels in a one-room school, Suse demonstrates a much more thorough knowledge as she instructs their teacher of many years, who knows his job but suffers from "stage fright" in the presence of strangers. Suse's self-confidence and initiative extend beyond Rie's both in the instances of helping Andrew and in matching wits with Miss Burdine on the math problem.

Another way the two characters are alike is that each is the eldest daughter in her family, but Suse again proves an extension or development of Rie. Each girl assumes from a young age much of the responsibility for child care and household chores. Rie admits to Louisa, "I'm used tu takin' Beetle [her youngest sister] ever place I go" (46). When Rie stops to talk for a few minutes, she realizes she has neglected her sister: "Oh, land a livin, these youngens. I'll bet she's crawled clean out th' big house and fell off'n th' porch" (60). Rie takes care of the children and helps her mother with the house work, but unlike Suse, she never complains.

With fewer reasons for dissatisfaction because her father is a better provider for his family than Nunn is, Rie accepts without question what life holds for her. Louisa already sees signs that the years are not likely to be kind to Rie: "Rie did not seem a child to be soothed by

pleasant promises, but a person old as herself, older in many ways. . . . In three years she would be almost sixteen--married in all probability--preparing for the birth of a child without doctor or nurse" (285). As Rie becomes older, Louisa can see that

Rie's waist would twist yet more when she carried her own children instead of her mother's, and the bend of her shoulders grow as she grew with her children, so that at twenty-five she would be an old woman never having been a young one. (364)

Arnold repeatedly describes Suse as one who is older than her years, an "old woman" before her time (49, 378), but the main difference between Suse and Rie is that Suse resents being saddled with adult obligations. Milly knows that Suse "had always hated housework and had ever been an impatient baby tender"; nevertheless, Suse had been increasingly required to be "the keeper of the house and Bill Dan [the Ballew baby]" (261).

The contrast between Rie and her friend, Mabel, foreshadows Arnold's characterizations of Suse and Lureenie in Hunter's Horn. Louisa observes that Mabel "would always want a green silk dress trimmed with lace, and know she wanted it"; however, "Rie would never know" (364). Rie will not let herself want things that she believes to be unavailable to her; she will not dream for what is beyond her reach. But in her friend Mabel is the brief sketch of

Suse's friend, Lureenie, as well as a significant side of Suse herself. Suse wonders

how would it be to be a woman like Lureenie, married with little youngens, but wanting still the outside world, . . . and always knowing that you could never get away until you were dead?" (228)

What Lureenie wants is clearly beyond her reach. But because Lureenie wanted a flower garden, "Suse and Lureenie worked themselves half to death traipsing in the woods hunting log dirt" and even spent money on flower seeds, only to have the hogs uproot the plants and the sheep eat them (55). Because Lureenie also dreamed of having a pretty house, she tried wallpapering her cabin, but the first hard rain caused the paper to fall off; then rain streaked her whitewash and made the walls "pied as a copperhead" (55). Then because she had always wanted a radio, she buys one on credit in Cincinnati and brings it home with her though she has no money for batteries. Though Lureenie repeatedly faces defeat, she will not abandon her dreams. Before she dies in childbirth, her delirium lets her hear music on the radio (318). Like Mabel in Mountain Path, Lureenie and Suse not only want things from the outside world, but they also are constantly dissatisfied not to have them.

Suse is a more complex character than Rie because Suse will not unquestioningly accept her fate. From the

beginning of the novel, when Suse runs outside to watch an airplane pass, she longs for freedom. She is restless and wants to escape to the city, where she could further her education and build a better life for herself than in the hills. Suse challenges the people and ideas that have the potential to determine her future: she vows to herself that "she wouldn't be like Milly [her mother] and she wouldn't be like Lureenie; she'd make her own life; it wouldn't make her" (228). Then when her pregnancy threatens that resolve, Suse renews her promise to herself: "What she had done was done--it was over--sin it was, but for one sin only she wouldn't pay with her whole life--all her life" (349). Readers are led to expect that Rie will, without question or complaint, spend all of her life in the Kentucky hills and grow up to fill the roles of wife and mother, just as her mother before her. But in Hunter's Horn, Arnow develops a more self-aware character, one who challenges authority and tradition. Suse is a strong individual who thinks for herself and does not want to live "by God or the neighbors."

In Hunter's Horn, readers can trace from Mountain Path a number of extensions and developments in setting, theme, and character. The path becomes a gravel road, by which even greater numbers leave the hills. The theme of isolation--physical and psychological alienation--becomes

more complex. That is, the primary conflict in Mountain Path is between the native hill people and a city woman, who becomes less of an outsider in the course of the novel. Louisa Sheridan's inner struggles are the only ones readers see. In Hunter's Horn, however, the number of "outsiders" increases, though they are basically of only incidental importance. Arnow explores the way that individual actions can alienate one as thoroughly, perhaps more so, than cultural differences. And she focuses not on one single character, but on an "ensemble cast" of characters. Readers witness not only the actions but also the internal workings of several characters. Hunter's Horn is no less Suse Ballew's story than it is Nunn's, no less Sue Annie's than it is Milly's or Lee Roy's. Nunn and Suse in particular seem extensions of characters in Mountain Path.

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUDING THE KENTUCKY TRILOGY: HUNTER'S HORN AND THE DOLLMAKER

Arnow's second novel lends a certain resonance to her third, The Dollmaker. Hunter's Horn provides a Kentucky setting, a time frame which can be traced from the late Depression past the American entry to World War II, a community of recognizable characters, and a number of thematic conflicts. Reading The Dollmaker, a fine novel in itself, becomes an even richer experience when it is read in the sequence of Arnow's Kentucky trilogy. The echoes of place, people, and human problems reverberate from one novel to the next, and in The Dollmaker the connections with Hunter's Horn are much closer than with any of Arnow's other fiction.

The most obvious connection is the setting. The main character of The Dollmaker introduces herself in the first chapter with "I'm Gertie Nevells frum Ballew, Kentucky" (5). Nunnely Ballew from Hunter's Horn knows the area well and sends his children to Deer Lick School, where Gertie's children would also go (126) if it were not closed as though it were "forever Saturday" (85) because the war has taken away the teachers. Arnow records this change along with others that are occurring beside Little Smokey Creek

in the same Kentucky community that was the setting for her second novel.

Anyone who reads both Hunter's Horn and The Dollmaker will recognize certain characters as well as the setting. In the first chapter of The Dollmaker, Gertie refers to the old midwife from Hunter's Horn, "Aunt Sue Annie," who brought the news that Gertie's youngest child, Amos, had been exposed to diphtheria, not just "the croup" (13, 22). And Sue Annie continues to be the gossip and busybody that she was in the earlier novel. Gertie's youngest daughter, Cassie, playing with her imaginary playmate, Callie Lou, repeats something she heard from Sue Annie: "He come in drunk frum Indianee 'thout one cent fer his wife an youngens"; Clytie, Cassie's oldest sister, corrects her: "It was his paycheck in a beer parlor, silly. That's what Sue Annie said, an it was old Willie Sexton done it" (114).

Sue Annie Tiller, the Sextons, the Hulls, old John Ballew, Ann Liz Cramer, Ansel Anderson--mail call at Hull's store in The Dollmaker sounds like a roll call of the characters in Hunter's Horn. But by the time of The Dollmaker, the war has touched all of the lives in this formerly isolated community. Even the local preacher has been called away to serve his country. As Gertie instructs her children from the Bible on one Sunday morning, she explains why she is teaching them: "our preacher's gone to Oak Ridge an they ain't enough people left fer Sunday

School" (35). Preacher Samuel Hull, father of Andy, Suse's classmate in Hunter's Horn, also ran the local store and post office, though his wife has taken over those jobs ever since Samuel "left God's work fer Oak Ridge" (90). The Preacher's oldest son, Andy, the promising scholar in Hunter's Horn, has been drafted and sent to France (91). The community's other minister, the fire and brimstone revival preacher, Battle John Brand, makes a second appearance in The Dollmaker, "stampeding the souls of his flock to Christ with his twin whips of Hell and God" (58).

Old John Ballew also lives on in the second novel. When the Tiptons, owners of the farm that Gertie wants to buy, moved to Indiana, where "their pop got him a job in a powder plant," they sold their farm to Uncle John Ballew (42), Nunn's second cousin, though Arnow had explained in Hunter's Horn that "in kinship [John] seemed more like uncle than cousin, for he was old, nigh onto seventy" (19). It does not seem unlikely to readers of Hunter's Horn that Gertie would have to deal with John Ballew to buy land because in Hunter's Horn John is one of the most successful farmers and land owners in the area: "he had almost a thousand acres of land, more than five times as much as Nunn, and in it were hundreds of acres of pine and poplar timber that people said were worth a fortune" (19).

