

# The Fallen Idol and Southern Women Writers ( I )

—Katherine Anne Porter's Fictional Women—\*

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Mark Twain once wrote that Cervantes laughed away chivalry from literature and that Sir Walter Scott brought it back. Twain ridiculed this romantic tradition in his works. "Yes, Guenever was beautiful, it is true, but take her all around she was quite slack."<sup>1</sup> *His* Guenever is bifurcated in her function: the one is embodied as the Southern belle, and the other as the black mistress—Roxy in *Pudd' nhead Wilson*. Twain's Virginian gentlemen turn to black women—slaves—for pleasure, while they put their lady on the pedestal and worship her. Twain's attitude toward the chivalric tradition, however, was ambivalent: Colonel Grangerford strikes Huck as the model of a gentleman, very tall, slim, and always clean-shaved. It seems that chivalry remained longer in the South than anywhere else in the States. Basil Ransom in James's *The Bostonians*, who attempts to reinstate the rules of "lady worship" in Boston, comes from the South. To Basil the first of the feminists seemed to be forfeiting their prerogatives in exchange for "equal rights" and in turn they seemed to deprive him of *his* rights.

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\* This is the first of the essays evolving out of an outline presented at the Specialists Conference on "Southern Literary Tradition" held at the Kyoto American Studies Summer Seminar for 1979.

1) Mark Twain, *A Connecticut Yankee at King Arthur's Court* (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin, 1971), p. 241.

The chivalric tradition survived much longer in the South, where European influences dominated the mode of life in that society. Woman was regarded not so much as an individual as a romantic ideal created out of man's imagination, the Southern belle. She is a creature pure, innocent, obedient, and physically weak, who needs the protection of a gentleman. But in reality woman in the Old South had quite an important and fulfilling occupation as manager of a large household and as transmitter of that heritage. Her occupation was gone, as it were, after the end of the Civil War. The collapse of the plantation system and the break-up of the family which had been the center of her life deprived the Southern lady of the *raison d'être* of her life. Like Stella in *A Streetcar Named Desire*, some left home to find a new life elsewhere; many stayed on the decaying plantation to disintegrate like Blanche DeBois, Stella's sister. Caddy Compson becomes a virtual Guenever, both beautiful and slack. She wanders as an outcast, because the South of her time was not prepared for her candid expression of sexuality; promiscuity was associated only with black women. Emily in Faulkner's "A Rose for Emily" is the last of the Southern lady, who turns out to be a murderer and a necrophile. Faulkner's tribute to Emily is both sincere and ironic. In the hands of major (and in this case male) Southern writers, the former lady has become a fallen idol invested with the evil and corruption of the old manner of life in the South. The idol has been humiliated into a bitch, an alcoholic, a neuropath (the deranged wife in Ransom's poem), and a criminal.

At the same time, nostalgia for the vanished chivalry is acutely felt by women of all ranks in their fiction. Thus, Amanda waits for a gentleman caller who never turns up for Laura (*The Glass Menagerie*). The mother's foolish dream prevents Laura from starting a new life. She has been made to feel that just as she is physically crippled she is deficient as woman. It seems that Southern literature has created only female stere-

otypes, whether it is the lady on the pedestal or the fallen idol. Then how does woman fare with Southern women writers—Katherine Anne Porter, Flannery O'Connor, Carson McCullers, or Eudora Welty? This short essay is an exploration on what manner of woman is presented in Katherine Anne Porter's short story sequence—the Miranda cycle in particular.

I

The protagonists in Katherine Anne Porter's stories are mostly women—which is true even of her only novel, *Ship of Fools* (1962)—women who constantly ask who they are and what it means to be woman.<sup>2</sup> Born in 1890 in Indian Creek, Texas, Porter grew up in what she later called "the Old Order." Young Porter was a witness to the romantic view of woman embraced with fervor in the old South, the residuum of which tradition lingered still at the turn of the century in which most of her stories are set. As her biographer Joan Givner observes, Porter shared an idealistic view of her own mother created by her father's sentimental recollection of his wife (Givner 48). Another lasting influence Porter received during her adolescence is that of her grandmother who became after Alice Porter's death young Porter's virtual mother. The grandmother figure in the stories (often without a name) is based on her recollection of her grandmother, a matriarch who supports the household. Naturally, the events and characters in Porter's short story sequence, *The Old Order* ("The Source," "The Old Order," "The Witness," "The Circus," "The Last Leaf," and "The Grave"), and in two novellas ("Old Mortality" and "Pale Horse, Pale Rider") are those of Porter's actual family and her experience. Miranda Gay, an adolescent girl growing up in the South at the turn of the century, functions as her creator's "vessel of consciousness" in the se-

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2) An extensive study on the subject is given in Jane Krause DeMouy's *Katherine Anne Porter's Women: The Eye of Her Fiction* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1983).

quence.

