

THE BARGAIN: LILLIAN SMITH ON RACE, SEX, AND
CLASS IN SOUTHERN SOCIETY

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Lillian Smith, more than any other Southern woman in the twentieth century, ardently and persistently challenged her culture's most sacred taboos--race, sex, and class. Had she been a man such sacrilege would have been enough to raise the ire of her fellow Southerners, but for a Southern woman--worse, a Southern "lady"--to have exposed the darkest corners of a region's psyche was an abomination. During her thirty year career as an editor, essayist, novelist, critic, playwright, and lecturer, Smith criticized her region's culture with a scathing analysis that left little of the Southern myths unchallenged.

This unlikely female challenger to a racist, sexist, class-stratified society was born in the north Florida community of Jasper on December 12, 1897. Her parents, Anne Simpson and Clavin Warren Smith, were both from Southern families who had once been slaveholders in Georgia. Lillian Smith grew up in a family and a community steeped in the cultural milieu of the deep South. Her childhood experiences in Jasper were in many ways typical of the experiences of other Southern children of that era. Smith said of her hometown, with its population almost equally divided between black and white, that it was "almost like a stage set of typical segregation and typical economic and cultural patterns."¹

Her father, Calvin Smith, was a prosperous business man. According to Smith, he had no difficulty reconciling the meager wages he paid his laborers, black and white, and the shanty towns he provided for their habitation, with his advocacy of Christian charity and his sense of community, sentiments which he conscientiously transmitted to his children. In a spirit of noblesse oblige he admonished them that they must "do something" with their lives, that they "owed a debt to society which must be paid." Nor did he have difficulty rationalizing his life in a segregated society with his Christian principles, instilled into his children by daily family prayers and by his insistence that each child read the Bible in its entirety each year. In this religious atmosphere Lillian Smith grew up hearing such phrases as "all men are brothers" and "the teachings of Jesus are important and could be practiced if we tried."² For Lillian Smith God was not someone met only on Sunday, but "was a permanent member of the household." She summed up her experience thus: "We lived the same segregated life as did other southerners, but our parents talked in excessively Christian and democratic terms."³ Because her parents were concerned with providing the advantages of schooling, art, and travel for the

nine children in the Smith family, Lillian Smith's world was not so narrowly confined by the parameters of the little community of Jasper as it might otherwise have been. Like many other Southern liberals of the period, Smith gained a new perspective of her region and its culture by escaping its confines for a time.⁴ She attributed her new insight into Southern racial patterns to a three-year stay in China in the early 1920's. In fact, she said the China experience changed her life.⁵

Although her intellectual break with the customs and traditions of her region began much earlier, it was not until 1936 when she was 39 years old that her literary career, and thus the articulation of her divergent views, began with the publication of a small and unpretentious magazine with the pretentious name of Pseudopodia. Co-edited with her friend and life-long companion Paula Snelling, Pseudopodia began as a vehicle for regional literary expression and developed into a widely ranging journal of cultural comment and analysis. The magazine's name was changed to North Georgia Review in the spring of 1937 and to South Today in 1942, the name under which it continued to be published until its demise in 1945. During the period of its publication the magazine served as a sounding board for writers who desired social, political, and economic change in the South, and it was the only journal of its type at the time in the region that published and reviewed the works of black writers. An early contributor to the magazine was Wilbur Cash, who was to be an important influence on Smith's understanding of the southern scene. Smith published an essay from Cash's manuscript of Mind of the South five years before its publication by Knopf.⁶

Lillian Smith is perhaps best known by the general public for her novel, Strange Fruit, which was published in 1944 and shortly thereafter was banned in Boston, generating a sensational censorship trial.⁷ Ostensibly the book was banned because of a four-letter word buried in its pages. It is much more likely that the book's treatment of miscegenation and the graphic lynching scene were the real shockers to the sensibilities of Americans, both in the North and in the South. Despite the shocking nature of the book, or because of it, Strange Fruit became a best seller, sold a million copies, and made Smith a national literary figure. Certainly in the South the book was recognized as a glaring indictment of the region's time-honored traditions. However, Smith insisted, and evidence supports her, that Northerners and Southerners alike were disturbed by the book. She said: "It seems dangerous to many people for beyond the racial element in it, everything in . . . western culture seemed questioned."⁸ Recognizing the book's challenge to the South's racial and sexual mores and fearing the possible reactions to the novel, Eleanor Roosevelt wrote to Smith that she wished the book had been written anonymously, for as she said: "I am afraid the repercussions in the South are going to be

really serious for you I am not sure that the South won't be very angry with you and turn against you. I hope I'm wrong."9

