

INTRODUCTION



Caroline Gordon

(1895-1981)

Most writers become important in literary history for one reason: They publish works of literature that meet the highest standards of aesthetic quality, set by the classics. Caroline Gordon is important for *four* reasons: (1) She published nine novels and many short stories that meet the highest standards--greater productivity than all but a half dozen novelists in the canon--with the most comprehensive vision of any American novelist, larger than Melville's, extending from the origin of human consciousness as expressed in archetypes and myths to the afterlife and eternity, from Classicism to Christianity.

(2) Gordon was a leader in the Modernist movement in literary analysis called New Criticism--objective analysis of literature according to aesthetic standards--which began with Ezra Pound and T. S. Eliot. Her three textbooks, along with those by Cleanth Brooks and Robert Penn Warren, changed the way literature was taught throughout the United States. (3) Gordon and Wallace Stegner were the most significantly influential teachers of fiction writing in American literary history, Gordon especially in her editorial advice to Flannery O'Connor. And (4) at the Tate estate in Tennessee, called Benfolly, Gordon was an alternative to Gertrude Stein in Paris, a hostess to many of the major writers of her day, in particular the Southern Agrarians, some of whom lived and wrote in her home for extended periods--Warren, Katherine Anne Porter, Ford Madox Ford, Edmund Wilson, Malcolm Cowley, Andrew Lytle, John Crowe Ransom, Robert Lowell, Jean Shepard, Laura Riding, Sally Wood, Stark Young, Louise Bogan, Evelyn Scott, Josephine Herbst, Howard Baker, Dorothy Baker, John Gould Fletcher, Phelps Putnam, Harold Loeb the model for Robert Cohn in Hemingway's *The Sun Also Rises*, and others.

LITERARY ACHIEVEMENTS

(1) *Penhally* (1931), a metaphor compressing the history of the Old South in the saga of one plantation, is one of the best first novels ever published. Very few first novels are this good. Gordon's first novel did not become popular because, unlike the classic first novels *The Scarlet Letter* and *The Sun Also Rises*, it is

not sexy, sensational, or conventional--it has a daring Impressionistic structure--and because it is one of so many novels about the Old South it was redundant in the North. (2) "The Captive" (1932) is the *best* fiction in the mostly nonfiction genre of Indian Captivity Narratives, which includes fiction by Charles Brockden Brown and James Fenimore Cooper.

(3) *Aleck Maury, Sportsman* (1934), modeled on her father, is a recognized classic that continues to be popular, especially with sportsmen. Through all her fiction, Gordon transcends gender more convincingly, deeply and extensively than any other novelist. The opposite of Feminists unable to transcend gender at all, Gordon wrote a novel, many chapters, and numerous stories from the perspective of a man and another three novels about the psychological problems of modern intellectual males. Gordon is like she describes Tiresias to be in Greek mythology, the seer who has been both a man and a woman: "preeminent among the Greek seers for the reason that he saw further and more clearly than any of his priestly confreres. His vision extended into both the past and the future." (4) *None Shall Look Back* (1937) is among the very best novels in American literature--a greater achievement than the classic Civil War novel *The Red Badge of Courage*. It is one of only 13 American novels containing multiple coinciding allegories. The battle scenes are as powerful as any in Crane or Hemingway. Some male critics said that if her name had not been on the cover, they would not have guessed that the author was a woman. Andrew Lytle said the same of *all* her fiction: "If she did not sign her name, it would be at first hard to know her sex."

(5) *The Garden of Adonis* (1937) is Gordon's variation on major themes and motifs in Eliot's *The Waste Land* (1922), the most influential poem of the 20th century: loss of faith, lack of rain, failure of crops, wasted seed, and the sterility of love affairs that lack deep roots. The garden that withers is a symbol of spiritual death in the modern world and evokes the parable of the sower by Jesus. As exemplified by this title alluding to a Greek myth, Gordon uses the "mythic method," the most prominent technique identified with Modernism, more than any other Modernist, more even than Joyce or Eliot. Gordon's sympathetic portrayal of poor whites is unlike John Steinbeck's Okies in being unsentimental and complex and it is more comprehensive than the depictions of poor whites by Sherwood Anderson and by Faulkner, whose Snopes family is a negative social force. Her fifth novel (6) *Green Centuries* (1941) evokes the continent as it was before the coming of western civilization--"the fresh green breast of the New World" as Fitzgerald put it at the end of *The Great Gatsby*. In American literature the most influential expression of that vision has been by Cooper in his 5-volume saga of Leatherstocking, the idealized frontiersman Natty Bumppo. Set during the American Revolution and based in part on Daniel Boone, the iconic frontiersman and friend of Rion Outlaw the protagonist of *Green Centuries*, Gordon's novel critiques Boone as a model, contrasts reality with Cooper the Romantic and is so fair to the Cherokee enemies of white settlers that some liberal critics have duped themselves into siding with the pagan barbarians who scalp children.

(7) Her next three novels constitute a trilogy on marriage and contemporary relations between the genders in the context of Christianity, with continuing themes and settings and similar characters--mainly "sick intellectuals" living in New York City--in which Gordon proves herself to be the wisest analyst of marriage in American literature. All three novels are masterpieces. *The Women on the Porch* (1944) is a response to the Feminist movement against marriage in which the wife of a sick intellectual is betrayed, but is able both to attain equality and to save her marriage. In this novel Gordon boldly enlarges her vision to include the paranormal--ghosts, spirits, or "presences." (8) *The Strange Children* (1951) makes the most effective use of a child as a central intelligence since *What Maisie Knew* (1897) by Henry James, casts a prominent male critic modeled in particular on Edmund Wilson as the villain, and ends with the father, modeled in part on Gordon's husband, poet/critic Allen Tate, suffering like T. S. Eliot from "dissociation of sensibility"--lack of soul. (9) *The Malefactors* (1956) is the best novel of religious conversion in American literature and an affirmation of agrarian values, humility and charity.

(10) *The Glory of Hera* (1972) is one of the most significant intellectual achievements in American literary history, another one of only 13 American novels containing multiple coinciding allegories: (a) The ancient Greek deities and myths correspond to archetypal characteristics of human beings; (b) the story of the self-sacrificial pagan hero Heracles in many ways parallels and prefigures the story of Jesus Christ; (c) the progression of Heracles corresponds in general to the progression from pagan barbarism to Christianity; (d) the psychological changes in Heracles correspond to both the stages of the individuation process in an individual as defined by Carl Jung and to the collective spiritual development of western civilization.

Gordon's vision is larger than Melville's, extending from the archetypal conscious mind to the plan of God. Gordon, Hawthorne and Faulkner are the only American novelists to write *two* novels containing multiple coinciding allegories. Similarly, only a few fiction writers have been able to make their final narrative a comprehensive summation weaving major themes from their various works together into a single unity, a grand finale and last testament--evidence of psychological wholeness, integrity of vision and intellectual mastery of the highest order: *Billy Budd* by Melville, *The Golden Bowl* by James, *The Old Man and the Sea* by Hemingway, *A Fable* by Faulkner, *Ship of Fools* by Porter, *The Violent Bear It Away* by O'Connor, and *The Glory of Hera*. All of these are clearly about Christ in one way or another, if the golden bowl is seen to evoke the Holy Grail.

(11) Gordon is also one of the best short story writers in world literature. All her short stories are of the highest quality and some are among the best stories ever written, most notably "Old Red," "The Enemies," "The Long Day," "Hear the Nightingale Sing," "The Forest of the South," "The Ice House," "The Captive," "The Olive Garden," and "Emmanuele! Emmanuele!" (12) As a leader in the New Criticism movement that revolutionized the teaching of literature in the United States, Gordon published more influential literary criticism than any other American novelist--becoming more widely influential a critic than Henry James: *The House of Fiction* (1950), an anthology with commentaries edited with her husband the poet Allen Tate, became a standard text throughout the United States; *How to Read a Novel* (1957); and *A Good Soldier: A Key to the Novels of Ford Madox Ford* (1963).

BIOGRAPHY

Caroline Gordon was born in 1895 at Merry Mont farm near Trenton in Kentucky, close to the border with Tennessee where after 1930 she lived with her husband Allan Tate and their daughter Nancy at the Benfolly farm. Appropriately, given her literary similarity to him as a Christian allegorist, Merry Mont had been named after "The Maypole of Merry Mount," the most comprehensive tale by Hawthorne. This region is the setting for many of Gordon's short stories and novels. Her mother's ancestors, the Meriwethers, came to Kentucky from Virginia in the 18th century, where they acquired thousands of acres of fertile land. The most illustrious member of the family was Meriwether Lewis, the secretary of Thomas Jefferson selected by him to lead the expedition that explored the West in 1804-6.

PARENTS

Decades later, Gordon's father, James Morris Gordon, the Aleck Maury of her fiction, came to Kentucky in the 1880s as a tutor for the Meriwethers. One of his ancestors was a delegate to the Virginia convention of 1788 that ratified the federal constitution and another, Caroline's great-grandfather William Fitzhugh Gordon, had a career in Congress and was a general in the War of 1812. Her father married one of his students, Nancy Meriwether, a girl described as bookish, judgmental, religious, and aloof.

At an early age, Gordon sensed that her mother did not love her--in fact, did not even like her. "Mother is the sort of person with whom no one can have a satisfactory relationship." "She is medieval in spirit. Her ratiocinative processes are those of the schoolmen of the Middle Ages." By the age of 4 Gordon had suicidal feelings. She turned to her father and at age 10 began attending his all-boys school in Clarksville, Tennessee, which emphasized the classics. "My likeness to my father--the qualities I inherited from him, which were the qualities that saved me, were too much for my mother. She had enough of that sort of thing in him and yet she was too deeply committed to him to turn against him so she took it out on me." Gordon's close study of the ancient Greek classics and mythology provided the intellectual foundation for her writing. Also, as the only girl among all the boys, she had a unique exposure to males. Later, in her teens, she attended public school in Ohio and in 1916 she graduated from Bethany College in West Virginia, where she later said she learned to write fiction while studying Greek.

