ABSTRACT

"I Only Love Them:" Dorothy Scarborough and the Supernatural in Literature

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This thesis examines the life and accomplishments of Emily Dorothy Scarborough, graduate of both Baylor University and Columbia University and professor of English, as they relate to her interest in the supernatural. Born on 27 January 1878, Scarborough developed a love of literature at an early age and spent the majority of her childhood at Baylor University. Constant contact with African-American culture became a profound influence on Scarborough's writing, particularly Conjure and other occult traditions. World War I also constituted a significant influence on her work, as well as her views on supernatural literature in general. Although elements of the supernatural are present in all of Scarborough's work, her most famous novel, *The Wind*, represents her best expression of the subject and had generated the most critical interpretations. Scarborough's simplistic appreciation of the supernatural led to her accurate prediction that public interest in the subject would persist indefinitely.

"I Only Love Them:" Dorothy Scarborough
and the Supernatural in Literature

by

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For my family, friends,

and supporters of local history

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Dorothy Scarborough, known predominantly as a folklorist and for her controversial novel *The Wind,* also harbored a profound affection for the supernatural.[1] Her dissertation for her Ph.D. from Columbia University, *The Supernatural in Modern English Fiction*, published in 1917, received favorable reviews and remains a standard reference in the field of literature today, although considerably outdated.[2] A review in *The Bookman* by William Lyon Phelps declared that Scarborough obviously loved her topic, and found her "full of high spirits."[3] Scarborough herself says of her subject in the dissertation's introduction, "In this book I deal with ghosts and devils by and large, in an impressionistic way. I don't know much about them; I have no learned theories of causation. I only love them. I only marvel at their infinite variety and am touched by their humanity, their likeness to mortals."[4] This study focuses on several topics pertaining to Scarborough's interest in the supernatural. Each chapter deals with a

[1]Sylvia Ann Grider, "The Folksong Scholarship of Dorothy Scarborough," in Francis Edward Abernethy, ed., *The Bounty of Texas* (Denton: University of North Texas Press, 1990), 97.

[2]Sylvia Ann Grider, "Dorothy Scarborough," in Sylvia Ann Grider and Lou Halsell Rodenberger, ed., *Texas Women Writers: A Tradition of Their Own* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1997), 137.

[3]William Lyon Phelps, Review of *The Supernatural in Modern English Fiction*, by Dorothy Scarborough, Part II of "Three Books of the Month," *The Bookman*, XLVI (January 1918), 611-612.

[4]Dorothy Scarborough, *The Supernatural in Modern English Fiction* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1917), 4.

specific aspect of her life that either influenced or displayed her fascination with the subject. Chapter one documents Scarborough's early childhood, family life, and the beginning of her fascination with literature. Chapter two concerns her childhood influences, particularly the conservative religious background generated by practically growing up at Baylor University and her prolonged contact with African-Americans and their blending of occult traditions with Christianity. Chapter three explores the impact of World War I on both Scarborough's interest in the supernatural and her views on the war's effects on supernatural literature in general. Chapter four addresses Scarborough's use of the supernatural in her most famous novel, *The Wind*, and examines several critiques of the work. Chapter five chronicles the remaining years of Scarborough's life, her lasting influence, and the continued popularity of the supernatural.

Discussing Scarborough's affinity for the supernatural demands an examination of the definitions of "supernatural" understood by her contemporaries. According to George T. Knight's 1910 article on the subject in *The Harvard Theological Review*, the words "nature" and "supernatural" typically present three different meanings. The first view, described as that generally adopted for every-day use among most people, describes the supernatural as God the Creator, together with his immediate acts and whatever else has immediate relations with him. Nature includes "the whole of created things after they have left the hand of God," particularly if connected with matter.[5] In the second interpretation, nature is described as including all being whatsoever. "Such is the implication," Knight explains, "when we speak of the 'nature of God,' or say every being

[5]George T. Knight, "The Definition of the Supernatural," *The Harvard Theological Review*, 3, No. 3 (July 1910), 310.

has a nature."[6] Knight further describes the pantheists' reversal of this thought and their claim that everything deserves consideration as supernatural, and the opposite argument that there is no supernatural. "Thus," he concludes, "following the varying usages of words, one man may say that there is a supernatural, and another that there is no supernatural; and both are right—according to the meanings assigned to nature."[7] The third description argues that the supernatural occupies the region of free wills, both divine and human, rather than that of necessity. Knight notes how others have regarded a creative power in man's free will, and therefore human free will as supernatural, and cites A.H. Strong's statement that, "nature is the manifestation of God under the law of cause and effect. Mind is the manifestation of God under the law of freedom."[8]

Given these definitions of the term "supernatural," I believe that most of the uses of the word employed by Dorothy Scarborough fit the first description. Although she gives no definition of the supernatural herself, in her dissertation, she writes:

> Man loves the supernatural elements in literature perhaps because they dignify him by giving his existence a feeling of infinity otherwise denied. They grant him a sense of being the center of powers more than earthly, of conflicts supermortal. His own material life may be however circumscribed and trivial yet he can loose his fancy and escape the petty tragedies of his days by flight beyond the stars. He can widen the tents of his mortal life, create a universe for his companionship, and marshal for forces of demons and unknown gods for his commands. To his narrow rut he can join the unspaced firmament; to his trivial hours add eternity; to his finite, infinity. He is so greedy for power, and has so piteously little that he must look for his larger life in dreams and in the literature of the supernatural.[9]

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[6] *Ibid.*

[7] *Ibid.*, 311.

[8] *Ibid.*

[9] Scarborough, *The Supernatural in Modern English Fiction*, 2.

Her descriptions of the therapeutic nature of supernatural literature suggest that, like Knight's first definition of "supernatural," Scarborough considers being and actions directly associated with God (including the Devil and demons, though Knight makes no mention of them), and thus outside what is commonly viewed as nature, as inherently supernatural.[10] This passage likewise demonstrates that Scarborough clearly does not consider either everything or nothing worthy of the description as supernatural, eliminating Knight's second description of the supernatural as it applies to her and her works. Finally, this passage also eliminates the third definition of supernatural for consideration in connection to Scarborough. Although she describes the creation of supernatural literature as a creative act of man's own design, she clearly sees a difference between the recreation of supernatural events on the written page for pleasure and enjoyment and actual supernatural events.

Fig.1. Dorothy Scarborough, 1923[11]

[10] *Ibid.*

[11] "Novel of Texas Tells of Cotton Field and Life on a Plantation." *Dallas Morning News*, 20 May 1923.

Family History

Born to Mary Adelaide Ellison and John B. Scarborough in Mt. Carmel, Texas, on 27 January 1878, Emily Dorothy was the youngest of three children. After she spent several years growing up in the tiny community of her birth, Scarborough's family moved to Sweetwater, Texas, in search of a drier climate for Mary Scarborough's weak lungs. However, the harsh climate forced the family to move again in 1887, this time to Waco, "to grow up under the shadows of Baylor [University]'s towers," which had just merged with Waco University the previous year.[12] John Scarborough, a distinguished lawyer and judge, settled his family in a Victorian mansion on the corner of South Eighth Street and Speight. The neighborhood housed the families of many Baylor professors, and stood within sight of the towers of Old Main and Burleson Hall.[13]

Ellison Bledsoe, the first Scarborough child, died while young, but George Moore and Martha Douglass, Dorothy's older brother and sister, survived and preceded her in their educational and professional endeavors.[14] Martha Douglass studied modern languages at Vassar, and then taught at Baylor University. She later married George White McDaniel, who served as a pastor at the First Baptist Church in Richmond, Virginia, for twenty years, and published three novels, her husband's biography, and a volume of poetry.

George Moore graduated from the University of Texas Law School, practiced journalism, and served with the United States Department of Justice. During this time, he

[12]Patricia Ward Wallace, *A Spirit so Rare: A History of the Women of Waco*, (Austin: Nortex Press, 1984), 121.

[13]*Ibid*, Grider, "Dorothy Scarborough."

[14]Ann Fears Crawford and Crystal Sasse Ragsdale, *Women in Texas: Their Lives, Their Experiences, Their Accomplishments*, (Burnet, Texas: Eakin Press, 1982), 237.

helped clean up a gambling ring and later used these experiences in plays written for Broadway. After enjoying considerable success from his first play, *The Lure*, and writing and adapting a number of other plays for the stage, he moved to Hollywood to write for the screen, collaborating with Dorothy on the screenplay of *The Wind*.[15] With her older siblings' influence as guidance, Dorothy naturally followed their example and pursued a life of education and achievement as well.

Like most western universities, Baylor offered both a "Primary" and a "Prepatory" [sic] program for elementary through high school students.[16] Therefore, because Scarborough was only nine years old when her family moved to Waco, she attended the university from the beginning, and received most of her educational influence from her experiences there.

Robert E. B. Baylor, James Huckins, and William Milton Tryon had organized an education society in the Texas Union Baptist Association in 1841 with the intention to establish a Baptist university in Texas. Baylor University, chartered by the Republic of Texas on 1 February 1845, opened in 1846 at Independence, Texas. When the Baptist General Association of Texas and the State Convention, which had controlled Baylor's operation since 1848, combined in 1886, Baylor and Waco University were consolidated and rechartered as Baylor University in Waco.[17]

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[15]*Ibid.*, 237-238.

[16]Wallace, 121.

[17]Handbook of Texas Online, Lillie M. Russell and Lois Smith Murray, "Handbook of Texas Online – BAYLOR UNIVERSITY," Available from http://tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/BB/kbb5.html, Internet, accessed 7 December 2009.

Under such prolonged influence from a significantly religious authority, Scarborough undoubtedly displayed the impact of Baylor's emphasis on the Baptist faith. One student remarked of her and the classes she taught at Baylor, "I had classes under her, but I remember much more the consistent way she lived and worked for the Lord than I do the things she taught me in English or Latin."[18]

As Scarborough continued her education at Baylor, her father consistently encouraged her to learn, and reading became her favorite pastime. She often hid with a book from the Baylor library in the old loft barn behind her house or in the old oak tree in her front lawn, only reluctantly returning for piano lessons or household duties.[19] According to Mabel Cranfill, Scarborough was small in stature with gray-green eyes and auburn hair, and possessed a stimulating personality and generous nature.[20]

At this point in her life, her literary tendencies truly began to show themselves. As much as she avoided other forms of work, she eagerly accepted her mother's challenges when she showed her "pictures and suggested that I write out the stories that these pictures suggested to me."[21] Scarborough claimed, "I always wanted to write. I was always scribbling things. My father was always bringing home books to show me. He did everything he could to expose me to books, and the right sort of books. I never had any patience with the conventional juvenile stories. I read the real stuff.…"[22]

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[18]Wallace, 124.

[19]*Ibid.*, 123.

[20]Mabel Cranfill, "Dorothy Scarborough—An Appreciation," *The Baylor Bulletin*, XL (August 1937), 38-44.

[21]Mabel Cranfill, "Dorothy Scarborough," *Texas Monthly*, IV (September 1929), 213-214.

[22]*Ibid.*

Cranfill provides as account of Scarborough's early endeavors in reading and writing and her love of the literary arts:

> Miss Scarborough does not recall when she began to read, nor when she learned. It was a habit acquired when a small child. She would bury her diminutive nose so deep in the book of the moment that she would be perfectly oblivious of everything going on around her. She did not care for the ordinary games of childhood as the other children did, but all her spare moments were spent in her favorite pastime—reading. There was a large old-fashioned barn at the Scarborough home which had a loft filled with hat and cotton-seed hulls. There Dorothy would often go, taking along a book. One day her mother found a book there, and in tones of distress, mentioned the matter to a neighbor, saying she was sure "a tramp must have been up there!" The neighbor recognized the book as one belonging at her house, so told Mrs. Scarborough it must have been "Dot," as she was called, instead of a hobo.[23]

While attending Baylor, Scarborough further pursued her interests in writing and literature. She published her first work, "A Visit to Hades," in 1893 in the campus literary magazine, *The Baylor University Literary*, when she was only fifteen. Scarborough also joined the Baylor Calliopean Literary Society, eventually became the editor of the magazine responsible for publishing her first piece, and continued her excellence as a student of literature. By contrast, she repeated the same math course several times before passing.[24] It became the campus joke to tease "Dot," or "Miss Dottie," as her friends and family called her, "when she was in the throes of composition perched on the window seat with pencil grasped firmly in hand," with the question, "Well, Dot, how deep is the snow *this* time?" as it invariable snowed in all the short stories she wrote at Baylor.[25]

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[23]Cranfill, *The Texas Monthly*.

[24]Wallace, 123; Crawford and Ragsdale, 238.

[25]Grider, "Dorothy Scarborough," 135; Wallace, 123.

CHAPTER TWO

The Supernatural and African American Influence

Undoubtedly, consistent contact with African Americans throughout her life influenced Dorothy Scarborough's writing. After the family moved to Waco, Scarborough experienced daily contact with African-American servants, and unknowingly began absorbing their folklore. In an article written for *The Texas Monthly*, Mabel Cranfill describes her time there:

> As a small girl she loved to listen while the dusky maid in the Scarborough kitchen would ply the dasher in the churn to the tune of "Swing Low Sweet Chariot," or some other haunting spiritual. Or she would hear the colored yard-man singing "I Want To Be More Humble In My Heart," while harnessing the horse of mowing the yard….
>
> There was a Negro church not far from the Scarborough home, and on still summer evenings, this little girl would sit on the front steps, chin cupped in hand, while the plaintive melodies sung by the dusky worshippers floated out on the air—that is if the children next door did not scream too lustily playing "hide and seek," or the street car did not screech as loudly as usual turning the corner!
>
> On Sundays in summer there were "baptizin's" in Waco creek not far away, and the neighborhood children often went to them. Dorothy was always of that number, and she enjoyed the singing most of all.[1]

Although she never featured them in her work, African Americans appeared in two of Scarborough's earliest stories published in the Baylor literary magazine. In "The Mother's Recompense," the old African-American family cook remains loyal when the father contracts yellow fever though all the other servants flee. "Bangs" describes how

[1]Mabel Cranfill, "Dorothy Scarborough," *The Texas Monthly*, IV (September 1929), 212-227.

the "Africans" copied the hairstyle of monkeys and later passed it on to Parisian hairdressers.[2]

In 1919, her fictional work *From a Southern Porch* based on her ideas and experiences gathered from Texas to Virginia, was published. Scarborough explained that it contained vivid depictions of African-American life based on her memories of African-Americans she had known throughout her life as viewed through the eyes of an aristocratic Southern woman.[3] *From a Southern Porch* also contained a brief discussion of the philosophy and superstition of African-American culture. Scarborough portrays her African-American characters as philosophers, exemplified by a conversation between the narrator and the cook Aunt Mandy. Curious as to how Simon Doolittle, the African-American who delivered the wash, came to own his brightly painted cart, she asks Aunt Mandy, who replies that Simon was "de laziest man, black or white, was ever bawn in dis country," but that he had a lot of children. Every time one of his children died, he would collect the insurance that he carried on the child. Aunt Mandy continued, saying:

> Yes'm, most ob de colored folks roun' heah had dey lives insured, even to de little chillun. Dey is really mo' profitable, yo' know, 'case dey dies oftener….Yes'm for fifty dollars….Some folks raises cotton fo' a libin', an' some raises hawgs, or cawn, Solomon, he raises chillun. Colored folks has chillun awful easy, yo' know,—tain't no burden to dem lack hit is to white folks, so Solomon was gittin' up in de pictures. He was gittin' rich.[4]

The narrator interpreted this to mean that African-Americans were naturally philosophic about life as it pertained to the individual, and that they perceived life and death in a simple way and usually explained them in simple terms. This philosophic

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[2]Dottie (Dorothy) Scarborough, "The Mother's Recompense," *Baylor University Literary*, II (March 1894), 12-16; "Bangs," *Baylor University Literary*, III (October 1894), 52-54.