These poplar trees also become important as a link between the two novels because in each one the timber is a part of John's identity. In Hunter's Horn, Arnow describes how "Old John looked up the valley, searching out his trees":

He smiled on them, a more tender smile than he would have given any of his children. The smile died and his eyes were old, dwelling on his trees. "An when I'm gone an my youngens get my land, ever last one a them poplars'll be cut down and sold. . . ." John didn't mind to part with his money, but he wanted his trees to live on, a kind of everlasting life for himself on earth. (21)

But by the end of the novel, Old John announces to Nunn that he has sold his poplar timber: "I reckon it's like Nancy says--this war's made timber high, so sell it and make my will so there'll be no fighten an no lawyer bills mongst my youngens when I'm dead" (403). In The Dollmaker, when Gertie strikes her deal with John Ballew to buy the Tipton Place, he recalls his timber as he tells her,

"fifty years ago I bought cut-over timberland fer fifty cents a acre, but I sold it fer more. Some uv it I've still got growed up in timber." He remembered the sold timber, the cut trees, and he was for an instant an old man unable to steady his wandering mind. (98)

Arnow poignantly achieves continuity within The Dollmaker with John's failing memory over his valuable timber which he sold at the end of Hunter's Horn.

Other community members from Hunter's Horn receive less development as characters in The Dollmaker, reappearing primarily in name only. The Cramers often went fox hunting with Nunn, though Nunn disliked Rans Cramer, a braggart and irresponsible man who deserted his children and wife, Lureenie. Nunn also despises Mark Cramer, who fathered the illegitimate child that Suse is carrying at the end of the novel. In The Dollmaker, some of the Cramers, according to Gertie's father, "took off fer Muncie an they'll kill theirselves in one a them factories" (61). Lister Tucker, another of Nunn's fellow fox hunters, had a fine hound, Sourvine, who rivaed only Nunn's Zing for the lead in nearly every hunt. Tucker has left the area by the time of The Dollmaker; he "gave up trucking because he couldn't get tires for his truck. He and all his family had gone to Hampton Roads, Virginia" (86).

Old Ansel Anderson, patriarch of "six sons between sixteen and thirty," shakes his cane at the sky and recalls "th last war" when he "registered th boys," some of whom he "never saw agin" (222). In The Dollmaker, old Uncle Ansel Anderson, a man with "five sons gone," rides a mule to deliver the mail (101, 91).

At least two of Arnow's characters seem to be named inconsistently, suggesting that for some minor characters Arnow did not look back at previous manuscripts. Or, in one case, Arnow may have used Ann Liz's maiden name in one

novel and her married name in the next. In any case, Ann Liz, in Hunter's Horn, is a "Cooksey" who helps out at Lureenie's childbirth (316), but a "Cramer" whose husband and four older children have taken factory jobs and left her and the younger ones to farm in The Dollmaker (95). Jaw Buster Anderson, Nunn's friend who owns a coal truck and gives Nunn rides to town, is Jaw Buster Miller in The Dollmaker, however, who "had long made steady money on the railroad section gang," though "bigger money" has lured him to a steel mill in Gary, Indiana (86).

Nunn Ballew receives only one brief mention. On mail day, Mrs. Hull, the store owner and postmistress, talked "to herself as she held up some circular, 'Nunnely D. Ballew.' Don't they know th only Ballews left is John's family?" (109). With that single reference, Arnow leaves the Nunn Ballew family of Hunter's Horn, though many of the crises and conflicts which confronted them continue in The Dollmaker.

In addition to the continuity of setting and character, Arnow creates thematic continuity as the main characters in each novel face social, economic, and psychological crises that require human will and strength to endure. Though her trilogy records the breakdown of a way of life, she focuses on individuals and declares that "despite the disintegration of hill culture, hill people

were not all destroyed to the point of dissolution" (MP, Intro).

The power of Hunter's Horn comes from the unique combination of characters which move readers to empathy with each one's struggles. Milly Ballew, having already lost two babies, makes it her daily goal to feed and clothe her family with the usually scanty provisions that she has. Lee Roy, having already taken on many adult chores and responsibilities while his father is away fox hunting, wants to be a man and wants his father to be a man he can be proud of.

Suse wants to escape the limitations and tedium of her life in the hills; she wants to have plenty to eat and good clothes, to go to high school, to live in a city, to be free of household chores and tending to her sister and brothers. Central to each of these struggles, and perhaps most poignant of all, is Nunn Ballew, who desperately wants to overcome the object of his obsession so that he can become a good provider for his family. His problems are threefold: he sees society changing and feels virtually powerless to alter the forces already in motion; he has too little cash to meet his family's basic needs; and he feels debilitating guilt about the effect his obsession has had on his family. His inadequacies as a parent and his financial problems are fuel for the fires of his psychological self-torment.

The power of The Dollmaker comes not, as some critics suggest, from the forces that oppose Gertie Nevels, [Barbara Baer refers to Arnow's novels as "chronicles of destruction" (117)] but instead from her determination to endure, not to give up. Even though Joyce Carol Oates contends that Gertie's "last real success" occurs in the opening scene of the novel, when Gertie saves her son's life (603), Harriette Arnow herself has pointed out that the people in The Dollmaker "endure, even at the novel's end. . ." (Hobbs 168). When such critics as Baer and Oates call attention to Arnow's powerful depiction of the tragic events in Gertie's life, their claims have merit, but, as is the case in Hunter's Horn, it seems even more important to examine the characters' responses to external events. Arnow's Dollmaker, like Hunter's Horn, emphasizes the ability of the human spirit to survive social, economic, and psychological threats of destruction.

Certainly it is clear from the discussion in Chapter II of this study that, in Hunter's Horn, as early as 1939, the social structure of the community was beginning to change as the men moved away from their failing farms to take jobs in the cities, sometimes moving their families, sometimes leaving them behind. Paths have been widened to graveled roads, and the increased access to hill communities has led to an influx of government agents as

well as other outsiders to see the impoverished living conditions of the hill people.

Nunn panics when he sees the new road has come almost all the way to his land.

He had known it was coming, a graveled road clean to the edge of his farm, for the post office was almost on the edge of Samuel's land and his land bordered Samuel's, but the road was like the spring, unprepared for and so unexpected. The world was close in his face: the road would come on, they said, down the hill and up the creek; it would be a handy thing to take things out, but what could take out could bring in--Pinkney and the other men to hunt--strangers to see his run-down farm and ragged children. (250)

Nunn fears having the world "close in his face" because he dreads the inevitable exposure of his failures as a farmer and as a provider for his family. But even though he feels frustrated and powerless to slow the changes in his world, he continues to move toward his goals of catching King Devil, putting up fencing on his farm, and doing all the things he knows he should to make up to his family for all he has failed to provide.

War has its effect especially on the women in the community both in Hunter's Horn and in The Dollmaker. In Hunter's Horn, Sue Annie describes a scene which forecasts the opening of The Dollmaker. She believes the war and the factories "are a mebbe goen to git ever man out a these hills fore it's over, an us women'ull have to be th ones to drive the cows to th bulls an git our own wood an go fer

the mail'" (393-4). Indeed, World War II has taken nearly all of the men from the settlement where Gertie does most of the "man's work." She explains to one of the Army officers whom she flagged down to take her to a doctor in town that "th only miners they left us is two cripples an one real old'" (14). In Hunter's Horn, Sue Annie predicted "with a remembering sadness unusual for her":

"it'll be like I've heared my granmammy tell, when all th men uv our settlement went off. . . an in this war it'll be a lot th same; th women an th youngens left in these hills, they'll have to look out fer theirselves, and they'll have a heap th hardest time than a lot a th men--but they'll git no brass bands an no bonuses. Ah me," she sighed. (394)

From the beginning of The Dollmaker, Gertie sees the social disintegration of Ballew, Kentucky. Because of the war, the entire social structure of the community has changed. Most of the men have had to leave, either to enlist in military service or to take jobs in the city to help with the war effort. Gertie responds by assuming responsibility for much of the work. She tells her father, "I can do a man's work" (72). And when she easily moves the hundred pound sacks of feed in the general store, she declares, "I reckon I'll have to be the man in this settlement" (102).

Gertie would have done very well caring for her children at the Tipton Place, where she could have grown

plenty of food and hunted. She tells one of the officers from Oak Ridge that the hunting is "mighty good--now" because "they ain't hardly left us a man able to carry a gun er listen to a hound dog" (13). But in Detroit, taken away from her familiar surroundings, Gertie realizes, with frustration, that her roles as provider, parent, and wife have changed.

The highway also makes a difference in Gertie's life. When she needs it to carry her three-year-old son, Amos, to get medical help, the highway "stretch[es] empty between the pines, silent, no sign of cars or people, as if it were not a road at all, but some lost island of asphalt coming from no place, going nowhere" (1). The road, "once so fine and new, tying their settlement to the outside world" soon seemed "only a thing that took people away" (42). Because the road has taken away the community doctor, Gertie carries her son on a mule out to the highway where she eventually stops a car. She tells the impatient military officer whom she stops: "I know they's a war. . . . That's why th doctor closest home is gone" (4).