In photographs she is usually standing apart, or on the fringe, or in the back row of whatever group she is in, which is consistent with her detachment in narration, her Modernist inclination to understatement, her theme of self-sacrifice as the supreme virtue, and her humility as a Christian. To all that must be added her feeling rejected by her mother, feeling that she was not pretty, and feeling inferior to Allen. Later, she was treated as an outsider by her house guests the male Agrarians, marginalized in the publishing industry, and

finally, stereotyped and censored by Feminists. She taught in a high school for three years, then became a reporter for the *Chattanooga News* from 1920 to 1924 and began to write a novel, *Darkling I Listen*. "[My] ultimate purpose [is] the writing of prose which shall be personal and American and yet derived from classical models." Her high standards led to a nervous breakdown. She finished the novel in a state of depression but later destroyed it unpublished.

GREENWICH VILLAGE

In 1924, like so many aspiring writers, Gordon moved to Greenwich Village in New York City. She had reviewed the southern Fugitive poets and became acquainted with the Agrarians--poets rebelling against the Romanticism and sentimentality of the Southern literary heritage. She soon got pregnant by the handsome young poet Allen Tate. Their attraction was instantaneous and passionate. "Women, of course, are always on the look-out for heroes," she said once. At first she refused to marry him because she was proud and jealous and knew he was "a ladies' man"--almost irresistibly charming. Tate did not want to get married either. But when they first met, in 1923, "I saw her in the driveway. She was the prettiest girl I ever saw and I pissed in my pants." Then he heard a voice saying, "She can save me." In 1925, for the sake of the child, they agreed to a temporary union that instead lasted for over 30 years.

ALLEN TATE

Tate is a major poet, critic, scholar and biographer whose one novel is very good. He was a great asset to Gordon in many ways both personal and professional, and often very generous, but he was also a serial adulterer who warned her, "Don't ask so much of me, or I will continue to seek other women who will ask less." Gordon said "I'd have done better if I hadn't been so absorbed in my own work. But Allen's mother looms larger in the picture. She so tortured him when he was a child that he is literally afraid to commit himself to any woman." "...committing himself wholly to me would be a kind of self-relinquishment." Tate got drunk a lot and lied all the time, embarrassed her and demeaned her intelligence compared to his: "You are more gifted but less intelligent."

Their quarreling led to divorce in 1945, but their love for each other compelled them to remarry in 1946, only to separate in 1947 and divorce again in 1959. According to biographer Ann Waldron, "The divorce and Allen's remarriage almost destroyed Caroline." Her friends agreed that divorce from Allen was the tragedy of her life. She said, "I, of course, am like a person who's had both legs cut off but will probably learn to get around quite spryly on crutches." "A human soul can triumph by embracing its destiny, however grim that destiny may be." "My opinion of Allen is that he is the most wonderful man I have ever known but that he is a bit crazy."

In her art and her criticism Gordon took stands and never backed down, whereas in her life with Tate she nearly always backed down when necessary to preserve her marriage--but not without fighting back when betrayed: "The psychologists say that when a person is frightened it's 'fight or flight.' I don't flee but I am too quick to fight. If I had enough faith I wouldn't feel that I had to fight. I wouldn't feel menaced." "I think that if I could learn not to get angry no matter what happened our life would be different," she wrote to Allen. "And if you could forgo deception at the same time I was forgoing anger we'd probably be as happy as any two people could be." "My difficulty was the doubt that you loved me, but that came from a feeling of inferiority I have toward you." "It's a wonder that we've lasted this long." "It's really been fine while it lasted."

ARTISTS IN POVERTY

During the 1920s in Greenwich Village they often had others living with them who needed help, including the reckless homosexual and alcoholic poet Hart Crane, until he became impossible, portrayed as Horne Watts in *The Malefactors*. During this period Gordon formed relationships with literary figures such as the critic Malcolm Cowley, who said that "Caroline, Katherine Anne Porter and Josephine Herbst were the three talkingest women in New York." The Tates were so poor that Allen worked as a janitor to pay their rent and Caroline considered writing potboilers. Eventually, they had to let her mother take Nancy until they could make enough money to feed her. Gordon said "I tried to console myself by reflecting that if Nancy had stayed with us she might have starved to death."

FORD MADOX FORD

In 1926 Gordon was hired by the great British novelist Ford Madox Ford to be his secretary. Ford the Modernist became her mentor. She called him her "Master" and "the best craftsman of his day." He insisted that she show him her fiction in progress, then coaxed her along with encouragement, took her dictation and taught her techniques of Impressionism she used in her first novel *Penhally* (1931) and throughout her career. When he tried to kiss her in a Paris church, as he was known to do to attractive women, proposing marriage although both were already married, Gordon laughed and refused to take it seriously. They remained close friends and she published a study guide to his novels in 1963.

PARIS

When he won a Guggenheim Fellowship, the Tates joined the expatriate movement of American artists, lived briefly at Oxford and met T. S. Eliot, then went to Paris and lived abroad from 1928 to 1930. Ford Madox Ford lent the Tates his apartment in Paris rent-free in exchange for Gordon retyping a five-hundred page manuscript for him. Tate later said, "I was about to plunge into the French experience which young Americans in the twenties thought they must have or remain provincials." They spent time in the cafes frequented by the expatriates, became acquainted with the Fitzgeralds, got to know Hemingway and made the obligatory visit to Gertrude Stein, though Gordon had contempt for the narcissism of Stein and, sharing the opinion of her friend Porter, thought the Left Bank was merely "a sort of super-Greenwich Village. They actually appall." In 1929 the major critic/poet Yvor Winters published "Summer Dust," her first short story, and then published "The Long Day" as well. "Summer Dust" was selected for *The Best Short Stories of 1930*, "The Long Day" was reprinted in *Scribner's* magazine and the legendary editor of Fitzgerald and Hemingway, Maxwell Perkins, asked to see more of her stories.

BENFOLLY

Tate's rich brother Ben gave the Tates a farm in 1930, with a colonial house on a bluff overlooking the Cumberland River near Clarksville, Tennessee, later the primary setting of *The Strange Children*, her most obviously autobiographical novel. The gift was Ben's folly because he could have made money if he had rented the land to tenant farmers instead. "It is really funny," Gordon said. "Here we are, absolutely broke, even broker than usual, in a magnificent house." She used the place generously as a hostess for other writers, in particular for the male southern Agrarians, friends and associates of Tate: Robert Penn Warren, John Crowe Ransom, Andrew Lytle, and others. "I've done the cooking for six or eight people all summer besides writing the novel. Have a negro girl who washes dishes but can't clean up because there is somebody writing a book in every room in the house." "The business of cooking three meals a day, churning and so on is too much for me. I am so exhausted by afternoon that I have to get in bed and stay for hours and I can't think of a word to write." "Nobody ever thought of not having people staying in the house when I was at a crucial state in a book. And that was the way I wanted it--*trying to do something that was impossible.*" [Italics added.]

In response to a proposal by Yvor Winters, she helped organize a "Boosting Katherine Anne Porter campaign" with Winters, writing letters on Porter's behalf to other writers and to critics including Edmund Wilson, which launched Porter's career. The poet Robert Lowell came to sit at the feet of Tate and camped in a tent on their lawn. Gordon agreed with the agrarian values of the all-male Agrarians but thought their political program, expressed in the famous anthology of essays *I'll Take My Stand* (1930), was too theoretical and impractical. In her writings she implicitly disagreed with them. She even teased Allen--taking her own stand. "None of the others will listen to me, I being a mere woman and not admitted to the councils and God knows I won't want to be in on them." Ironically, she was the truest agrarian among them: "Allen is yelling at me to go to town. I've learned to drive." "I never want to live in town again." "I'm not at all an urban person, you see. I love to have space around me, and I love to dig in the dirt and walk in the woods." "Daisy Miller, our Jersey cow grazes on the lawn and duly scatters manure which I pick up on a dust pan and place carefully around the petunias."

Gordon published "The Captive" in 1932 and won a Guggenheim Fellowship. In 1934 she published *Aleck Maury*, *Sportsman* and her most famous story "Old Red" won second prize in the annual O. Henry

short story contest. In 1937 she published *two* novels. Unfortunately, the first, *None Shall Look Back*, one of the very best novels in American literature, a greater achievement than *The Red Badge of Courage*, was overshadowed in the marketplace by the sensationally popular Civil War romance novel *Gone with the Wind* published the year before, and has never been properly recognized. The second novel, *The Garden of Adonis*, got shot down before it could take off.

LIBERAL SABOTAGE

Liberal male editors of *The New York Times Book Review* sabotaged *The Garden of Adonis* by assigning a Feminist to review it, a mystery writer named Augusta Tucker. Years after he died, editors of *The Times* admitted they had tried deliberately to destroy the reputation of Wallace Stegner, the major Realist in the 20th century and a conservative like Gordon, both of whom were considered political enemies by New York leftists. Tucker's subjectivity is evident in her description of the conservative rural characters as "boring," by the condescending tone of her insult that Gordon is "best at old men"--as in deplorable old white males beneath the interest of progressive women like herself--and most of all in her assertion that the characters did not "come to life." Since Feminists do not consider men convincing in real life, it is to be expected that they would not find them convincing in a novel.

Feminists are resistant readers. Males are dead to them already and so are conservative women writers. When they say that characters did not come to life they are confessing to their own lack of empathy and imagination. As Gordon said, "The reader who demands that his own moral code shall not be infringed upon, or his feelings lacerated by any unpleasant happenings in any book he reads, is actually demanding that the emotions aroused in him by the reading of any work of art shall not overflow into real life." "When we are tempted to censure an author because the characters in his novels do not adhere to our own code of morals we ought to remind ourselves that some of the greatest heroes of fiction--indeed of myth and legend--trespassed against the accepted code of their day."