Lillian Smith, of course, has not been the only observer of Southern culture to recognize the complex relationship between racism and sexual anxieties.¹⁰ As one scholar has said, "A mountain of evidence has been accumulated to document the basically sexualized nature of racist psychology."¹¹ Congruently, sexuality in racism is intimately connected with issues of power and dominance,¹² and hence the dynamic duo of racism and sexism. Smith's perception of the complex relationship between race, sex, and class led her to explore the nature and nuances of the culture's basic assumptions. Her uncompromising analysis of her culture's pathological preoccupation with race and sex, coupled with her unflattering critique of evangelical religion in the South, did seem to threaten the fundamentals of Southern society. Smith wrote, "The lesson on segregation was only a logical extension of the lessons on sex and white superiority and God."¹³ Smith was correct in assuming that she posed a threat to the essentials of the dominant Southern culture. Such a threat was particularly untenable coming from a woman.

A look at a few of the reviews of Strange Fruit illustrates this point quite well. For example, one reviewer said of the book, "Here are scenes so coarse in word and implication that they are bound to offend."¹⁴ Another male critic wrote, "To many readers the uncouth speech and licentious behavior will come as an affront."¹⁵ Particularly telling is a review which reads:

Presumably for the purpose of appealing to a vulgar multitude she sins against good taste so grossly as to make her story quite unfit for general circulation. It seems curious enough that this daughter of one of the South's oldest families should . . . employ phrases which decent people regard as unprintable.¹⁶

Throughout her career Lillian Smith was challenged by critics, often men, who questioned whether she was really a Southerner since it seemed highly improbable that a Southern born woman would so relentlessly and in such plain language reprove her native region. It might be noted that Ellen Glasgow, who wrote a generation earlier was criticized by a kinsman who said of her first novel: "It is incredible that a well-brought up Southern girl should even know what a bastard is, much less write about one."¹⁷ A half century had not appreciably altered male views as to acceptable female behavior.¹⁸

The themes of sin, sex, and segregation were explored more deeply in her second book, Killers of the Dream (1949), which was an introspective and scathing analysis of the Southern state of mind and morals. Killers of the Dream is the most significant of her works, and, like her writing, is autobiographical. The book required a self-analysis that must have been as painful for her as it was enlightening. She believed that although she wrote and spoke of her experiences as a child growing up in the South, the experiences were not uniquely hers, but belonged to most white Southerners who were born at the turn of the century. She wrote:

Out of the intricate weaving of unnumbered threads, I shall pick out a few strands, a few designs that have to do with what we call color and race--and politics--and money and how it is made--and religion--and sex and body image--and love--and dreams of the Good and killers of dreams.19

Lillian Smith said that in her experience there had been a concomitant inculcation of Christian principles and attitudes toward race and sex. It was true that Christian doctrines were espoused aloud whereas the subjects of race and sex were seldom discussed per se; nevertheless, these pervasive themes of Southern culture were simultaneously instilled into the minds and hearts of Southern children. The process was so subtle that it was more subliminal than conscious. The lessons--to love God, to love one's white skin, and to believe in the sanctity of both20--were taught to the young of the South with what amounted to religious fervor.

Smith saw these lessons as fundamentals of the Southern Tradition which children learned with their first steps. The ritual, she said, was intricate in its movement, and the participants were both white and black:

Some, if their faces are dark, learn to bend, hat in hand; and others, if their faces are white, learn to hold their heads high. Some step off the sidewalk while others pass by in arrogance. Bending, shoving, genuflecting, ignoring, stepping off, demanding, giving in, avoiding. . . we learned the dance that cripples the human spirit.21

Indeed, the lessons were learned so well that they became second nature. It was unnecessary for the white Southerner to stop and think about where it was correct for him to go. His muscles knew this intuitively, and they proceeded to take him to the front of the bus, to the big school, to the hospital, to the hotel, restaurant and picture show, into the best his town had to offer its citizens. Smith said, "The ceremonials in honor of white supremacy, performed from babyhood, slip from the conscious mind down deep into muscles and glands"22