Then the absence of a doctor does not stop her from doing what is necessary to save her son's life. When he is choking, she performs a tracheotomy so that he can breathe. In one of the most powerful scenes in the novel, she uses her whittling knife to open her child's windpipe and holds

it open by inserting the bent end of a hairpin (11-4). Less courageous and less determined people might have been paralyzed by the absence of professional medical help, but Gertie refuses to consider herself helpless and her son's condition hopeless simply because the war has taken the doctor away from their community. She whispers to Amos, "I cain't let th war git you too" (11). She forces an unwilling officer to take her to get the additional medical attention she needs. More successful than Nunn in the face of social changes, Gertie bravely, even fiercely, faces a terrifying obstacle brought about changes in the hill settlement where she lives, and she triumphs.

The Depression and the War also brings to the backhills tough economic times for the Ballews as well as the Nevels. With money scarce, Nunn's obsession with killing King Devil creates a great financial burden for his family. Nunn occasionally discusses the family finances with his wife, but as his actions show, he ultimately makes the decisions about how their money is spent. The novel opens with Nunn's telling the shopkeeper that he wants to buy only twenty pounds of sugar, though readers learn that he had promised Milly fifty pounds; he wants to use the money instead to buy two dozen cans of dog food for Zing, his old fox hound. Then later, after King Devil has run Zing to death, Nunn, knowing the hardship he is causing his family, feels "torn within himself about selling the

heifer, the calf, the two remaining fattened pigs, and some ewes to raise \$150 to buy pups and dog feed and pay the cost of the trip" (77). But his family goes without meat and enough milk so that he can purchase the twin fox hound pups. With cash difficult to acquire and with his family needing everything from meat to clothes, Nunn knows "the money that had gone for the pups, their feed, and their medicine by rights belonged to Milly and the children" (162). But he convinces himself that "he would manage and his family wouldn't suffer" (162).

One way Nunn makes money is moonshining. He experiments with whiskey making, as he believes that it is "no sin like stealing, just something against the law" (124). Though his experiment is successful, he hates the "friendly smirking ways" of some of his neighbors (162) because he wants to be known as farmer, not a moonshiner, or even a fox hunter.

But to sustain his sheep and improve his farm, Nunn has to go heavily into debt. After King Devil slaughters most of his sheep, Nunn signs a lien on his land for fence posts and rolls of woven wire. He signs "a note promising to pay his old debt of \$78 and his new debt of \$233 for fence and corn and lard and flour to take him through crop-making time" (264). Other ways besides farming are available to allow Nunn to repay his debt, but he does not

want to consider them. A neighbor, Willie Cooksey, begs Nunn and Suse to go to Indiana with him and his family to pick tomatoes, but Nunn responds, "I ain't so hard up yet that I've got to send my youngens off to public works" (266). Nunn knows

Willie spoke the truth; times were good; all things were getting higher, even the little farm stuff a man had to sell. . . . But he would build the fence; he wouldn't let King Devil put him out of the sheep business and off at public works in Indiana. (266)

Nunn's decisions based on his obsessed rivalry with King Devil are not financially sound, but he never gives up in the face of his financial troubles, though he is often discouraged. With pain and shame, Nunn recalls his son's eyes

when he'd learned that most of the hay was sold, sold uncut in the field--something no Ballew had ever done--to Ansel Anderson for \$75 so that Nunn could pay off some of his debt to the storekeeper in Town. (269)

Nunn, however, is pleased by the corn crop, which he believes will

carry him through till corn-cutting time again. . . there'd be plenty to fatten Rosie's eight pigs and maybe Rosie, too; some said hogs would maybe go high as ten cents a pound, and if they did, the hay money and hog money and the money from Jude [his son's colt] would just about pay off his debt--if they could live without meat, almost no clothes, and hardly any store-bought grub. (268)

Nunn worries about "Milly when she learned there'd be another winter with no meat" and about Suse "waiting for Sunday shoes"; he tells himself "he'd make crossties, he might even moonshine again--no, he wouldn't do that, but he'd make money some way" (269).

When Sam and Vinie, the Ballew's fox hounds, finally catch and kill King Devil, Nunn does what he always said he would do: he sells them to Elias Higginbottom, a wealthy fox hunter from town, "for what Elias said was \$350 in cash and goods: \$150 in cash and a whole truckload of goods" (399). Nunn spends \$15 on a ready-made dress for Suse because she "ought to have it. . . she'd suffered more than the others from King Devil--kept out of high school and tied down at home" (400). Before he finds out about her pregnancy, he plans to use some of the money to send her to high school. But by the time Nunn has the family's finances in better shape than ever before, his family has suffered irreparable damage.

In The Dollmaker, the Nevels family also suffers through tough economic times which accompany the Depression and World War II. Gertie's husband, Clovis, has had trouble finding steady work. He sometimes takes a job "tinkering" on some mechanical thing or hauling coal, but he rarely gets paid. It is Gertie who works the land and puts most of the food on the table for her family.

With an eye on their economic future, Gertie is dissatisfied with working land that belongs to someone else, even if it is Nunn's uncle, the kindly John Ballew. She dreams of owning a farm of her own and keeping the entire crop, instead of giving back half to the landlord. To make her dream a reality, she has been saving money secretly for fifteen years, the entire time she has been married. She has been depositing in her coat lining the proceeds from selling eggs, molasses, poultry, and livestock, until she has accumulated the tidy sum of three hundred and ten dollars (32). That amount combined with the inheritance money she received after her brother Henley's death allows her to afford the farm she has always wanted. Economically independent for the first time in her life, she strikes a deal with Uncle John Ballew to buy the Tipton farm.

But her husband, Clovis, also acts independently, when he is not inducted into the Army right away and has no job prospects at home. He goes to Detroit, finds a job, sells his truck, and makes arrangements to move his family into a wartime housing project. Gertie, yielding to pressure from Uncle John and her mother to go, remains secretive, like Nunn, about her money and how she plans to spend it. She does not tell Clovis about her plans for the Tipton place until the near the end of the novel, when they are so deeply in debt that neither one of them can foresee a time

when they will ever again have economic independence. Though no longer sharecroppers in Kentucky, they fall, like Nunn, deep into debt. In Detroit, they soon begin to buy "on time"; their new "landlord" is the "installment plan." By the end of the novel, they are on the brink of financial disintegration.

Gertie watches her savings dwindle steadily as she supplements Clovis' income to pay for what she would have raised herself back home or would have had no need for. The milk man, the produce vendor, the ice man, the gas bill, the electricity bill, and Clovis' union dues all need to be paid. Gertie tells Clovis about her inheritance from Henley because she knew he would find out eventually from one of the children, but her other savings remain her secret because she is afraid he might want to spend the money on a new truck. As long as she keeps the money in the lining of her coat, she feels security in having potential economic independence for her family.

But she loses that security in moments of blind grief over the horrible accidental death of her youngest daughter, Cassie, who bleeds to death when her legs are amputated by a train. Arnow describes Gertie, at the emergency room of the hospital, who

for the first time had understood that money would bring Cassie out of this windowless place . . .

she had shoved her hand down into the blood-encrusted coat, crying, "Money? Clovis, I've got money--all th money--all them years." And she had laid it in his startled, trembling hands . . . .  
(374)

But Gertie sadly realizes when the money is all gone that she has not even held Cassie in her arms (375). Clovis explains later how the policemen at the scene of the accident recommended a funeral director who took advantage of them. There is not enough left for a grave marker for Cassie, though Clovis promises that they will soon have enough for a down payment on one (388).

After grieving for days and drinking "pink water" (phenobarbital), Gertie gradually realizes that "she couldn't flop down and cry like some; a cross waited to be whittled" (407). So, after one of the most wrenching experiences of her life, Gertie shows tremendous will when she pulls herself out of her grief and begins her carving again to make money to support her family. She further agrees to go along with Clovis' plan to use a jig saw to increase her production of "hand carved" work. Though she obviously despises the work she is turning out, she works on, "straight-mouthed, grim-eyed; her hatred for the ugly dolls fading at times as she enumerated in her head all their needs against the opening of school and winter quickly following" (459).

Gertie also continues to work on her cherry wood figure for a while. Arnow writes that "the man in the wood gave rest and peace" from the past and the uncertain future (457). But finally, the cherry wood carving fails to comfort her as she realizes that "the faceless man" seemed to be "whispering, 'There's no money in me'" (457).

Gertie has to assume responsibility for the family's economic survival even after Clovis finally returns to work because he is preoccupied with getting revenge on the man who attacked him over some union activities. Clovis looks at Gertie's work "with absent eyes. His eyes were often like that now, unworried by the payments falling due, blind seemed like to everything except his memories of the man who'd tried to kill him" (498). Gertie, on the other hand, looks at Clovis' paycheck "for only \$37.23" and knows that "after November rent was paid, there would be almost three dollars left" (497). But even in the face of these dire economic straits, she tries "to silence her fears by reminding herself how lucky they were" compared to others she knows: "they had a ton of coal paid for; Clovis was getting well without a doctor; their credit was good" (497). She had even amassed small savings of slightly over thirty dollars from the sale of her carved crucifixes and dolls, and she has been taking in washing and ironing.