PRINCETON

Tate joined the faculty at Princeton from 1939 to 1942, where his objective New Criticism focused on aesthetics set him at odds with most English professors, who were teaching literature from an historical perspective, focused on contexts rather than texts. "The older professors were hostile to the New Criticism, for which Allen was an advocate, and Allen was contemptuous of them and their historical criticism." "The worship of mediocrity is almost a religion in Princeton," Gordon said. Throughout her career, some of her critics were offended by her outspoken husband and some were influenced in evaluating her work by their resistance to the New Criticism both Tates were promoting. As she saw it, her critics were divided into two camps, Allen's friends and Allen's enemies. The Tates were Southerners among Yankees, agrarians among urbanites, conservatives among liberals, New Critics among Old Critics. Marriage to Tate was both a blessing and a curse for Gordon, as was her illustrious editor Max Perkins, though despite her suffering she undoubtedly considered both relationships worth the price. Princeton became the closest she had to a home place, within commuting distance from teaching and editorial jobs in New York City.

ACADEMIC NOMADS

During the 1940s, despite her having written several masterpieces, Tate's reputation skyrocketed while Gordon's declined. Women were not allowed to teach English at Princeton and she felt reduced to a faculty wife. *Green Centuries* was published in 1941 but her publisher did not promote it: "It seems to me that ten days after it was out Scribner's had forgotten they had published *Green Centuries*.... My book was a complete failure, financially, didn't even pay back its advance... It was poor timing, of course--people are tired of pioneer stories." *None Shall Look Back* was largely forgotten and never got established as the great novel it is. Tate was appointed poetry consultant at the Library of Congress and the Tates lived in Washington D.C. from September 1943 to June 1944. Tate then became the Editor of the *Sewanee Review* and between 1946 and 1951 Gordon lived part of the time with him in Sewanee, Tennessee and part of the time in Princeton where their daughter was living.

Gordon was adventurous and loved traveling to new places at the same time that she longed for a permanent home, lamenting in a poem: "Twas ever thus from childhood's hour / I've seen my fondest hopes decay / I never loved a tree or flower / But when it got ready to bloom / I had to go away." "My longing to have ground under my feet represents that most feminine side of my nature, a side which has been dangerously suppressed and frustrated by our wandering lives."

TEACHING

During the 1940s and several times thereafter she taught a workshop in techniques of fiction at Columbia in New York. With Tate she edited *The House of Fiction* in 1950, the large anthology with commentaries illustrating New Criticism that became standard around the country in many courses on fiction and fiction writing. Along with a textbook on poetry by Cleanth Brooks and Robert Penn Warren, Gordon and Tate revolutionized the teaching of literature throughout the United States. In 1951 Tate joined the faculty at the University of Minnesota. After that the Tates lived in Minneapolis much of the time and Gordon served as writer-in-residence, advised young writers, lectured at writers conferences and taught courses in fiction, creative writing and mythology at colleges and universities around the country including the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, College of St. Catherine, Purdue, Emory, Notre Dame, The New School, City College of New York, the University of Kansas, the University of Washington, and the University of California at Davis. At the age of 78, she moved to Texas and taught at the University of Dallas, a Catholic institution that she loved.

Just as she had the highest standards in her writing, Gordon had the highest standards in her teaching. She could recite whole passages of Flaubert and Joyce from memory. She expected a lot and she gave a lot. She was extremely generous in response to requests for advice from fiction writers. When Walker Percy asked for guidance on his first novel, she replied with a 30-page single-spaced letter full of suggestions for revision. As a rule English professors write short notes on student papers, at most a page or two, depending on the size of a class. Gordon's comments on student papers routinely ran to 20-30 pages in length and sometimes even ran as long as 50 pages. "Teaching does take it out of you, if you take it seriously," she said, "and I can't seem to take it any other way."

MENTOR TO O'CONNOR

"For Flannery O'Connor, Caroline Gordon was an indispensable critic. Gordon not only read O'Connor's manuscripts and suggested revisions but, after publication, also reviewed her books and explicated them in numerous essays. O'Connor's letters show how extensive was Gordon's help. After Gordon provided her with many valuable revisions for *Wise Blood*, O'Connor habitually sent all of her work to Caroline Gordon: "Whenever I finish a story I send it to Caroline before I consider myself really through with it. She's taught me more than anybody"....

To improve *Wise Blood*, she urged stronger active verbs, appropriate diction for the omniscient narrator, more details to make a given scene or character vivid, and she recommended interspersing a character's speech with descriptions of the listener's response.... Her practical advice is consonant with the principles she delineates in *The House of Fiction* and later in *How to Read a Novel*. To evoke the physicality of a scene or a character, Gordon recommended Flaubert's technique of giving the reader at least three sensuous details, advice that Flannery O'Connor later echoes in her own critical writings. For greater unity and clarity, Gordon suggested that O'Connor better prepare the reader for the meaning of the title, that she reinforce the significance of certain actions by repeating them but in a slightly different way, and that she make a scene more vivid by moving outside it, using a description of landscape, for example, to contrast with the action. So valuable were Gordon's letters that Flannery O'Connor eventually mailed them to her friend 'A' so that another aspiring writer could benefit from them."

Rose Ann C. Fraistat
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CONVERSION

The most controversial issue in Gordon criticism is her conversion to Catholicism in 1947. There were precedents for religious conversion among the most distinguished Modernists. The most famous is T. S. Eliot's eventual conversion to Anglo-Catholicism. Wallace Stevens wrote all his poems as an atheist, then six months before his death he converted to Catholicism. Critics have differed over *when* Gordon became so religious, only one of them recognizing the Christian allegory in "The Captive" (1932). Her supreme theme is heroic self-sacrifice, which is epitomized in Christ. Her own cross to bear was her deceitful, unfaithful husband. She was a Christian all along, it just took awhile to commit herself to the specifics of theology and practice involved in being a Catholic.

As she said, "The writing of [serious] fiction is in essence a religious act. We are moved to imitate our Creator, to do as he did, and create a world." "I have come to believe that there is only [one] plot (the scheme of Redemption) and that any short story, or novel, any fiction (detective story, folk tale, any story anywhere at any time) is a splinter, so to speak, of that plot--if it's good." She believed that her major innovation was to restore religious experience to literary fiction, to "Lift us from the natural level to the supernatural." Throughout her life she wrote according to her belief that "An artist's first duty is the same as any other man's--to serve, praise and worship God."

JUNGIAN ANALYSIS

In 1954 while she was living with Tate in Rome, Gordon sought help in understanding her marriage by consulting a Jungian psychiatrist, Dr. Dora Bernhard, who saw her in Jungian terms as a "feeling-intuition type." They discussed archetypes and the collective unconscious and analyzed Gordon's dreams, in one of which she saw herself standing by Allen, who was seated on a throne. Gordon decided that "I should rely more on ["my instinctual nature"] instead of identifying myself so with Allen and trying to do everything the way he wants it done." In another dream Allen--her "animus"--discouraged her from joining the procession following Jesus astride a donkey on his way into Jerusalem. Gordon came to believe that "The only way to get in touch with the unconscious is through the dream which gives the only accurate report of what is going on." She included dreams in her novels with increasing frequency. "The action takes place on the frontiers of the archetypal conscious mind." [*The Origins and History of Consciousness* by Erich Neumann is] about the best book I ever read, next to Holy Writ."

Dr. Bernhard believed that Caroline had saved herself by distancing herself from her mother and developing the talents she inherited from her father, but in doing so she had suppressed the feminine side of her nature. She needed to forgive her mother and not depend so much on Allen. To her friends, Gordon called Dr. Bernhard "a real 'new critic'" of dreams. "Meeting this woman, at least becoming acquainted with the Jungian technique is the most tremendous experience of my life, next to falling in love and being converted, and of a piece with both." "[Jung is] much more interesting than Freud because...he believes that the archetype is operating right now." "Trouble with Freud he never got around to but one myth."

As a Jungian, Gordon could not have been pleased when her daughter Nancy married a Freudian psychiatrist: "Everything goes into the Freudian meat-grinder to emerge as pap suitable to be fed to invalids." Nancy later had a nervous breakdown over her husband's Freudianism, especially as applied to men, her father in particular, complaining, "Mama, I'm sick of penis envy...and latent homosexuality, too.... With the castration complex a man can have his way about everything in this life." Dr. Bernhard also treated Allen and said, contradicting his view of himself as more intelligent than Caroline, that she was "more intelligent and more clever than her husband."

THE MALEFACTORS

Gordon took a stand for her faith and published *The Malefactors* in 1956, the best novel of religious conversion in American literature. Allen Tate was correct in calling it a masterpiece equal to the writing of Virginia Woolf. Some of the characters are clearly modeled on real people including the Tates, in particular the homosexual poet Hart Crane and the religious philanthropist Dorothy Day, which provoked some critics into seeing themselves as targets, as among the "sick intellectuals" in New York. Most of the critics were

secularists who disliked implicit criticism of their morals. When a friend wrote Gordon a letter criticizing the novel, Allen intercepted and destroyed it to save her pain. On the other hand, her friend the French philosopher Jacques Maritain at Princeton wrote her praising the novel highly, understanding that the characters are metaphorical figures that transcend literal individuals.

Only a few reviewers praised the novel. Arthur Mizener managed to get a review in *The New York Times Book Review* saying the novel was a work of "great intelligence" and lamenting the neglect of all her novels. In the *New Republic* Vivienne Koch called Gordon "the best woman novelist we have in this country at this time" and described *The Malefactors* as a "profoundly conceived, incandescent story." The poor reviews hurt Gordon deeply: "I am going through a strange and terrible time. A certain enthusiasm, a kind of vigorous response to life which I held on to through all sorts of trials has left me. I can hardly face each day. I long only for the night."