[3]Dorothy Scarborough, *From a Southern Porch* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1919), v-vii.

[4]*Ibid.*, 223-224.

interpretation of African-Americans contributes to the local color of the novel in conjunction with elements of African-American superstition. To the characters in *From a Southern Porch*, at least, the term superstition has a wide meaning, including aspects of philosophy and religion, morality, and beliefs that included theories on plants, animals, and insects.

From the narrator's perspective, African-American philosophy in the South was optimistic. She compared them to children or animals in their lack of worry about rent, income taxes, trends in fashion, and other things, stating, "Optimism seems related in some occult way to pigmentation, for the blacker the skin, the kinkier the fair, of a negro, the more joyous and blithe is he in disposition, the more heedless of any tomorrow."[5]

Ghosts in the African Tradition

Another aspect of African-American philosophy and superstition present in *From a Southern Porch* was the idea of life after death and ghosts. To Scarborough's characters, an attitude no doubt taken from their real-life models, ghosts were very real and endowed with the same characteristics as their living counterparts. In the chapter entitled "Porch Raillery," the narrator was visited by a group of spirits with representatives from both Texas and the African-American race. When the narrator asked a pair of African-American spirits to sing her some reels, they happily obliged and subsequently got into a discussion concerning the relative types of music.[6]

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[5]*Ibid.*, 208.

[6]*Ibid.*, 293-300.

Scarborough's 1921 collection of supernatural tales entitled *Humorous Ghost Stories* contained the story "Dey Ain't No Ghosts," the story of a young African-American boy, which she also mentions in her dissertation.[7]

In 1923 Scarborough published *In the Land of Cotton*, her first novel and the first installment in a proposed trilogy on the subject. The work contained many examples of African-American folk songs, of which Mabel Cranfill noted the following:

> Her love of Negro folklore finds its place in this volume, which contains many songs not before published. Other Southern writers had known of some of these songs, but it took this book to show them that readers everywhere would appreciate them.[8]

In addition to Cranfill's assessment of Scarborough's work, Baylor University called her back to Waco to honor her with an honorary degree of Doctor of Literature. While on this trip, Scarborough also traveled to Fort Worth collecting more folk songs. An African-American church there invited her to attend a special service of spirituals expressing appreciation for her interest in the folk music of their race. Half the church was reserved for white visitors, and every seat was occupied. Scarborough gave a short speech about the dignity and worth of African-American music, urging the preservation of this heritage.

She wrote of the event:

> I said in closing that there was only one request I had to make in connection with my funeral, which I hoped was some time in the future. I should not be at all satisfied unless some of my colored friends were there and sang, "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot." As I sat down, the choir and congregation softly took up the strains:
>
> Swing low, sweet chario-ot
> Comin' for to carry me home!

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[7]Dorothy Scarborough, *Humorous Ghost Stories* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1921).

[8]Cranfill, *The Texas Monthly*.

> I felt for a time as if I were attending my own obsequies, and wondered if the instant response were a hint that an early demise was desirable. When the song was over, an elderly man…rose and said: "This is one of the happiest days of my life. It does my heart good to hear a white lady from a great university urge us to treasure our racial folk-songs because scholars prize them. We must all work together to collect them and save them for future generations.[9]

Scarborough's interest in African-American folk songs culminated in the publication of her 1925 work *On the Trail of Negro Folk-Songs*. Ola Lee Gulledge, a fellow Baylor alumna, and W.C. Handy, an African-American composer, aided Scarborough in the transcription of the lyrics and music for her book. In her quest for folk-songs, Scarborough visited several states, predominantly in the south, including Louisiana, Texas, Tennessee, Virginia, Mississippi, Kentucky, Georgia, Alabama, North Carolina, South Carolina, Oklahoma, and New York. She did not limit her search to African-American sources, but contacted public servants, ministers, teachers, professors, and private citizens from all walks of life, both white and black.[10]

In Natchez, Mississippi, Scarborough witnessed an African-American baptism at which she heard many old folk songs. As the baptism candidates made their way to the pond, hundreds of Negro spectators joined the singing of their dirge-like chant. Scarborough relates that the preacher charged a dollar per head to baptize, and that each candidate thrashed, groaned, struggled, and shrieked throughout the process.[11] In Natchitoches Parish, Louisiana, she met one of her grandfather's slaves as an old man, of which she related the following:

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[9]Dorothy Scarborough, *On the Trail of Negro Folk-Songs*, 28-29; Cranfill, *The Texas Monthly*, 39.

[10]Dorothy Scarborough, *On the Trail of Negro Folk-Songs*, 3-33.

[11]*Ibid.*, 14-16.

He looked at me with dimming eyes.

> "My ole pappy tol' me befo' he died that good luck would be bound to go with ol' Master's fambly because they was allus so good to their poor slaves. They brought us up mannerable, and I brought my chillun up thataway too. And ain't none of us never been arrested nor had no trouble. But some of the young folks these days isn't that way and it makes trouble. Us old folks sees when dey do wrong, and it hurts us, but we can't do nothing, cause we's feeble and we's few.
>
> "White folks and black folks look like they ain't live lovely together like they used to."[12]

Scarborough thoroughly enjoyed her search for folk songs, writing, "I urge that as a song hunter I should rather hear a Negro in the cornfield or on the levee or in a tobacco factory, than to hear Galli-Curci grandoperize,"[13] and, "Personally I have had so much fun collecting Negro songs that I should regard any future deprivation or calamity as merely a matter of evening up. It is not fair for one being to have all the fun and enjoyment in life."[14] *On the Trail of Negro Folk-Songs* was, and remains, an excellent primary source for students and lovers of African-American folklore.

Clearly, African-American folklore and life played a decisive role not only in Scarborough's childhood, but also in her academic endeavors, and her contact with this culture nurtured a healthy respect and appreciation for it. Thus, African-American influence began making an appearance in Scarborough's work from the very beginning of her literary career and remained a pervasive source of inspiration throughout her life. In addition to African-American culture and characters appearing directly in her work, her prolonged contact with African-American culture, specifically the blending of traditional

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[12]*Ibid.*, 17.

[13]*Ibid*., 1-2.

[14]*Ibid*., 6.

African Conjure and Christianity, influenced her interest in the supernatural and supernatural literature as well.

The Conjure Tradition

Author Yvonne P. Chireau describes Conjure as a magical tradition of African American occultism in which spiritual power is invoked for various purposes, such as healing, protection, and self-defense in the form of spells and supernatural objects. The relationship between Conjure and African-American religion, particularly Christianity, has always been somewhat ambiguous. Conjure has typically associated with magical practices, while Christianity is viewed as a "religion," suggesting that the immutability of divine will and claims of individuals to manipulate spiritual power render them naturally in conflict with one another. However, from the time of slavery to the present time, many African Americans have blended various aspects of Christianity, Conjure, and other forms of what Chireau calls supernaturalism without concern for their supposed incompatibility. For African-American Conjurers, magic and religion represented compatible, symbiotic perspectives that complemented and relied on each other.[15] Chireau asserts that the relationship between Conjure and Christianity was fluid and constantly shifting rather than static.[16]

In Chireau's words, "some interpreters have viewed occult beliefs as residual superstitions, the consequence of an incomplete Christianization of black Americans that began in slavery. Others have portrayed magical practices as enduring survivals of native

[15]Yvonne P. Chireau, *Black Magic: Religion and the African American Conjuring Tradition*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 12; Yvonne Chireau, "Conjure and Christianity in the Nineteenth Century: Religious Elements in African American Magic," *Religion and American Culture*, 7 No. 2 (Summer 1997), 226, 230.

[16]Chireau, Black Magic, 25.

African traditions: detached from their religious moorings, occult beliefs are seen to have provided the spiritual fodder by which bondspersons challenged slaveowner hegemony and retained a powerful ancestral heritage."[17] Both Conjure and Christianity provided unique resources for addressing diverse cultural needs in African-American life.[18]

Recent studies of early American religion reveal that European colonists inherited an intricate tangle of "esoteric, heterodox, and occult traditions" that flourished for several generations and gradually became reconfigured in the wake of eighteenth-century Protestant retrenchment.[19] When European occultism and magical beliefs arrived in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century America, Africans had also begun a parallel transfer of their spiritual traditions as the influx of people from Africa into the Western hemisphere countered the white colonial presence.

The rise of occultism among white American settlers resulted from the "diffusion of folk supernaturalism, miracle lore, and mystical philosophies" tracing their beginnings to medieval Europe. For African-Americans, the religious worlds of Africans prior to the diaspora profoundly shaped their magic and occult beliefs. The Magic and occultism embedded in West African religious beliefs were assimilated into the spiritual consciousness of black slaves.[20] Unlike some Latin-American and Caribbean slave communities, where African religions survived intact, Christianity became virtually the only organized religion among African-Americans in the United States at the time of emancipation. Those aspects of their traditional religions that were preserved the longest

[17]Yvonne Chireau, "Conjure and Christianity in the Nineteenth Century: Religious Elements in African American Magic," *Religion and American Culture*, 7, No. 2 (Summer 1997), 226.

[18]Chireau, "Conjure and Christianity," 226-227.

[19]*Ibid.*, 226.

[20]*Ibid*., 227.

and eventually incorporated into Christianity were styles of worship and practices that various local African religions had in common.[21]

Both black and white witnesses affirmed the presence of persons believed to possess special powers in black populations throughout the United States during the slavery period. Black abolitionist William Wells stated, "Nearly every large plantation had at least one, who laid claim to be a fortune teller, and who was granted with more than common respect by his fellow slaves."[22] Nineteenth century observers often noted that Conjure and African-American Christianity seemed to have been nurtured in the same soil. One plantation owner in antebellum South Carolina echoed this observation, stating, "In all instances which I remember to have noticed with reference to such fact, I have found among the religious slaves of the South traces…of a blending of superstition and fetichism *[sic]*, modifying their impressions of Christianity."[23] Noted landscape architect and travel writer Frederick Law noted after touring Virginia in the 1850s that a good portion of the slaves regularly attended church, yet their religion was dominated by a "miserable system of superstition, the more painful that it employs some forms of the words ordinarily connected with true Christianity."[24]

Folklorist William Owens corroborated this unusual blending of religious cultures nearly thirty years later, remarking that black "American-born superstitions" were "interwoven with so-called religions beliefs" and represented "a horrible debasement of

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[21]George M. Marsden, *Religion and American Culture* (Florence: Wadsworth Publishing, 2001), 77.

[22]Chireau, *Black Magic*, 13.

[23]*Ibid.*, 13-14.

[24]*Ibid.*, 14.

some of the highest and noblest doctrines of the Christian faith."[25] Chireau claims that in the American South, in the face of Protestantism becoming more widely accepted and indigenized among American-born blacks, remnants of African magic were either incorporated into organized religious life or absorbed into African-American folk beliefs, as they were forbidden and unable to maintain their own collective religious practices.[26] In an effort to reconcile African religious views with the monotheistic views of Protestantism, some African-Americans reinterpreted their traditional beliefs. For example, the numerous divinities were recast as the trickster-like figure of Satan, animated, invisible beings, or the otherworldly entities, ghostly presences, and disembodied spirits of folk tradition.[27]

The Atlantic slave trade successfully imported two significant features of African religion: the use of charms and the diversity of skills attributed to religious specialists.[28] With this emphasis on materiality, Conjure practitioners relied on created material objects. An array of charms, amulets, and talismans known as "hands," "mojos," "gris-gris," "jacks," "tobies," "goopher bags," and "wangas" were commonly used for empowerment and protection.[29] Maintaining these features, supernaturalism in the New World developed multiple configurations among the slaves, ranging from fragmented

[25]*Ibid.*

[26]Chireau, "Conjure and Christianity," 229.

[27]*Ibid*.

[28]*Ibid.*, 228.

[29]Chireau, *Black Magic,* 47.

rituals reminiscent of traditional African religious practices to composite practices grafted onto Christian beliefs.[30]

Further emphasizing this blending of traditions, religious leaders in slave communities, including both Christian ministers and Conjurers, were entrusted with the knowledge and responsibility of maintaining spiritual traditions. Black Christian preachers typically assumed a variety of public religious roles, while Conjurers fulfilled private spiritual needs. However, it was not unusual for practitioners of Conjure to profess themselves committed Christians while acknowledging the powers of the occult world.[31] Occasionally, the same person held authority over both traditions, such as Kentucky slave William Webb. According to Chireau's account, Webb often prepared special bags of roots for other blacks to carry "to keep peace" between masters and slaves on local plantations. As he explained, these roots were to be used in conjunction with prayer, and explained their use to other bondmen by saying, "I told them those roots were able to make them faithful when they were calling on the Supreme Being, and to keep [their] mind at work all the time."[32]

In many cases, supernatural beliefs helped to mediate relations between blacks and whites.[33] Another slave known as Elihu was described as "an old and creditable member of the church," who was "as punctilious as a Pharisee," yet also placed great faith in charms, Conjure, witches, spells, and his own gifts for the "miraculous cures" of

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[30]Chireau, "Conjure and Christianity," 228.

[31]*Ibid.*, 229, 232.

[32]Chireau, *Black Magic*, 14.

[33]*Ibid.*, 17.

animals and people that he performed throughout South Carolina.[34] According to Chireau's article in *Religion and American Culture*, an unidentified African-American clergyman admitted to an amateur collector of African-American spirituals and folklore that even as a professed Christian, he found himself "under the influences of *voodooism*" and other African occult practices. He described how after numerous unsuccessful attempts to attract new worshippers as a young pastor, he met an unexpected visitor:

> I was in my study praying when the door opened and a little Conjure man came in and said softly: "You don't understand de people. You must get you a *hand* as a friend to draw 'em. Ef you will let me fix you a luck charm, you'll git 'em."

The minister accepted the "hand," a small, homemade talisman, from the Conjurer, and surprisingly found his church full the next week. He recalled that for four years the aisles were crowded every Sunday, until he eventually destroyed the charm out of disgust, unable to reconcile his popularity with the apparent power of what he considered an occult object. He stated, "I knew it was not the gospel's power, but that retched 'luck ball,'" but was forced to conclude, "I…have never been able to draw an audience since."[35] A Conjure woman from Alabama known as Seven Sisters represents the complementary view of a Conjure practitioner displaying reverence for Christian beliefs. When asked where she learned her knowledge of divination and "tricking," or casting spells, she replied, "It's a spirit in me that tells—a spirit from the Lord Jesus Christ….I tricks in the name o' the Lord."[36]

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[34]*Ibid*., 15.

[35]Yvonne Chireau, "Conjure and Christianity in the Nineteenth Century: Religious Elements in African American Magic," *Religion and American Culture*, 7, No 2 (Summer 1997), 225.

[36]Chireau, "Conjure and Christianity," 232.

Indeed, Biblical lore and images provided an almost ideal setting for African-American occultists. According to writer Zora Neale Hurston, many Conjurers considered the Bible the "greatest Conjure book in the world," and Moses was "honored as the greatest Conjurer."[37] Although some African-American Christians remained skeptical of Conjure and occultism and rejected the magical aspects of these traditions, they equivocated other aspects of supernatural belief. One former slave explained, "I never know much about de hoodoo, but de spirits, yes. God is a spirit, ain't he?"[38] The traditions of Conjure and Christianity complemented each other in how each responded to distinctive cultural concerns surrounding issues of explanation and control.

Evil was clearly identified in both perspectives, but each offered contrasting therapeutic possibilities for addressing specific misfortunes. Christianity addressed African-American suffering, but did so by offering a universal framework of moral and ethical beliefs.[39] According to George M. Marsden, simple Christians, no matter how materially poor, could see themselves as morally and spiritually superior in a higher realm of reality. African-Americans typically viewed themselves as the new Israelites, enslaved in their own Egypt. In their oppression, the hope of a heaven where they could abandon the burdens of slavery possessed real, literal meaning. Such biblical imagery was central to Nat Turner's brief slave insurrection in Virginia in 1831.[40] Conjure, on the other hand, spoke directly to slaves' perceptions of powerlessness by providing alternative (even if largely symbolic) means for addressing their suffering. Conjure was

[37]*Ibid.*, 235.