Though Gertie acts more responsibly than Nunn because her family's welfare has always been her first financial

priority, Nunn and Gertie each face financial crises brought on at least partially by personal weaknesses. To most readers, Gertie's secrecy about her savings and her decision to give it away in a moment of frantic grief seem much more justifiable, more acceptable, than Nunn's spending, which is motivated by his obsessive desire to get a red fox, and which results in unforgivable neglect of his family. But in each case, regrettable rationalizations and a degree of self-interest are responsible for the character's actions.

Nunn's actions cause readers to pity him, to be enraged by him, to judge him because his obsession with getting King Devil has literal, devastating effects on his family. His behavior, however, works as a metaphor to show the cost in human terms of anyone's single-minded determination to reach a goal. The consequences of almost everyone's actions affect others, and Nunn is acutely aware and ashamed of the hardships his financial choices have created for his family. Despite his poor judgment, however, Nunn never gives up. Until the closing pages of the novel, when he feels that he is like one of the children of Israel who "died along the way," he believes he can compensate his family for his misplaced priorities.

Gertie Nevel's efforts show her determination to face the problems that threaten her family's economic survival.

Nunn Ballew has similar determination, but he makes unwise choices. Gertie has lost the Kentucky farm land she loved and could have owned. She has lost her life's savings, but her determination to survive--particularly her interest in economic survival--enables her to pull herself out of a debilitating depression to do what is necessary to sustain her family.

Readers see further evidence that Arnow is exploring recurrent themes and characterizations in The Dollmaker when Gertie, like Nunn and other characters from Hunter's Horn, not only faces social and economic crises with strength and determination, but also draws on those inner qualities to survive potential emotional and psychological destruction. Arnow's descriptions of the mental challenges each character faces seem overwhelming, and although no one emerges unscathed, each one, with the exception of Lureenie, again manages to survive, to endure. The most important challenges include struggles with fundamentalist Christianity and guilt from feeling like a failure as a parent and marriage partner.

In both Hunter's Horn and The Dollmaker, important characters struggle with Preacher Battle John Brand's Old Testament God. In Hunter's Horn, Arnow writes that "most people, and particularly Milly, admired the big, white-bearded, black-browed, blue-eyed man, and looked upon a two-week revival conducted almost wholly by him as a rare

glory" (328). On one night, with his text "the harvest is passed, the summer is ended, and still we are not saved," Battle John urges his congregation to consider the fate of Lureenie Cramer. Without calling her name, he says,

Maybe th young mother who went from your midst so short a time ago, maybe as she lay a dyen she cried, "Lord, Lord," but was she saved? . . . Ah-h-h, brethern, she put it off. An now it's too late, everlastenly too late--too late. (336)

He asks his listeners to picture her children visiting her grave and wondering if they will see her in paradise: "an frum th flames uv hell that mother will look upward an try to whisper 'No'" (336).

He then returns to the harvest metaphor. He tells the farm families,

Ah, yes, my friends, th devil laughs to find you in his harvest, an God weeps. He hates to see you cast into hell an outer darkness. Ah, good sistern, think how it ud be to have a loved one burn up afore your eyes, an you could see th flames--fire an dark--fire an dark--that's hell. All things are possible with God; only God could make a hell. (337)

Terrifying nearly all with his descriptions of "flaming serpents with red-hot scales and smoking breath that wrapped themselves about the sinful sons of men" (337), Battle John Brand causes Nunn and Suse in particular to struggle with his concept of God.

Nunn feels intense guilt and misery in the face of Battle John's God. Many of Nunn's questions about God and religion, however, are inextricably connected to his obsession with King Devil and his deep guilt that he has failed to provide adequately for his family. In desperation, Nunn looks to religion for answers: "Religion! If he had religion he could leave King Devil to go his way, but before a man could get religion he had to give his heart and soul to God and get God's grace to forgive his sins" (267-8). Such a plan leaves him with questions and doubts: "how could a man be certain God would forgive? How could he know God wanted his soul? How could a man know he hadn't committed the unpardonable sin? What was the unpardonable sin?" (268).

Nunn's fears about "the unpardonable sin" remind readers of Hawthorne's character, Ethan Brand, whose obsessive search for the "unpardonable sin" left him coldly rational and unfeeling. Unlike Ethan Brand, however, Nunn has not cut himself off from his feelings. When he realizes that he has been hunting the big red fox for seven years and denying his family things they desperately need for that long, "he stopped, the seven striking him, not in his head or his reason where he knew it, but in his heart" (267). Nunn's emotions clearly remain intact, but his emotional pain makes him most aware of that part of himself because he believes that "if he lived to be a hundred and

caught King Devil and died a millionaire, that wouldn't help Suse now--unpardonable, unforgivable" (268). At that moment, Nunn measures his guilt in terms of the restitution which he thinks he can never make, though up until the closing scenes of the novel, he continues to try. His thoughts of God lead him to the inescapable conclusion that he is responsible for his own actions.

Nunn's daughter, Suse, listens to Battle John and questions "the whole pattern of sin and immortality" (338). Though she had once thought the Bible to be "kind and clear and comforting, like the words of someone very old and very wise and kind" (338), the revival preacher who condemns her friend, Lureenie, causes Suse to know she "hated him, and felt herself an outcast and a sinner, knowing that if he spoke the truth and Lureenie was in hell, she hated God also" (338). Though her mother chides her for her independence, Suse cannot yield to Milly's tearful warning not to "stand stiff-necked and stubborn" in the face of God (340). Unwilling to accept such a cruel portrayal of God, Suse believes that "she could not love God, not after Battle John's sermon" (342).

Suse's struggles strongly resemble those of Gertie Nevels, who also "stood now as in childhood when her mother wept or scolded--silent, high-headed, straight-shouldered, stony-faced" (52). Gertie also sat through revival meetings

led by Battle John Brand: "His Hell would quiver like the heat waves through the meeting house, and she would sit trying desperately to think of other things, but never succeeding" (58). Battle John's sermons were so fiery that Gertie believed

she could smell her own flesh burning, rising like an incense to God in heaven, with her mother who was forever listening down the golden stairs, but never hearing her daughter cry: "I love Battle John's God." (58)

Like Suse, who disappoints her mother by refusing to join the church, Gertie "never, no matter how hot the coals or bright the flames that Battle John made, was able to say such things, but sat on in sweaty-handed guilt and misery" (58). Gertie, no more than Suse, can accept Battle John's God.

Throughout her life, Gertie has repeatedly wrestled with her mother's God of hell fire and damnation. As a child, Gertie thought Battle John Brand's words were designed to stampede "the souls of his flock to Christ with his twin whips of Hell and God" (58). As an adult, Gertie listens to her mother remind her, "You ought to read yer Bible, Gert. It's all foretold. 'I come not with peace but a sword,' Christ said" (53). But Gertie still cannot accept her mother's wrathful Christ. Gertie replies,

mebbe they's another side to Christ. Recollect he went to th wedden feast, an had time to fool with

little youngens, an speak to a thief and a bad woman. An Henley [Gertie's brother, killed in action] was like Christ--he worked an loved his fellowmen. (54)

Gertie's concept of Christ is "a laughing Christ"; she thinks of him as "a Christ who had loved people, had liked to mingle with them and laugh and sing the way Henley had liked people and singing and dancing" (54). Even though Gertie's mother charges her with having ideas that make her "mighty clost to bein' a infidel" (54), Gertie's mind "made this Christ alive, the way Cassie made the witch child Callie Lou alive," or the way Gertie could give "life and heart" to a "piece of hickory sprout" (54). Gertie's creative imagination offers her emotional health and psychological salvation from her mother's accusations and the threats of eternal damnation from Battle John's God.

As psychologically challenging as her struggles with God are the feelings of frustration and guilt that Gertie faces as a wife and mother. Her feelings, like Nunn's, stem from changes in her roles as provider and parent. Nunn is hurt to see how well his family can get along during his hunting absences. Gertie is dismayed at the ways city life limits her independence and self-sufficiency. In Detroit, she must learn to buy food rather than raise it, buy on credit rather than try to save money, cook on a gas range rather than a wood stove, and live among strangers in a small flimsy building. Because she

has always defined herself as a provider for her family, she feels particularly frustrated in Detroit.

Though Clovis repeatedly asks his wife to accept what is good enough, as he says, for "millions an millions" of others, Gertie cannot. At one point, when Gertie angrily tells Clovis, "You know I'd hunt a factory job in a minute, but you won't hear to it" (226), Clovis reminds her that she is "too big for the factory machinery, set for little slim women" (226). Clovis wants to place limitations on Gertie; he wants her to see her size, which had always been an advantage back home, as a handicap. He wants her to conform to his idea of a wife who is content to stay at home, cook, clean, and care for the children and let him earn the living.

Clovis' determination that Gertie should be content is particularly frustrating for her: she feels guilty because a part of her knows that she is Clovis' wife and that what he wants is not unreasonable, but another part of her knows that she cannot deny her own feelings and change to be what Clovis wants. Like Nunn, who feels guilty because he is not the kind of family provider that he would like to be, Gertie must face similar frustration and despair.