The name Miranda Gay (which means in Hebrew “to be admired”) reminds us of her namesake in Shakespeare’s *The Tempest* who wakes to a “brave new world.” Both heroines illustrate, as Darlene Harbour Unrue points out, the classical tenet from Plato on that wondering is the state preliminary to knowledge (Unrue 49). Miranda’s wonderment at the romance of her deceased Aunt Amy leads to a final realization of the evils and inadequacies inherent in the social system she has been taught to abide. She learns through the years that there is no feminine identity prescribed in Victorian Southern society. Woman is not so much a person as an ornament to be loved, admired, picked up at the marriage market, then put on a pedestal, and become a bearer of children.

The central character in *The Old Order* is not Miranda, however, it is her Grandmother who indeed is an authority figure feared by the people in the household. She undertakes man’s business and in her time “[has] planted five orchards in three states” (“The Source” 4). She is the pillar of the family “with all *the responsibilities of a man* but with *none of the privileges*” (26. My italics). She survives the old order by virtue of her personal strength which verges into aggressiveness. For her grandchildren, “she was the only reality . . . in a world that seemed otherwise without fixed authority or refuge.” Just the same the children “felt that Grandmother was a tyrant, and they wished to be free of her; so they were always pleased when, on a certain day, as a sign that her visit was drawing to an end, she would go out to the pasture and call her old saddle horse, Fiddler” (8). Like her saddle-horse on which she makes her journey between her town house and the households of black tenants, Grandmother represents the order, the stability, and the glory of the past, which now consists of faded pictures, “scraps of the family finery,” and the rolling pin which belongs to *her* great-grandmother, the wife of

"Kentucky's most famous pioneer" ("The Old Order" 11).<sup>3</sup> Miranda's legacy from the old order is the knowledge that woman may be a belle, then a matriarch (like her Grandmother) with an identity which, however, has nothing to do with her intrinsic person and that what is needed to maintain that identity is her ability to restrain and control herself. Miranda's wonderment at Grandmother's life does not, therefore, provide a model for the young girl.

The stories in *The Old Order* are fragments drawn from the past by Grandmother with her conciliatory listener, old Nannie, the black woman who chooses to stay with Grandmother even after the liberation. Thus, the structure of the sequence itself illustrates the collapse and discontinuity of the old order, only remnants of which are remembered in bits and pieces of their anecdotes which constitute *The Old Order*. Now we turn to the two novellas in *Pale Horse, Pale Rider* in which Miranda becomes the central character.

"Old Mortality," the first of the novellas, has artistic autonomy, "a miracle of compression" (Mooney 20). It consists of three parts arranged in chronology: the first is dated 1885–1902; the second, 1904; the last, 1912. The novella traces the growth process of the protagonist from the age of eight to that of eighteen, from mere wonderment to a certain knowledge of herself. At the end of "Old Mortality" Miranda learns that she still has to create her own truth, has to write a prescription thereby to realize her own destiny. The romantic legend of Aunt Amy is after all a delusion and the living legend is merely one among a long procession of "living corpses, festering women stepping gaily toward the charnel house, their corruption concealed under laces and flowers . . ." (174).

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3) "Kentucky's most famous pioneer" is no other than Daniel Boone. Porter herself once told her interviewer that her family descends from Jonathan Boone, the brother of Daniel Boone. See Givner, p. 25.

Her mind closed stubbornly against remembering, not the past but the legend of the past, other people's memory of the past, at which she had spent her life peering in *wonder* like a child at a magic-lantern show. Ah, but there is my own life to come yet, she thought, my own life now and beyond. I don't want any promises, I won't have false hopes, I won't be romantic about myself . . . . At least I can know the truth about what happens to me, she assured herself silently, making a promise to herself, in her hopefulness, her ignorance. (181-182)

The first part of the novella begins with the eight-year old Miranda, like James's Maisie, looking and wondering at the faded picture of "a spirited-looking young woman, with dark curly hair" (107). Aunt Amy sits "forever in the pose of being photographed, a motionless image in her dark walnut frame with her smiling gray eyes following one about the room" (107). The picture gives Miranda an impression of constraint rather than joy and happiness. Here Porter presents the crux of being a lady in the old South. Her spiritedness, recklessness, is restrained within the "dark walnut frame," that is to assume the part expected by the society. The picture rather disturbs Maria and Miranda, even though they cannot fathom the cause of their uneasiness which the image arouses in them. So "quite often they *wondered* why every older person who looked at the picture said, 'How lovely.'" (107. My italics.) The picture does not impress the girls as that of a belle the grown-ups believe her to be. Just the same they share their dreams (if only to please their elders) and crave for the installments of the romance of Aunt Amy and Uncle Gabriel, which more or less shape their childhood.