[38]*Ibid*., 238.

[39]*Ibid*., 238-239.

[40]Marsden, *Religion and American Culture*, 78-79.

used to meet everyday needs ranging from protection from physical violence to medical treatment. Many religiously pragmatic African-Americans invoked any combination of Conjure and Christian beliefs to address troubles in their immediate circumstances.[41]

Hoodoo and Other Forms of Conjure

Although the terms Hoodoo, root working, tricking, and Voodoo were distinguishable, their use often saw considerable overlap. Hoodoo referred to the use of spells and other forms of magical manipulation as well as healing and harming traditions. Root work characterized the use of natural objects in the performance of ritual, and was used interchangeable with Hoodoo in African-American oral traditions. Voodoo, a term adopted by both blacks and whites, described a religion that originated in Haiti (vodou) and flourished in Louisiana from the late eighteenth to early nineteenth centuries. However, in the African-American vernacular, Voodoo, along with tricking and Hoodoo, described the use of spiritual powers for malevolent purposes, also called black magic or maleficia.[42]

This darker side of African-American Conjure tradition was often employed against and blamed for feelings of victimization. A wide range of accidents, losses, and problems were blamed on Conjure. For example, a nineteenth-century plantation owner in Georgia described how the rivalry between two African-American workers, Jane and Anna, was linked to a series of mishaps:

[41]Chireau, "Conjure and Christianity," 239.

[42]Chireau, *Black Magic*, 77.

> Though Anna milked, Jane churned, and every effort to make butter failed. Jane said that Anna had put a spell on the milk. Anna retorted by saying that Jane put something in the milk to prevent the butter coming, so that she, Anna, could be discharged. Chickens about the yard began to die, the water in the well had a peculiar taste….Negroes would use neither axe nor hoes kept at the yard….When a hen was setting, she rarely brought off chickens….It can be well understood from the foregoing, how this matter of "conjer," in designing hands, can work evil to the innocent.[43]

Additionally, harming magic was used to explain tragic results of sexual competition as well. Dye Williams, an ex-slave and resident of Savannah, Georgia, described such as situation: "Deah wuz somebody wut want muh huzbun tuh leab me an go off wid um, so dey hab me fix. Whoebuh fix me fix muh huzbun too, cuz he go off an leab me an I know he ain nebuh done dat lessn he bin fix."[44]

In addition to her own illness and abandonment of her husband, Williams also attributed the death of a baby and another child to the intentional harming spells of individuals: "Muh son die wen he wuz twenty-three….Deah wuz so many women attuh him, lots uh people tink one uh dem fix 'im, but duh doctuh say he die from pneumonia."[45]

These occult beliefs retained their power for African-Americans long after slavery ended.[46] This is apparent in the folklore collections of J. Mason Brewer, a black folklorist and contemporary of Scarborough born in Goliad, Texas, on 24 March 1896.[47] In his 1968 collection *American Negro Folklore*, Brewer relates a tale that he titles "A

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[43]*Ibid*., 79.

[44]*Ibid.*

[45]*Ibid*., 80.

[46]Chireau, "Conjure and Christianity," 239.

[47]Handbook of Texas Online, James W. Byrd, "Handbook of Texas Online – JOHN MASON BREWER," Available from http://tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/BB/fbrbb_print.html, Internet, accessed 3 March 2010.

Ghost Voodoo Story" describing an African American man named Jakie Walker's frightful experience on the Mississippi River. After a typical night of heavy drinking, Jakie had made his way to the river to avoid going home and angering his wife. Jackie described what followed:

> It felt real good out there, you know, with the wind from the river blowin' in my face and all them nice river smells. I found me a corner and set myself down to rest and try to think what I would tell that woman when I got home. I didn't go to sleep. No sir. I kept me eyes wide open. Then it happened. Man, I'm tellin' you straight, I can still see that *thing*! It ain't no word of lie, either.
>
> "That *thing* come driftin' right over the top of the river. *It* was shaped jest life a man—only *it* weared a long black gown what dragged behind *it* for a long piece. That *thing* kept comin'. *It* came slowly, too. I wanted to run, but I couldn't. I wanted to holler, but I couldn't. *It* got closer and closer to me. I swear I could feel the heat of that *thing* on my body—that *thing* was burnin' and burnin' right into me. Looked like *it* wanted to crawl through my eyes! And I couldn't do nothin'. I had hell on my hands.[48]

Jakie at last found his voice and managed to ask the creature what it wanted. The thing replied that it was someone who knew Jakie, but had drowned in the river, and that it had been sent to take him away unless he stopped his drinking. However, Jakie remained reluctant to give up his vice:

> Does you know my wife?" I asked that *thing*.
>
> "I does," *it* said, "an' I knows how you feel, but, Jakie, you gotta stop drinkin'. Now I'm gonna do some of my stuff so as you'll know I mean what I says."
>
> Then that *thing* started to do *its* stuff. The waves in the river started rollin' and they started risin'. All of a sudden they makes a noise like I ain't never heared [sic] to this day. Then they comes up over that wharf and they was like arms reachin' out for Jakie Walker. Brother, what would you do?
>
> "I promises you, ghost," I said. "If you will jest go away and take them waves with you, I promises you I ain' never gonna drink again."
>
> Then everything was all right. That *thing* turned around and went right away and them waves stopped risin' and stopped rollin' and hollerin' for Jakie Walker. I swear I ain't touched a drop of liquor of no kind since that night. Every payday I totes my money home to my woman and we ain't had much trouble since. And this is the funniest part of it. Do you know that when I got

[48]J. Mason Brewer, *American Negro Folklore* (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1968), 52.

home that night my wife was waitin' for me right in the door? I was scared stiff, but you know what she done? She jest throwed her arms 'round my neck and screams, "Jakie, honey, I dreamed you was dead. And I sure is glad to see you!" "Baby," I says, "I was almost dead, but I is a new man now."[49]

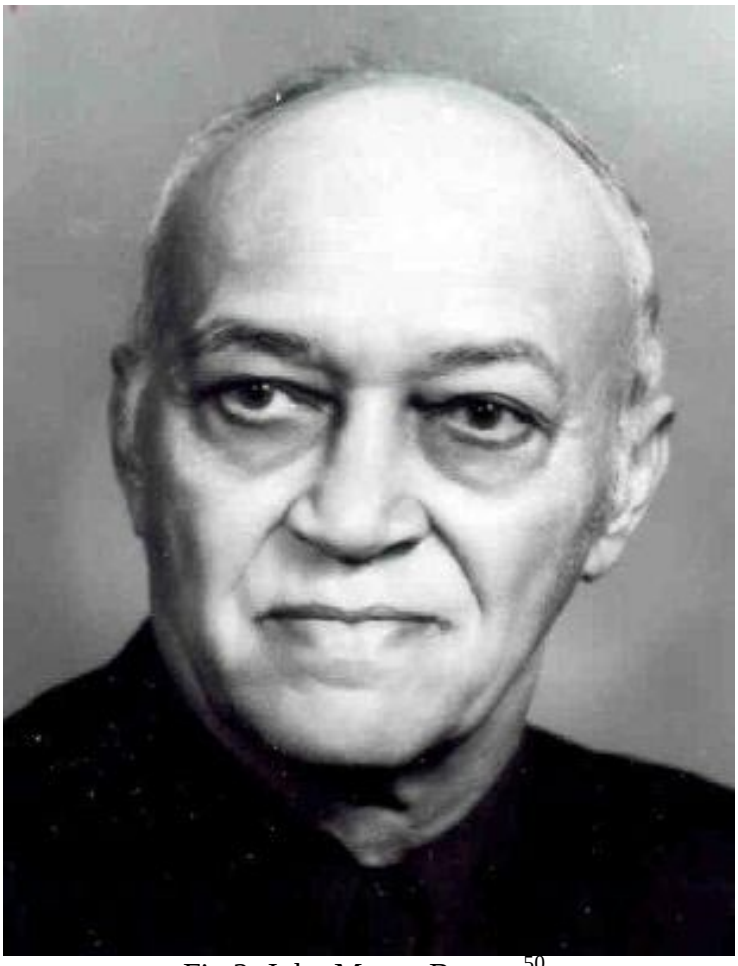

Fig.2. John Mason Brewer[50]

Brewer also provides evidence of the continued influence of Christianity in African American occultism in his 1958 publication *Dog Ghosts and Other Texas Negro Folk Tales*. In the story "Saint Peter and the Marlin Negroes," Brewer recounts:

> Ah calls to min' de Mt. Carmel Baptis' Chu'ch, rat up dat paa't de street yonnuh 'bout a block from de square. Hit still de bigges' Baptis' Chu'ch in Marlin, but Ah 'membuhs when hit didn' hab nothin' but de Big Nigguhs in hit, 'cep'n one

[49]*Ibid*., 53.

[50]The Black Past: Remembered and Reclaimed, "Brewer, John Mason (1896-1975)," available from http://www.blackpast.org/?q=aaw/brewer-john-mason-1896-1975/, Internet; accessed 9 March 2010.

> po' fawm han' from offen de ole Maddox Fawm down to Fish Creek. De membuhship sho raised a howl 'bout dis po' plannuhtation han' b'longin' to dis heah silk-stockin' chu'ch too. Dey name hit de silk-stockin' chu'ch 'caze dey ain't nothin' but Nigguh-rich folks what kin b'long to hit. Dat's de why dey raise so much cane 'bout dis po' han', Mose Smith, b'longin' to de chu'ch.[51]

Despite opposition from the congregation, Mose Smith remained a member of the church. Eventually, several prominent members of the church died, and drove their fancy cars to the gates of heaven, in accordance with an old saying that "de way you gits 'bout down heah on de earth am de same way you gonna git 'bout when you gits to heabun."[52] However, when each of the rich church members reach Saint Peter at the gates, he refuses to let them in. Poor Mose Smith, the last to die, received very different treatment:

> De las' one of 'em to die was de po' han', Mose Smith. So he driv' up to de pearly gates wid his ole T-model Fo'd jes' a-rattlin' an' a shakin' lack hit was gonna fall to pieces evuh minute de Lawd sen'! Hit kep' up so much fuss 'till bof Saint Peter an' Gawd comes runnin' up to de heabunly gates an' peeps ovuh de fence to see what keepin' up all dis heah racket at de high gates of heabun; an' when Gawd looked out an' seed Mose an' his ole rickety Fo'd a-rattlin' an' a squeakin', he turnt to Saint Peter an' say, "Open de gate, Peter, an' let 'im in—he done had hell 'nuff!"[53]

Although he published quite a few years after Scarborough, he was still considered her contemporary, and she undoubtedly encountered much of the same folklore rich in supernaturalism published in his collections. The pervasiveness of this culture in the African-American community made itself known to Dorothy Scarborough in her prolonged contact with blacks as a child and in her extensive studies of their folklore, even if it took predominantly covert forms of expression in the presence of an educated white woman. In addition to influencing her writing, her prolonged contact

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[51]J. Mason Brewer, *Dog Ghosts and Other Texas Negro Folk Tales* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1958), 77.

[52]*Ibid*.

[53]*Ibid*., 78.

with the African-American community led to a profound respect for their culture that lasted throughout her career. A letter written in 1925 from Charles S. Johnson, editor of *Opportunity: Journal of Negro Life*, reads:

> My dear Miss Scarborough,
> Here, at last, are the manuscripts from our Contest! The unexpected volume of materials has caused some delays, but added to this has been our efforts to prepare these manuscripts so that they will make the smallest demands upon your time and energies. The contributors to the Contest totaled 733….
> If possible, we should like to make the announcements in the May issue of OPPORTUITY. This means that we hope he have the decisions before April 12th. There is an immense interest among Negro writers in the contest; and altho [sic] this first experiment is not all that could be desired, it is, we feel, a significant contribution to the artistic future of the Negro.
> Your co-operation in this experiment is valuable and stimulating, and we are not lacking in our appreciation of it.
>
> Sincerely yours,
> Charles S. Johnson[54]

This letter indicates that Scarborough participated in the judging and management of a writing contest for the journal that accepted entries from African-American writers. Clearly, Scarborough valued African-American literature and culture enough to dedicate her time to this contest in hopes of advancing their literary contributions. This profound respect and appreciation continued throughout her life and educational pursuits.

[54]Dorothy Scarborough Papers, The Texas Collection, Baylor University, Waco, Texas.

CHAPTER THREE

The Supernatural in World War I

Scarborough completed her Bachelor of Arts degree in English in 1896 at the age of eighteen, and stayed at Baylor to study for a Master of Arts, which she completed in 1899.[1] After she taught public school in Waco for the next five years, the Baylor administration offered her a position in the English department in 1905. For several years, she taught a short story composition class, and in 1912 developed the first journalism course in the state.[2] The Modern Writer's Club represents another innovation that she brought to Baylor. As an activity for the club, the students wrote to author Frank R. Stockton concerning his famous short story, *The Lady or the Tiger?* Stockton returned Scarborough's correspondence, informing her that "people in the North are apt to say it was the lady, while my readers in the South are likely to favor the tiger."[3] Scarborough became one of the most beloved professors at Baylor University, and her students recalled that "as she passed you, you saw the safety pin which joined her shirt waist and skirt, showing below her belt in the back. But we loved her...she was never too busy to talk to a student..."[4]

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[1]Grider, "Dorothy Scarborough," 135; Wallace, 123.

[2]Grider, "Dorothy Scarborough," 136; Wallace, 123.

[3]Crawford and Ragsdale, 238-239.

[4]Wallace, 124.

Following the example of Lula Pace, Scarborough began traveling by train to the University of Chicago at the end of the spring quarter to enroll in summer courses from 1906 to 1910. Encouraged by her success with independent living and weary of the "undergrad grinds," Scarborough took a leave of absence from Baylor in 1910 through 1911 to travel abroad and study literature at Oxford University.[5] However, her usual enthusiasm for learning diminished when "after reaching there she learned that this celebrated university did not at that time deem women worthy of receiving a degree!"[6]

Scarborough used her experiences at Oxford as the foundation for her highly autobiographical manuscript *The Unfair Sex*, published serially in 1925 in *The Woman's Viewpoint*, a publication devoted to women's issues. Personifying Scarborough's point of view, her heroine, Nancy "Ginger" Carroll, is shocked to learn that "Oxford, the seat of intellectual development for the Anglo-Saxon world, was actually behind Texas when it came to giving women a chance for education."[7] Despite her frustrations with the university's sexist prejudices, she nevertheless considered her experience at Oxford an exhilarating one that expanded her intellectual horizons and brought her into contact with English authors such as Christopher Morley.[8] She said of her time there, "It was poetry to sit in the great halls that had seen centuries of students come to pass."[9]

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[5]Grider, "Folksong Scholarship," 97; Wallace, 125.

[6]Wallace, 125-126.

[7]Crawford and Ragsdale, 239; Wallace, 124, 126.

[8]Crawford and Ragsdale, 239.

[9]Wallace, 126.