When she published *How to Read a Novel* in 1957, she hoped that with the proper publicity from the publisher, Viking, it would be a success. If it failed, she thought "the bright boys will take over my ideas and in a few years they will be in literary circulation, uncredited to me, of course." This is precisely what happened. Gordon usually got no credit for leading the movement to New Criticism. Feminists opposed her for it. Viking did not publicize the book at all and the worst reviews were patronizing dismissals by critics with their own ideas of how to read a novel. Still worse, Allen filed for divorce and Malcolm Cowley sided with Allen. Gordon began to think that Allen had turned all their friends and even their daughter Nancy against her. He soon married Isabella Gardner, a fellow poet.

In near despair Gordon increased her praying, began to study St. Theresa of Avila, and planned to retreat into charity work as a lay member of the Carmelite order. Like Melville she would give up writing fiction because she could not please enough readers, and because she felt crushed by Allen. But then, after all, Gordon was too resilient and dedicated--too heroic--to give up. She had manuscripts she wanted to finish and she must have been encouraged to keep working by the success of *The House of Fiction*, which had become a standard textbook used throughout the country, so profitable that Scribner's reprinted it in 1960. The University of California published her study of Ford Madox Ford in 1963.

BIAS OF PUBLISHER

As a novelist Gordon was often compared to Faulkner, which made her a rival among the competing reputations of major figures. She was lucky to have as her editor Max Perkins at Scribner's, considered the greatest editor of all time, the editor of Hemingway, Fitzgerald, and Thomas Wolfe. However, that good fortune was also a handicap in that Perkins like Cowley had an investment in the big names. This prejudice against her was commercial more than a matter of her gender, since the big names were making Scribner's a lot of money, while Gordon was barely making it. She had to sell or sink. Ad budgets were determined by past and projected sales. "I always seem to fall into the troughs made by these leviathans like Ernest--and Margaret [Mitchell]." Gordon took a stand for her art and never compromised in order to sell more books. "My books have never sold and doubtless never will--at least in my lifetime."

Perkins invested in Gordon for the quality and potential of her writing by remaining her editor but not by publicizing her. His editorial suggestions "were damn good" and he was also "the only publishing person I ever met whom you could talk to like a human being." But Gordon wrote too well to require editing, which is what Perkins most loved to do. "He wasn't terribly interested in my work. He liked other people like Tom Wolfe or Marcia Davenport. They gave him an opportunity to exercise his extraordinary talent." Perkins excelled at editing for the common reader, but despite editing Hemingway, Fitzgerald and Wolfe, Max Perkins was not a very good judge of overall literary quality, or else he subordinated quality to popular taste, as demonstrated by his shocking rejection for *Scribner's* magazine of such great short stories as Gordon's "The Ice House" and "The Captive" and Porter's "Theft" and even "Flowering Judas"--one of the most anthologized stories in history.

Gordon became so disappointed in Perkins that she finally decided that "Scribner's is no market for my stories." Perkins was by then in failing health and in 1950 Scribner's switched her to a different editor. In 1953 Scribner's sold the paperback rights to *Green Centuries* to Bantam. Thereafter, however, Scribner's

refused other offers to reissue some of her stories and novels in paperback editions, without consulting her. Always without an agent, on her own Gordon eventually made book deals with Harcourt, Brace; Viking; Doubleday; Farrar, Straus and Giroux; and the University of California.

Charles Scribner, Jr. inherited the once-great company and mismanaged it into collapse. He had no respect for his authors nor for the great literature his company had published--no respect for Gordon, nor even for Hemingway. In 1962 Gordon asked him to return her copyrights since he had let all her books go out of print, but he refused. He had sold reprint rights to some of her short stories for a dollar and a half and had given away rights to others for nothing. In 1971, without informing Gordon, he sold all rights to her first seven novels and one collection of her short stories for sixteen hundred dollars. All she could say to people was that the president of Scribner's "sold me down the river."

The changing of publishers made her books harder to order and caused problems with later reprintings. When he got even more desperate for money, Charles Scribner, Jr. hired two Feminist editors who censored and stole Hemingway's last novel manuscript, *The Garden of Eden* (1986). They had it completely rewritten by an illiterate editor who disliked Hemingway. They cut most of the manuscript, changed what remained into sexy trash to make it sell better, and made additions that reversed meanings and reinforced their false Feminist stereotype of Hemingway.

MALE PREJUDICE

Male prejudice against women writers was provoked by women. Women dictated taste and criteria in publishing from the beginning of American fiction in 1797 through the Civil War, mainly because they were up to 80 percent of the readers. Their value system, the political correctness of that day, was called Victorianism because their role model was Queen Victoria. Their domination of American literature was called the "genteel tradition," an expression of sentimental bourgeois Romanticism. Victorian ladies were just as censorious, though not as fascist, as Feminists were to be at the end of the 20th century. Twain was so Victorian he allowed his wife to censor parts of the original *Huckleberry Finn*. By the end of the 19th century serious fiction writers refused to be censored anymore. They resented the tyranny of Victorians and started the Realist movement led by Twain, James, and Howells--mostly men but also the best women writers, namely Freeman, Chopin and Wharton.

Male critics reflexively identified women writers in general with the prevailing taste of women, which had made great financial successes out of mediocre Victorian women novelists while males including Hawthorne and Melville had struggled to survive. It was easy for males to see excellent women local colorists like Mary Wilkins Freeman as merely "regionalists" writing in a minor genre. Chopin's *The Awakening* (1899) got condemned by Victorians of both genders and disappeared, then got rediscovered by male New Critics. Some male critics regarded Edith Wharton as a lower quality imitation of Henry James, but she was considered the greatest living American novelist in 1925, before the Modernist movement made her look dated. Willa Cather emerged as obviously a great novelist, but males turned against her after her novel *One of Ours* seemed to affirm World War I, whereas Hemingway, Dos Passos, Cummings and other male writers who were actually in the war depicted its wasteful horrors as resulting from political corruption and greed. Cather was being patriotic and dramatizing the idealism of a naive young American soldier, but male critics saw this as poor judgment that reflected on the quality of her vision. Later in the century John Steinbeck suffered a similar fate after he supported the war in Vietnam.

Caroline Gordon was a victim of male condescension in the aftermath of Victorianism. Her husband was a Southern traditionalist with an aristocratic sensibility who belittled her intelligence. At that time the two most influential critics in the country, Edmund Wilson and Malcolm Cowley, were friends and occasional guests of the Tates, though both were leftist New York intellectuals who felt superior to them. Wilson is satirized as Tubby in *The Strange Children*, after he repaid the hospitality of Gordon by refusing to review her writing. Cowley confessed to male prejudice in an interview after Gordon died: "You have to get the admission of an aged fellow that I was a little bit anti-feminist at that time. That is, in our discussions we were the boys. The boys always got together and the girls weren't asked to join them." "Caroline was writing unpublished novels that 'we' didn't read. Later she felt--and rightly, in part--that she was a victim of

sexual discrimination." Note that Gordon was ignored for being a "feminist," whereas later in the century she was ignored for *not* being a Feminist. [Italics added.]

Gordon treated Cowley as a friend and must have been deeply hurt by his failure to even mention her in any of his many books. Cowley advanced his own career by promoting the writers who were big names and friends besides--Hemingway and Faulkner in particular. She said of Wilson, "I have come to realize that he literally does not know how to read fiction," and of Cowley "that he just did not know how to take hold of any of the writers he was discussing," that he could not "grapple with the book itself." After taking a stand, she eventually forgave both men and resumed friendships with them on her own terms, telling a friend that in regard to Wilson, "I found that I hadn't the slightest interest in what he thinks of my work."

HIGH PRAISE

Despite the prejudice of some editors and critics, Gordon was highly praised by leading fiction writers including Katherine Anne Porter, Ford Madox Ford, Flannery O'Connor, Robert Penn Warren, Andrew Lytle, Peter Taylor, Walker Percy, and Stark Young and by male scholars including Mark Van Doren, Yvor Winters, Donald E. Stanford, Robert Heilman, Arthur Mizener, Hugh C. Holman, Willard Thorp, Howard Baker, Robert Gorham Davis, Jacques Maritain, Herbert Read, Paul Engle, R. V. Cassill, John Hall Wheelock, Francis Fergusson, Ashley Brown, and William Peden. Women among the discerning analysts of Gordon's fiction include Louise Cowan, Jane Gibson Brown, Vivienne Koch, Janet Lewis and Rose Ann C. Fraistat in *Caroline Gordon as Novelist and Woman of Letters* (1984). Lewis wrote that Gordon "knows as much about the art of the novel and the practice of prose fiction as anyone living."

Nine stories by Caroline Gordon are listed in *Short Fiction Criticism* (1960); her entry in *The Reader's Encyclopedia of American Literature* (1963) lists *all* her books with brief comments; the canonical *Literary History of the United States* (1963) lists *all* her books with longer commentary; Frederick J. Hoffman compares her to Faulkner in *The Modern Novel in America* (1963) as does Walter Allen in *The Modern Novel* (1965). Men have published over twice as many articles on Gordon as women, including the only collection of critical essays on her short stories, in 1972. One of the mostly reliable books analyzing her fiction is *Caroline Gordon* (1972) by William J. Stuckey.

FEMINIST STEREOTYPE

The best critics have recognized that, contrary to the dogmatic Feminists who destroyed her reputation, Gordon did *not* relegate most women to subservient roles in "The Patriarchy." She portrays a great diversity of women in a wide variety of roles, from the heroic young mother captured by Indians in "The Captive" (1932) to the formidable goddess Hera (1972). At the end of her first novel the most powerful character is the socialite Joan Parrish who acquires the plantation Penhally. At the end of *None Shall Look Back* many women are managing families and properties in the South because so many men have been killed in the Civil War. At the end of *The Women on the Porch* Catherine has her repentant husband on his knees kissing her foot. A number of Gordon's women, including Susan Allard, Cassy Outlaw and Vera Claiborne are Christ-evoking and many others too are saviors of men, whereas Feminists are declared enemies of men. Gordon said "I have been inundated by advice from women all my life. It boils down to two pieces of advice: 1. Stop writing fiction. 2. Be just like me."