Nunn feels unspeakable guilt about being a failure as a parent. Because of his neglect and irresponsibility, he feels he has "lost" both his son, Lee Roy, and his

daughter, Suse (247, 267). He knows he has caused both to lose their respect for him. He must also live with his belief that "he could have saved his two dead children," if not for his preoccupation with fox hunting (327). Though he blames King Devil initially for all that has happened, Nunn knows "he'd never in his life had any bad luck but what he'd brought on himself" (327). Then, at the end of the novel, in his single attempt to do "the decent thing" when he finds out Suse is pregnant, he rejects his own daughter and her "bastard," and earns the rejection of his wife as well. Despite his love for his family and deep guilt for failing to meet their expectations, Nunn's obsession with King Devil has prevented him from making his family his first priority, until the end of the novel, when his judgment seems to have become too distorted to be effective. Even then, he contemplates his plight. He refuses to ignore or deny what he has done, though he feels like one who "died on th way" to the Promised Land. Nunn Ballew suffers the death of his dreams and, according to the single reference to him in The Dollmaker, became one of the "lost people" who left the hills for the city to try to find a better life.

Gertie spends her creative energies in a much more productive way for her family by dreaming of owning a farm instead of a fox hide. Her imagination allows her to deal successfully with the guilt her mother wants her to feel,

and Gertie often copes with Clovis and life in Detroit by allowing her imagination to take her back to Kentucky.

When she cooks dinner,

stooping over the too low gas stove, . . . she saw herself back home. The red ball of the winter's sun was going down behind the hills across the river. The cedar trees above the creek whispered among themselves in a rising night wind. The new milk was cooling on the porch shelf. (237)

But interrupting Gertie's imagined scene, the disheartening reality of Detroit crashes in: the roar of planes and trains, the stifling heat of her kitchen, the smelly fish she cooked for dinner, her children's dirty wet clothes--all intrude on her imagination (238). And Gertie feels almost literally "torn apart" by the oppressive noise and filth of this place where Clovis wants her to live and be happy.

Clovis' expectations for Gertie challenge her independence, her self-esteem, and ultimately, her identity. He asks Gertie for compromises that she cannot make, though she wrestles with his requests to "adjust" before she reaches the conclusion that she cannot "give in to bein like other people." Gertie loves her husband, but she cannot give up her self to be the wife he wants. Her determination to maintain her identity is a more noble goal than Nunn's goal of catching King Devil; however, like

Nunn, she suffers from guilt because she cannot meet her spouse's expectations.

Gertie also feels insecure and guilty in her role as a parent once she gets to Detroit. Like her children, she must struggle with the problems of "adjusting" to a new place, and she is plagued by worries about the kind of guidance to give her children. Their principal tries to reassure Gertie that her children will "adjust," and because Gertie is unfamiliar with the word, the man explains, "Yes, adjust, learn to get along, like it--be like the others--learn to want to be like the others" (185). Though Gertie wants her children to be happy, she does not want them to lose their individuality. She constantly worries about Clytie, her oldest daughter, and Enoch, her middle son, who readily adapt to school and the neighborhood: Clytie spends too much time by the radio, and Enoch is too streetwise. She worries about two others as well--Reuben, her oldest son, and Cassie, the youngest daughter--who do not "adjust" to Detroit. Her sullen son, Reuben, withdraws from everyone and eventually runs away from home to live with his grandparents. And Cassie--"more lost and lonesome than afraid, she always seemed like a child away from home" (210); Cassie spends most of her time with her make-believe playmate Callie Lou.

Clovis takes pride in the ready assimilation of Clytie and Enoch and blames Gertie in part for the problems with

Reuben and Cassie. Even though he tells Gertie to make Cassie stop "play acting" with her imaginary friend, Gertie has her own ideas about Callie Lou. Gertie recognizes Callie Lou as an imaginative creation that should be allowed to exist, but eventually, one of her greatest regrets is that she ever allowed herself to agree with Clovis that Cassie would be better off without Callie Lou. On the day Gertie demands that Cassie stop talking to herself, Gertie immediately finds herself

fighting down a great hunger to seize and hug and kiss the child, and cry: "Keep her, Cassie. Keep Callie Lou. A body's got to have somethen all their own." (344)

Gertie's emotional and psychological pain only intensifies as the novel progresses, for Gertie holds herself responsible for Cassie's death, which occurred in the train yard where Cassie went to avoid being scolded for playing with her make-believe friend. Cassie's horrible death is the psychologically pivotal event in the novel for Gertie, who delves as deeply into grief and despair as anyone could.

Glenda Hobbs, Arnow critic, describes Gertie after Cassie's death as "consumed by guilt and despair." Hobbs states that Gertie "has lost the strength or the will to fight back" (138). At first, these words seem an apt description, for Gertie will certainly never be the same

woman she was before the death of her child. But her actions eventually disprove Hobbs' conclusion and reveal her strength and determination to survive. She will not allow herself to remain in the fog of phenobarbitol: she believed "she couldn't flop down and cry like some; she had to make money; a cross waited to be whittled" (407). Her art offers her solace, a way to endure, as well as a way to support her family.

Gertie's final action at the end of the novel--her splitting of the cherry wood figure with an ax--has been interpreted as a sign of her defeat. But this dramatic conclusion can be seen instead as a climactic indication of commitment to life, a crescendo of hope, an act that affirms her social, economic, and psychological survival.

As the final scene begins, Gertie eagerly responds to an unexpected request to make some carvings--"real handmade things of good wood" (540)--for a church bazaar. After accepting a fifty dollar advance for the commissioned work, Gertie sets to work--not on that project, but on the cherry wood figure instead. She works, Arnow writes, "as if time were running out and this were the one thing she must do with her time" (545). Gertie acts as though she is saying farewell to a friend as she stays up all night working on the man in the cherry wood. Then, the next morning, Gertie hauls the block of cherry wood to the scrap wood lot. She

must split it before it can be sawed into small boards, and Gertie's wielding of the ax is met with "a great shout" from the children who have accompanied her to the lumber yard, but their cry accompanies an act of triumph, not an act of despair.

The closing dialogue between Gertie and the man at the lumber yard reveals Gertie's mental health in the face of destruction. When the lumber man comments that Gertie must have meant for the sculpture to represent Christ, though she had not found a face for him, Gertie answers at first: "No. They was so many would ha done; they's millions an millions a faces plenty fine enough--fer him" (549).

Hobbs thinks that "Gertie's remark is flippant" and that "she is echoing Clovis' appeals to accept what 'millions an millions' of city people tolerate. . ." (148). Hobbs explains that "when she says 'millions an millions' of faces are suitable, [Gertie] suggests that the man in the wood is like the compromising city folk who buy sawed Christs" (148-9).

Certainly, Gertie's words do echo Clovis' "millions an millions," but the man in the wood is not clearly an image of conformity. When Gertie "pondered, then slowly lifted her glance from the block of wood," Arnow writes that "wonder mixed in with the pain," as Gertie says, "Why, some a my neighbors down there in th alley--they would ha done" (549). Her realization, stated here in the last sentence

of the novel, is a testimony to her sensitivity; in spite of all that she has suffered, she remains capable of "wonder," and this revelation that the face for her cherry wood man could have been a person that she knew, one of her neighbors, seems to affirm that she has not abandoned her image of the common man Christ. Hobbs asserts that the "'crying, rending sound' the cherry wood figure makes as Gertie cracks it open with the ax signifies her own metaphoric screech at executing her own destruction" (149), but that statement does not consider the reason for Gertie's act. She has split the unfinished wooden figure so that she can use the cherry wood for commissioned work that will bring money to support her family. Her act destroys only the sculpture she has worked on throughout her stay in Detroit; her act in no way signals her own destruction. When Gertie splits the wood, she is doing what she feels she must to ensure the survival of her family. Fifty dollars in a time of post-war unemployment is a great deal of money that will buy many things her family needs for the new school year. Contrary to Hobbs' conclusion, with the splitting of the cherry wood sculpture, Gertie thus asserts her determination to survive because she is now strong enough to give up the man in the wood who has helped her through the harsh, tragic events of

her life in Detroit. She is strong enough to give up what saved her in order to save others.

Like the characters in Hunter's Horn, Arnow's Gertie Nevels faces nearly every kind of destructive threat--the social deterioration of the community where she grew up, the cultural dislocation, the financial problems that cause her to lose all hope of gaining economic independence, and the psychological challenges--the guilt that makes her feel alienated from a God she cannot accept, from her husband, and from her children. Faring better than Nunn, in each case, she relies on her creative imagination to sculpt a view of reality that she can live with; she exercises her will to survive each threat to herself and her family. Gertie, like Nunn and the other Ballews, faces hardships and makes conscious choices to endure, rather than to give up. With this extension of the story which began in Hunter's Horn, Arnow once again creates characters who demonstrate a commitment to life, and that commitment is a tribute to the strength of the human spirit. The power of The Dollmaker lies in the spirit of Gertie Nevels. And her spirit grows out of facing many of the same challenges that Nunn Ballew and his family face in Arnow's previous novel.

