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Introduction to *E. D. E. N. Southworth: Recovering a Nineteenth-Century Popular Novelist*

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INTRODUCTION

MELISSA J. HOMESTEAD AND
PAMELA T. WASHINGTON

In early 1901, Willa Cather visited Prospect Cottage in the Georgetown neighborhood of Washington, D.C., the longtime home of the recently deceased novelist Emma Dorothy Eliza Nevitte (E. D. E. N.) Southworth. Born in Washington, D.C., in 1819 to southern parents (her father from Virginia, her mother from Maryland), Southworth lived in Washington with her family until she married Frederick Hamilton Southworth and moved with him to Wisconsin in 1841. When he deserted her and their two children, she returned to Washington and taught school to support herself, turning to writing to supplement her income from teaching. Within a few years, Southworth became one of the most prolific and popular novelists of the nineteenth century, publishing scores of novels in a career that stretched from the late 1840s through the early 1890s. In 1853, she purchased Prospect Cottage with her literary earnings, and although she lived in England in the late 1850s and early 1860s and spent part of her later years in Yonkers, New York, she returned to her cottage late in her life and died there in 1899.

A mere two years after Southworth's death, Cather made her visit and Southworth's literary legacy the subject of a newspaper article for the *State Journal* of Lincoln, Nebraska, for which Cather had written reviews and cultural criticism as a student at the University of Nebraska and to which she occasionally contributed even after leaving Nebraska in 1895. Cather concisely frames Southworth as a popular writer of melodramatic novels, a southerner, and a celebrity, and enacts in miniature the dynamic Andreas Huyssen describes in "Mass Culture as Woman: Modernism's Other." At a moment in the evolution of American literature when the "great divide" was opening between mass culture and "authentic" culture, female reader and male author, and the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Cather sought to establish her own affiliation with the realm of pure art by positioning Southworth, her oeuvre, and her readers on the "wrong" side.

Cather's article provides a provocative jumping-off point for our twenty-first-century collection of essays on Southworth because it maps with precision Southworth's location in this cultural struggle. Cather's early-twentieth-century visit to Prospect Cottage came at a crucial moment in her career, when, as her account of the visit demonstrates, she was struggling to find a way to become a "serious" novelist and contemplating the literary legacy of one nineteenth-century popular woman novelist with profound ambivalence.¹ Writing throughout as "we," Cather creates for herself and her readers a collective identity as modern subjects standing in judgment of a quaintly outmoded culture. However, she maintains this position of superior knowledge with difficulty, swinging between dismissive critique and defensive rationalization as she seeks to unlock the secret of Southworth's popularity with an earlier generation of readers. Southworth's "physical labor" is central, as Cather imagines her "sitting in the little library facing on the river, writing thousands upon thousands of pages with a fine pointed pen in her tiny laborious chirography."² "[P]eople bitten with the passion for creative experiments," Cather suggests, have an obvious reason for such unrelenting toil, but Southworth's motivations puzzle her because, Cather believes, she wrote only variations of one plot over and over again: "adventures [of] self-sacrificing chambermaids and noble, though affectionate factory girls."

As Huyssen observes, "aesthetic discourse around the turn of the century consistently and obsessively genders mass culture and the masses as feminine, while high culture, whether traditional or modern, clearly remains the privileged realm of male activities."³ Ascribing "pejorative feminine characteristics to mass culture" (i.e., Cather's dismissal of Southworth's female protagonists and their "adventures") was a key move in this aesthetic discourse. Specific commercialized print forms of mass culture were, Huyssen observes, targeted for critique, including "serialized feuilleton novels, popular and family magazines, the stuff of lending libraries, fictional bestsellers and the like."⁴ Southworth authored serial novels published in popular weekly family "story papers" (magazines published in newspaper format), which in book form became best sellers and favorites of lending library patrons.