GORDON ON READERS

In reference to other writers, Gordon wrote that "Every masterpiece demands collaboration from the beholder"; "Allen says 'If you write a book which is an innovation both in subject matter and form you must expect to be attacked,' and I did expect--not to be attacked so viciously, but ignored, as usual"; "[I am] writing very lucidly about something that is quite complicated, and there is nothing that annoys people more"; "I wrote two novels, one in Civil War time and one in pioneer times, but people didn't know how to read them"; "The majority of novel readers are not capable of the effort it takes to translate yourself into another age"; "If we are to read a novel with understanding we must first of all lay aside our own preconceived idea of what a particular novel ought to be like and try, instead, to find out what it is"; "The reader who wants to read understandingly...must perform an act of self-abasement. He must lay aside his

own opinions for the time being"; "There remains the reader who...feels that the author ought to write books that people want to read rather than the books he himself feels impelled to write."

DECLINE

She began having memory lapses and feared she would lose the ability to teach. She worried about how she would support herself. Her application for another Guggenheim fellowship was rejected. Once again it appeared that politics were in play, as Gordon said "I don't think anybody who isn't communistically inclined would have much chance with the [Guggenheim] Foundation these days." Also she figured that because of *The Malefactors* the judges may have thought she would use the fellowship to write a scathing memoir attacking more of the "sick intellectuals" (like themselves) in New York. Still disappointed by the reviews of the novel, she sometimes drank too much and once fell down and broke three ribs. Allen divorced Isabella Gardner and married a former student named Helen Heinz, who soon had twins. By 1969 Gordon had a chronic heart condition that woke her up at three or four every morning to labor with Herculean dedication on *The Glory of Hera* (1972), her last novel.

Afterward she began to suffer from hallucinations, she lost 30 pounds and she had a heart attack. She developed eye problems, her arthritis worsened and her mind often wandered. Yet at age 81, in physical and mental pain, Gordon was still teaching. The 1960s-70s were decades of cultural rebellion and many students had no respect for authority, especially in New York. Gordon's teaching now consisted of "sustaining, with as much equanimity as one can muster, repeated kicks in the teeth." Despite her pain she tried to finish more books, including *Creative Writing or Craft Ebbing?*; her autobiographical novel *A Narrow Heart*, retitled *Behold My Trembling Heart*, quoting St. Augustine; a novel on her family connection the explorer Meriwether Lewis, *Joy of the Mountains*; and another revision of *The House of Fiction*. But she was unable to finish any of these books. Her arthritis got so severe she could barely type. As she once said of others, "Suffering is one of the tasks appointed a hero."

CHARACTER

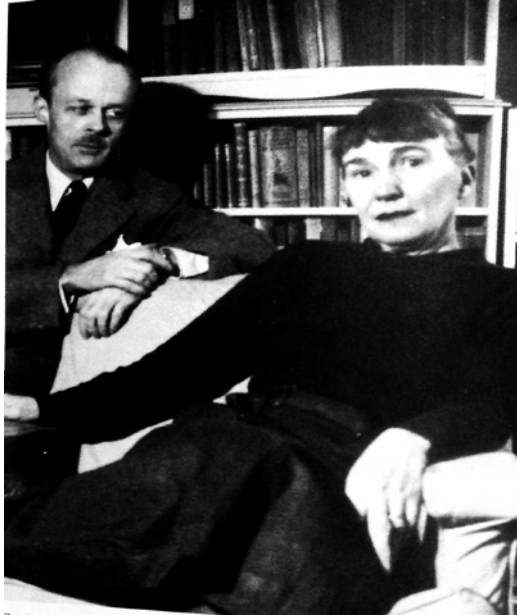
According to Malcolm Cowley, his friend Caroline Gordon had a reputation for being absolutely chaste. At Benfolly they used to go swimming together, but "Caroline was the most chaste woman I ever met. I never even kissed her." There is no evidence that in her entire life she ever slept with anyone but her husband, Allen Tate. She took a stand for fidelity. She was also charitable, forgiving and repentant in writing to Tate that "I agree with practically all of the charges you bring against me. You have been sorely tried and in ways more intangible and hence in some ways harder to bear than in the ways in which I have been tried." "Some of the sufferings you went through in childhood have left dry--cold places in your heart. I ought to have tried to warm them to life instead of letting my self-love demand that they glow for me." The biographer Ann Waldron says of Gordon, "She was generous until the day she died, sending money to both her brothers and to Cousin Manny. (She sent the fifty-dollar-a-month pension she received from the University of California to Manny every month.) She gave generously to Dorothy Day's causes and sent untold sums to priests and nuns around the country for prayers and Masses for Allen."

DEATH

Her daughter Nancy and her psychiatrist husband Percy moved from Princeton to Mexico in 1978 upon his retirement. Gordon moved along to a small house next door to them in San Cristobal de las Casas, in a beautiful mountainous region of southern Mexico. When Allen called Nancy and asked her to help him leave his current wife, Gordon told her, "I think this house is much too fancy for me. Find me a hovel and give my house" to Allen. But the next year he died. When told, she did not weep. For some time after his death Nancy often overheard her mother sitting alone outside in the garden, talking to Allen in friendly conversation. As she had once said, "The ways of God are, of course, incomprehensible but occasionally one seems to catch a glimpse of the working of God's will."

By 1979 Gordon was losing the ability to concentrate and suffering from painful arthritis, diverticulosis, pericarditis, arteriosclerosis, pneumonia, cataracts and a partially paralyzed hand. She stopped attending church and stopped gardening. She kept waiting for visitors who never came. What came was a stroke in

1981 and despite being kept on the highest possible dosage of medicine to prevent circulatory failure she developed gangrene in her right foot that required the amputation of her leg above the knee. After the operation she decided to die. She stopped speaking. She stopped eating and taking medicine and never spoke again. Within days, while Nancy held her hand, Gordon's favorite priest came and gave her the last rites, accepted a silent confession and kissed her on the forehead. She died looking into his eyes, with what Nancy said was a "look of absolute bliss."



Caroline Gordon and Allen Tate

CENSORSHIP

Since her death in 1981 the Feminists who control English departments and publishing have denigrated or ignored Caroline Gordon because she is conservative, intellectual, complex, literary (over their heads), Southern, and Christian. The intolerance of Feminists made Gordon the most underrated writer in American literature. Also, as an objective New Critic, Gordon is seen as an enemy by Feminists who deny that objectivity is possible because they are incapable of it and in order to replace it with subjective propaganda. Literary quality is determined by aesthetic values. Feminists have no aesthetic values, only political interests focused on themselves--"Me Studies." By replacing the literary classics with mediocre politically correct writing, Feminists belittled and ignored the best women writers, showing more disrespect for the achievements of women than the worst male critics. Gordon epitomizes the woman who must do *a lot more* than a man would to earn deserved recognition. Yet *men* eventually canonized her, whereas women (Feminists) destroyed her reputation. Ironically, Feminists are such philistine narcissists they are incapable of recognizing that most of the best American fiction writers in the 20th century are women--Wharton, Cather, Porter, Gordon, O'Connor, Welty, and Marilynne Robinson.

EXCLUSION

Males made Caroline Gordon canonical, but published no more articles on her after 1972 except Robert Penn Warren's introduction to her collected stories, because the Feminist movement began in full force and Feminists had already begun their campaign against the prominent dissenter Caroline Gordon in 1937 with the attack on *The Garden of Adonis* in the *New York Times Book Review* by Augusta Tucker. Then in 1960, despite all her publications and recognition by prominent critics and leading writers, Gordon was excluded by Dorothy Nyren from *A Library of Literary Criticism: Modern American Literature*. Nyren was a librarian in the Concord, Massachusetts library, which once censored *Huckleberry Finn*. According to a

number of studies, librarians are the most Politically Correct of all academics. Known for censoring conservatives, almost all librarians are Feminists who belong to the same political party by a ratio of over 200 to 1. Nyren selected 170 American authors who wrote or became prominent after 1904, including many *far* less important in literary history than Gordon--such as Erskine Caldwell, James Gould Cozzens, Vardis Fisher, William Goyen, MacKinlay Kantor, Carson McCullers, John P. Marquand, May Sarton, Irwin Shaw, Peter Viereck, Glenway Wescott--even the Communist hack Howard Fast.

Gordon was a victim of prejudice by both men and women. Because she had been dismissed by the likes of Wilson and Cowley, and because women--Feminists--likewise dismissed her, male editors began excluding Gordon from their anthologies and histories: James D. Hart lists all her books with comment in *The Oxford Companion to American Literature* (1983), but in his *American Fictions 1940-1980* (1983) the bigoted Frederick R. Karl discusses many unimportant Feminists and others while censoring conservatives. Karl refers to Gordon once in passing, discusses none of her works, associates her with the discredited Old South and mentions Wallace Stegner, the major Realist of the 20th century, only once in a footnote. The Harper & Row anthology of American literature published in 1987 omits them both, as does the infamous Heath anthology in 1989. By the 1990s radical Feminists had firmly established their regime of Political Correctness and no one got published who did not conform. Feminists disliked Gordon so much that in *Twentieth-Century Southern Literature* (1997) J. A. Bryant, Jr. is able to praise her conservative husband Allen Tate because he does so while slapping down Gordon with a lie: "Ironically in 1938 Tate in a single novel, *The Fathers*, had accomplished what Gordon attempted to do in nine."