Smith's analysis of her society was shaped by her belief that culture is man-made, not innate or God-given; thus, Southern culture, particularly those aspects which she deemed as most damaging to the human spirit, could be altered once people understood the dynamics of that culture. So she set out on a quest to discover the origin and the nature of the "dance that cripples the human spirit." In so doing her autobiography became sociology; but it became something more, too. It became a probe into the collective cultural psyche. Her objective was not simply a study of the segregation of the races--not narrowly a matter of civil rights--but rather the separation of human beings from one another--black from white, old from young, male from female. In a letter written two years before her death in 1966, she wrote to a friend, "As a citizen I work for civil rights, as a serious writer I probe on all levels the philosophical, mythic, symbolic, psychological meanings of segregation. . . ."23 Smith recognized and had the nerve to wrestle with what most writers of her day chose to ignore--the centrality of race to the Southern self-consciousness.

Like others before her and many after her, Smith recognized that race, class, and sex have been the three primary means of domination in American society.²⁴ Moreover, perverse as it may seem, racism has served as a stabilizing influence in American culture in that it has been a source of gratification for whites, has defined a social universe, absorbed aggression, and facilitated a sense of virtue in white America. Racism has been an integral part of a stable and productive cultural order and has in fact contributed to America's material success.²⁵ The idea that racism has been a central theme in American history can be lamentably well documented from the 17th century to the present. Thus, while the American South may deserve the dubious honor bestowed upon it by U. B. Phillips of being a region dedicated to remaining a white man's country, it is distinct from the mainstream of American culture only in the degree of its overt dedication to the principle of white supremacy. Gunnar Myrdal was convinced that racism was not exclusively a Southern problem but was rather a national dilemma,²⁶ and Lillian Smith concurred with this view. Certainly, Smith did not contend that Southern society was unique in its propensity to dehumanize individuals by its invidious traditions. But it was Southern culture Smith knew best, and she knew the subtle pressures by which the culture transmitted its values on each new generation.

One year before Lillian Smith was born the Supreme Court of the United States in the Plessy v. Ferguson case demonstrated the dominant culture's racist attitudes, making "separate but equal" the law of the land, and also acquiescing in the South's determination to handle alone its "Negro problem."²⁷ Thus, Smith grew up in a Jim Crow South and experienced a dichotomizing set of values which she said forced her "to split the body from the mind and both from the soul."²⁸ Maturing into an astute critic

of her society, Lillian Smith sought an understanding of a system which she saw as dehumanizing for both whites and blacks. Killers of the Dream is the articulation of her analysis of the South's collective psyche. As a student of Freud, Jung, and Kant, Smith explored the deep-seated psychological basis for the culture's neuroses. But Killers of the Dream is also a sociological study of the South's socioeconomic system.

In an essay in Killers of the Dream entitled "Two Men and a Bargain," Smith laid out in a simple parable her analysis of caste and class in Southern society. The essay began with the statement". . . Southerners did more than exploit, deprive, ignore the poor white, they made a bargain with him."²⁹ In the parable Mr. Rich White makes a bargain with Mr. Poor White, but before he did

. . . [He] studied about it a long time . . . for it had to be a bargain Mr. Poor White would want to keep forever. It's not easy to make a bargain another man will want to keep forever, and Mr. Rich White knew this. So he looked around for something to put in it that Mr. Poor White would never want to take out. He looked around . . . and his eyes fell on the Negro. I've got it, he whispered.³⁰

Mr. Rich White's primary motivation for the bargain was of course economic gain. It had been true when the South was essentially a plantation economy that for economic success what was needed was a large, tractable, cheap labor supply. Southerners continued to believe, as the New South of increasing industrial expansion emerged, that what was necessary, what was absolutely, essential for economic success, was a tractable labor force content to work for lower pay than factory workers in the North.³¹ In fact this was the major appeal used by Southern boosters to entice Northern industry to the South. Propagandists for the New South stressed the large body of strong, hearty, active, docile laborers of Anglo-Saxon stock who were content with their wages and had no disposition to strike.³² The exploitation and manipulation of the white working class in Southern society was accomplished with finesse by moneyed interests who exploited race and tradition to keep labor cheap and obedient. C. Vann Woodward is but one of many scholars who have demonstrated the intricate workings of this technique of social control. Woodward quoted an Alabama business booster who had a good grasp of how the system worked:

The white laboring classes here are separated from the Negroes, working all day side by side, with them, by an innate-consciousness of race superiority. This sentiment dignifies the character of white labor. It excites a sentiment of sympathy and equality on their part with the classes above them, and in this way becomes a wholesome social leaven.³³

Lacking the training and expertise of professional scholars whose subject was the South, Smith nevertheless demonstrated a keen insight into the dynamics of the South's peculiar socioeconomic system. As the parable continued, Mr. Rich White further explained the bargain to Mr. Poor White:

There's two jobs down here that need doing: Somebody's got to tend to the living, and somebody's got to tend to the nigger. Now I've learned a few things about making a living you're no-account to learn (else you'd be making money same way as I make it): things about jobs and credit, prices, houses, wages, notes, and so on. But one thing you can learn easy, any man can, is how to handle the black man You boss the nigger, and I'll boss the money. How about it?³⁴

According to Smith, that was the linchpin of the bargain: "You boss the nigger, and I'll boss the money." But it was the practical, day-to-day implementation of the bargain which shaped the totality of the region's culture. Every aspect of Southern life in some way accommodated itself to the bargain. Southern economic structure, politics, social custom, and religion all functioned symbiotically to bolster the bargain. Mr. Poor White, in exchange for his economic deprivation, was given a broad sphere of influence. Mr. Rich White told him:

Anything you want to do to show folks you're boss you're free to do it. You can run the schools and the churches any way you want to. You can make the customs and set the manners and write the laws (long as you don't touch my business) Now if folks are fool enough to forget they're white men, if they forget that I'm willing to put out plenty money to keep the politicians talking, and I don't mind supporting a first-class demagogue or two, to say what you want him to say--just so he does what I want about my business.³⁵

In the area of politics the bargain was manifested unabashedly in the disfranchisement movement. C. Vann Woodward has pointed out that behind the shibboleths of "White Supremacy" there raged a conflict between Southern white men for dominance.³⁶ The pawn in this disfranchisement game was the black man, but the Machiavellian techniques, such as literacy tests, property requirements, and poll tax, used by Southern elites to secure their hold over the region, affected poor whites as well as blacks.³⁷ Disfranchising campaigns were characterized by appeals to white supremacy and race hatred, and Southern voters readily agreed upon the necessity of keeping the black man "in his place" and maintaining white supremacy.³⁸ The Negro was indeed the unifying factor in Southern politics, and would continue to be throughout the twentieth century.

The closing decade of the nineteenth century with its economic, political, and social frustrations was, as C. Vann Woodward has said, "the perfect cultural seed bed for aggression against the minority race."³⁹ The Negro was the catalyst which brought about the reconciliation of the estranged white classes of the South. Segregation, physical separation of the races, was the visible manifestation of white unity, a corollary to white dominance. Harassed by fears and anxieties about his economic condition and threatened by the spectre of black competition, the lower class white, predisposed as he was with antipathy toward blacks,⁴⁰ was manipulated into accepting the black man as the scapegoat, the cause of all of his frustrations, and was led to believe that his only salvation from his degradation was to draw the color line between himself and the Negro. The result was Jim Crow, a system of racial separation supported by law and custom in the South. Lillian Smith's explanation of the origin and nature of Jim Crowism, if oversimplified, did capture the spirit of the system. In further defining the nature of the bargain Smith had Mr. Rich White say to Mr. Poor White, "Best thing you can do . . . is to Jim Crow everything. It'll be easier for us that way to keep the niggers out of the unions and down on the farms where they belong, and it ought to make you feel better for a lot of reasons."⁴¹ Mr. Rich White continued his monologue, encouraging the segregation of "colored folks" on busses, streetcars, and trains; in toilets, movies, schools, and churches. "You can make rules about restaurants and hotels, too, if it'll make you feel better," said Mr. Rich White. Of course, Mr. Poor White was far too poor to patronize the hotels and restaurants himself, but it would make him "feel good" to know that he was "sort of bossing things there." "Go on," said Mr. Rich White. "Fix all the Jim Crow you want. When you don't have meat to eat and milk for your younguns, you can eat Jim Crow."⁴² Summarizing the bargain, Smith said:

Down South, folks began keeping this bargain. They began to segregate southern living. They segregated southern money from Mr. Poor White, and they segregated southern mores from Mr. Rich White, and they segregated southern churches from Christianity, and they segregated southern minds from honest thinking, and they segregated the Negro from everything . . . Jim Crow was Mr. Rich White's idea but Mr. Poor White made it work.⁴³

Smith's criticism of Southern churches for their "un-Christian" capitulation to racism and their support of the bargain was a pivotal point in her critique of Southern culture. Christianity itself, as it was taught in the churches of the south, traumatized the Southern psyche. Smith wrote, "Belief in Some One's right to punish you is the fate of all children in Judaic-Christian culture. But nowhere else, perhaps . . . [is there] such a growing climate for guilt as is produced in the South by the combination of a warm moist evangelism and racial

segregation."44 Writing of camp meetings and revivals of the past, Smith said, "Guilt," was then and is today "the biggest crop raised in Dixie, harvested each summer just before cotton is picked. No wonder that God and Negroes and Jesus and sin and salvation were baled up together in southern children's minds. . . ."45 The conflicting messages conveyed by Christian teaching could stymie the soul. Smith wrote:

I do not remember how or when, but by the time I had learned that God is love, that Jesus is His Son . . . that all men are brothers with a common Father, I also knew that I was better than a Negro, that all black folk have their place and must be kept in it, that sex has its place and must be kept in it, that a terrifying disaster would befall the South if ever I treated a Negro as my social equal . . . I had earned that God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son so that we might have segregated churches 46

Smith learned, as did other Southern children, that it was possible to be a Christian and a white southerner simultaneously," . . . to pray at night and ride a Jim Crow car the next morning and to feel comfortable in doing both."47 Religion, then, played an important role in buttressing the bargain; and although Smith would never have admitted the intellectual debt nor expressed it in just those words, she clearly recognized that religion in the South served as the opium of the people. Smith had Mr. Rich White say to Mr. Poor White:

If you ever get restless when you don't have a job or your roof leaks, or the children look puny and shoulders stick out more than natural, all you need to do is remember you're a sight better than the black man. And remember this too: There's nothing so good for folks as to go to church on Sundays. To show you I believe this, I'll build you all the churches down at the mill or on the farm you want--just say the word.48

The realities of Southern life support the thesis that religion has indeed served as a viable method of social control for whites and for blacks.49

Without question lynching was the most drastic form of social control in the South. Rationalized as necessary to hold the Negro in check, the Gothic horrors of the Southern lynching bee went unchecked by law or custom. Justification could always be traced directly or indirectly to sexual anxieties, real or imagined.50 Although white supremacy was firmly supported by Southern institutions, the practice of lynching was a constant reminder that force and violence were the ultimate underpings of the Southern social system. It is obvious how lynching functioned as a social control for blacks, but Lillian Smith saw

lynching as an extreme but viable means of releasing pent-up aggression caused by fear and uncertainties among the lower class whites. Mr. Rich White said to Mr. Poor White:

. . . If you don't have much to do, and begin to get worried-up inside and mad with folks, and you think it'll make you feel a little better to lynch a nigger occasionally, that's OK by me too; and I'll fix it with the sheriff and the judge and the court and our newspaper so you won't have any trouble afterward. . . . 51

Although Smith purposely eschewed a Marxist interpretation of the South's socioeconomic system, in fact, economic motivation was the fulcrum of her analysis of racism and segregation in the post-bellum South. Of the bargain in general and of Jim Crow in particular Smith had said it was "Mr. Rich White's idea but Mr. Poor White made it work." Quite clearly Smith saw racism used by the ruling elite as a device to divide the working class into two hostile segments for better control--and for more profits. Nevertheless, Smith would have denied vehemently a debt to Marx for her insights.