Southworth's popularity simultaneously attracts and repulses Cather, the aspiring modern artist. As Huyssen explains, "The constant fear of the modernist artist is being devoured by mass culture through co-option, commodification, and the 'wrong' kind of success." In a state of "constant fear," the artist "tries to stake out his territory by fortifying the boundaries between genuine art and inauthentic mass culture."⁵ In trying to define this boundary, Cather makes an odd move registering her ambivalence: She contrasts Southworth with Henry James, who

was a generation younger than Southworth and known for his experiments in technique. “[I]t must be understood,” Cather insists, as if defending Southworth against a charge of pandering to a mass audience for financial gain, “that this woman was no mere mercenary; I doubt whether Mr. Henry James himself is more sincere, or whether his literary conscience is more exacting than was hers.”⁶

Cather made her pilgrimage to Southworth’s cottage accompanied by a man with “profound literary knowledge,” probably author and Catholic University of America professor Charles Warren Stoddard,⁷ and he told her “the story of the woman as he knew her [making] her life seem less comically grotesque.” Cather offers no explanation as to why Southworth’s life would seem grotesque in the first place—that she was prolific, popular, and female is enough. Stoddard told Cather about the thousands of fan letters Southworth received from “readers who worshiped from afar . . . and declared that her novels were their spiritual and intellectual food.” Cather briefly embraces the vision of fame Southworth represents—what author doesn’t long for thousands of devoted readers? Again invoking James as counter-example, Cather asks her readers, “[I]f this is not fame, what is it, please? How many of us ever think of writing to Henry James when we approve of him, or beg him to be merciful and recall his heroines to life when they perish, or care very much whether they perish or not?” However, Cather also imagines readers of the newspaper in which her column appeared making Southworth “the butt of jests” in order to distance themselves from the feminized tastes of the previous century. “We may talk very knowingly about the structural finesse of contemporary French novelists and air our cosmopolitan culture as we will,” she writes, “but most of us had mothers who in their youth considered this woman the inspired priestess of the softer emotions, and her style the most poetic and intoxicating in the world.”

The early twentieth century marked the rise of both literary modernism, which defined itself against an allegedly debased, feminized nineteenth-century literary culture, and the academic discipline of American literary history. Cather’s column on Southworth uncannily predicts how most literary historians treated Southworth in the ensuing decades. For the first seventy-five years of the century, they emphatically placed Southworth outside the canon, reserving her a place in niche studies of popular literature and best sellers. She thus appears in Fred Pattee’s *The Feminine Fifties* (1940), Frank Luther Mott’s *Golden Multitudes* (1947), Mary Noel’s *Villains Galore: The Heyday of the Popular Story Weekly* (1954), and Herbert F. Smith’s *The Popular American Novel 1865 to 1920* (1980). These studies present popular literature in general and Southworth in particular as a necessary, but artistically inferior, background for understanding the achievement

of canonical male figures. Mott presents himself as an “honest inquirer after the reasons of Mrs. Southworth’s popularity” who represses his “repugnance for her excesses and artificialities” and dons “the gas-mask of tolerance” to conduct an objective inquiry.⁸ “Howells, Twain, and James are subversive writers!” exclaims Herbert Smith, but their subversion can only be understood against the backdrop of the popular tradition against which they rebelled and which they sought to subvert.⁹ Smith is willing to concede that “[n]o novelist of this period . . . no, not even E. D. E. N. Southworth—was completely a philistine,”¹⁰ but the greatest praise he offers is that Southworth’s sentimental excesses inspired readers to turn to James: “Perhaps an enlightened readership grows up, sighing, by weaning itself from the bathos of E. D. E. N. Southworth to cut its teeth on the irony and psychology of Henry James.”¹¹

Like Cather, these critics also generalize broadly about Southworth’s oeuvre, portraying her novels as indistinguishable from one another and distinguishable from other popular women’s fiction only by their excesses. Cather is vague about the “adventures” Southworth plotted for her heroines but is clear about their social position and their passive virtues: lowly young women (chambermaids, factory girls, lodge-keepers’ daughters), they are “self-sacrificing,” “noble,” “affectionate,” and “virtuous.” Indeed, one suspects that Cather confused Southworth with her successor, Laura Jean Libbey, who, as one recent critic notes, did genuinely “stick to one form—one story really—with tenacity. . . . She told the story of a young girl, suddenly adrift and alone in the world who attracts the attention of a suitor far above her in station. After sensational mishaps and separations, the couple is united in the end.”¹² Herbert Smith proclaims that “[w]ith nearly one hundred titles in her canon, [Southworth] really wrote only one story: the trials of perfect virtue triumphant finally over the machinations of perfect vice.” Modern readers who know Southworth through *The Hidden Hand* will find these generalizations puzzling, as would her nineteenth-century critics. As Linda Naranjo-Huebel argues based on a close reading of magazine reviews of Southworth’s fiction from 1849 to 1854, critics responded with alarm to Southworth’s fiction, which they condemned as “uninhibited” and “unsuppressed,” evidencing a “feminine intemperateness and wildness.”¹³