In 1970, funded by a foundation, Feminists established hundreds of "women's studies" programs in colleges and universities throughout the United States. Using these programs the way Communists used cells to take over unions, dogmatic radical Feminists began taking over English departments and literary publishing and to denigrate and ignore the best women writers, replacing them with mediocre Feminist writers and others useful to their agenda. Students recognized the differences in quality between their choices of texts and literary classics, making it necessary for Feminists to abolish the classics. Moreover, Feminists have no interest in literature except as a means to a political end; they have rejected everything written before 1970 as "patriarchal"; they lack the imagination and humanity necessary to identifying with male characters or anyone with beliefs different from their own; they have had no literary education; and they have admitted to being incapable of objective reading.

NEGLECT

"By contrast with Eudora Welty...and with Katherine Anne Porter and Carson McCullers...Gordon has 'suffered a curious lack of appreciation.' Her 'unmodishness' [non-Feminism] may be responsible for her lack of wider recognition." (Vivienne Koch, 1953) "The writings about Gordon and her work are 'surprising and disappointing; the majority of reviews are either negligible or inadequate as criticism, and, considering the extent and excellence of her work, the fact that there have been only four general articles devoted to it is something more than surprising'." (Joan Griscom, 1956) "*Aleck Maury, Sportsman* was a 'minor classic,' and Gordon's books 'have grown more skillful with time' but 'not many people seem to notice'." (Arthur Mizener, 1956) "Gordon is mentioned only a few times in passing in this volume which deals with major and minor Fugitives, among whom she is not discussed. Gordon is listed as one of the 'newer group of Southern women writers'." (John Bradbury, 1958) "She needs somebody to write sensibly about her stuff because nobody much has. She hasn't ever got the critical attention she deserves I am sure. I see Allen got some kind of medal." (Flannery O'Connor, 1958)

"No full-length study has yet appeared despite the subtlety and strength of her talent." (Frederick P. W. McDowell, 1966) Gordon has 'the most elusive reputation'; her novels 'have not yet had a full-length critical presentation'." (Ashley Brown, 1968) "Gordon is 'a much neglected writer.' This is due in part to her unpopularity" [non-Feminism]. (James E. Rocks, 1968) "Gordon...is one of those writers 'whose absence from the rolls of contemporary American letters would so dramatically change the picture of our national literature in the second third of the twentieth century that it is almost unimaginable that [she] should not be there'." (Hugh C. Holman, 1970) "These stories have not received the recognition and critical regard which their intrinsic excellence and their relevance to the understanding of Gordon's total vision would seem to warrant." (John E. Alvis, 1972) "Of the major Southern novelists of the twentieth century, Caroline Gordon

has been the most neglected. She is perhaps the least appreciated of the critically and artistically important American writers who have contributed directly to the development of their chosen form. Yet before her death in 1981 she had become an acknowledged master of the craft of fiction--especially among other artists of her own stature....[Due to] politics [and] religion....a major part of the story of her undervaluation has been the unavailability of her books, particularly the first five novels, which are the foundation of her achievement." [Feminist censorship] (M. E. Bradford, 1991)

"Despite the praise, the reputation, and the acknowledged importance of Miss Gordon's work, her fiction has not received the kind of critical attention one might have expected it to attract, particularly in an age so productive of literary criticism. To date, there has been only one thin pamphlet and a half-dozen or so articles about Caroline Gordon's eight novels and her two collections of short stories. One reason Miss Gordon's fiction has not attracted much critical attention is that her novels have never been popular.... Among other reasons that Caroline Gordon has been ignored is the fact that she is a demanding writer. Most of her novels are difficult to read, not because they are all stylistically or intellectually complex, but because they demand moral and esthetic responses that [Feminists] are unable to make. They...require of readers almost as much talent in the art of reading as their author has lavished on the art of their writing.

Furthermore...Miss Gordon's fiction, though rigorously modern in technique is rigorously anti-modern [non-Feminist and Modernist rather than Postmodernist] in attitude." (W. J. Stuckey, 1972) "Perhaps because most representations tend to fix Gordon in a one-dimensional pose [non-Feminist], the full scope and complexity of her art have not been explored. Her name has been submerged in analyses of the Southern Renaissance, modernism, and in *feminist studies* [italics added].... (Anne M. Boyle, 2002)

Michael Hollister (2020)

FEMINIST ADMITS NEGLECT

"Given the fact that Gordon's history is woven so intricately through the contesting fabric of cultural change and gender rearrangements, it is surprising that feminist critics have neglected an analysis of the works of this prolific writer. There is much in Gordon's life and art to intrigue literary scholars. She experimented with modern artistic techniques and explored many of the themes often associated with the study of women's literature. Indeed, Caroline Gordon seems to be a prime candidate for rediscovery.

Portraying women who feel imprisoned, who fear their creative and procreative potentials, Gordon writes of those betrayed by love and false authorities, those who are silenced, those who crave understanding and influence. Probing into suggestive changes of point of view and uses of poetic language, she investigates sexual and racial perceptions of self and society in her early stories. In her later works, she experiments with autobiographical fiction as she reconstructs her own experience as daughter, wife, and mother and wrestles with cultural, classical, and religious myths. Her memoirs, critical texts, and hundreds of personal letters offer insight into the personalities who dominated the art world during the twenties and thirties and describe her impressions and judgments of contemporary writers. Why, then, have critics neglected Gordon?

The answer probably lies in Gordon's public resistance to the tradition of women writers [women who write as Feminists rather than as persons transcending gender] and her apparent acceptance of patriarchal myths, structures, and values [whereas Feminists try to destroy them]. Although Caroline Gordon explores questions that intrigue feminist scholars who consider how gender and social and cultural values are reflected in women's literature, her responses to these questions are sometimes...disturbing.... We come upon the anti-Feminist Gordon... [The reason why she is] not identified as a major American writer...[by Feminists, whereas males canonized her by 1972]

She is stereotyped as an assured and stubborn woman who resists...the modern world... She is presented as a demanding, passionate, and violently quarrelsome [caricature] woman who wished to remain with her husband, Allen Tate, despite his verbal and physical abuse and his many public infidelities [not as many by far as those tolerated by Feminists such as Hillary Clinton]. Her drinking, her anger, her sharp and condescending voice are remembered; so is her late conversion to Catholicism [Feminists are Atheists who

discriminate against Christians], her disregard of racial issues in her later works [not in her earlier works], and her desire for the re-assertion of male authority." [Feminists demand *all* authority for themselves, whereas Gordon wants spiritual equality. It is comical to read a Feminist accusing anyone else of being "violently quarrelsome." The smear that Gordon is a racist because she didn't write enough favorable stories about blacks is characteristic of leftists who write no stories at all about blacks and make false accusations of racism to cover their own bigotry.]

Anne M. Boyle
Strange and Lurid Bloom: A Study of the Fiction of Caroline Gordon
(Fairleigh Dickinson U 2002) 32-33

The rest of this document consists of rebuttals to Feminist critics of Gordon:

FEMINISTS DESTROY GORDON'S REPUTATION

In 1989 the biography of Caroline Gordon by Veronica A. Makowsky, a professor of Women's Studies, killed her reputation by giving Feminists an excuse to ignore her. Makowsky is a molehill who belittles a mountain. She opens with a quotation from Gordon's memoirs describing a suicidal mood in her childhood. In her *first* sentence of commentary, the Feminist robs Gordon of her heroic life with the lie that she was suicidal all her life--weak and cowardly because she did not become a dogmatic Feminist like Makowsky: "The sense of abandonment to menacing presences, the moment of panic and despair, the seemingly miraculous recovery, and the resolution to confront the danger once more--these elements constitute the continual scenario of Caroline Gordon's life, the pattern that made her the good artist she was and prevented her from becoming the great artist she might have been."

The pattern Makowsky denigrates as disempowering is in fact the life pattern of a hero, one brave enough to "confront the danger once more." Makowsky deems Gordon second-rate because in her life and art Gordon is politically incorrect, disproving Feminist dogmas. Gordon was victimized less by men than by Feminists such as Makowsky and she was heroic in standing alone against a Feminist tide of hostility, slander and snobbery. For decades Feminists accused men of not respecting strong independent women, yet they themselves do not *tolerate* strong independent women. In truth, Gordon was not suicidal, she grew up to become one of the strongest women in American history, and one of the greatest writers.

On what basis does this Feminist demote Gordon from the canon and dub her a failure? She does not reveal her criteria until 212 pages later, where she quotes Gordon saying readers are more interested in action than in the thoughts of characters. It is certainly true that males often find "women's writing" to be self-centered and reduced to women's feelings. Makowsky exaggerates Gordon's accurate observation into a "credo" for all of her writing: "This credo is one reason Caroline Gordon is a writer's writer, not a popular author [with Feminists]. Her works are often beautiful examples of technical mastery, but the thoughts, the feelings, the wit, and the humor that enlivened her letters and her conversations are absent from her characters and her authorial voice. [On the contrary, see her wit and humor quotations.] In some ways the very seriousness with which she regarded the art of fiction barred her from the serendipitous, impulsive plunges into the human heart that often make for great fiction." Makowsky accuses Gordon of being *too serious!* To her a "writer's writer" is inferior to a "popular writer," demoting Henry James, Joyce, Porter, O'Connor and other greats to a status below the author of the Harry Potter children's fantasies.

The intolerance of Makowsky is juvenile. She requires that Gordon write like a "woman writer," the very limitation that all the best women writers transcend. She subordinates "beautiful technical mastery" to her preference for "women's fiction," faulting Gordon for not taking "impulsive plunges" like a giddy Romantic female instead of being a scrupulous artist. Because this women's studies professor has had no literary education, she requires an author to explain her thoughts and feelings in a story so that she can understand her. And she wants tragedies to be funny. Gordon is an objective symbolist like Joyce and writes according to the "iceberg principle" of Hemingway. Makowsky gives no evidence in her biography that she has any familiarity with Modernism. She is ignorant of literary history and aesthetics. The term Modernism does not even appear in her book.