## CHAPTER VI

### LATER SOUNDS FROM HUNTER'S HORN IN ARNOW'S FINAL NON-FICTION AND FICTION

Of central significance in Arnow's canon, Hunter's Horn integrates the Kentucky trilogy by authentically describing the people and practices in the Kentucky setting, by introducing central characters, and by providing important thematic continuity. On an even broader scope, Arnow's Hunter's Horn strikes an important note in American literature. A reader who pays attention will hear beyond the regional sounds of baying foxhounds, glugging sour mash kegs, barn animals, and backhills Kentucky speech patterns. The astute reader will notice the universal sounds of individuals struggling to assert identity and achieve social acceptance.

Hunter's Horn introduces subjects, themes, and characters that prove integral to each of Arnow's books written after the trilogy. In Hunter's Horn, Arnow fuses her fiction with the historical research she conducted over a twenty-year period and published in two later volumes: Seedtime on the Cumberland (1960) and Flowering of the Cumberland (1963). Then, in her next book, The Weedkiller's Daughter (1970), Arnow's only novel set entirely outside of her native Kentucky, readers again see parallels with Hunter's Horn: in important ways, Susie

Schnitzer of The Weedkiller's Daughter seems a modern version of Suse Ballew. And in her final published novel, The Kentucky Trace: A Novel of the American Revolution (1974), Arnow returns to a central male character, as she did in Hunter's Horn. Leslie Collins struggles with many of the same conflicts that Nunn Ballew faces. Arnow's later non-fiction and fiction carry distinct, recognizable sounds from Hunter's Horn.

Arnow was used to writing about transitions, those of an individual--Louisa Sheridan--in Mountain Path, those of individuals and families in Hunter's Horn and The Dollmaker. In her first non-fiction book, she expands her subject to the population and whole region of southern Kentucky and middle Tennessee. In Seedtime on the Cumberland, she reconstructs the transitional years of early exploration and settlement from 1780 to 1803 along the Cumberland River. Arnow explained her choice of subject:

times and places were mingled in my head. . . . My people loved the past more than their present lives, I think, but it cannot be said we lived in the past. Two things tied all time together; these had run through most of the old stories to shape the lives of men, and so did they shape our lives and the lives of the people around us. These were the land and the Cumberland. (Intro. xii)

In 1963, Arnow's second non-fiction book was published. Flowering of the Cumberland covers the same time period as Seedtime (1780-1803) and, thus, is a "companion" work, rather than a sequel. Seedtime and Flowering focus on the same area of Kentucky where Arnow's trilogy is set. Though the time period covered by the non-fiction works is considerably earlier than that featured in Arnow's fiction, the mountain life she describes is isolated enough to have resisted many changes.

In Hunter's Horn, readers can see Arnow's research of such practices as fox hunting, midwivery, local law enforcement, household and farm chores, and revival preaching. Hunter's Horn also reflects especially well the "companion" concerns of Arnow's non-fiction. That is, in Seedtime, a central subject is the lone pioneer, the strength of the individual, but in Flowering, Arnow examines "the pioneer as a member of society" (xi) and turns to "those activities which, differing from hunting or house building, could not be performed by a lone man or family" (xii).

Hunter's Horn, more completely than Mountain Path or The Dollmaker, focuses on both, on the lone native individual and on native individuals as members of society. Unlike Arnow's first novel in which the central character is an outsider to the community, and unlike her third one in which only part of the story is set in Kentucky,

Hunter's Horn dramatizes the struggles of men, women, and children in their native families, set entirely in a backwoods Kentucky community.

The connection between Hunter's Horn and Flowering of the Cumberland is clear when Arnow discusses fox hunting. In Flowering, she describes "the peculiarly American brand of fox hunting" found in the mountains and in other areas of the South, where the rough terrain prohibited following the hunt on horseback. The hunters gathered and listened. Arnow writes that

the sounds the hounds made thus became as important as the sight of them had once been, and hounds were valued not only for their speed but for their mouths; there are still soft mouthed, pretty mouthed, bugle mouthed hounds advertised, but like much of the language of fox hunting, unfound in dictionaries. (140)

In Hunter's Horn, the men gather many evenings on Pilot Rock, the highest ridge around, to listen to their fox hounds run. Nunn's hound, Zing, usually led the pack: "Zing gave tongue, his bell-like cry rising up . . . echoing and reechoing through the valley. . . . Zing never gave tongue like that except when the scent was clear and hot" (37). The men listened as

Zing's voice and Sourvine's voice, with Speed's occasional bay just a little behind, grew fainter and fainter until they seemed no more than a fainter note of the thin whisperings of the wind in the stunted pines on Pilot Rock. (37)

Arnow also records the sounds of Willie Cooksey's "pretty-mouthed hound on a well-loved scent" (270). And Nunn's twin fox hounds have sweet "singing yodeling" voices (369): the female, Vinie, has "maybe a prettier mouth" (118), and Sam sings "like a fresh-tuned fiddle" (394). Arnow's fictional treatments of fox hunting and hounds clearly reflect with historical accuracy the descriptions in her non-fiction.

Arnow's research also led her to discover that a childbirth was a community event.

Childbed was attended by the husband, and when possible not only his father-in-law, but his father as well, for the old-time midwives wanted, and quite often needed, men at such times.  
(Flowering 62)

Arnow acknowledges also that "there were, of course, always a number of women gathered" (62). The midwives, "usually older women, their skills learned from mothers, and with families of their own," could bring little to a birthing except "a clean apron, their skillful hands, and a few herbs" (61). This description indeed fits Sue Annie Tiller, the midwife in Hunter's Horn, and the birthing scenes involving Lureenie Cramer and Milly Ballew.

Arnow's non-fictional accounts of baby care also echo the scene in Hunter's Horn when Nunn and Milly's fifth child, Bill Dan, becomes ill soon after his birth. In Flowering, Arnow explains that the baby

was scarcely born before the many gathered to help with the borning were in an argument over the kinds and quantities of teas to give him; one holding for walink; still another, white oak; and always somebody to insist the toddy should be stronger. More teas were needed to break out the hives, cure the thrush, more commonly called "thrash," to get him through teething; and as settlement progressed and domesticated herbs such as catnip became common, the variety of teas increased as did the choice in patent medicines and physicians. (67)

In Hunter's Horn, the Ballews' visitors came with "a bunch of dried herbs or handful of green walink or mullen to make tea for Bill Dan. His bowels had gone loose and greenish when he was three or four days old and he grew more and more fretful" (241). Sue Annie "poured spoonfuls of rattleroot tea down him; poor child, the stuff tasted awful, and he fought it so. Then in fifteen minutes it was all to do over; he'd puked it up" (241). Much to Sue Annie's chagrin, Nunn eventually takes the baby from her, waves aside her freshly brewed catnip tea, and successfully doctors the child with sweetened water, just as he would have treated a lamb with an upset stomach (242-3). In life and in fiction, people often disagreed on the proper home remedies to administer.

Everyday foods and special dishes described in Seedtime on the Cumberland are quite similar to those in Hunter's Horn. In Seedtime, Arnow explains that "the first settlers as well as succeeding generations [had] some form of cornbread at each meal" (396). The Ballews, too,

regularly ate "corn pone." Arnow describes in Seedtime a good meal of green beans in which "some Irish potatoes would be peeled, quartered, and buried in the beans," then corn would be added, and finally,

the okra pods on top. All this with cornbread, sliced cucumbers, pickled beets, red pepper relish, with some fried meat and gravy, and the usual wild honey . . . and sweet potatoes made quite a good supper. (412)

In Hunter's Horn, when Milly announces to her family "we've got a good supper," she tells them they are having possum, "sweet taters," and "green beans with corn biled on top like I like, an okra, an tomaters, an gingerbread" (8). A favorite dessert of the pioneer family was "fruit cobbler, this always served with a sweet, frothy sauce, known as 'dip,' the only remnant of syllabub left" to those in the upper Cumberland region (Seedtime 420). For a company dessert, Milly baked "a strawberry cobbler with egg dip" made from "a can of condensed milk" (184). Throughout Hunter's Horn, the family's foods are authentically derived from Arnow's memory and historical research.

In the only scholarship which discusses specific parallels between Hunter's Horn and Arnow's two non-fiction books, John Unrue asserts that "the Ballew family and their neighbors are not literary contrivances or novelties, but believable descendants of the past" (36). As evidence, he

cites a number of particular comparisons in Arnow's non-fictional and fictional treatments of midwifery, home remedies, superstitions, moonshining methods, foods, speech patterns, and Biblical allusions (35-54).

Though many other examples could be cited to demonstrate the parallels between Hunter's Horn and Arnow's social histories, perhaps these are sufficient to show the historical authenticity of the fictional details. Quite obviously, Arnow's research for Seedtime on the Cumberland and Flowering of the Cumberland began before 1949, when Hunter's Horn was published, and her detailed knowledge of the social history and customs of the area chosen for her fiction dramatically enhances the power of the novel.