Less sensible than her sister Maria, Miranda is more susceptible to the romantic ideals expected of the genteel woman in that society. "First, a beauty must be tall; whatever color the eyes the hair must be dark, the

darker the better; the skin must be pale and smooth. Lightness and swiftness of movement were important points. A beauty must be a good dancer, superb on horseback, with a serene manner, an amiable gaiety tempered with dignity at *all hours . . .* ” (112. My Italics.), which is enough to make any one despair of attainment. Such an ideal beauty is mere fiction, a product of idle fancy. A classic parody of such a belle is given in Shakespeare’s sonnet 130 : “. . . I love to hear her speak, yet well I know/ That music hath a far more pleasing sound:/ I grant I never saw a goddess go—/ My mistress, when she walks, treads on the ground./ And yet, by heaven, I think my love as rare/ As any she belied with false compare.” As has been mentioned, the movement of the novella is from wondering toward knowledge synonymous with disillusionment of the romance. As a young girl, however, Miranda entertains a hope that “by some miracle she would grow into a tall, cream-colored brunette, like Cousin Isabel” (112). If Aunt Amy belonged to the world of poetry and romance, Cousin Eva belonged to “their everyday world of dull lessons to be learned” (115), an option neither Maria nor Miranda will choose.

Cousin Eva teaches Latin in a Female Seminary, and she travels making speeches on suffrage, who indeed could be a model for the “new” woman “who was beginning to run wild, asking for the vote, leaving her home and going in the world to earn her own living . . . (“The Old Order” 22). This role of the “new” woman is something no young woman with vestiges of the old order will assume without hesitation. Besides, Porter does not present Cousin Eva as a welcome alternative to Aunt Amy, or to Miranda, because Cousin Eva is far from a liberated woman. Doomed to a single life, she would sit eternally in corners of the world, invisible unlike her mother who “[is] still the belle of the ball” (114). As her hungry looks and “strained and tired eyes” show, she is forever dislocated in society, a self-imposed victim, not a heroic martyr of the cause since she does not

believe in the cause. She hates and curses the old order . She lets it exploit her as well as its favorite, Amy Gay, the Southern belle. Miranda penetrates through the myth of romance and the myth of the “new” woman.

## II

Katherine Anne Porter’s use of the horse and horserace as a controlling metaphor in “Old Mortality” is especially poignant in the second part of the novella. Chivalry associated with the romantic tradition here in question is horsemanship as well as “lady worship.” The word *cheval* in French is a horse, and a *chevalier* is a knight attendant to a lady in the romantic tradition. One of the qualifications required of a belle is her superb horsemanship. She must be light and swift in movement—that is first of all she must be thin, slender, as Miranda’s father boasts: “There were never any fat women in the family, thank God” (108), which sets Miranda wondering as usual. Their Grandmother was thin as a match, and their contemporary cousins are proud of their eighteen-inch waists. But Miranda wonders: what about their great-aunt Eliza or great-aunt Keziah who weighs “two hundred and twenty pounds”? And great-uncle John Jacob says: “my sentiments of *chivalry* are not dead in my bosom; but neither is my common sense” (109. My Italics), which forbids his wife to ride his good horse. Here irony is apparent. For this *chevalier*-gentleman his race horses are more important than female vanity. And he has a point, too, that if his wife had the proper female vanity in the first place, she would never have got into such shape (109). No wonder Aunt Amy looks constrained and restless in the old picture contained within the “dark walnut frame.” Women in the old order have to work hard to keep their shape in order to attain *and* maintain their feminine identity, just as racehorses should be kept in constant training to win the race. Nervous

tension arising from such life necessarily leads to sickness, as Amy's consumption is symptomatic of the unhealthiness inherent in such social mores.