Among twentieth-century critics before the 1970s, only Helen Waite Papishvily in *All the Happy Endings* (1957) anticipated the approaches of later feminist literary historians to Southworth and her female contemporaries. Papishvily finds a feminist subtext in Southworth’s plots, in which deserted women successfully make their own way in the world without the aid or protection of men. By virtue of its sustained attention to Southworth’s works, an early bio-critical monograph

on Southworth, Regis Louise Boyle's dissertation *Mrs. E. D. E. N. Southworth, Novelist* (published in 1939), also represents an interesting exception. Because Boyle studied at the Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C., and had the advantage of access to the Library of Congress and people who had known Southworth, her dissertation remains an important, if problematic, source for scholars.¹⁴

In the wake of Nina Baym's *Woman's Fiction: A Guide to Novels by and about Women in America, 1820–1870* (1978), Southworth began receiving serious consideration as a writer. In the 1980s, Southworth became part of the larger project of recovering nineteenth-century women authors and their works, appearing in two important feminist studies published in 1984, Mary Kelley's biographical *Private Woman, Public Stage: Literary Domesticity in Nineteenth-Century America* and Annette Kolodny's textually focused *The Land Before Her: Fantasy and Experience of the American Frontiers, 1630–1860*. A century after Southworth's most famous and popular novel, *The Hidden Hand; or Capitola the Madcap*, first appeared as a book in 1888 (it was first serialized in 1859), the influential Rutgers American Women Writers series issued an edition with an introduction by Joanne Dobson.¹⁵ Featuring heroine Capitola Black, a tomboyish, cross-dressing heroine, it made a splash and appealed to late-twentieth-century feminist sensibilities. The Rutgers series effectively set the agenda for the study of nineteenth-century women authors and their works over the ensuing decade, and Southworth began to receive respectful, if brief, attention in mainstream literary histories such as the *Columbia Literary History of the United States* (1988) and *Columbia History of the American Novel* (1991). Southworth was an important figure in feminist monographs focused on women's authorship and women's writing in the 1990s, including Susan Coultrap-McQuin's *Doing Literary Business: American Women Writers in the Nineteenth Century* (1990), Barbara Bards and Suzanne Gossett's *Declarations of Independence: Women and Political Power in Nineteenth Century American Fiction* (1990), and Susan K. Harris's *19th-Century American Women's Novels: Interpretive Strategies* (1990).

Southworth continues to be studied in relation to other women writers of the period and appears in twenty-first-century studies, including Karen Tracey's *Plots and Proposals: American Women's Fiction, 1850–90* (2000), Janet Gabler-Hover's *Dreaming Black/Writing White: The Hagar Myth in American Cultural History* (2000), Betina Entzminger's *The Belle Gone Bad: White Southern Women Writers and the Dark Seductress* (2002), Joyce W. Warren's *Women, Money and the Law: Nineteenth-Century Fiction, Gender and the Courts* (2005), and Michelle Ann Abate's *Tomboys: A Literary and Cultural History* (2008). Southworth also features

less regularly in thematic monographs focusing on both men's and women's texts, including Ken Egan's *The Riven Home: Narrative Rivalry in the American Renaissance* (1997), Caroline Levander's *Voices of the Nation: Women and Public Speech in Nineteenth-Century American Literature and Culture* (1998), and Paul Christian Jones's *Unwelcome Voices: Subversive Fiction in the Antebellum South* (2005) and *Against the Gallows: American Writers and the Movement to Abolish Capital Punishment* (2011).¹⁶ Over the past three decades, Southworth has also been the subject of several dozen essays published in journals and book collections, several unpublished dissertations, and many dissertation chapters.