Makowsky is one of the Feminists who took over English departments during the 1980s in order to replace literary study with their "Me Studies." She is an agent of the academic police state called Political Correctness. The term "police state" derives from *The Language Police* (2003), a study of Feminist censorship in the publishing industry by Diane Ravitch, a Democrat. Makowsky and other dogmatic Feminists set out to destroy the reputations of the best women writers because none of them agreed with their sexist dogmas. Another example of Feminist betrayal is the malicious biographer of Gordon's close friend Katherine Anne Porter--Joan Givner, a leftist Canadian professor and jealous mediocre fiction writer who sides with the Communist Josephine Herbst against Porter the patriot.

Joan Givner lied about Porter throughout the first edition of her biography in 1982, then published a second edition in 1991 in order to smear her some more. Porter died in 1980 and Gordon in 1981. Feminists like to attack their victims after they are dead and cannot defend themselves. Their propaganda does that to almost the entire American female population of the 19th century. Feminist biographers like Makowsky interview their subjects, gain their trust and then betray them. Makowsky is the coward, Gordon is a female Hemingway. Throughout her book Makowsky refers to Gordon condescendingly as "Caroline," as if she is a friend. Fortunately, two of America's greatest writers did not have to read the slanders about them by women who pretend to honor the greatest women writers then stab them in the back. Feminists advocate "women's rights" except for the right to disagree.

Only because intolerant Feminists now control Wikipedia entries on women writers, the commentary on Caroline Gordon's page is very short and none of her books are discussed. Nor are any of the books about her listed. This is an example of Politically Correct censorship at its most blatant. While "rediscovering" and publishing many mediocre women writers, Feminists who control literary publishing have not brought out Gordon's novels in paperback since she converted to Christianity, they have published no collection of her essays--despite her importance in the history of New Criticism--nor any collection of critical essays on her novels or her short stories. Lack of paperback editions has in effect censored works by her that offend Feminists, since instructors have been especially unlikely to require students to buy expensive hardbacks by a Politically Incorrect writer.

FEMINISTS CENSOR A GENIUS

Gordon is called a "genius" in *The Underground Stream: The Life and Art of Caroline Gordon* (1995) by Nancy Lee Novell Jonza. But Jonza does not prove Gordon's genius with analysis of her fiction in the context of literary history. Her biography is much superior to the hit job by Makowsky in 1989, but is likewise uninformed by literary history, as evident in the same failure even to mention literary Modernism: "Until recently Caroline Gordon's literary reputation has been based in large part on misleading and inadequate portraits of her as a woman and a writer. Gordon was almost always judged in the context of her relationships--especially her marriage--and not as a woman and writer in her own right." This accurately describes the prevailing Feminist judgment of Gordon, which is "misleading" and "inadequate" and based not on analysis of her fiction but on feelings about her as a woman rather than as a writer, especially feelings of disapproval because Gordon remained with an abusive husband (which is politically incorrect unless the woman is a Feminist running for President).

As a Feminist, Jonza herself gives the highest priority to gender--to being a woman. She too focuses on relationships, with a petty emphasis on Gordon's anger at betrayal, and projects her own irrelevant attitudes as Feminist critics always do. She reverses the priorities of Gordon, who gives the highest priority to art and to being a writer who transcends gender. Jonza sets out to dispel what she calls the "public myth" that Gordon created for herself--"in part as an attempt to falsely reassure Tate that he was the most important influence on his wife's life and talent." Jonza sees deception and "self-protective posturing" rather than integrity, generosity, and self-sacrifice. She downplays the literary influence upon Gordon of the "evil" male Allen Tate and emphasizes the Feminist obsession that Gordon was a victim of spousal abuse. As a result, Jonza makes her seem pathetic rather than heroic.

ILLITERATE FEMINISTS PREVAIL

The Feminist critic Anne M. Boyle reinforces the negative stereotype of Gordon in *Strange and Lurid Bloom: A Study of the Fiction of Caroline Gordon* (2002). Her title actually describes her book rather than

Gordon: She asserts falsely that Gordon consistently portrays "the failure of heterosexual love," as if homosexuality is the only alternative: "I am particularly influenced by my reading of the works of Adrienne Rich," she writes. Makowsky was Boyle's editorial advisor and Jonza "inspired" her. Whatever the sexual orientation of this author might be, her book is an attack on heterosexual relations from what is essentially a lesbian perspective: To her, matriarchy is Good, patriarchy is Evil. She quotes Gordon referring to "the belief so long prevalent that the 'Old South' was matriarchal in organization." "By 1880," Boyle notes, "the majority of schoolteachers in the South were women, and social and civic reform societies were proliferating in the South as well as the North." She emphasizes the power enjoyed by Southern matriarchs in Gordon's life and art, yet claims the South was totally patriarchal. If that were true, Aleck Maury would not have needed to escape from matriarchal women.

Also as a Feminist, Boyle hates "patriarchy" so much she has rejected God: She dismissively spins "the 'sins' of Eve" to "knowledge, voice, and assertiveness"--falsifying the Bible, where the sins of Eve are pride and disobedience to God. Boyle makes generalizations that subvert religious faith and attributes them to Gordon, claiming for example that Gordon had a "darkening vision": "Mortal men and women cannot rise above nor offset the chaotic trends of their constructed world." It is gender-bound Feminists like Boyle who cannot transcend their constructed world, not Gordon, who became a Catholic. Boyle argues that "the authority of the Catholic Church" was a betrayal of women and Gordon herself as a writer. She claims that religious faith and deference to men were choices she made "at the expense of her developing genius and voice." Having no knowledge of literary tradition or aesthetics, Boyle does not realize that Gordon was elevating her art to the standards set by the classics of past centuries, not just catering to "a literary circle" of men she knew. Most astonishing, as an uneducated Feminist, Boyle does not know how stupid she looks to deny "genius" to writers because they have literary values and religious faith--so even Shakespeare does not qualify as a genius--and to grant that status only to dogmatic radical Feminists who take impulsive but politically correct plunges writing Atheist "women's novels."

Like other Atheist critics feeling insecure in their own faith, Boyle insinuates that Gordon's religious faith is dubious or insincere, that "From her first published novel...to her last...there is evidence that feminine power, perhaps the power of the Great Goddess, existed prior to...the creation of patriarchy'." She insists that Gordon "remained haunted by the possibility that a feminine power, perhaps the Great Goddess, ruled the world earlier and could return and destroy the constructions of men." This is a Feminist fantasy. Gordon was not a secret Feminist worshipping women or Nature. She knew well that worshipping a Nature deity is one of the worst sins in the Old Testament, repeatedly condemned by God, and that it would be Christ, not Gaia, who would destroy the constructions of men and of Feminists: "Those women of mine aren't followers of The White Goddess," Gordon declared. "They are simply unregenerate."

FEMINISTS DEFAME INDEPENDENT WOMEN

Boyle's first sentence suggests that Gordon is contaminated by Politically Incorrectness, sick in the head--"infected" by Southern values--and her first paragraph exposes Boyle as just as ignorant of literary history and aesthetics as Makowsky and Jonza. One might counter that Boyle, in her reductive prejudices, is infected by Feminist values: "From the forties on [she converted to Catholicism in 1947], Gordon is seen [by Feminists] in a much more negative light as divorced wife, vengeful autobiographical novelist, difficult and demanding critic, proselytizing Catholic, and conservative social critic.... Most representations tend to fix Gordon in a one-dimensional pose." Boyle herself, for example, as when she argues that Gordon should have written "women's fiction" instead of writing "for a literary circle that would never fully accept her." Men canonized Gordon. It is bigoted Feminists like Boyle who defamed and never fully accepted her. Just like Malcolm Cowley and his male friends excluded Gordon, so Boyle excludes her from her Feminist "community"--reducing her to a "marginal figure."

Throughout her book, Boyle complains that Gordon was independent, that she "resisted the label 'woman writer'" (as have all the best women writers); that "she disparaged 'women writers' (those who cannot transcend their gender); that she was "alienated from a community of writing women" (No, she was a close friend of women writers including Katherine Anne Porter, Flannery O'Connor, and Sally Wood); that she rejected "the tradition of women writers" (and identified with the canonical tradition that includes

both genders); that she "never established a female community" (she welcomed males at Benfolly); that she did not "locate herself in a community of women artists" (she had a family).

Boyle says, "Although Gordon does not explain what the 'womanly novel' is, one can be fairly certain that she is criticizing domestic fiction or the romantic or 'sentimental' literature usually ascribed to the popular woman novelist of the day." The feminist Nina Baym defines the "womanly novel" as displaying "allegedly female qualities, as the product of a timid, sentimental, narrow, trivializing sensibility... Some recent feminists, agreeing with this depiction, have seen the authors as hacks and traitors to their sex... A reexamination of this fiction may well show it to lack the esthetic, intellectual, and moral complexity and artistry that we demand of great literature." (*Women's Fiction: A Guide 1820 to 1870*, 1978: 18)

DELIBERATE IGNORANCE

Ignorance of literary history and aesthetics is a Feminist goal, in defiance of "The Patriarchy" and to avoid unfavorable comparisons of their chosen texts to the classics. Boyle explicitly rejects literary values: "the high cultural valuation of figuration, transcendence, and other modes of flight from the literal." To her literal mind, all literature is fantasy--"flight from the literal." Here the uneducated Feminist actually confesses to disliking literature because she has not been taught by liberals how to understand it and wants to get rid of it to make room for Feminist autobiographies, PC political tracts, and fantasies of power by "women writers."

"Figuration" (figurative language--metaphor, symbolism, allegory) is the language of great literature and transcendence is its dominant spirit. The language of the "womanly novel" is only literal, whereas literary language is *both* literal and figurative. Because she has no understanding of literature, when she mentions a woman writer who is in fact one of the best, such as Chopin or Jewett, she is reducing her to a woman writer without understanding her. She has never learned that *The Awakening* is not Feminist but a Realist satire of the Romantic New Woman, she misses the transcendental point of "A White Heron," and she thinks a "modernist" is merely a character like J. Alfred Prufrock or Quentin Compson (who is not a modernist but a diehard traditionalist).