Learning that several male students from Baylor were also in attendance at Oxford, Scarborough invited them to tea in her rooms. A friend exaggerated that "although she was old enough to be their mother, the Dean was adamant in her refusal," as English propriety forbade the mixing of male and female students.[10] However, Scarborough "outwitted" her opponent by giving a tea in his honor and inviting the Baylor students. As a friend observed, "The Dean could do nothing but be a gracious guest."[11]

Upon her return from Oxford, Scarborough published a collection of poetry entitled *Fugitive Verses*, which was recognized in a review of new poetry published in the *Dallas Morning News*. The author called her work a "volume of graceful verse that reveals a mind quick to respond to the call of humanity and the beauties of nature, and to see in even everyday incidents something that appeals to the imagination and the creative faculty."[12] Scarborough also joined the Texas Folklore Society, which had formed in her absence, became a lifelong member of the organization, and was elected president in 1914. Her presidential address, "Negro Ballads and Reels," represented the first public statement of her interest and expertise in folklore.[13] Scarborough served as president of the society until 1916, when she received another leave of absence from Baylor after the death of her parents to complete the residency work on her doctorate at Columbia University.[14] After she completed the requirements for a Ph.D. in English, G. P.

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[10]*Ibid.*

[11]*Ibid*.

[12]"'The Buccaneers' is New Book in Verse," *Dallas Morning News*, 10 February 1913.

[13]Grider, "Dorothy Scarborough," 136.

[14]Crawford and Ragsdale, 239; Grider, Dorothy Scarborough," 136-137.

Putnam's Sons published her dissertation, *The Supernatural in Modern English Fiction*, in 1917.[15] A review of her dissertation published in the *Dallas Morning News* described it as follows:

> *The Supernatural in Modern English Fiction* claims attention both for its subject matter and for the graceful style in which it is written. Much time has been spent in collecting the materials which go into the making of this scholarly work, and Miss Scarborough has traveled extensively in order to have access to the best sources of information. The books referred to are legion; the field is covered in a thorough and scholarly manner.
>
> Because the subject is, relatively speaking, contemporary, this book is much more readable than most works of a similar nature. Miss Scarborough follows up the advantage of a subject in which all may feel an interest by writing with natural grace and ease. She escapes the slightest suspicion of the pretension and pedantry which mar many scholarly dissertations.[16]

As Scarborough expressed throughout her work, critics also recognized that supernatural literature holds an almost universal appeal. With the publication of her dissertation, Columbia University invited Scarborough to teach courses in the short story and the novel. In 1923 she was appointed to the rank of assistant professor, and in April 1931 she became the second highest-ranking woman faculty member as an associate professor.[17] This promotion immediately became recognized as a breakthrough for women in the exceedingly conservative institution.[18]

While teaching at Columbia, Scarborough took pride in the fact that Carson McCullers, author of *The Heart is a Lonely Hunter* and *Member of the Wedding*, took her first courses under her. She also organized the Writers' Club at the university to

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[15]Wallace, 128.

[16]"Texas Woman Writes Work on Modern Fiction," *Dallas Morning News*, 3 December 1917.

[17]Crawford and Ragsdale, 240; "Dorothy Scarborough Promoted at Columbia," *Dallas Morning News*, 22 April 1931.

[18]"State Press," *Dallas Morning News*, 15 May 1931.

introduce her students to authors Edna Ferber and Hamlin Garland. For one year she worked for the *New York Sun* as a staff member for "Books and the Book World," but returned to teaching for the time it allowed to pursue her own writing.[19] Although Scarborough flourished in New York, she always identified herself first as a native Texan and second as a southerner, and never fancied herself a pioneer westerner.[20] She also remained a staunchly devout Baptist, commenting that, "In New York you need your religion more than you ever did before."[21]

Occultism and the Great War

With Scarborough's dissertation published in the same year as the beginning of America's involvement in World War I, the conflict clearly influenced both her interest and perception of the supernatural. Commenting on the sudden increase in interest in her subject, Scarborough stated in her dissertation, "I hesitate to suggest a reason for this sudden rising tide of occultism at this particular time, but it seems clear to me that the war has had much to do with it."[22] While *The Unfair Sex* certainly described Scarborough's time at Oxford, it remains unclear whether she, like her heroine, fell in love with a classmate who was killed in the early days of World War I.[23] If she did indeed know and love someone killed in combat, this traumatic experience would have only increased the war's effect on her. However, nothing in her surviving records

[19]Wallace, 128.

[20]Grider, "Dorothy Scarborough," 134.

[21]Crawford and Ragsdale, 241.

[22]Scarborough, *Supernatural*, 281.

[23]Grider, "Dorothy Scarborough," 136.

indicates the existence of such a person.[24] It is likely that Scarborough merely recognized that adding a romantic element to her story would benefit its popularity. Whether or not this particular aspect of Scarborough's autobiography is true, she clearly experienced the shock of World War I with the rest of the nation.

In historian John Milton Cooper, Jr's words, World War I constituted "an experience that profoundly, unsettlingly, and permanently altered how Americans viewed themselves and their place in the world."[25] According to Cooper, the initial shock of the war in America began with the sudden, unexpected outbreak of the war in 1914. However, at this point Americans predominantly viewed the war with an attitude of remoteness and detachment.[26] However, "nearly every American of any walk of life woke up to the possibility, the danger of involvement in World War I" when news of the sinking of the *Lusitania* on 7 May 1915 reached them. Of the more than one thousand who died on the liner, more than one hundred were Americans.[27] Instead of igniting cries for war as the sinking of the battleship *Maine* had done in 1898, pushing the nation into the Spanish-American War, most resisted the idea of becoming involved in the conflict.[28] Historian Robert Bolt contends that at this point in history, many individuals believed that humanity had progressed to a point disputes could be settled without resorting to

[24]Dorothy Scarborough Papers.

[25]John Milton Cooper, Jr., "The Shock of Recognition: The Impact of World War I on America," *The Virginia Quarterly Review*, 76 No. 4 (Autumn 2000), 567-568.

[26]*Ibid*., 568-569.

[27]*Ibid*., 574.

[28]*Ibid*., 575.

violence. Therefore, when the war broke out, the American people felt bitter disappointment.[29]

Although some, most notably Theodore Roosevelt and his friends, advocated strong action likely to lead to war, they represented a tiny minority.[30] Although public opinion polls did not exist at the time, a group of New York newspapers conducted the closest thing possible by asking editors around the country for their opinions regarding how the United States should respond to the *Lusitania* incident. Of one thousand editors who answered their request, only six called for war.[31] Many sentiments indicated that Americans typically adopted the selfish attitude of wanting no part of the war. Most believed that America would not benefit from the war and that foreign nations had brought it on themselves and should therefore not expect the American people to rescue them from the turmoil.[32] Just prior to World War I, public campaigns advocating world peace and arbitration had reached their peak.[33]

When America finally did join the war in the summer of 1917, a temporary nationalistic mania seemed to permeate nearly every aspect of American culture. Patriotic organizations sprang up almost instantly across the country as a spirit of vigilantism flourished, targeting everything from "suspiciously German foods to

[29]Robert Bolt, "World War I," in *The Wars of America: Christian Views*, ed. Ronald A. Wells (Macon, Georgia: Mercer University Press, 1991), 164.

[30]Cooper, 575.

[31]*Ibid*.

[32]Bolt, 164.

[33]Marsden, 186.

suspiciously German neighbors."[34] Once America became an active wartime participant, most of the peace advocates supported the decision. "Universal peace, they reasoned, might be possible only by the victory of those who were principled and ultimately champions of peace."[35]

President Woodrow Wilson provided a just-war rationale for entering the conflict, arguing that champions of restraint do not prevail in a time of war. America's churches became swept up in this wartime fervor along with the rest of the nation. Some clergy remained skeptical of unrestrained nationalism while others openly embraced it. According to George Marsden, "some of the latter virtually draped the flag over the cross so that one could no longer tell the difference between the two."[36] This new civil religion, which Marsden describes as popular and legal demands for complete loyalty, had reached a peak. One Methodist clergyman from Oregon told the Portland Rotary Club in 1918, "There is no place on the top side of American soil for a Pacifist….If you have one, shoot him. Don't talk peace to me; I don't want peace, I want righteousness."[37] During the war and in the following two decades, Americans were faced with the realization that they had become involved in world politics, whether they liked it or not.[38]

Although World War I temporarily brought most of the nation together in its patriotic fervor, its aftermath revealed bitter antagonisms, particularly between

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[34]David L. Herzberg, "Thinking Through the War: The Social Thought of Richard T. Ely, John R. Commons, and Edward A. Ross During the First World War," *Journal of the History of the Behavioral Sciences*, 37 No. 2 (Spring 2001), 123.

[35]Marsden, 186.

[36]*Ibid*., 186-187.

[37]*Ibid*.

[38]Cooper, 584.

fundamentalists and modernists in mainstream churches.[39] As a fully articulated doctrine of isolationism emerged prior to the war, an analogous development occurred in around the same time in American Protestantism: fundamentalism. Cooper notes that the term "fundamentalism" was not coined until 1909, and defines it as a conservative evangelical movement to preserve what proponents regarded as the fundamentals of the Christian faith.[40] Marsden provides a similar description, stating that the term was first used to describe a "coalition of militantly conservative Protestants who were trying to preserve the nineteenth-century revivalist Protestant establishment," but argues that it was not used until 1920.[41]

These fundamentalists viewed the world through images of warfare, fighting against liberal modernist theologies within their denomination and conspicuous trends toward secularism in popular culture. Defending Christian "fundamentals" implied a willingness to fight for certain doctrines that liberals denied.[42] Also known as premillennialists, fundamentalists believed that real hope for humanity lay not in creating a liberal civilization, but in Jesus' dramatic return to establish his millennial kingdom. Although these fundamental Protestants occasionally advocated pacifist views before the war, they became ardent patriots once the war broke out.

The sense of cultural crisis emphasized by the war transformed growing conflict over theological questions into heated debates.[43] Fundamentalists argued that dramatic

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[39]Marsden, 188.

[40]Cooper, 581.

[41]Marsden, 193.

[42]*Ibid*.

[43]*Ibid*., 188-189.

changes in moral attitudes, accelerated by the war, constituted evidence of the consequences of an increasingly liberal society. Conservative church leaders despised the new dances and short dresses of the flappers and, as one critic described, the transition from "the bended knee to the bared knee."[44] The war's sudden end in November 1918 left many Americans with an undirected zeal to fight for a holy cause. The Bolshevik communist revolution in 1917 and American labor strikes in 1919 led to the "red scare" and even some strong fears of a communist takeover. Though not responsible for these fears, fundamentalists fanned the flames, adding bolshevism to threats against national morality.[45]

Because Protestant Christianity was so closely associated with the centers of power in nineteenth-century America, many Protestants felt a strong impulse to keep up with cultural changes. These theological liberals, or modernists, believed that Christianity should not only keep up with, but provide leadership for, cultural and intellectual change by reinterpreting Christianity's traditions to fit modern ideals. This capacity for change made modernism very compatible with wartime patriotism. However, "building a progressive, democratic, worldwide civilization based on brotherhood of all people under the fatherhood of God" became the essence of liberal Protestant vision.[46]

Clearly, Dorothy Scarborough recognized the social, cultural, and religious impacts of World War I and viewed the conflict as a significant influence on the increase in supernaturalism in literature. In an article entitled "War and the Supernatural in

[44]*Ibid*., 191.

[45]*Ibid*., 190.

[46]*Ibid*., 188.

Current Literature" published in the journal *The Bookman: a Review of Books and Life* in 1918, she wrote, "While it is true that the ghostly has always been present in man's poetry and prose, both oral and written, from the earliest recorded time, there are periods when it seems to occupy more attention than at others….This love for the supernatural, manifest in literature as in life, though never absent, is more marked in the literature of the past twenty or thirty years than ever before."[47] She continued, stating, "This advance of ghosts in the twentieth century has shown a marked increase since the Great War began….This war has belittled ordinary thinking for us, so that we need superlative symbols, more than mortal images, to match the mighty swing of events. One does not go on merely thinking afternoon tea thoughts when a world a aflame, when the sword-point is at humanity's throat."[48]

In describing the influx of supernatural literature, Scarborough pointed out that a significant feature of many works associated with the war was their claim to hold legitimate communications from the dead. She describes a book written by a woman named Elsa Barker who claimed that the deceased Judge Hatch of California dictated her writings. According to Barker, Judge Hatch informed her that the war was planned in hell, of which Scarborough comments, "…which sounds more sensible than most postmortem statements. He is in a position, it would seem, to judge the comparative merits of the case, and does not side with Germany. The author entertains the Maeterlinekian theory that the war is a manifestation of a cosmic conflict, a struggle

[47]Dorothy Scarborough, "War and the Supernatural in Current Literature," *The Bookman: a Review of Books and Life* 47, No. 2 (April 1918), 115.

[48]*Ibid*., 116.

between the forces of evil and of good, of which the fight on earth is but an infinitesimal part."[49]

Scarborough describes another such claim from the *Journal of the American Society of Psychical Research*, which published an account of conversations believed to have been held with a Professor Hugo Münsterburg of Harvard, who asserted that the war made him sick and spoke of the "arrogant ignorance" of the German people, whose downfall he prophesied.[50] Scarborough clearly recognizes the American perspective of demonizing Germany and casting it as the ultimate evil while casting the Allied forces as the ultimate good in these works. However, she also acknowledges the more universal perspective of utter confusion and sense of being overwhelmed in the face of the atrocities of war with the statement, "We find the war supernaturalism in poems, stories, novels, and in the drama, and in the literature of all the countries involved in the conflict."[51]

The appearance and intervention of divinities represent another facet of supernatural literature associated with the war that Scarborough examines. As she asserts, "This war supernaturalism shows an interesting diversity of creatures, angelic, deific, satanic….The frequent and reverent use of the personality of God and of Christ in the literature of to-day suggests a return to the old religious mysticism of mediaevalism [sic], wherein divinity figured much in literature."[52] As an example of this type of literature, Scarborough describes a book entitled *A Legend of Ypres*, by Elinor Jenkins, in

[49]*Ibid*., 117.

[50]*Ibid*.

[51]*Ibid*., 118.

[52]*Ibid*.

which a scene depicts the spirits of slain soldiers in heaven looking down on a battlefield. Seeing the line about to fail, they beg God to allow them to go back and help their comrades. God indulges them, replying "Begone, then, foolish ones, and fight again!" to which the spirits reinforce the Allies and save the day.[53]

In addition to heavenly figures, Scarborough notes the appearance of the Devil in wartime literature as well. In her dissertation, she says of the his presentation:

> The devil has so changed his form and his manner of appearance in later literature that it is hard to identify him as his ancient self. In early stories he was heralded by supernatural thunder and lightning accompanied by a strong smell of sulphur [sic]. He dressed in character costume, sometimes in red, sometimes is black, but always indubitably diabolic. He wore horns, a forked tail, and cloven hoofs and was a generally unprepossessing creature whom anyone could know for a devil. Now his role is not so typical and his garb not so declarative. He wears an evening suit, a scholar's gown, a parson's robe, a hunting coat, with equal ease, and it is sometimes difficult to tell the devil from the hero of a modern story. He has been deodorized and no longer reeks warningly of the Pit.[54]

However, in the publication of her article only one year later, she revised her opinion of the typical characteristics attributed to the Devil as he appears in wartime literature:

> We may note an interesting change seen in this war diabolism from that of recent years, in that there is a reversion to type, a return of the old-fashioned, indubitable devil with physical make-up of horns, hoofs and tail, as well as with his demoniac character. The Satan of recent years—before the war, that is—had shown a leveling tendency, a more human nature than of old. We had come to sympathise [sic] with the fiend, to feel that there is so much of the human in the devil and so much of the devil in us that it would be unbecoming for us to treat him harshly. But now the demon is again the convenient fiend whom we can loathe conscientiously.[55]

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[53]*Ibid*.

[54]Scarborough, *The Supernatural in Modern English Fiction*, 131-132.

[55]Scarborough, "War and the Supernatural," 120-121.

This dramatic change in perception over the course of a single year indicates that Scarborough recognized the decisive impact of the war on both the American people and humanity as a whole.