In many ways Lillian Smith owed a debt to Wilbur Cash who had insisted that class as a concept was never "an integral part of Southern thinking in general."⁵² It was true, he said, that Southerners were aware of a division of society into those who had claim to property, power, and gentility and those who did not, but there was never the degree of resentment or hate on the part of the lower sorts necessary to legitimize a true class conflict.⁵³ Cash accounted for this lack of class conflict in two ways. First he pointed out the South's relatively socially integrated white society of neighbors and relatives not far removed from a democratizing frontier past. The second factor was the history of slavery and a post-bellum subordination of the Negro into what Cash called "a special alien group"⁵⁴ whose presence was "vastly ego-warming and ego-expanding"⁵⁵ to the poor white population. If a poor white in the South had been walled out by the plantation system and its legacy of poor dirt-farms, share cropping, tenancy, and the lien system, he was at least, because of his white skin, a member of the dominant class. Though he might be robbed and degraded in so many ways, "Come what might, he would always be a white man."⁵⁶

Michael O'Brien credits Cash with an unwitting Hegelian phenomenology which worked itself out in the Mind of the South. Cash, he said, believed ideas were motive forces in the historical process but also functioned in a dialectical sense.⁵⁷ The original thesis of Southern history was not one of unity but diversity, "an aggregation of human units, of self-contained and self-sufficient entities."⁵⁸ Cash pitted against this thesis of an atomized, unself-conscious society, an antithesis: slavery, the race problem, and the dispute with the North. Out of these

tensions came the synthesis of Southern self-consciousness, brought together in large part by the tenets of racial loyalty which smoothed away possible areas of class friction. He called this synthesis the Savage Ideal.⁵⁹ Unlike Smith, Cash saw no manipulation on the part of the elites but rather the universal acceptance of the Southern myth on the part of white Southerners.

To complicate further Smith's analysis, there was her predilection toward psychoanalysis as a tool for probing into the South's psyche. This led her into some obvious ambiguities. As a student of Freud, Smith was deeply concerned with the pathology of individuals. By definition Freudian psychology is concerned about individual human nature and does not question society itself. Smith, although deeply indebted to Freudian concepts, never fully shared Freud's pervasive pessimism about man and society, as her optimistic call for change indicates.

Perhaps it was the pathology of culture which was Smith's real subject; and perhaps the bargain, as she perceived it, was the result of pragmatic utilization of the destructiveness in the culture by some individuals. Smith, unlike Cash and others, believed that human thought, even at its most detached level, is rooted in the cultural soil which nourished it. In short, ideas are not created in a vacuum. Racism as an idea was the product of specific historical developments and has served a useful function in Western culture; but culture is dynamic, not static. Smith was enough of an optimist to believe in the possibility of cultural change and enough of an elitist to believe that in our society, change must emanate from the top. Moreover, Smith was not a gradualist who urged a slow process of changing men's minds and hearts. Rather, she advocated immediate alteration in Southern institutions, believing that a change in the social, economic, and political environment would transform the way people think.

What is most fascinating about Lillian Smith is that she transcended her age and culture. She took a stand for full human rights for all people and she never once wavered from that unequivocal position. Nor was she ever tempted to join the ranks of other Southern "liberals" of her era who preached moderation and gradualism. Smith challenged her region's most precious held beliefs, and she remained in the midst of the fray while doing so. She did not go underground with her writing nor did she expatriate herself from the South. Smith may not have been so much a Southern liberal-- but an even rarer oddity--a Southern radical.

NOTES

1Lillian Smith, unpublished notes, Special Collections, University of Georgia Library, Athens.

2Lillian Smith, Killers of the Dream (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, Inc., 1949, 1961), pp. 27,32.

3Ibid., p. 28

4Morton Sosna, In Search of the Silent South: Southern Liberals and the Race Issue (New York: Columbia University Press, 1977), p. 176.

5Smith worked as a music teacher, not a missionary, at Virginia School in Huchan, Chekiang Province, from 1922 to 1925. In both her published works and private notes and letters she emphasizes the significance of her China experiences. See, for example, Lillian Smith to Maggie [?], 1964.

6Pseudopodia (Winter 1936). Wilbur Cash and Lillian Smith were friends as well as professional acquaintances. They corresponded frequently and Cash and his new wife visited Smith at Clayton, Georgia, in 1938. See Cash to Lillian Smith, 1938.

7Bernard De Voto, "The Decision in the Strange Fruit Case: The Obscenity Statute in Massachusetts," New England Quarterly, June 1946; pp. 147-183.

8Lillian Smith, unpublished notes, Special Collections, University of Georgia Library.

9Eleanor Roosevelt to Lillian Smith, 23 January, 1944, Roosevelt papers, Hyde Park, New York.