Boyle ignores most of Gordon's short stories, snobbishly dismissing "The Ice House," one of Gordon's best according to all other critics, as "a rather tedious story of Northern meanness and greed." No doubt it is tedious to her because there are no women in it. She is too prejudiced to tolerate a story about men only and too ignorant to discern the complexity of the story--in particular the irony that the Southerner is just as guilty of meanness and greed as the Northerner. Her terse dismissal is evidence of how shallow and cursory her reading is. Boyle lumps all women writers together and judges them on the basis of personal taste and Political Correctness, according to the criteria set forth by Cheri Register in *Feminist Literary Criticism* (1971): "The final test must be the subjective response of the female reader [men can go to hell]. To earn feminist approval, literature must perform one or more of the following functions: (1) serve as a forum for women; (2) help to achieve cultural androgyny; (3) provide role-models; (4) promote sisterhood; (5) and... consciousness raising." No literary classic meets these standards.

Ignorance of literary history and a literal mind leads Boyle to criticize Gordon for being objective and subtle, writing according to the iceberg principle, refining herself "out of existence" like Stephen Daedalus in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* by Joyce. Boyle calls this sophisticated Modernist technique "inadequacy of expression." She thinks this is why Gordon "perplexes rather than satisfies readers." Uneducated Feminist readers like herself that is. Boyle refers to the "artistic detachment required by the New Critics" yet she blames Gordon's detachment on a deception practiced *only* by her, intended "to mask her gender, to subdue feminine power." Yes, the technique is intended to "mask" not just gender but the entire author. It is sexist to deny a woman the right to use a technique used by men and philistine to see it as a fault. Boyle sees only the literal surface of a narrative. It is Feminists who "subdue feminine power" by promoting ignorance and depriving women of an education.

FEMINIST NARCISSISM

The narcissism characteristic of Feminists is evident in Boyle's discussion of how Gordon revised "Summer Dust" into "One Against Thebes." Boyle likes the first version best because it is Politically Correct, "about the choices a young, sensitive girl will face as she grows up in a society that denies her values and her value." She thinks the story "should be read" as one of the many stories by women that challenged the interlocking power hierarchies present in not only the political and social world but also in literature." The story "should be read" as furthering the Feminist agenda, reduced to gender power rather than read as art according to its own pattern of implications. Boyle complains that in Gordon's revision 32 years later, under the influence of her father the girl she identifies with "loses her name, her singular perspective, her contentious voice, and her lonely stand against violent and unfair power." Projecting herself, Boyle objects to bringing the girl into the real world where she must relate to men. She prefers the first version in which the girl turns "toward an alternate world governed by a fairy godmother." Boyle is an adolescent Romantic objecting to Realism.

Boyle condemns broadening the vision of the girl to include other people: "Using an omniscient narrator rather than a central intelligence, Gordon broadens her focus to include other characters." Feminists like Boyle are so self-important they want the spotlight entirely on themselves--*all the time!* Boyle goes on to complain about literary values: "Overt sexual symbolism and classical allusions reinforce theme and make more apparent this girl's place in a traditional and...stable society.... Rather than providing more insights into Sally's character, the older Gordon chose to develop characters and forces in the environment that shape Sally's identity. Gordon expands Sally's connection to the male community by enlarging...the part of one male character." Boyle objects to any positive connection between a male and a female because Feminists want to polarize the genders. She also complains that the later version of the story reduces the threat of rape. Boyle even resents the normal relationship of the girl with her father, seeing the male parent as having "unfair power" over his daughter--a threat to her "contentious voice." Feminists are opposed to fathers as personifications of The Patriarchy and Boyle loses sympathy with the story completely because in her feverish eyes gender relations are always a competition for power: Gordon "pits the masculine voice of the father against the feminine voice."

As is true of Feminists on campuses all over the country today, Boyle wants to silence the male voice and to encourage little girls to become as contentious as they can. Her ignorance of Modernist techniques leads her to accuse Gordon of repeatedly "silencing the female protagonist." She is not able to detect the implications in the silence. To men, the most comical Feminist dogma is that women "have been silenced." Women have always censored male writers as much as they can--totally if possible, as on campuses today--and have always dominated the fiction marketplace, for the most part as sentimentalists who are popular with other women because they "do not plumb the abyss." Boyle is most absurd when she downgrades Gordon because she "does not plumb the abyss." Boyle does not know what the abyss is. She cannot define it: "the abyss" is "the undefined territory that threatens her fictional characters."

Boyle is the one who does not analyze in depth: She summarizes plots and applies her template of Feminist dogmas to them, making political stock responses and judging works according to who has "dominance," men or women, and whether female characters "are allowed" to express feelings congenial to radical Feminists of the late 20th century--who gets to win the gender war. Because she cannot define the abyss herself, let alone "plumb" it, Boyle blames Gordon, accusing her of using narrative strategies "to divert attention from the specific nature of the abyss." Boyle is so shallow it is ironic when she declares, "I strive to understand the depth of Gordon's personal and cultural uneasiness with the world." So to this Feminist, the abyss is not death or existential meaninglessness, it is merely "uneasiness." This woman could not see an abyss if she fell into one.

FEMINISTS DISEMPOWER WOMEN

Boyle does not acknowledge the power Gordon exerted on the teaching of literature throughout the United States with her anthology *The House of Fiction* (1950) and her demonstration of New Criticism *How to Read a Novel* (1957). Gordon was a *leader* of the New Criticism movement. Feminists are opposed to objective analysis because they cannot be objective and do not want to be--they are political activists,

subjective by definition. Gordon personifies what Feminists oppose--objectivity, the classics, literary rather than political priorities, transcending gender, and respect for males.

Accordingly, Boyle punishes Gordon for heresy by saying that "Gordon's close relationship with these men and her *support* of the practitioners of the New Criticism, who exerted a most powerful influence over the discussion of literature from the 1940s through the 1970s, may very well have facilitated her movement away from exploring and affirming women's thoughts and values [Feminism] in her work." Boyle takes away Gordon's distinction as a leader of a major revolution in literary criticism and gives it entirely to men. She depicts Gordon not as a leader but as merely giving "support" to the movement. [*Italics added.*]

Similarly, by rejecting traditional literary values and calling them "masculine criteria," Boyle rejects the best literature by women as "masculine." This implies that being great writers makes women "traitors to their sex." By demeaning and ignoring the best women writers, rejecting their classics, Feminists deprive them of the recognition they deserve and deprive students of exposure to the best writing by women, giving the impression that what they teach instead is the best that women can do. In killing the classics by both genders, destroying literary study, persecuting males, denying them due process, prohibiting free speech, reducing enrollments and funding, provoking opposition to higher education, making English departments liabilities, and accelerating the demise of colleges, Feminists have appeared to validate the old stereotypes of women as childish narcissists--irrational, intolerant and totalitarian. Their monopolies in education and publishing have been disastrous for both. They have reduced opportunities for women of future generations and will subject them to men who distrust them and do not want to hire them because they might be Feminists who will accuse men unfairly and sue them. Feminists are the real "traitors to their sex." They are half-brained in excluding half the human race, proving that Gordon was correct that "women's culture" is "inherently inferior to men's"--which includes *both* men and women.

Anne Boyle is most obviously a radical Feminist when she indicates that her own goal is matriarchy--a "woman-centered world"--not equality but the "dominance" of men by women, as is already true now in the education system. As she sees it, dominance over men is the only way a woman can feel comfortable in this world (pages 34-35). She advocates total control over men. Her book perpetuates the gender war and indoctrinates by spreading falsehoods, still another proof of how Feminists have corrupted education. Boyle was a literature student in the 1970s (in her 40s) when the radical Feminist movement began to replace literary studies with their "Me Studies." She earned a Ph.D. in 1982 with a dissertation on Gordon that must have been directed by a radical Feminist, taught at Wake Forest and published her book on Gordon in 2002, just three years before she died. Surprisingly, she was married, had a number of sons and was buried in a Catholic cemetery. She dedicated her anti-male book to her husband and one of her sons and appears to have had a good relationship with them.

Nevertheless, Boyle's book is neither Christian nor tolerant of males. She flashes her Politically Correct credentials repeatedly, over and over again--*See how PC I am!*--with abundant citations and quotations of PC Feminists, reduction of Gordon's poet husband Allen Tate to an evil embodiment of "The Patriarchy," ridiculous complaints that women have been "silenced," and the pious lie that black writers have been excluded like women--this from a Feminist participating in a movement that silences and excludes men wherever possible--including black men. Boyle needed a recommendation from a Feminist to get her book published in 2002 and used Makowsky. Her bibliography and citations reflect her own dogmatic radical Feminism: Makowsky (8 citations); Jonza (5); Annette Kolodny (5)--Kolodny is a notoriously inaccurate and vicious anti-male critic; Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar (2)--the most famous radical Feminist critics; and Adrienne Rich the distinguished lesbian poet (2). Not cited is William Stuckey, a New Critic whose *Caroline Gordon* (1972) provides some of the best close analyses of her fiction of any book.

A professor at the University of Pennsylvania Wharton School and Editor of the *Journal of Forecasting* studied academic writing and concluded that anyone wishing to be published in the PC academic press controlled by Feminists after 1980 must: "(1) *not* pick an important problem, (2) *not challenge existing beliefs*, (3) *not* obtain surprising results, (4) *not* use simple methods, (5) *not* provide full disclosure of methodology, sources and findings, and (6) *not* write clearly." (J. Scott Armstrong, quoted by Charles J. Sykes, *ProfScam: Professors and the Demise of Higher Education*, 1988: 105-06.)

To the few teachers out there still teaching literature, the following courses are examples of how Gordon might be included: Faulkner and Gordon; Ford and Gordon; Porter, Gordon, O'Connor, and Welty; Gordon and the Southern Renaissance; Gordon and the Agrarians; Gordon and New Criticism.

Michael Hollister (2020)