In addition to contact with deceased spirits and heavenly and demonic entities, Scarborough acknowledges various other supernatural trends apparent in wartime literature. Metempsychosis, which she defines as "the thought that at death the soul of a human being may pass into another mortal body or into a lower stage, into an animal or even an plant."[56] What she identifies as "scientific supernaturalism" (essentially science fiction) and magic vision also constitute important trends.[57]

As an example of scientific supernaturalism, Scarborough describes a one-act play entitled *Efficiency*, a satire on war methods. "An inventor has perfected a plan of piecing together dismembered limbs of the slain, making living men out of fragments, thus sending more fighters back to the line. The ruler has one of these automatons appear before him, praising the scheme, but the machine-made thing revolts at a system that puts efficiency above humanity and slays the autocrat."[58] Clearly, literature began reflecting the public's reaction to the horrors associated with the technology developed during the war. Since the sinking of the *Lusitania* in 1915, American newspapers had devoted a great deal of coverage to the war, carrying photographs from the front. Furthermore, by this point, news of the first use of poison gas had reached the American people. As described by Cooper, Americans began to think to the war as "a big, dirty, horrendously

[56]Scarborough, *The Supernatural in Modern English Fiction*, 189.

[57]Scarborough, "War and the Supernatural," 121-122.

[58]*Ibid*., 122.

mechanized war."[59] Exploring this sentiment, Scarborough wrote, "The scientific aspects are less frequent now than in other supernaturalism, perhaps because man has been so stunned by the emotional side of the war, by the brutal facts of horror, that his brain cannot busy itself with the intellectual concepts necessary for the scientific ghostliness previously popular."[60] Written in a manner that almost generates the appearance of an afterthought, Scarborough noted the decline of humor as another trend indicative of supernatural wartime literature, writing, "But the humorous supernaturalism, which has been so prominent a feature in our twentieth century unearthliness, is rare. We can readily understand that, for no one is inclined to be funny over the war, not even the ghosts that have waxed merry in recent years."[61]

In assessing the literary value of war supernaturalism, Scarborough expressed a general lack of enthusiasm for the plays and novels, identifying them as "…weak, too turgid and sensational, too obviously written for occasion and for national emotions to have wide appeal," and stating that, "…one wonders if any of them will live long after the war."[62] The short stories earn slightly higher approval, though, it seems, not for their content, but for their brevity. Scarborough explained, "Perhaps the reason for that [the superiority of short stories over dramas and novels] lies in the fact that the ghostly is better expressed in brief form than at length, since the unearthly thrill cannot hold for long without too great a strain upon the nerves of the reader or audience."[63] Despite her

[59]Cooper, 575-576.

[60]Scarborough, "War and the Supernatural," 123.

[61]*Ibid*.

[62]*Ibid*.

[63]*Ibid*.

lack of esteem for other forms of literature pertaining to the war, Scarborough described the poetry as "…on the whole, of a more genuine power and [having] more depth of feeling, more sympathy and comprehension, than any of the other types."[64] As a quintessential example of supernatural wartime poetry, Scarborough said of Katherine Tynan's work, "Her poems of the pitiful ghosts of war touch both the heart and the spinal cord….No literature of the war supernaturalism has touched me so deeply as her verse. If all literature were like hers, we should have a compensation for the conflict,—but some of the poems and plays are calculated to add a new terror to war."[65]

In addition to acknowledging the impact of the war on supernatural literature, Scarborough also obviously recognized the merits of literature as sort of barometer for society's general attitudes and reactions to the war. In spite of the shock and despair associated with the war, it generated a vast increase in interest in the supernatural.

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[64] *Ibid*.

[65] *Ibid*., 124.

CHAPTER FOUR

The Supernatural in *The Wind*

While continuing her teaching career at Columbia, Scarborough became more ambitious concerning her career as a writer. In 1919 she published the whimsical extended essay *From a Southern Porch*, documenting her time as a summer house guest in her sister's elegant home in Richmond, Virginia.[1]

A *Dallas Morning News* article devoted to the activities of authors and publishers in 1919 announced Scarborough's work on *From a Southern Porch*, quoting an excerpt from the preface:

> Books in abundance have been written about houses and the people who live in them, as there are various volumes concerning gardens and the joy of digging in the patient earth. But nobody has written a book about porches, which seems to me monstrous ingratitude. For how many works of literature have been composed on porches or inspired by them! How often has Pegasus got a famous start some rocking chair on a dreamy veranda! And how many stodgy books there are, which might have leaped and run afield with vinous life, if only they had been porch-written![2]

Because her dissertation had enjoyed such popularity, she also began editing and contributing to ghost story anthologies, including *Famous Modern Ghost Stories* and *Humorous Ghost Stories*, both published in 1921.[3] *Famous Modern Ghost Stories* enjoyed so much success, that Scarborough's publishers allowed the American Printing

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[1]Grider, "Dorothy Scarborough," 137.

[2]"What Authors and Publishers are Doing: Serious and Frivolous Items about the Folks who Make the Books," *Dallas Morning News*, 28 September 1919.

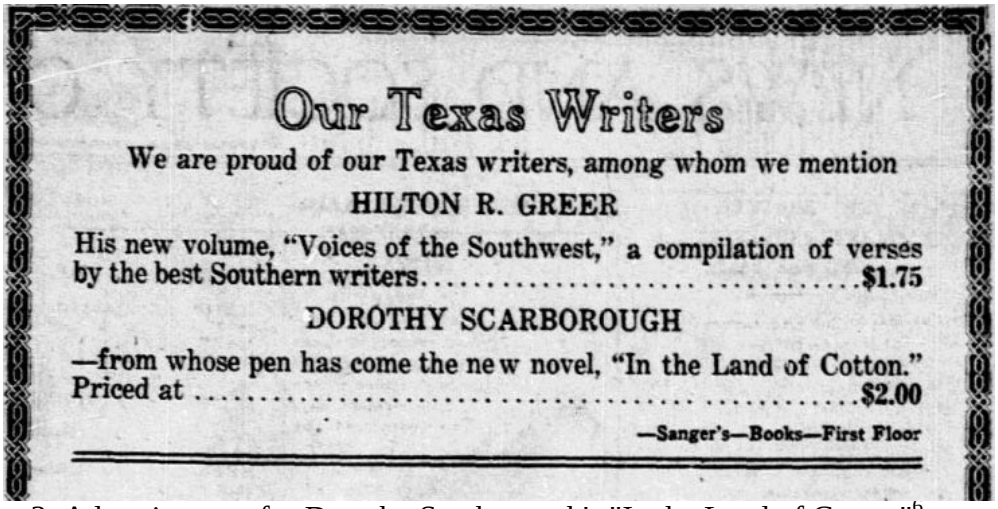
[3]*Ibid.*; Luther Jerry Truett, "The Negro Element in the Life and Works of Dorothy Scarborough," Master's thesis, Baylor University, Waco, Texas, 1967, 36.

House for the Blind to publish an edition of the book in Braille.[4] Following the example of Frank Norris's trilogy on wheat, Scarborough published her first novel, *In the Land of Cotton*, in 1923 as the initial volume in a projected trilogy dealing with cotton farming. When Scarborough published *In the Land of Cotton*, the *Dallas Morning News* published an extensive review of the novel, praising its accurate description and critique of the tenant farmer system in Texas:

> This is an American novel, fashioned of materials as distinctly and truly Texas as if an exact and all-inclusive moving picture had been made, and its characters had been granted the gift of speech. It is a faithful transcript of Texas life, or rather that cross-section of it which touches the very foundations upon which Texas has been built….The hero of the book is young Ben Wilson, son of a tenant farmer, who dared to lift his eyes to the daughter of Jerry Llewellyn and cherished ambitions to rise above the level to which fate and cotton and the landlord system had held the tenant class. It is about this boy, his struggles, his sacrifices, his disappointments and his fine manliness that the interest of the reader centers. And the poignancy of the tale is deepened, its unerring truth to life is demonstrated when, at the last, fate and cotton and the landlord system have their way with him….On its purposeful side, the book is a condemnation of the one-crop system to which the farmers of Texas have been held by inexorable economic forces and a denunciation of methods by which credit has been extended to the tenant classes; it is an argument for diversification and for improved methods of marketing as a means of assuring equitable returns to all producers of cotton.[5]

[4]Dorothy Scarborough Papers.

[5]"Our Texas Writers," *Dallas Morning News*, 21 May 1923; "Novel of Texas Tells of Cotton Field and Life on a Plantation," *Dallas Morning News*, 20 May 1923.



Our Texas Writers

We are proud of our Texas writers, among whom we mention

HILTON R. GREER

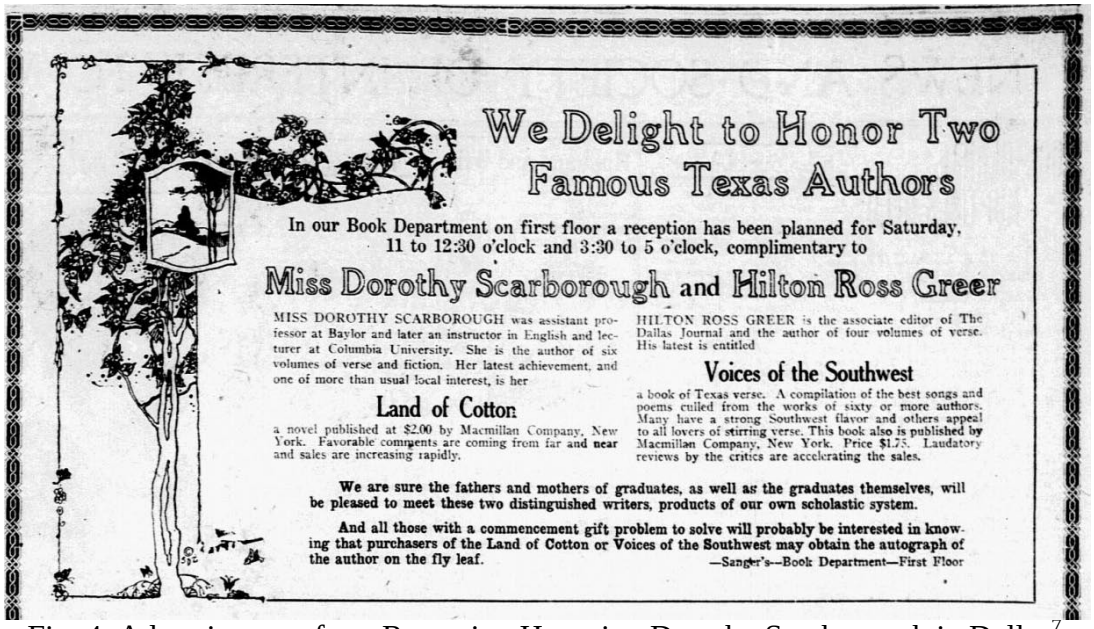
His new volume, "Voices of the Southwest," a compilation of verses by the best Southern writers.....$1.75

DOROTHY SCARBOROUGH

—from whose pen has come the new novel, "In the Land of Cotton." Priced at $2.00

—Sanger's—Books—First Floor

Fig. 3. Advertisement for Dorothy Scarborough's "In the Land of Cotton"[6]



We Delight to Honor Two Famous Texas Authors

In our Book Department on first floor a reception has been planned for Saturday, 11 to 12:30 o'clock and 3:30 to 5 o'clock, complimentary to

Miss Dorothy Scarborough and Hilton Ross Greer

MISS DOROTHY SCARBOROUGH was assistant professor at Baylor and later an instructor in English and lecturer at Columbia University. She is the author of six volumes of verse and fiction. Her latest achievement, and one of more than usual local interest, is her

Land of Cotton

a novel published at $2.00 by Macmillan Company, New York. Favorable comments are coming from far and near and sales are increasing rapidly.

HILTON ROSS GREER is the associate editor of The Dallas Journal and the author of four volumes of verse. His latest is entitled

Voices of the Southwest

a book of Texas verse. A compilation of the best songs and poems culled from the works of sixty or more authors. Many have a strong Southwest flavor and others appeal to all lovers of stirring verse. This book also is published by Macmillan Company, New York. Price $1.75. Laudatory reviews by the critics are accelerating the sales.

We are sure the fathers and mothers of graduates, as well as the graduates themselves, will be pleased to meet these two distinguished writers, products of our own scholastic system.

And all those with a commencement gift problem to solve will probably be interested in knowing that purchasers of the Land of Cotton or Voices of the Southwest may obtain the autograph of the author on the fly leaf.

—Sanger's—Book Department—First Floor

Fig. 4. Advertisement for a Reception Honoring Dorothy Scarborough in Dallas[7]

[6] *Ibid.*

[7] " We Delight to Honor Two Famous Texas Authors," *Dallas Morning News*, 25 May 1923.

In the Land of Cotton was clearly at least mildly successful, as Scarborough and Hilton Ross Greer, associate editor of *The Dallas Journal* and author of several volumes of poetry, were honored with a book signing in Dallas.[8]

In an article published in the *Dallas Morning News* on 15 July 1923, Scarborough announced that she would write two more books on cotton to complete the trilogy as well as a collection of African-American folklore entitled "Negro Folk Songs of the South":

> Cotton here has been of interest to me for a long time. There is a poetry, a romance, a drama in cotton which has been neglected. Cotton is the very life of the South, but there has been almost nothing written about it. I've been thinking about the drama of cotton for a long time, and I plan a triology [sic] of novels on cotton. There will be two more novels, one on manufacturing cotton and the other on the cotton exchange….
> My next book, however, is not on cotton, but is connected with cotton. It is "Negro Folk Songs of the South," a collection of negro secular songs and their melodies. The book is nearly completed and will be published next spring.[9]

Of course, "Negro Folk Songs of the South" became *On the Trail of Negro Folksong*, published in 1925. In recognition of her work, Baylor awarded her an honorary Doctor of Letters degree.[10] After the publication of *In the Land of Cotton,* Scarborough said of Texas literature:

> There is wonderful literary material in Texas, and there has been little done with it….A friend of mine here suggested the other day that in ten years flocks of writers would be coming to Texas to write about it. But we don't want outsiders coming here to write. There is too much of the superficial in fiction already. What we need is those who can write with real sympathy, because they have lived

[8]*Ibid.*

[9]"Dorothy Scarborough, Texas Novelist, Will Write Two More Novels on Cotton," *Dallas Morning News*, 15 July 1923.

[10]Grider, "Dorothy Scarborough," 137; Wallace, 128.

> here and know Texas. And why should Texas writers ever seek outside for material? Here is a wonderful literary field, practically untouched.[11]

Texas enjoys a rich literary tradition most commonly identified with Anglo male writers of the early to middle twentieth century who dealt with the birth of the republic, the range cattle industry, and the discovery of oil.[12] From the 1920s through the 1940s, J. Frank Dobie dominated the field. Widely known as "Mr. Texas," he exercised considerable control over what was published about Texas, and like most men of his generation, took little notice of the literary accomplishments of his female contemporaries and their predecessors. This sentiment was typical of Texas culture, and the "Texas Mystique" was described as "paternalistic, chauvinistic, wealthy, aggressive, friendly, exploitative, prejudiced, independent, optimistic, enterprising, boisterous," and exclusively male.[13] However, in spite of being left out of the Mystique, women played a crucial role in the development of Texas culture and literature.

In part because of exclusion from the Mystique, the literature of Texas women developed as radically different from their male counterparts. Instead of focusing on high times and heroism, women writers focused more on the human problems of personal relationships and maintaining stability in times of crisis, as well as examining the qualities that sometimes were left out of the Mystique: humor, loyalty, betrayal, decency, paradox, faith, and steadfastness. Their tendency to ignore the mythic image of Texas

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[11]"Dorothy Scarborough, Texas Novelist, Will Write Two More Novels on Cotton," *Dallas Morning News*, 15 July 1923.

[12]Handbook of Texas Online, Sylvia Grider and Lou Rodenberger, "Handbook of Texas Online—WOMEN AND LITERATURE," Available from http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/WW/kzwcuprint.html, Internet, accessed 2 February 2010.