All of this activity points to a lively scholarly interest in Southworth, but, arguably, interest in Southworth has narrowed and calcified rather than broadened and deepened. Scholarly books published through 2000 focus on a range of Southworth's novels (e.g., Kolodny focuses on *India: The Pearl of Pearl River*, Harris on *The Deserted Wife*, Bardes and Gossett on *The Discarded Daughter*, Tracey on *Britomarte, the Man-Hater*, and Gabler-Hover on *The Deserted Wife* and *Virginia and Magdalene*). However, *The Hidden Hand*'s appearance in a modern teaching edition paradoxically narrowed the Southworth revival and fixed her in readers' minds as little more than "the author of *The Hidden Hand*."¹⁷ For example, nearly all of the scholarly journal articles on Southworth published in the first decade of the twenty-first century focus primarily on *The Hidden Hand*. With no other Southworth novels available in modern editions, few scholars and students appreciate the depth and complexity of her career or the wide-ranging literary, political, and social engagements of her fiction. Indeed, too often, despite the renewed popularity of *The Hidden Hand* and its place as a standard text in women's literature classes, the earlier biographical and critical understanding of her career as a whole still holds sway. Southworth is presented as typical of the supposed excesses of all nineteenth-century women novelists: She wrote hastily against the clock and was motivated by money, she created wildly improbable characters and plots, and she serialized her works in popular weekly papers consumed by legions of uncritical and unsophisticated female readers.

Southworth's status as a white southerner has also vexed modern scholars. Willa Cather, who was born and spent her first ten years in Virginia, presents Southworth as thoroughly southern in her sympathies and embraced by the (white) leaders of the region. "[I]t was very much the fashion," she writes, "for all young ladies of the 'first families' of the south to read her latest story as they reclined in hammocks on their wide verandas." Southworth was also, Cather claims, "feted and banqueted" by these young ladies' elders "in the capitals of the southern states." One suspects Cather may have confused Southworth, a strong public supporter of the Union, with her popular contemporary Augusta Jane

Evans, an ardent supporter of the Confederacy.¹⁸ Cather once again uncannily prefigures how literary historians in subsequent decades treated Southworth's regional identity. Mott, for instance, claims that Southworth's fiction published in the *National Era*, an antislavery periodical, was proslavery propaganda representing happy slaves on southern plantations, and that she resorted to antislavery themes only after Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* proved them lucrative.¹⁹ The notion that, as a white southerner, Southworth must have supported slavery has continued to shape scholars' readings of particular novels.²⁰ Essays in this collection begin the work of reading across Southworth's oeuvre to allow for a fuller understanding of her thinking on race and slavery, its evolution over time, and her deployment of different strategies for different audiences.

Taken together, the collected essays argue that Southworth, her fiction, and her readers are more complex than received wisdom suggests. Indeed, literary history has reduced most nineteenth-century American women authors, including those ostensibly more "serious" than Southworth, to a single book, making *all* of their careers appear narrow and simple: Harriet Beecher Stowe is the author of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, Catharine Sedgwick is the author of *Hope Leslie*, and so on. By emphasizing the range and depth of Southworth's career, this collection argues for a fuller and more complex mode of recovery.

We present the essays in four tightly focused clusters of three essays each, with essays within each cluster organized primarily chronologically by subject matter. These clusters, focusing on periodical contexts, genre, intertextuality, and marriage, grew out of conversations at a two-day symposium on Southworth held at the American Antiquarian Society in April 2009. Participants found themselves returning repeatedly to a set of common questions and methodological tools that produced answers contradicting the received wisdom about Southworth. If you pay close attention to the serial publication of Southworth's fiction, you make discoveries about her texts, her creative process, and her engagement with the literary market. If you apply recent scholarship on genres such as the Gothic and the sensational to her fiction, you find that even her most improbable plots perform important cultural work. If you follow her literary allusions to their sources, you discover an ambitious artist at work, responding to and revising a range of literary texts in order to achieve her own aesthetic and social ends. Together, the twelve essays (seven first presented at the symposium) encompass fifteen of Southworth's novels and novellas, primarily from the first two decades of her career (the late 1840s through the late 1860s).