The similarities between Hunter's Horn and Arnow's last two novels relate chiefly to one similar character in each novel and to theme. In The Weedkiller's Daughter, Arnow introduces Susie Schnitzer, who has much in common with Suse Ballew. Thematic similarities emerge when Arnow again examines problems of alienated adolescent girls.

The Weedkiller's Daughter (1970) makes a great leap forward in time. Though a novel set in Detroit in the 1960's may seem to have little in common with Hunter's Horn, the main character in The Weedkiller's Daughter, Susan Schnitzer, seems related to Suse Ballew. Each is the oldest child in the family. Each has at least one younger brother. Each, at one time or another, resents the actions

of her family, especially those of a domineering father and a submissive mother. Each feels alienated from her family and community and longs to escape to the North.

The Schnitzer family resides in an exclusive Detroit suburb named Eden Hills. The country club parents hardly know their daughter, and they have irreversibly alienated Susie. The father, Herman Schnitzer, manufactures heat-resistant plastics used in the Vietnam War and makes a career of hating Communists, blacks, foreigners, and living plants. The only plant he wants to live, an elm tree beside the swimming pool, is dying. He sponsors weed-killing campaigns in the community; he fears Eden Hills will be overrun by Negroes and weeds. Susie, as she is known to her friends, writes anonymous letters to the newspaper attacking her father's weedkilling campaign. She has secretly nicknamed her dictatorial father "Bismarck," and her cold, superficial mother, "The Popsicle Queen." Her mother has conformed to Herman's WASP lifestyle, despite her Italian Catholic upbringing.

Susie's younger brother, Brandon, is his bigoted father's son, sent for a weekend to an indoctrination camp for young super-patriots. Susie describes it as a place that "anybody who admired Hitler might go for" (148). He snoops for "subversive" materials in Susie's room.

Bright, fifteen-year-old Susie is caught in an

identity struggle complicated by the lack of communication with her parents and the absense of her maternal grandmother, who raised her until she was six. Susie's grandmother, named as a "Communist sympathizer" in the McCarthy investigations, moved to Nova Scotia, where Susie still secretly visits her and other relatives, usually under the guise of dates or outings with friends. Mr. Schnitzer refuses to help the grandmother clear her name, but Susie views her grandmother's "un-American activities" only as "attempts to help people not much of anybody else would help" (45).

Soon after returning to live with her parents, Susie accidentally crashes through a window and receives a number of cuts, and eventually scars, on her face and head. Though surgery makes the scars less visible, her parents worry about the emotional scars which may have resulted and send her to spend summers at an expensive "Camp for Exceptional Children" in Canada, where she is able to stay in touch with her grandmother.

Susie's circle of friends includes Robert Kendrick, who is closer to "the Establishment" than her other friends, though her "date" with him allows her to cover her secret trip to Canada for her grandmother's birthday party. Iggy, whose father is an artist, listens to Susie's anxieties about talking to the school psychologist. Katy, whose father's career is threatened by right wing forces,

is a talented flutist. Angus, son of an Establishment minister, is an independent thinker. Ben Holmes, a Black student at Eden Hills High, is the target of much local bigotry. All, except Robert, would be by her father's standards totally unacceptable friends for Susie.

Another of Susie's secrets is that she harbors Ter, her cousin, her godfather's son, who has robbed a bank in a desperate effort to do something significant. He knows Susie's secret entrance into the house, and she takes care of him for several days as he recovers from a superficial bullet wound. He eventually returns the money anonymously and is never found out.

Throughout the novel, however, Susie worries about being "found out." An intelligent girl who often feels alone and refers to her own brain as her "IBM," Susie not only worries that Ter will be discovered in her room, but she also fears her independent thinking will be discovered by the school psychologist who has been interviewing students for his study in "alienation." Susie has to attend these interviews but does not want to reveal her unconventional ideas, so she reads psychology books to determine the responses the counselor wants to hear. The novel ends as she outsmarts the man: she leaves feeling successful because he has not learned her "secrets."

Her individuality remains intact: "Susan Schnitzer still belonged to Susan Schnitzer" (372).

The suburban Detroit setting suggests that the novel might be more an extension of The Dollmaker than Hunter's Horn, especially when readers recognize that "The Primitive," a character named Mrs. Nevels, but called by that name only once or twice, is Gertie Nevels. She bought a farm outside Detroit after World War II. Her land and pond form a more Edenic place than the neighborhood of "Executive Homes" called Eden Hills.

In The Weedkiller's Daughter the Primitive appears repeatedly, primarily in connection with the issue of environmental conservation. Mr. Schnitzer, a staunch advocate of weedkilling, refers to Mrs. Nevels as "that old hillbilly" (87), the label that Gertie heard when she first arrived in Detroit. Susie's brother, Brandon, calls her "the lawless old woman" with "land somewhere out in the township on a gravel road" (87). She is "a big woman" (303), who raises sheep and other livestock, makes wine, and takes out a gun against the men spraying weedkillers (87). Embraced by others of "the anti-weedkiller crowd" (303), The Primitive appears as an eccentric who cares about protecting the environment and preserving nature's balance. Though she is a friend of Susie Schnitzer, The Primitive clearly is not the central focus of the novel.

Because The Weedkiller's Daughter is Susie's story, the correlations between Hunter's Horn's Suse Ballew and Susan Schnitzer are more important--Susie is a modern version of Suse. Susie's way of telling time, her secrets, her favorite place, her alienation, her courage, her independence--all seem inheritances from Suse Ballew.

Like the people in backhills Kentucky who tell time by the sun and the seasons, not by "a running timepiece," Susie Schnitzer intuitively marks time. She does not use an alarm clock, but instead her "inner time clock that lived without electricity and never needed a windup brought her awake" (50). She then observes "a dim blob of gray" which means "it was around seven o'clock of a late September morning, that time of year in lower Michigan when the nights grow long and longer as the sun runs down the sky to winter" (50). Susie, like Suse, shows sensitivity to the natural signs of time's passing.

Also, like Suse, Susie devotes her time to secrets she cannot discuss freely with anyone in her family. Suse writes to Mark Cramer, one to whom she can tell the "wantings she never mentioned to those around her" (294). Susie wishes for a confidante in her cousin, Ter: "she wished they were biking down some lonesome country road where she could talk with him of these things that chewed holes in her, and of which she could speak to no one--here" (47-8).

In The Weedkiller's Daughter, when Susie feels dissatisfied with her life, she seeks solace in nature. She is much like Suse, who loves to go to Pilot Rock: "on clear days the hills rolled in blue waves into infinity, and her thoughts could go rolling with them, farther and farther away, free as birds flying" (Hunter's Horn 293). On those days, "the bright, ever calling North seemed closer than on other days" (293). She "lay stomach downward on the stone table and wrote to Mark. . . she wished she could . . . see Detroit . . . go to high school, get away from the Little Smokey Creek country" (294). Susie goes out to The Primitive's pond where she can watch birds and other wildlife and write. She, too, writes letters using a "cold stone" for a desk, but Susie's letters, written under an assumed name, are to a newspaper editor, to protest her father's weedkilling campaign (The Weedkiller's Daughter 68).

Susie wants to fly away, desperately wanting to escape the racial prejudice and discrimination of the "good Americans" who surround her. She is much like Suse Ballew, who felt

something inside her. . . rising and flying with the birds, straining after them, crying and calling fit to burst her heart, but soundless and wordless, because there were no words that could tell the thing, only knowing deep inside her that she, Suse, would go away into new fine country, as the wild geese were going now. Only, the wild geese would come back with the spring, and they

went together; but when she went, she'd go alone and she'd never come back. (294)

Susie Schnitzer also sets herself apart from others: she feels "already a citizen of Canada by her own proclamation," and she believed "there were not many more years of waiting to be the real thing" (180). She thinks, "what a cruddy, cruddy world, the human-being part"--it would be "nice to be a Canada goose and fly away from it" (204).

Each girl suffers alienation from her family and her community because she holds independent opinions. In particular, Suse expresses unpopular opinions in confrontations with her father, with her mother, with a church member at the revival, and with the man who would be her father-in-law. Susie Schnitzer, less outspoken than Suse, all the same believes that "somewhere on earth there should be a place for notes out of tune--and people out of tune," that is, "the people who did not say the proper words at the proper time" (177). She thus describes Suse precisely.

Susie describes herself as well. Her friend Iggy reminds her that she was "the only one who dared ask the old boy [their high school teacher] the wrong kind of question"; she asks him, "But doesn't our constitution give us the right not to believe in God?" (80). Susie, like Suse, is unafraid to challenge authority. Each character

has the courage to ask "the wrong kind of question" and form her own independent, often unpopular, opinions.

Susie Schnitzer's needs for secrecy, solace, escape, and independence clearly echo Suse Ballew's. Though more "modern" problems touch Susie--McCarthyism, the Vietnam War, conservation of natural resources, racial bigotry, civil rights--her primary concerns are also found in Hunter's Horn: hypocrisy, alienation, appreciation of nature and independent thinkers, and freedom. Susie has inherited the sensitivity and sensibility of Suse.