[13]*Ibid*.

culture and people produced a body of literature distinct from the more traditional male writers, but not as widely known.[14] As an example of Texas women's writing that received as much attention and recognition as much of the work of her male contemporaries, *The Wind* represents a triumph not only for Scarborough herself, but also for Texas women writers in general.

1925 marked the high point in Scarborough's writing career with the publication of *The Unfair Sex*, *On the Trail of Negro Folksong*, which brought her national acclaim and which many consider her most significant work, and her most famous, highly controversial novel, *The Wind*.[15] Set in frontier Sweetwater, Texas, during the drought of the mid-1880s and chronicling the story of Letty, the delicate and sensitive heroine from Virginia, *The Wind* was based upon Scarborough's mother's memories of living in Sweetwater. The combined elemental and perceived demonic forces of the wind and sand ultimately drive Letty to madness, murder, and suicide.[16]

Though primarily focusing on the effects of the harsh Texas climate, Scarborough intertwined her affinity for both folklore and the supernatural into her novel. Weaving in snatches of folksong throughout the story, she characterized the wind after the ballad image of the Demon Lover.[17] At the height of her crisis, Letty examines the events that led to her demise. "Her mind went on searching out the line by which events had

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[14]*Ibid*.

[15]Grider, "Dorothy Scarborough," 137; Wallace, 130.

[16]Grider, "Dorothy Scarborough," 138; Wallace, 129.

[17]Grider, "Dorothy Scarborough," 138.

happened. It was all so clear now. It was the work of the diabolical wind."[18] In a reply to a letter from the proprietor of a Dallas bookshop commenting on the popularity of the book, Scarborough explained *The Wind*'s origin:

> I was impelled to write the book just at the time I did by a certain incident. I had invited Edna Ferber to speak to the Writers' Club of Columbia University, and I was coming up to the hall with her in a taxicab. She said, "I'm nervous today, and I don't know why."
>
> "Probably because of the high wind that's blowing," I told her. "That affect's ones nerves decidedly."
>
> She looked surprised and said, "I had never though of that."
>
> Then I told her of our Texas winds and sands, and how hard they are on women. I told her the story I meant to write, of the effect of wind and sand and drought on a nervous, sensitive woman not used to the environment. I quoted our Texas saying, "Never mind the weather so the wind don't blow."
>
> "What perfectly wonderful material for a story!" she cried. "I'd give anything for it!"
>
> "But you can't have it," I laughed, "it's my story. And anyway, no one could write it who hadn't lived in Texas."
>
> "It is folk-material of the richest sort," she went on. "Don't fail to write that story."[19]

Upon the novel's publication, Scarborough's editor at Harper and Brothers suggested that the novel be published anonymously "to arouse the reading public to the point where it will buy *The Wind* in commercially profitable quantities."[20] The anonymity proved wise, as the book infuriated many West Texans with its harsh description of the climate's effects.[21] Scarborough's anonymous publication of *The Wind*

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[18]Dorothy Scarborough, *The Wind* (New York: Harper, 1925), 332.

[19]Sylvia Ann Grider, foreword to *The Wind* by Dorothy Scarborough (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1979), ix.

[20]Wallace, 129.

[21]*Ibid*.

immediately generated controversy and speculation concerning its author. An article in the *Dallas Morning News* offered extensive speculations:

> But here is the enigma: Who wrote *The Wind*? It has been brought out anonymously. The suave representative of Harper & Bros. [sic] who travels through our part of the world taking orders for this and other items on the Harper list made statements about the author of this new novel that were both vague, and tantalizing. The author lives or has lived among us, and is well known to us all. He (or she) has written another book under his own name, perhaps other books. Some have guessed that the author is Ruth Cross; others vow that it must be Dorothy Scarborough. Still others wonder in Karle Wilson Baker has forsaken poetry for fiction.[22]

Dallas Morning News writer Victoria Ferguson conducted an interview with Dorothy Scarborough published on 1 November 1925, in which they discuss possible authors of *The Wind*:

> "Have you read *The Wind*?"
> "Yes," she answered with no emotion.
> "What do you think of it?"
> "Well," said Miss Scarborough, fingering her pencil, "it seems to me a sincere study of a certain aspect of Texas life. I think that the author must be some one who knows Texas, for this story couldn't have been written from a Pullman car window. It is presumably by a person who knows West Texas especially…There is something about *The Wind* that makes me feel that some one who writes poetry must have done it. There is Hilton Greer, for instance. He used to live on the Plains and was no doubt chummy with horns and rattlers and the rest of Texas material."
> "But many readers," I interrupted, "think it is yours."
> As far as I could tell, Miss Scarborough neither jumped with surprise nor blushed with pride. She did, however, do something with her jolly brown eyes, sparkling from out her horn-rims, which made me feel quite comfortable. I began to forget the purpose of my visit and to take a great interest in the professor herself.[23]

[22]"About Books and Authors," *Dallas Morning News*, 25 October 1925.

[23]"Texans in New York Are Uncertain About Authorship of *The Wind*," *Dallas Morning News*, 1 November 1925.

Understandably, the most violent reactions toward the novel came from Sweetwater, and although never substantiated, rumors of public burnings of the book spread.[24] In 1925, R. C. Crane, a Sweetwater lawyer and president of the West Texas Historical Association, wrote a six-point denunciation of Scarborough's novel. Published in several newspapers, including the *Dallas Morning News*, his diatribe accused Scarborough of deliberately distorting the facts to increase sales, and he denounced the book for what he considered faulty local color, incorrect cowboy lingo, "spurious natural history," inaccurate terminology, and "deplorable ignorance" of local geography.[25] Scarborough finally felt compelled to defend herself anonymously. She replied, "Has the West Texas wind got on your nerves, Mr. Crane, and the sand blinded you to the difference between a novel and a historical treatise?...A novelist writes impressionistically, and fiction need conform only to the essential truth of a time or place. I still think my book does that."[26]

Public opinion in Texas finally softened when Scarborough at last revealed her authorship.[27] In early 1926, the *Dallas Morning News* published the announcement: "Harper & Bros. today, with the consent of the author, announce that the recently published novel, *The Wind*, is the work of Dorothy Scarborough. *The Wind* was

[24]Grider, Foreword, x.

[25]*Ibid.*, x-xi.

[26]*Ibid.*, xi.

[27]Grider, "Dorothy Scarborough," 138.

published anonymously and many guesses have been made as to its authorship."[28] Although no record of Crane's response to her defense exists, the two did ultimately meet face to face. In 1928 the Sweetwater Chamber of Commerce invited her for a visit. Scarborough charmed her audience and proved her sense of humor by quoting from a letter her mother had written just after moving to Waco. Complaining of the dry heat, she said, "Oh, how I long for a Sweetwater breeze!"[29]

After a luncheon, Judge Crane took Scarborough on a drive through the countryside to point out inaccuracies in her descriptions. However, a northerner blew in, and they barely made it back to town. As another scholar observed, "Judge Crane had nothing to say. It was a vindication and an answer."[30] Along with criticism, *The Wind* also enjoyed great popularity. It achieved such success that its adaptation for film was announced in 1927:

> It has been announced that Victor Seastrom of Dallas will be director for the picturization [sic] of *The Wind*, a novel of West Texas in the late '80s of which Dorothy Scarborough, formerly of Baylor, is the author. Also it is announced that the intention of the producing company is to make it one of the big features of the coming season's production program. Miss Scarborough, who is aiding in many ways in gathering authentic data and "props" for the production, has sent many letters asking for photographs of Texans and of ranch scenes of the 1886-88 period…[31]

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[28]"About Books and Authors: Publishers Tell Who Wrote *The Wind*," *Dallas Morning News*, 31 January 1926.

[29]Grider, Forward, xii.

[30]*Ibid.*

[31]"Texas Club of New York to Give Big Fancy Dress Ball on San Jacinto Day," *Dallas Morning News*, 10 April 1927.

Actress Lillian Gish read the novel and convinced Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer to make a movie of it, and she played the starring role. Scarborough herself traveled to Hollywood to write the screenplay, and became close friends with Gish, who remembered the filming in the Mojave Desert as one of her most difficult acting experiences.[32]

The Wind constitutes an excellent representation of Scarborough's use of the supernatural while simultaneously exploring many other subjects. Many interpretations and descriptions of Scarborough's novel exist, yet they all acknowledge the importance of the supernatural element as an integral feature.

Susan Kollin, author of "Race, Labor, and the Gothic Western: Dispelling Frontier Myths in Dorothy Scarborough's *The Wind*," an article published in the journal *Modern Fiction Studies*, argued that "Scarborough dismantles myths of national identity and regional promise that have traditionally shaped Euro-American narratives about the West."[33] *The Wind*, Kollins contends, shows how the themes of Euro-American freedom, frontier heroism, and the infallibility of the national mission present in the typical Western, can only exist through the repression of concerns for nature, race, and empire.[34] Traditional Westerns expressed ideas about the inevitability of Manifest Destiny and celebrated notions of frontier promise and independence, while the anti-Western disrupted this confidence by examining how such Western myths repressed the underside

[32]Grider, Forward, xii; Wallace, 130.

[33]Susan Kollins, "Race, Labor, and the Gothic Western: Dispelling Frontier Myths in Dorothy Scarborough's *The Wind*," *Modern Fiction Studies*, 46 No. 3 (Fall 2000), 675-676.

[34]*Ibid.*, 676.

of American history and culture. Kollins traces the anti-Western to the Gothic novel, indicating that Scarborough borrowed heavily from this genre in her creation of *The Wind*.[35]

Although Kollins omits the reference, Scarborough's inclusion of the Gothic romance in her dissertation indicates that she had extensive experience with this form of literature. According to Scarborough's description, supernaturalism is intimately tied to the Gothic romance:

> The real precursor of supernaturalism in modern English literature was the Gothic novel. That odd form might be called a brief in behalf of banished romance, since it voiced a protest against the excess of rationalism and realism in the early eighteenth century. Too great correctness and restraint must always result in proportionate liberty. As the eternal swing of the pendulum of literary history, the ebb and flow of fiction inevitably bring a reaction against any extreme, so it was with the fiction of the period. The mysterious twilights of medievalism invited eyes tired of the noonday glare of Augustan formalism. The natural had become familiar to monotony, hence men craved the supernatural. And so the Gothic novel came into being.[36]

Thus, according to Kollins's interpretation, even without additional elements of the supernatural present in *The Wind*, the mere form of the novel links it to a genre essentially concerned with supernaturalism.

Scarborough emphasizes the importance of setting in the Gothic romance:

> In the terror tale the relationship between supernatural effect and Gothic architecture, scenery, and weather is strongly stressed. Everything is ordered to fit the Gothic plan, and the conformity becomes in time conventionally monotonous….From a study of Gothic architecture was but a step to the writing of romance that should reproduce the mysteries of feudal times, for the shadows on ancient, gloomy castles and cloisters suggested the shades of ghost-haunted fiction, of morbid terrors….

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[35]*Ibid*.

[36]Scarborough, *The Supernatural in Modern English Fiction*, 6.

> The Gothic castle itself is represented as possessing all the antique glooms that increase the effect of mystery and awe, and its secret passage-ways, its underground vaults and dungeons, its trap-doors, its mouldy [sic], spectral chapel, from a fit setting for the unearthly visitants that haunt it….The harassed heroine is forever wandering through midnight corridors of Gothic structure. And indeed, the opportunity for unearthly phenomena is much more spacious in the vast piles of antiquity than in our bungalows or apartment-houses.[37]

Setting is likewise a vital element in *The Wind*, as Letty is removed from her beloved home in Virginia and forced into the harsh Texas landscape. According to Kollins, Scarborough intentionally employs Gothic tropes in her novel to dismantle Western myths, especially the idea of exceptionalism. Thus, *The Wind* is set in Texas for specific purposes. As a region shaped by the multinational and multicultural influences of Indians, Mexicans, and Anglos, Texas becomes an unfixed geography, neither entirely western nor southern. By placing her novel in a geographically ambiguous region, Scarborough enables her novel to employ elements of the Gothic novel to attack the idea that the West remains somehow historically different from other American regions.[38] Kollins cites author Teresa A. Goddu's interpretation of *The Wind*, in which she stated that although America "did not have crumbling castles and antiquated traditions, it did have in the Indian a symbol of a ruined and conquered past."[39]

Kollins argues that *The Wind* recasts the romance of the West, which drives European Americans in search of freedom and adventure, as an act of conquest, displacing the Native and Mexican inhabitants. Scarborough's anti-western novel

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[37]*Ibid*., 8-9.

[38]Kollins, 678.

[39]*Ibid*., 683; Teresa A. Goddu, *Gothic America: Narrative, History, and Nation* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 55.

portrays the interplay between frontier romance and imperial adventure as the buried past of the Southwest Indians.[40] In recounting the history of white settlement in Texas, Lige, a neighboring cowboy whom Letty eventually marries, finds that he cannot narrate it without referencing the people who previously claimed the land:

> He pictured how the Indians used to shoot them [the buffalo] with their bows and arrows, or sometimes, when other means failed, they would drive herds of them over a precipice….He told her of the Indians that had formerly ranged on western plains, wild and free as the buffaloes—the Comanches, the Apaches, and the Kiowas—and described their battles, their marauding expeditions, when they would swoop down on some lone settler's ranch, fire his house, kill the family, perhaps, drive off the cattle and horses, and escape to the trackless plains where the white man could scarcely find them.[41]

In typical Gothic American literature, the arrival of white settlers is understood to doom the American Indian, who is typically relegated to the distant past. This Gothicized Indian serves as a ghostly reminder of a dangerous, yet enticing national history. *The Wind*, however, provides a critique of the nation's expansionist ideologies instead of simply replicating these conventional uses of the Indian.[42] This is evident in Lige's account of the story of Cynthia Ann Parker:

> He told her the tragic story of Cynthia Ann Parker, into whose life despair came twice—the little white girl who was stolen from her family by the Indians, and somehow escaped the death or torture that was the usual fate. How she all but died of homesickness, when she had to resign herself to life among the Indians, while her family and friends at first made efforts to recapture her and finally gave her up as dead….
>
> "She had got over grieving for her folks, and settled down to live as an Indian. But the whites came to fight the Indians after some raid the red devils had made. The Texas rangers came after them to settle up the scores…."

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[40]*Ibid*., 681.

[41]Kollins, 681; Scarborough, *The Wind*, 57-58.

[42]Kollins, 683.

> "The rangers took her prisoner, and her baby that she had with her….She tried every way to get away from them, as if she was as anxious then to be an Injun as she must 'a' been to get back to her home when the redskins first took her. At last her folks recognized her for Cynthia Ann Parker."
>
> "She broke her heart grievin' over it," he responded grimly. "She was more of an Injun then than a white person, and her child was somewhere on the plains, she didn't know where. Her folks watched her so close she didn't have no chance to get away, and, anyhow, the tribe was scattered and her man killed, so she just set and mourned, with a look on her face fir to make a stone cry, folks said. First her baby died, Prairie Flower, and then the mother went, too. She never did get reconciled…."[43]

Thus, a Gothicized Indian returns to disrupt conventional Western narratives just as a Gothic nature is designed to unsettle these myths.[44]

However, Kollins reads too much into her interpretation of Scarborough's work, particularly her choice of setting. Like the Gothic novels described in her dissertation, I believe that Scarborough selected Texas because it lends itself to the psychological and supernatural terrors she designed to attack Letty. As she related to her friend, Texas novelist Edna Ferber, Scarborough sought to write a novel documenting the effects of the wind on a nervous, sensitive woman not prepared to deal with it.[45] With her background in American folklore and childhood years spent in Sweetwater, she knew the region well enough to accurately describe the hardships the wind in Texas can bring and incorporate legends of the wind as a living, demonic force intent on destroying her heroine.