Often the girls are confused about the names of the horses and of their aunts and great-aunts. Miss Lucy which wins the race in New Orleans is mistaken for Miss Honey, Uncle Gabriel's second wife. The aim of Porter's satire is obvious, which is to expose the inhumanity latent in the chivalric tradition and in "lady worship." Women are no better than the race-horses (the slaves for that matter); sometimes the latter are taken better care of as they mean money and fortune. The climax of Miranda's disillusionment takes place at the racetrack, where Miranda and her sister are taken by their father on a holiday and meet Uncle Gabriel, the hero of their family legend. Miranda comes face to face with the reality of the myth long cherished since her childhood.

The great crowd of beautifully dressed ladies and elegant gentlemen and the music bands excite and transport Miranda to the world of romance. It is no mere coincidence that Miranda plans her career as a jockey after she outgrows her dream of becoming a beauty. And it deserves special note here that Miranda unconsciously chooses a career exclusively for men; she will make a career out of an accomplishment for a beauty; she will ride a horse; she won't be run by men. To be sure, this dream of her future dies just as her romantic expectation is cruelly destroyed. The dramatic handling of the scene is superbly executed. Maria and Miranda watch a man coming toward them pushing his way heavily up the steps. They stare, first at him, then at each other.

"Can that be our Uncle Gabriel?" their eyes asked. "Is that Aunt Amy's handsome romantic beau? Is that the man who wrote the poem about our Aunt Amy?" Oh, what did grown-up people *mean* when they talked, anyway? (144)

The chevalier on the shining white horse turns out to be a drunk, and “a shabby fat man with bloodshot blue eyes, sad beaten eyes,” whose language is coarse. After the race they are taken to his place in “a desolate-looking little hotel in Elysian Fields” (150), where everything is “dingy and soiled” (152). The experience is fatal enough to seal the process of Miranda’s unlearning of the romance of Aunt Amy and Uncle Gabriel, which also means the end of her plan to be a jockey.

Looking back, it is only natural that the young “spirited” Amy Gay should know the reality of this gentleman and what it means to be his wife. She tells her mother: “Mammy, I’m sick of this world. I don’t like anything in it. It’s so dull.” And of Gabriel she says: “Gabriel is dull, Mother—he sulks” (130). Furthermore, this handsome romantic gentleman exploits and abuses his property (racehorses) and is disinherited by his grandfather who detects in him “signs of being a wastrel” (120). A true gentleman would never depend upon their horses for livelihood; Uncle Gabriel violates this tacit agreement among gentlemen, as it were. Born a beauty, however, Amy cannot choose the way of her cousin, Eva Parrington. Nor is she ready to endure the taunting all too familiar to women in the old order: “When women haven’t anything else [no beauty], they’ll take a vote for consolation. A pretty thin bed-fellow” (122). Given no other choice, Amy like many women before her marries Uncle Gabriel, well aware of what it means. She chooses death rather than degenerates with her husband, because death is the only means of her liberation as it is for Kate Chopin’s heroine, Edna Pontellier in *The Awakening*.

Thus, Katherine Anne Porter demythologizes “the shining knight on the white horse” as well as “the lady on the pedestal.” As an eight-year old Miranda was shrewd enough to notice the absurdity of the young men in the picture with their “waxed mustaches” and “their waving thick hair

combed carefully over their foreheads.” “Who could have taken them seriously, looking like that?” she wondered. (111)<sup>4</sup>. Miranda’s wonderment which begins with the quaint old picture of a young woman with restless eyes and of the unnatural-looking young men comes full circle in the last part of “Old Mortality,” that is to a knowledge that “she wanted something new of her own” (180). She returns home after a long absence to attend a funeral, where she feels alienated among the old people (= “old mortality” in the story’s title). So she comes home only to leave again on a new journey in search of her own truth. “She did not want any more ties with this house, she was going to leave it, and she was not going back to her husband’s family either. She would have no more *bonds that smothered her in love and hatred . . .* and she was *not going to stay in any place, with anyone . . .*” (180. My italics.) The realization of the reality and of the way the world is, however, is no solution for the eighteen-year-old Miranda. The vacillation between the path of a belle (the traditional female role sanctioned by the old order) and a single life chosen by Cousin Eva will remain with Miranda and with other women protagonists in Porter’s stories.