For her final novel, The Kentucky Trace: A Novel of the American Revolution (1974), Arnow returns to her native Kentucky setting and to a central male point of view, as she did in only one other novel, Hunter's Horn. Despite significant differences to Hunter's Horn, The Kentucky Trace does resemble that novel in two particular ways: its protagonist and its themes.

Kentucky Trace is the story of twenty-seven-year old Leslie Collins, a surveyor, covertly involved as a patriot in the Revolutionary War. He has scouted for Marion in South Carolina, though he was raised as a loyal British subject. After seeing his Royalist brothers in battle at Camden, Leslie is nearly certain that he killed one of them.

Having written already about the United States' involvement in World War II, Arnow again describes war less in terms of specific battles, though those are mentioned, than in terms of its effects on one person and those around him. By choosing not to focus on such famous pioneers as Davy Crockett and Daniel Boone, who made places for themselves in American folklore and history, Arnow uses Leslie Collins, granted, a less compelling character than Nunn Ballew, to explore what happened to the "ordinary" pioneers along the Cumberland Trail. Arnow offers readers a comparison with Nunn, whose final words in Hunter's Horn ask what happened to those children of Israel who died along the way to the Promised Land. Like Nunn, who wonders about his purpose in life and the mark he will make in his family's history, Leslie also worries about personal success and his destiny. In Hunter's Horn as well as The Kentucky Trace, Arnow shows concern for people who do not make a name for themselves in history books, in a sense, those who "died along the way."

Leslie nearly dies at the beginning of the novel, which opens with his narrow escape from being hanged. He returns from his surveying job to find no one at home--his wife, Sadie Hawkins, baby, Negro servants, Jethro and Angela, and his property all are missing. He sets out to find them, acting more out of obligation than anything else, readers learn, because his marriage to Sadie had been

a shotgun wedding, and her baby had not been his. He had married the daughter of a South Carolina tavern owner after spending one drunken night with her, and her baby had arrived several months later.

To find them, Leslie trails a group heading West in 1780. Arnow's historically authentic details appear, as they do in Hunter's Horn, when in The Kentucky Trace, she describes Leslie's woodsmanship, clothes, food, and route across Clinch Mountain, Powell Mountain, the Cumberland Gap, and Kentucky Trace. He travels to Price's Station and French Lick, now called Nashville. Arnow clearly researched the geography of the region as well as the pioneer practices of the time.

Like Nunn Ballew, Leslie's dilemmas primarily involve events on the Kentucky frontier, away from battles. He faces guilt about his role in society, his family, and his job. Also like Nunn, in addition to his guilt, Leslie struggles with alienation from his family and his own hypocrisy.

Each man feels guilty as he evaluates his contribution to his family history. Nunn compares himself to the successful farmer John Ballew and feels like a failure. Nunn often winces with guilt when he reminds himself that "no Ballew has ever" done such things as he has to make money to support his hunting and his family. Leslie feels

guilty that his individual actions impinge unfairly on those around him. As a surveyor, he believes "the Indians had the right word for a sextant--land stealer" (150). As a cuckolded husband, he feels guilty about letting himself be tricked into marrying a tavern keeper's daughter who was carrying another man's child. Later, as a widower, he feels guilty that he cannot feel more grief when he learns that she and the baby died of a fever.

Like Nunn, who feels alienated from his family because of the shameful things he has done to the Ballew name and reputation, Leslie deeply regrets what he has done, though his actions are largely unknown to his family. He will never mention that he saw his brothers at the battle of Camden and that he believes he is responsible for one of their deaths. He knows that his Virginia gentry parents, who never met Sadie, would not have accepted her wholeheartedly because of her background. And when he decides to adopt another woman's baby as his own, with twinges of guilt, he concocts a story for his parents to make the mother of his child "belong to the gentry with a gentleman for her father" (269).

With such choices, in an earlier time in American history, Leslie illustrates, as Gwen Curry points out in "Heritage and Deracination in Four Kentucky Writers," how "a man can in a sense become his own ancestor, can shape his own destiny and take control of his own future" (76).

In contrast, Nunn desperately wants to gain the power to shape his own future, but his position in the tight community of Little Smokey Creek limits his options. With his neighbors constantly reminding him of how they view him, he finds no escape from their censure. On the frontier in The Kentucky Trace, however, Leslie's position on the fringe of society gives him more power and freedom to alter his own heritage.

Though the setting of The Kentucky Trace is considerably earlier than any of her other fiction, Arnow's last novel reminds readers of Hunter's Horn when she demonstrates once again that she can create a credible male narrator who struggles with his family's view of him and his view of himself. Leslie also reminds readers of Suse Ballew when he watches wild geese--"two long strings met to form a wavering V high in the sky. . ." (212). But older than Suse and without her limitations, "he had followed, done more than follow; he'd been south, north, east, and west, but his going had never eased their sorrow or his restlessness--until now . . . the wild desire to see the world, measure himself against it was gone" (212).

In The Kentucky Trace, as in Hunter's Horn, a central theme is exposing hypocrisy. Leslie Collins recognizes the pretensions of his wife and her family as well as his own. He faces lies he tells himself, such as when he makes up an

excuse to return to see the baby William David (165) and when he adds false information to the family Bible about his adopted baby's parentage (269). Arnow again attacks religious hypocrisy with Old Scott, whom Leslie meets at Scott's Station; Old Scott "claimed he had received `the call'--whatever that was--to preach; tongue full of his brand of religion, the rest of him pure devil" (48). He threatens Leslie with "take one step toward that fort an I'll consume you with fire and lead, yea even as Moses consumed the burnen bush" (54). Old Scott reminds readers of three characters in Hunter's Horn: the revival preacher, Battle John Brand; the sanctimonious Keg Head Cramer, who prayed "God's will be done" instead of sending for a doctor on the night his daughter-in-law, Lureenie, died in childbirth; and Rans Cramer, Lureenie's husband, who returned to Little Smokey Creek, claiming to have "got religion." All also quoted, or misquoted, the Bible for their own purposes.

In The Kentucky Trace, as in her other fiction and non-fiction, Arnow shares her view of history--that history is at once all encompassing and intimate. In a 1968 address given to the Michigan Museums Conference, "Some Musings on the Nature of History," Arnow explained "the bigness of this world needs to be whittled down" and "the more familiar the place or person, the closer . . . the past becomes" (11). She believed that "history for

some of us is a shy girl, not coming close unless she can be certain of some kinship, some common bond, some self-identification with her" (10). Arnow uses history to draw readers close to her characters and their lives.

In Kentucky Trace as well as Hunter's Horn, Arnow pays attention to characters' clothes, furniture, housing, housekeeping, tools, guns, hunting practices, family life, attitudes, and language. In these works in particular, the historically authentic details are not artificially and inconsistently inlaid in her work; they are part of each novel's natural grain.

Glenda Hobbs, in American Women Writers: A Critical Reference Guide, describes Arnow as "the first and only American novelist to describe [Kentucky hill people] with fidelity and justice and to place them in a setting that is authentic to the last detail." She contends that even though Arnow is often given status only as a "regional" or "Appalachian" writer, such a label limits unfairly the scope of her work (69).

Hobbs' dissertation, Harriette Arnow's Literary Journey: From the Parish to the World (1975), offers an extensive discussion of Arnow's fiction in the context of such writers as Mary Austin, Jesse Stuart, Elizabeth Madox Roberts, Erskine Caldwell, Flannery O'Connor, and James Agee. In many of the comparisons, Hobbs draws on Hunter's

Horn to illustrate Arnow's ability to create portrayals that are not sentimental, exaggerated, sensationalized, grotesque, overly symbolic, or patronizing. Hobbs thus justifies her claim that "Arnow's characters are neither faceless symbols nor eccentric stereotypes": they "are not only more realistic than those of the best Kentucky novelists, but they also stand out among all fictional portraits of the southern rural poor" (32-3). Arnow's talent in creating gripping characters clearly distinguishes Hunter's Horn from other American novels that share a Kentucky or Southern setting.

Malcolm Cowley believes that Hunter's Horn especially deserves recognition because it defies categorization. Cowley writes that no label can adequately name "the special quality of the novel, which is partly a poetry of earth, partly a sense of community, and partly a sort of in-feeling for the characters, especially the women." Hobbs concurs about the universality of Arnow's work: "like Twain and Faulkner, she creates a private world whose inhabitants face dilemmas reaching beyond geographical boundaries. Her best fiction depicts the conflict between an individual conscience and society--whether it be family, community, or the wider world" (69).

Hunter's Horn represents Arnow's best fiction. The novel deserves recognition in its rightful place as the central work of her career because sounds from Hunter's

Horn resonate throughout her fiction and non-fiction.

Furthermore, it is a central work in American literature, for no other American novel contains such uncompromisingly realistic and unique portrayals of Kentucky people who strike universal chords of recognition.

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