Although Kollins offers a different interpretation of *The Wind*, she nonetheless identifies supernatural elements as an essential feature in the analysis of Scarborough's

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[43]Scarborough, *The Wind*, 58-60.

[44]Kollins, 683.

[45]Grider, Foreword, ix.

work. Supernatural images of nature appear throughout the novel, particularly the wind. Letty consistently refers to the wind as a demonic force intent on terrorizing her and the other white settlers: "Outside, nothing but vast, desolate stretches of sand and dead grass, with a few stalks of bear grass with its spears frayed by the wind, stunted mesquite bushes, cactus, and prickly-pear!...and a demoniac wind lying in wait to torment its victims, a wind that was as knowing and as cruel as a devil or a maniac!"[46]

Lige and Sourdough, his close friend, business partner, and neighbor, also describe the wind in demonic terms when they relate to Letty the legend of a wild demonic stallion:

> "They say some of these stallions weren't just flesh and blood, weren't living horses, but something that did not die," he went on musingly. "Spirits, you might say they were; maybe devils. You'll often hear of a pacing white stallion that couldn't never be taken, that laughed at your lasso. They'll tell you of a big black horse that no man living could come near to. You could see him racing over the prairies, when dusk began to come, going as fast as the wind. You could see his mane floating back like a black banner, you could hear him neighing. But no lariat was ever made that could capture him."…"He hasn't been caught, at any rate. If you see him you can know him, because his hoofs are like fire, they say, and his mane and tail stream in the wind, and he neighs at night, as he goes like the norther when it sweeps over the plain."…
> Sourdough spoke up. "Some folks say he comes ahead of a storm. An' maybe that's the reason they've thought they've seed him about here so much."…
> "I'll dream of cyclones and demon horses!" [Letty said].[47]

Rather than attempting to criticize the Western genre, Scarborough placed her novel in Texas merely for the convenience of experience and appropriate folklore. The appearance of Gothic elements in *The Wind* shares similar origins. Instead of incorporating elements of Gothic literature for specific purposes, as Kollins suggested,

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[46]Kollins, 682; Scarborough, *The Wind*, 105-106.

[47]Scarborough, *The Wind*, 154-155.

these traits appear in Scarborough's novel simply because of her experience with them. In writing her dissertation, Scarborough certainly spent a great deal of time studying Gothic literature and analyzing its typical components, so it is no surprise to find them manifested in some form in her own fictional works.

Scholars John C. Orr and Carole Slade provide similar overreaching analyses of *The Wind* as well. Orr argues that Scarborough creates a fully developed domestic heroine and places her in the setting for a Western novel.[48] These two genres represent antithetical forms of literature, with the domestic novel described as celebrating the life of a young woman surrounded by other women who guide her toward self-fulfillment, while the Western focuses on an adult male in the company of other men, though the hero's identity is often intertwined with independence from society.

Orr contends that "Scarborough negotiates a position between the masculine mythos of the Western and the feminine sphere of the domestic novel that allows her to critique the essentialist gender identity of each."[49] Citing Scarborough's poem "To George Eliot" in her book of poetry, *Fugitive Verses*, Orr argues that she describes her ideal individual in her praise of the novelist for possessing "man's great brain allied with woman's heart."[50] However, unlike the pioneer women who "could shoulder rifles and stave off Indians side by side with their husbands," Letty comes from a society where women led "tranquil lives, waited on by servants, keeping an exquisite daintiness of body

[48]John C. Orr, "When East Meets West: Rethinking the Domestic Heroine and the Western: Dorothy Scarborough's *The Wind*," *Pacific Coast Philology*, 31 No. 1 (1996), 108.

[49]*Ibid*., 107.

[50]*Ibid*., 111; Scarborough, *Fugitive Verses*, 66.

and mind, in spacious, leisured ease and comfort," and thus lacks any of the masculine traits that would allow her to adjust to life in Texas.[51]

Instead, as a product of a patriarchal culture, Letty becomes the malleable object of the masculine forces of both Wirt Roddy and the environment. Lacking the training to make a living and thus enter the masculine realm of self-fulfillment, Letty is forced to depend on men to support her: first her cousin Beverly, and then Lige.[52]

Cora, Cousin Beverly's wife, presented in contrast to Letty, "had a personality that was acutely conscious of itself, that never for one moment forgot its ego, and would suffer no one about her to forget it….Cora was thoroughly a woman, though with a slashing selfishness by some considered masculine."[53] While Letty's deficiency results from her lack of masculine traits and training, if Scarborough's perfect woman combines a man's head with a woman's heart, Cora lacks the latter.[54] In casting Letty as the helpless female victim of masculine forces, Orr invariably identifies the supernatural elements of *The Wind*, specifically Scarborough's references to the wind as Letty's "demon lover."[55]

In the novel's closing scene, Scarborough reaffirms the wind as the primary acting force in Letty's destruction, and leaves no doubt concerning its gender: "Why struggle against a force that was a devil, and all-powerful? She had known all along that

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[51]*Ibid*., 116; Scarborough, *The Wind*, 63.

[52]Orr, 115-116.

[53]*Ibid*., 117; Scarborough, *The Wind*, 94.

[54]Orr, 117.

[55]*Ibid*., 115; Scarborough, *The Wind*, 4.

the wind would get her!...With a laugh that strangled on a scream, the woman sped to the door, flung it open and rushed out. She fled across the prairies like a leaf blown in a gale, borne along in the force of the wind that was at last to have its way with her."[56]

Carole Slade presents a similar analysis of *The Wind*, arguing that it contains an analysis of the ways in which the authority of a patriarchal society, symbolized by the wind personified as a masculine force, incapacitates a woman's quest for authorship of her own life.[57] As Scarborough indicated, Letty's helplessness derives from her childhood in the patriarchal society of antebellum Virginia: "Letty was a helpless young girl that had always been treated like a child….The men in her family had always taken care of the women."[58]

In Texas, Letty encounters a different kind of patriarchal society that attacks rather than shelters women. Scarborough reverses gender roles of the male protagonist and female landscape typically portrayed in the American novel, instead presenting a landscape where the violent, masculine forces of nature resist the feminine impulses toward settlement: "In the old days [the time of the novel's action] the winds were the enemies of women. Did they hate them because they saw in them the symbols of that civilization which might gradually lessen their own power?...The winds were cruel to women that came under their tyranny."[59]

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[56]Orr, 115; Scarborough, *The Wind*, 337.

[57]Carole Slade, "Authorship and Authority in Dorothy Scarborough's *The Wind*," *Studies in American Fiction*, 14 (Spring 1986), 85.

[58]*Ibid*., 86; Scarborough, *The Wind*, 115.

[59]*Ibid*., 87; *Ibid*., 3.

Lacking the physical and emotional strength to withstand the harsh environment, Letty succumbs to it. Her terror of the masculine force of the wind drives her into a loveless marriage, asserting its authority over her: "She clung to him, babbling disconnected words just as she had used to cling to her black mammy when anything frightened her in the night. She heard herself promise that she would marry Lige the next day—not because she loved him, not because she was ready for marriage—but because she must spare Bev—and because she was afraid of the wind!"[60]

In the second half of the novel, the continuing drought culminates in an increasingly hostile environment, and Letty's mounting fears and deepening silence coincide with its intensification.[61] The wind takes on increasingly supernatural qualities as it exerts more and more control over Letty's life. Even Letty's weak struggle to control her situation displays supernatural elements. As Letty's only means of fighting back against the wind, "she whispered to herself phrases that came into her thoughts, that they might be runic rhymes that could bind the wind by a spell."[62] However, as she slowly descends into madness, she comes to believe that the wind can read and even control her thoughts: "She felt that the wind read her thoughts, knew all the emotions that she concealed even from her own soul. The wind slipped invisibly behind her all the time, could foreknow her actions because it knew her thoughts, even before they came into her mind. Maybe the wind sent them there!...Wirt Roddy had been able to read her

[60]*Ibid*., 87-88; *Ibid*., 179.

[61]Slade, 88.

[62]Slade, 85; Scarborough, *The Wind*, 207.

mind, and now the wind did, too."[63] Thus, the wind deprives her of any attempt to gain control of her own existence.

When Letty briefly takes initiative to become the author of her own life story, the male force of the wind once again overpowers her.[64] In a fit of terror brought on by a storm, Letty consents to sleep with Wirt Roddy, the mysterious stranger she met on the train to Texas who first told her of the terrible Texas winds, and kills him the next day in the heat of an argument. Realizing that the body will incriminate her, though she fears the knowledge of her adultery more than the murder, she conceals it in a sand dune. However, the wind slowly uncovers the body, pushing Letty over the edge into madness and stealing control away from her once again: "So the wind was determined Lige should know! The wind was even now whispering the truth in his ears—shouting it at him!"[65] Unable to bear the torment any longer, she succumbs to the wind's desire to silence her and runs into wind and sand to face her death.[66]

Although both Orr and Slade identify gender issues as central themes in the novel, Scarborough did not intend for them to be viewed with such importance. Rather than casting Letty as the main character to critique the domestic and Western novels or convey the effects of patriarchal dominance over women, Scarborough needed a fragile, helpless character to effectively accomplish her task of writing a novel describing the Gothic

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[63]Slade, 89; Scarborough, *The Wind*, 278.

[64]Slade, 87.

[65]*Ibid*., 90; Scarborough, *The Wind*, 336.

[66]*Ibid*.; *Ibid*, 337.

supernatural effects of the wind and a harsh climate on someone not physically or mentally able to adjust to them. Although Cora's role is to provide a contrast to Letty, as Orr suggests, they were not meant to represent two halves of the ideal woman. Rather, Cora's strong-willed nature, which remains utterly unaffected by harsh frontier conditions, accents Letty's incapacity to adapt to her new life in ways that would allow her to survive.

After Scarborough's success with *On the Trail of Negro Folksong* and *The Wind*, she found herself forced to choose between pursuing her career as a novelist or folklorist. Although she loved folklore, she chose writing novels and published *Impatient Griselda* (1927), *Can't Get a Redbird* (1929), and *The Stretch-Berry Smile* (1932) in quick succession.[67] *Impatient Griselda* represents a continuation of Scarborough's interest in the supernatural long after the publication of her dissertation and the end of World War I. Based on the biblical legend of Lilith, Adam's demon wife, the novel follows a tragic love story spanning two generations of Central Texas people.[68] *Can't Get a Redbird* and *The Stretch-Berry Smile* completed her cotton trilogy depicting the plight of the Southern tenant farmer, but they enjoyed only moderate success.[69] Scarborough also wrote a children's book on the subject, *The Story of Cotton*, pursuing the theme: "Cotton is master, and Cotton is cruel."[70]

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[67]Grider, "Dorothy Scarborough," 138.

[68]Crawford and Ragsdale, 244.

[69]William T. Pilkington, *Imagining Texas: The Literature of the Lone Star State*, (Boston: American Press, 1981), 11.

[70]Wallace, 128.

Fig. 5. *Dallas Morning News* Illustration of *Can't Get a Redbird*[71]

[71]"For Sale: Farm, Cute Cats Included." *Dallas Morning News*, 9 March 1930.

CHAPTER FIVE

Conclusion

Throughout her career, Scarborough remained an active participant in her local and academic communities. In 1914, Dr. Carl Lovelace, president of the Baylor Alumni Association, appointed Scarborough to collect the traditions and history of Baylor University on behalf of the association along with Judge W.H. Jenkins of Waco and J.M. Dawson of Temple.[1] Thus, from as early as 1914, Scarborough made her expertise in collecting folklore available to the community. In 1915, Scarborough was appointed a member of the Texas Women's Press Association, of which she remained an active participant.[2] Formed on 10 May 1893 in the Windsor Hotel in Dallas by a group of writers led by Aurelia H. Mohl of Houston, the purpose of this organization was to encourage Texas women writers and illustrators in their literary work through organized activities and communication with similar groups.[3]

In June 1923, both the Dallas Writers' Club and the University Women's Club hosted special events in the Medical Arts Building clubrooms honoring Scarborough's work in celebration of the novel's popularity.[4] At the luncheon given by the University Women's Club, Scarborough delivered an informal speech stressing the importance of education and the duty of the college woman toward community:

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[1]"Baylor Alumni Committees Appointed," *Dallas Morning News*, 23 June 1914.

[2]"Press Women Plan Trip," *Dallas Morning News*, 8 June 1915.

[3]Handbook of Texas Online, H. Allen Anderson, "Handbook of Texas Online—Texas Press Women," Available from http://tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/TT/eat3_print.html, Internet, accessed 2 February 2010.

[4]"Writer's Club to Honor Teacher of Journalism," *Dallas Morning News*, 7 June 1923; "University Women Will Honor Dr. Scarborough," *Dallas Morning News*, 19 June 1923.

> All reforms must begin with the college woman, as other women are not so keenly awake to the situation. It has always been the lot of women to start the reforms which the men get credit for at their successful materialization. The greatest reform incumbent upon the college woman of today, and especially in Texas, concerns education. It is a hard fact to admit, but Texas is thirty-seventh among the States in education, and the women must see to it that Texas comes to the front….The women have unselfishly helped the men to attain their successes in the past, and have contributed to man's glory to their own deprivation. Now is the time for women to assert their rights to equal positions for equal ability and equal pay for equal positions. Then it will come to pass that in education women will hold equal positions with men, and will be able to accomplish the much needed reforms in education of today.[5]

Later that year, she was chosen to speak at the Texas Women's Press Association's annual meeting in Waco on the topic "A Forward Glance at Fiction."[6] In her speech she condemned the increasingly risqué trends of contemporary fiction and championed the rising public opinion against it:

> There is too much of the element of the risqué, the indecent, in our fiction of late, I think. People explain all sorts of things on the basis of a general lowering of standards as a result of the war. But to explain is not to justify.
>
> Revolt against unwholesome aspects of fiction is beginning to show itself both in Europe and America. In quarters where we would least expect it there is a condemnation of indecency, not by the authority of the law, not by official censors but by the spontaneous expression of public opinion….
>
> In America there is a strong and rising revolt against improper fiction. Ministers and editors and officials have spoken out on the subject. Too radical laws might do the cause harm should we attempt to limit authors in that manner, but through the creation of public opinion which will take a firm stand against improper fiction improper books may be suppressed to some extent.[7]

It is interesting to note that while Scarborough held a negative opinion regarding "improper fiction," she clearly did not include supernatural fiction in this category

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[5]"Women Urged to Sponsor Reforms: Dr. Scarborough Says State Needs Educational Improvements," *Dallas Morning News*, 21 June 1923.

[6]"Texas Press Women to Meet in Waco May 21-23," *Dallas Morning News*, 13 May 1923; "Texas Press Women to Meet in Waco May 21-23," *Dallas Morning News*, 14 May 1923.

[7]"Author Says Public Opinion is Rising Against Risque Books," *Dallas Morning News*, 12 July 1923.

despite her conservative religious upbringing at Baylor. However, her family history, intimate connection to Baylor University, and the nature of her critique raise questions regarding whether Scarborough meant to imply that William Cowper Brann's *Iconoclast* should be considered part of this "improper" and "indecent" literature.

A talented writer with a penchant for attacking Baylor University, Brann was responsible for crafting several articles portraying the morality of the university in an unfavorable manner in his enormously popular serial publication, the *Iconoclast*.[8] Brann only increased the already bitter feelings between his supporters and those of Baylor when he wrote of the university's recent increase in student population in 1897:

> I note with unfeigned pleasure that, according to claims of Baylor University, it opens the present season with a larger contingent of students, male and female, than ever before. This proves that Texas Baptists are determined to support it at any sacrifice—that they believe it better that their daughters should be exposed to its historic dangers and their sons condemned to grow up in ignorance than that this manufactory of ministers and Magdalenes should be permitted to perish.[9]

Brann's enemies interpreted this as a slander against Baylor's female students, equating them to Mary Magdalen, rather than an attack directed at the university administration as he intended.[10] Angered by Brann's comment, as Dorothy was still in attendance at Baylor, her brother, George Scarborough, was determined to hunt the inflammatory author down with a pistol, while her father, Judge John Scarborough,

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[8]"Richard H. Fair, "The Apostle of Personal Protest: William C. Brann and the *Iconoclast* in Waco," in *Lust, Violence, Religion: Life in Historic Waco*, ed. Bradley T. Turner (Waco: TSTC Publishing, 2010), 41.