10Since many students of the Southern ethos have treated this subject, those mentioned here represent but a few of the best known studies. See for example Wilbur J. Cash, The Mind of the South (New York: Vintage Books, 1941), pp. 117-120, 131; John Dollard, Caste and Class in a Southern Town (Garden City, New York: Doubleday Anchor Books, Inc., 1957), pp. 321-326; 324-325; Gunnar Myrdal, An American Dilemma: The Negro Problem of Modern Democracy, vol.2; Walter White, Rope and Faggot: A Biography of Judge Lynch (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1929), pp. 62, 67-68; Thomas F. Gossett, Race: The History of an Idea in America (New York: Schocken Books, 1968), p. 283.

11Joel Kovel, White Racism: A Psychohistory (New York: Pantheon Books, 1970), p. 67.

12Ibid., p. 68.

13Killers of the Dream, p. 90.

14Edward Weeks, Atlantic, May 1944.

15Christian Science Monitor, 1 May 1944.

16Joseph McSorley, Catholic World, May 1944.

17Quoted from J. B. Hubbell, The South in American Literature 1607-1900 (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1954), p. 842.

18Early in her career, Smith drew fire from the influential and prestigious Fugitive-Agrarians such as Allen Tate, John Crowe Ransom, and Donald Davidson, centered at Vanderbilt; and she was regarded as a pariah by the school of New Criticism which labeled her work "sociological" and "polemical" since she called for social change in the South. Using the word "sociological" as a pejorative term, and regarding as less than art any work that dealt with contemporary social issues, the small but influential cadre of New Critics doomed to perdition any work which, from their point of view, had not been created in a social vacuum. And thus was Lillian Smith dismissed as less than a "serious artist." Any number of examples can be given to illustrate the persuasive influence of New Criticism and its proscriptive effects on the treatment of social themes. See Walter Sullivan, A Requiem for the Renaissance: The State of Fiction in the Modern South (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1976), pp. xix-xxiv; Walter Sullivan, Death of Melancholy: Essays on Modern Southern Fiction (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1972), p. 13; R. C. Simonini, Jr., Southern Writers: Appraisals in Our Time (Charlottesville: The University Press of Virginia), p. v-i, pp. 107-109, 112, 118, 121; William J. Handy, Kant and the Southern New Critics (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1963), pp. vii-x. In Frederick J. Hoffman, The Art of Southern Fiction: A Study of Some Modern Novelists (Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1967), p. 8, Hoffman says of Smith that she wrote a "social novel." "This is not the main line of Southern literature. The best writing goes deeper, sustains itself on other levels, exploits another vein." For an excellent discussion of the role of New Criticism as a bulwark for the status quo, see Bruce Franklin, "Teaching Literature in the Highest Academic," in The Politics of Literature: Dissenting Essays on the Teaching of English, eds. Louis Kampf and Paul Lauter (New York: Pantheon Books, 1972), pp. 101-102. It is my contention that Lillian Smith falls into a category with many

other women writers who have been deliberately "forgotten" or buried because their works were far too critical of contemporary norms--be they racial or sexual.

19Killers of the Dream, p. 27.

20Ibid., p. 83.

21Ibid., p. 96.

22Ibid.

23Lillian Smith to Edward Keating, 8 July 1964.

24Herbert Butman in a speech delivered at the Hugo Black Symposium at the University of Alabama, Huntsville, 1978.

25Kovel, White Racism, p. 4.

26This, of course, is the thesis of Gunnar Myrdal's two-volume study, An American Dilemma.

27C. Vann Woodward, The Strange Career of Jim Crow (New York: Oxford University Press, 1953, 1957, 1966), pp. 54 & 71.

28Killers of the Dream, p. 27. Elaborating on this theme, Smith wrote: I do not remember how or when, but by the time I had learned that God is love, that Jesus is His Son and came to give us more abundant life, that all men are brothers with a common Father, I also knew that I was better than a Negro, that all black folks have their place and must be kept in it, that sex has its place and must be kept in it, that a terrifying disaster would befall the South if ever I treated the Negro as my social equal and a terrifying disaster would befall my family if ever I were to have a baby outside of marriage. (p. 28).

21Ibid., p. 175.

30Ibid.

31William B. Hesseltine and David Smiley, The South in American History (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1936, 1943, 1960), p. 474.

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