After her declaration of independence at the end of “Old Mortality,” we encounter Miranda in “Pale Horse, Pale Rider” working as a journalist in a Southwestern city during the World War I. In this fantasy-like novella or “a mood piece” (Mooney 25), Miranda falls a victim to the raging epidemic. “Pale Horse, Pale Rider” depicts Miranda’s direct confrontation with death, her hair-breadth escape from it, and her only experience of “romantic love” which ends unconsummated. Adam (a

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4) Adrienne Rich deflates knighthood in her poem entitled, “The Knight” collected in *Snapshots of a Daughter-in-Law* (1963). Her knight struggles with a heavy burden under the radiant armor. The poet asks: “Who will unhorse this rider/ and free him from between/ the walls of iron, the emblems/ crushing his chest with their weight?”

soldier stationed in a camp near the city) takes care of Miranda, brings her medicine, and helps her to get into hospital, where he contracts influenza and dies of the epidemic while she sleeps unconscious beside him. In this fantasy piece, Adam is portrayed as a true chevalier, who sacrifices his life for his lady. That love means death and that she is the cause of his death haunts Miranda, and the traumatic experience reappears as the nightmare the protagonist dreams in "Flowering Judas" set in Mexico during the revolution. This masterpiece of short fiction does not belong among the so-called Miranda cycle; yet its protagonist is still Miranda Gay under a different name, as DeMouy observes that "the Porter protagonist is, after all, really only one woman" (14).

Laura has no family name (Miranda severs her family ties); she has no fixed place to stay, either. She is a lone professional, teaching English to Mexico Indian children, while she works for Braggioni, a fake revolutionary. Laura receives romantic courtship from Braggioni, who comes to her house almost every night during the month of crisis, "snarling a tune under his breath" (100). Such a gesture on the part of this worldly revolutionist does not mean, however, respect for Laura as an individual, but an expression of his carnal desire for a young attractive woman. Blatantly he confides to Laura: "One woman is really as good as another for me, in the dark" (109). He cannot understand the motive of a woman who participates in revolutionary activities *unless* she has personal interest in some particular revolutionary. "What is the matter with you?" he accuses her, telling her of "the legless beggar woman in the Alameda [who] has a perfectly faithful lover" (110). Laura is immune to emotional involvement of any kind, which is reminiscent of Miranda's promise to dispense with love and hatred in her life. Her dress made of "thick dark cloth" is an indication of the ascetic life she has deliberately chosen. It is true that she is aware of her sexuality which lures men around her; she

enjoys their attention as it satisfies her female vanity. And there remain a few vestiges of such vanity about her person: she is a “wonderful rider”; she decorates her blue serge dress with the round white collar made of delicate handmade lace. Laura suffers, as she admits to herself, from “the disunion between her way of living and her feeling of what life should be” (102). She is under “romantic error” as her comrades tell her; she has not yet cultivated “a developed sense of reality” (101).

Indeed, it requires her an enormous amount of psychic energy and courage to live a life of her own and to assert independence. Therefore, “she is not at home in the world” (107). Laura busies herself with teaching and enjoys it, loving the “tender round hands” and charming savagery of her pupils (107). She runs errands for Braggioni, for which she is abundantly paid, but stoically she remains uncommitted either to politics or to love. “She draws her strength from this one holy talismanic word [No. No. No.] which does not suffer her to be led into evil. Denying everything, she may walk anywhere in safety, she looks at everything without *amazement*” (107. My italics). And her life remains empty, unfulfilled. We recall Miranda who is made to wonder, to be easily amazed. Laura (aged twenty-two) has ceased to be amazed. Naturally, Laura becomes a betrayer of love, of her own life, and of her internal longing. Eugenio’s death of which she dreams in the terrifying nightmare leaves Laura sleepless, even more restless and wretched, the fate Miranda in “her ignorance” foresees at the end of “Old Mortality.”

To conclude this exploration of Katherine Anne Porter’s fictional women, a few words about the woman artist in another story of Porter’s here seems in place. Despite (or because of) its simple plot and its brevity, “Theft” reveals the psychological complexity of the protagonist. The unnamed protagonist (who remains anonymous throughout) comes home to

her apartment on the West Side, New York, on a rainy night; the following morning she discovers the theft of her gold purse. She reclaims it from the janitress who steals it for her niece “who needs pretty things.” For “[s]he’s got young men after her maybe will want to marry her. She oughta have nice things” (74). The protagonist who is an artist of sorts has “had [her] chance” (74). Only her indifference to people as well as to her personal possessions has deprived her of “many valuable things, whether material or intangible” (73). For the first time the young woman misses anything—her gold cloth purse which is a birthday present.