[9]Roger N. Conger, ed., *The Best of Brann: The Iconoclast, Selected Articles* (Waco: Texian Press, 1967), 106.

[10]William R. Carr, "Remembering Brann, the Great Iconoclast," *Springhouse Magazine*, Available online at http://www.springhousemagazine.com/brann.htm [accessed 2 February 2010].

promised his son that if he would refrain from shooting Brann, he would personally "deliver a horsewhipping" to him.[11]

When Brann and the two Scarboroughs happened to meet in the hall outside their office building, they attacked him, Judge Scarborough beating Brann down the stairway and into Franklin Street with his cane. When another attacker joined the Scarboroughs, Brann made a dash for his horse and managed to escape, shouting, "Truth will rise! Truth crushed to earth will rise again!"[12]

Given the history of her family's dispute with Brann and her upbringing at Baylor, it seems entirely plausible that Scarborough's remark about "ministers and editors and officials" speaking out against indecent literature was meant to invoke memories of Brann's controversial "ministers and magdalenes" comment. Given that she delivered a speech advocating the importance of education, particularly to women, in the same year she spoke out against risqué literature and that Baylor was her beloved home for years, it seems likely that this statement was a subtle attack on Brann and his crusade against Baylor.

Remaining an active participant in local communities, Scarborough spoke at the Dallas Salesmanship Club in 1923 concerning Texas's economic competition with California, stating that she was "trying to sell Texas in fiction and that in doing this she has found a wonderful product and a ready market."[13] After her success with *In the Land*

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[11]Charles Carver, *Brann and the Iconoclast*, (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1957), 151-152.

[12]*Ibid*., 151-153.

[13]"Dallas Urged to Aid Magic Valley," *Dallas Morning News*, 22 June 1923.

of Cotton and a mere two years before the publication of her wildly popular novel *The Wind,* Scarborough accurately predicted the success of Texas in literature.

Fig. 6. Artist Depiction of William C. Brann[14]

Likewise, Scarborough also predicted the success and longevity of supernatural literature. Although science fiction is common by today's standards, Scarborough recognized that science fiction, or what she called "scientific supernaturalism," was an intriguing development in her contemporary fiction.[15] The final chapter of her dissertation, entitled "Supernatural Science," begins as follows:

> The application of modern science to supernaturalism, or of the supernatural to modern science, is one of the distinctive features of recent literature. Ghostly fiction took a new and definite turn with the rapid advance in scientific knowledge and investigation in the latter part of the nineteenth century, for the work of Darwin, Spencer, Huxley, and their co-laborers did as much to quicken thought in romance as in other lines. Previous literature had made but scant effort to reflect even the crude science of the times, and what was written was so

[14]"Editor Brann Seized," *Dallas Morning News*, 3 October 1897.

[15]Gary Westfahl, "On the Trail of a Pioneer: Dorothy Scarborough, the First Academic Critic of Science Fiction," *Extrapolation*, 40 No. 4 (1999), 292-293.

> unconvincing that it made comparatively little impress….Zofloya [in Charlotte Dacre's *Zofloya*] dabbled in diabolic chemistry, and Frankenstein created a man-made monster that was noteworthy as an incursion in supernatural biology, yet they are almost isolated instances. Now each advance in science has had its reflection in supernatural fiction and each phase of research contributes plot material, while some of the elements once considered wholly of the devil are now scientific.[16]

Although she approached science fiction from a clearly academic perspective, Scarborough nonetheless examined it from a completely different background than the majority of its other critics—that of a folklorist.[17] Seeking evidence of the effects of "the crude scientific thought and investigation of the eighteenth century," in early literature, Scarborough concludes that "The Gothic contribution to this form of ghostly fiction is significant, though slight in comparison with later developments," and focuses her attention on those later examples of the genre.[18]

Early critics of science fiction, preoccupied with earning a place for it in the academic canon, felt compelled to argue for its merit based solely on its unacknowledged literary quality. Therefore, they emphasized the work of past writers who were already recognized as literary giants and only the very best contemporary writers. Scarborough, however, wasted no energy on these ideas, and defended its study "simply on the grounds that such stories are obviously appealing and important to many people, and for that reason they merit critical attention."[19] Scarborough concludes her chapter on scientific supernaturalism by stating that, "science finds its fitting expression in prose fiction. It is

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[16]Westfahl, 293; Scarborough, *The Supernatural in Modern English Fiction*, 251.

[17]Westfahl, 294.

[18]*Ibid*.; Scarborough, *The Supernatural in Modern English Fiction*, 17.

[19]Westfahl, 294.

an illustration of the widening range of the supernatural in fiction and as such is significant."[20]

Scarborough's simplistic approach to the importance of science fiction is clearly applicable to supernatural literature in general. In her introduction to *Famous Modern Ghost Stories*, entitled "The Imperishable Ghost," she stated:

> Ghosts are the true immortals, and the dead grow more alive all the time. Wraiths have a greater vitality to-day than ever before. They are far more numerous than at any time in the past, and people are more interested in them….But there's no getting away from ghosts nowadays, for even if you shut your eyes to them in actual life, you stumble over them in the books you read, you see them on the stage and on the screen, and you hear them on the lecture platform….Man's love for the supernatural, which is one of the most natural things about him, was never more marked than at present.[21]

This comment could easily apply to contemporary times. This is evident in the wildly popular *Twilight* series by author Stephanie Meyer that centers on the relationship between 17-year-old Bella Swan and the vampire she falls in love with, Edward Cullen. Set in the small town of Forks, Washington, the tourism generated by the novels and movie adaptations had dramatically altered the town's declining economy.[22] The film adaptation of *New Moon*, the second installment in the series, grossed $140.7 million in its opening weekend, more than any other film with an autumn release in history.[23] *New Moon* also features werewolf Jacob Black, Bella's childhood friend, adding another

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[20]Scarborough, *The Supernatural in Modern English Fiction*, 280.

[21]Dorothy Scarborough, *Famous Modern Ghost Stories* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1921), vii.

[22]Daniela Deane, "Twilight Fans Flock to Forks," CNN.com, Available from http://www.cnn.com/2009/WORLD/europe/12/02/twilight.tours.forks/index.html?iref=allsearch, Internet, accessed 7 March 2010.

[23]"No Sex Please, We're Vampires," CNN.com, Available from http://www.cnn.com/2009/SHOWBIZ/11/23/twilight.new.moon.teen.abstinence/index.html?iref=allsearch, Internet, accessed 7 March 2010.

element of the supernatural to the phenomenon.[24] Since the second film, werewolves have soared into popularity along with vampires. Traditionally, vampires have always been more popular than werewolves because the romantic, sexual components of the vampire myth, whereas the werewolf has been plagued by a decidedly less romantic legend and a "cheesiness" associated with poor special effects.[25] However, despite the sexual components typical of the vampire myth, some argue that the series owes its popularity to its more conservative message.

Elizabeth Morowitz, Communications Professor at the University of Missouri, argues, "In a more conservative environment we've had this push for abstinence education, so we now have a media message that's more congruent with that. So perhaps some teens relate to it in that way."[26] *New Moon* director Chris Weitz agreed that sexual abstinence is central to the film's appeal.[27] Regardless of the reason for their recent popularity, Scarborough recognized both vampires and werewolves as integral inhabitants of the supernatural world, devoting a section to each of them in her dissertation in the chapter "The Devil and His Allies."[28] Moreover, Scarborough was correct in her assessment, "Ghosts have always haunted literature, and doubtless always will."[29]

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[24]Deane, "Twilight Fans Flock to Forks."

[25]Breeanna Hare, "Can 'Wolfman' Destroy Vampire Fever?," CNN.com, Available from http://www.cnn.com/2010/SHOWBIZ/Movies/02/12/wolfman.brings.back.werewolves/index.html?iref=allsearch, Internet, accessed 7 March 2010.

[26]"No Sex Please, We're Vampires."

[27]*Ibid*.

[28]Scarborough, *The Supernatural in Modern English Fiction*, 158, 166.

[29]Scarborough, *Famous Modern Ghost Stories* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1921), ix.

In addition to actively participating in community programs and activities, Scarborough remained a trusted and dependable companion to her close friends. A letter from her friend and colleague, Edna E. McDaniel, Dean of Women at Baylor University in 1925, expresses an urgent request for advice:

> May I take the liberty since I am writing you now to ask you a question. I have a sister who has been teaching English for several years in Baylor College. She is wonderful little person, quite, calm, dignified and an excellent teacher. But I know perfectly well she has splendid ability as a writer and I am so anxious to get her thinking along that line. Texas needs to bring out more of her material. I am asking my sister to take next year off and go to Columbia….
>
> This is my question to you. Is it possible to get some position or work that she might make her own way. In other words I could assume all our obligations here at home and possibly could help her some if only she could have the feeling of helping herself. I do feel if I can get her away for a year or two she will produce something quite worth while.
>
> If you can suggest anything to me I will greatly appreciate it. I trust this is not asking too much of you. I know you are a very busy woman and yet somehow I wanted your advice in the matter….[30]

McDaniel clearly believed that Scarborough would not only agree to help despite her particularly busy schedule that year, but that she would do everything in her power to help her friend develop a solution to her dilemma.

During her writing and teaching career at Columbia, Scarborough rarely returned to Waco, and she purchased a farm in the Berkshires of New York as a haven from the city.[31] In 1932, Columbia granted her a sabbatical, and she traveled with her widowed sister to Europe, where she worked on the manuscript of a new folksong collection of Anglo ballads.[32]

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[30]Dorothy Scarborough papers.

[31]Wallace, 131.

[32]Grider, "Dorothy Scarborough," 139.

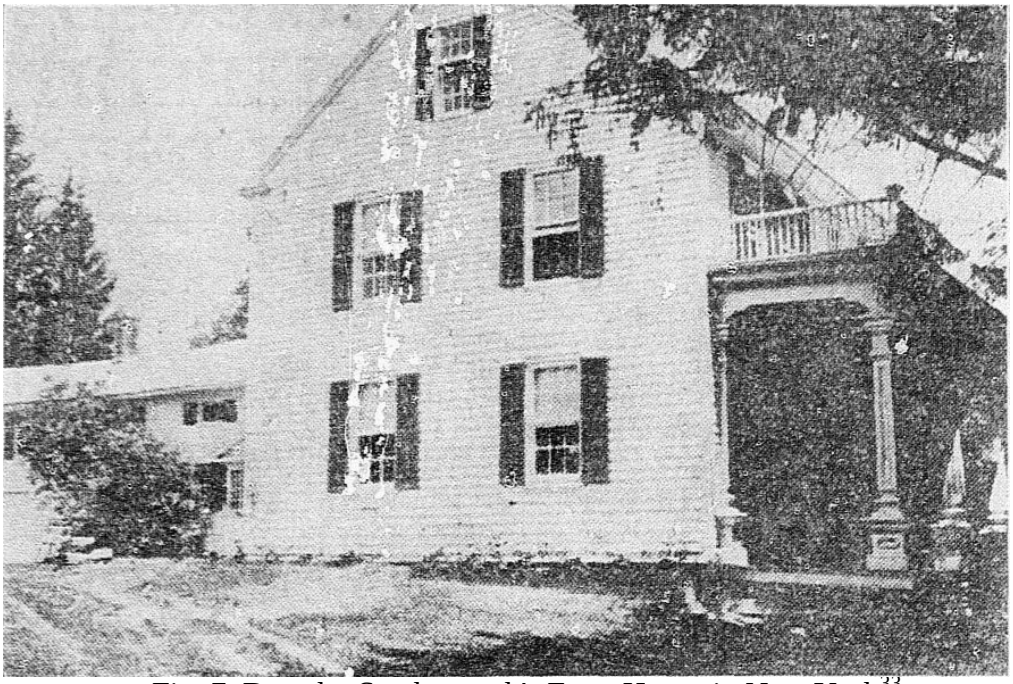

Fig. 7. Dorothy Scarborough's Farm House in New York[33]

[33]"A Visit to Dorothy Scarborough's Home," *Dallas Morning News*, 10 October 1926.

Fig. 8. Dorothy Scarborough on Her Farm in New York[34]

[34]*Ibid.*

Before completing the work on her collection, Scarborough died on 7 November 1935 at the age of fifty-eight in New York City. Biographer Sylvia Grider provides two possible explanations for her death in two different accounts: a heart attack or complications of the flu. However, both accounts of her death concur that she died in her sleep.[35]

After delays caused by her publisher's financial problems and litigation threats from one of the ethnomusicologists and one of the informants involved, Scarborough's second collection of folklore, *A Song Catcher in the Southern Mountains*, was published posthumously in 1937. In spite of the controversy over the musical transcriptions, the book received great acclaim from subsequent generations of folksong scholars.[36] After a memorial service held at Columbia, Scarborough's colleagues sent her body back to Waco, where rites were held on Monday, 11 November at Baylor University.[37] She was buried in the Scarborough family plot in Oakwood Cemetery. Her epitaph reads,

> *Death could not conquer a*
> *Spirit so rare.*
> *She goes on serving*
> *Here as there.*[38]

[35]Grider, "Dorothy Scarborough," 139; Grider, "Folksong Scholarship," 102; "Famous Novelist from Texas Dies in New York City," *Dallas Morning News*, 8 November 1935.

[36]Grider, "Folksong Scholarship," 102-103.

[37]"Texas Author's Burial at Waco," *Dallas Morning News*, 9 November 1935; "Dorothy Scarborough Buried," *Dallas Morning News*, 12 November 1935.

[38]Wallace, 132.

A tribute to Scarborough's life published in the *Dallas Morning News* in 1935 reads:

> Dorothy Scarborough came home Monday to stay. The talented Texas woman fared far afield and made her success in the East, but when she wrote, it was of Texas scenes, conditions and people, and when she died, she wished to be at rest in the land that had given her education and her inspiration.
>
> Her books may not live, though they had their place in her time and generation, for Dorothy Scarborough had the courage to make them real even where reality might offend her own folk. Whatever happens to her books, her intensely vital spirit will be projected through the literature of today and tomorrow because she had elected to teach others to write.
>
> There was a fine fibre [sic] of determination in the stocky, pleasant Texan. It stood by her in her determination to make everyone see that good writing can be taught to eager writers, and that the call to authorship may be divine inspiration but is often in sore need of human direction. The success of her classes at Columbia was the proof of her theory.
>
> That is the real legacy she leaves to the world she had quitted. Because of her, many young men and young women will find themselves able to write capably instead of badly and to make a living at it; some of them may pass from apprenticeship into greatness.[39]

Fig. 9. Dorothy Scarborough in 1928[40]

[39]"She Taught Others to Write," *Dallas Morning News*, 15 November 1935.

[40]"Dorothy Scarborough, Writer of West Texas Novel Now Shown as Photoplay, Honored During Visit to University," *Dallas Morning News*, 14 December 1928.

Clearly, Dorothy Scarborough led a very unique life for a woman of her time. When many universities still denied granting degrees to women, she earned a Ph.D. from one of the nation's most prestigious institutions and even became an associate professor. Scarborough's unique life experiences and accomplishments combined to provide her with a distinct interest in and appreciation for the supernatural. Rather than overanalyze it, Scarborough recognized the inherent attraction to supernatural literature and simply accepted it as such. As she accurately predicted, our fascination with the supernatural remains an almost universal condition and is in no danger of diminishing.

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