Like Laura in “Flowering Judas,” the unnamed protagonist exercises emotional retention in her relationship with men. They seem to have developed a cynicism that men are undependable, that they are not the faithful knights of the old order. (George fails to claim his bride on the wedding day in “The Jilting of Granny Weatherall,” which spoils the whole of good life Ellen Weatherall has lived despite that one betrayal.) The young woman in “Theft” knows that Camilo who sees her to the station of the Elevated is ready for “a complete set of *smaller courtesies*,” but ignores “the *larger and more troublesome ones*” (68. My italics.) To this dandy his new hat is more worthy of protection than his lady, as it were, just as the good horse is an object of greater importance than his wife’s vanity to Miranda’s great-uncle in Kentucky. If men are not to be trusted, then women must protect and take care of themselves. So Laura wields her holy talisman, “No,” to anyone and to anything, which secures her safety and freedom. Likewise, the artist protagonist of “Theft” lets another love go, tearing the letter she receives into “narrow strips” (72). She quietly suffers “dying friendships and the dark inexplicable death of love . . .” (73). Thus she is spared, as Robert Creeley writes, “the tragedy of human relationship” (“The Immoral Proposition.”) Yet the poignancy of Porter’s story is that the “theft” is not merely that of her lovely purse,

but that she is her own thief of numerous valuable possessions she has missed in her life. And the story's saving grace is that she is painfully aware of what she gains in exchange for the great sacrifice she makes. We now come to a conclusion that to establish selfhood and individual identity (not that of a belle nor of a matriarch) woman must forgo the warmth and comfort of love, home, and family. The resolution Miranda reaches in "her ignorance" at the end of "Old Mortality" is carried out deliberately and staunchly by the woman artist in "Theft," who indeed is every woman.

Born into Southern Victorian society which was disappearing, Katherine Anne Porter gave testimony to the feminine experience she observed at first hand and transmuted it into her art. The author seems to suggest that woman's life in the old order is not rewarding either for the young woman (Amy or Miranda Gay) or for the matriarch (Grandmother or Ellen Weatherall). Her stories are an implicit acknowledgment of the difficulty women face in order to live a truly fulfilling life not only in the old order but in any place and in any time. The conflict Porter's fictional women undergo anticipates the crux of our contemporary women who realize that being a contemporary woman means being torn between a need for love and a mutually exclusive desire for individual identity and assertion of personal ideals and talents.<sup>5</sup>

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5) See DeMouy, p. 15.

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〈要 約〉

〈落ちた偶像〉と南部女性作家（Ⅰ）

— キャサリン・アン・ポーターの女たち —

別 府 恵 子

本稿は、1979年度「京都アメリカ研究夏期セミナー」における「南部文学の伝統」と題する専門家会議（同年7月28・29日開催）にて、口頭発表した「<sup>アウト</sup>概要<sup>ライン</sup>」を基に書き下ろした論考の第一部である。「概要」の主旨はアメリカ南部社会の歴史を通して、理想とされた〈南部貴婦人像＝the Southern Belle〉が、南部文学の伝統（主に男性作家の手による）のなかで如何に描かれてきたか、また、現実社会および文学において類型化されてきた〈南部貴婦人像〉とその実像との落差を南部女性作家たちが如何に捉えているかを考察しようとするものであった。

1979年といえば、当時、キャサリン・アン・ポーターはまだ存命中だったことになる。「概要」では、恣意的に、キャサリン・アン・ポーター、フラナリー・オコナー、そしてカーソン・マッカーズの三人の南部女性作家の名を列挙しておいた。「南部文学の伝統」の専門家会議に出席されていた同夏期セミナーの講師の一人であったノースカロライナ大学教授、ルイス・D・ルビン（Louis D. Rubin）氏は、私の口頭発表した「<sup>アウト</sup>概要<sup>ライン</sup>」を“*You are on the right track*”（「大筋としては正しい方向にいつている」）と評されたと記憶する。キャサリン・アン・ポーターは翌年1980年に他界、その後10年近い歳月が流れ、その間に、本格的なポーター研究書およびジョーン・ギブナー（Joan Givner）の伝記（1982）など相次いで出版されている。当初の「<sup>アウト</sup>概要<sup>ライン</sup>」を基に書いた拙論「ポーターの女たち」では、それらの伝記・研究書を参考にはしたが、構想の大枠およびその主旨はさして変っていない。

今回『女性学評論』に掲載のため最初にキャサリン・アン・ポーターを取り上げたのであるが、これを機会に今後、当時には名を挙げなかったエレン・グラスゴー、ユードラ・ウエルティール、またアン・タイラー、シャーリー・アン・グローなどの作品にみられる〈南部貴婦人像＝the Southern Belle〉の推移を考察出来ればと考えている。