Essays in the first cluster, "Serial Southworth," treat her novels in their original periodical contexts. In "E. D. E. N. Southworth's Serial Novels *Retribution* and *The Mother-in-Law* as Vehicles for the Cause of Abolition in the *National Era*:

Setting the Stage for *Uncle Tom's Cabin*,” Vicki L. Martin recovers Southworth’s participation in the abolitionist program of the *National Era*. Although Mott and others have characterized Southworth’s early *Era* fiction as proslavery, Martin’s analysis of her first two novel-length fictions as they were serialized reveals that editor Gamaliel Bailey excised antislavery content from *Retribution*, which Southworth restored for book publication. As the serialization of *The Mother-in-Law* concluded, Bailey finally began to appreciate fiction’s value in advancing his antislavery program. Although Harriet Beecher Stowe has been credited with “inventing” the serial antislavery novel, Southworth’s novels preceded *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and paved the way for it.

Kenneth Salzer takes a new approach to a much-analyzed moment in Southworth’s career,²¹ her transition from writing for the *Saturday Evening Post* (edited by Henry Peterson) to writing for the *New York Ledger* (edited by Robert Bonner). In “An Exclusive Engagement: The Personal and Professional Negotiations of *Vivia*,” Salzer reads the romance plots in *Vivia*, Southworth’s last serial in the *Post*, as fictionalizing her conflicts with Peterson and imagining a more satisfying professional relationship with a different editor. *Vivia* “provides us with compelling evidence,” Salzer argues, that Southworth was “a professional woman writer who had no problem leaving a bad ‘engagement’ for a more equitable one.”

The last essay in the cluster, “The Hidden Agenda of *The Hidden Hand*: Periodical Publication and the Literary Marketplace in Late-Nineteenth-Century America,” defamiliarizes the familiar *Hidden Hand* by examining the reserializations of the novel in the *New York Ledger* and Southworth’s three-decade resistance to book publication of the novel. Alison M. Scott and Amy M. Thomas foreground Southworth’s shrewd negotiations with *Ledger* editor Bonner and book publisher T. B. Peterson about this valuable literary property. Literary historians have seen this long delay in book publication as an enigmatic quirk in the novel’s history, but Scott and Thomas argue that Southworth and Bonner privileged the *Ledger* audience and *The Hidden Hand* as a serial novel over its potential in the book market.

Recovery of nineteenth-century women’s fiction has focused primarily on the genres of woman’s fiction, the sentimental novel and the domestic novel, but these categories fail to account adequately for Southworth’s range. The first essay in the cluster “Southworth’s Genres,” “Illustrating Southworth: Genre, Conventionality, and *The Island Princess*,” argues that Southworth’s *Island Princess* uses the generic conventions of both sentimentalism and sensationalism. Continuing the conversation of the first cluster, Kathryn Conner Bennett analyzes the novel as an illustrated serial in the *Ledger*. Indeed, *The Island Princess* was the first novel Southworth wrote for the *Ledger*, and Bennett finds that the mixing of generic

conventions in the novel's text and illustrations typifies the political conventionality and hybridity of the *Ledger*. In particular, she finds that Southworth first advances progressive positions on the status of women and African Americans, but then, bowing to *Ledger* conventions, mutes her positions on gender and race.

In "Maniac Brides: Southworth's Sensational and Gothic Transformations," Beth L. Lueck locates similar generic hybridity in Southworth's portrayals of race and slavery in two of her early fictions, *Retribution* and *Hickory Hall*. Crucially, however, these novels first appeared in the *National Era*, not the *Ledger*, enabling Southworth to use generic hybridity to take more radical positions on race. Lueck argues that by deploying Gothic and sensational conventions in fictions foregrounding mixed-race characters and marriage plots, Southworth "explore[s] what it means to be black or white, free or enslaved, and rational or insane" in the antebellum United States. In the third essay focusing on genre, "Change of a Dress: *Britomarte, the Man-Hater* and Other Transvestite Narratives of the Civil War," Annie Merrill Ingram juxtaposes Southworth's Civil War novel, in which the title character disguises herself as a man to join the Union forces, with other cross-dressing narratives of the war. Ingram suggests that both Southworth's fictional and other (ostensibly) factual narratives "reveal that textual borders are just as variable as the boundaries of gender identity." Intriguingly, Ingram also argues that by engaging the harsh realities of the Civil War, Southworth participated in the evolution of American fiction away from romanticism to realism.

In addition to using tools from multiple genres, Southworth wrote in conversation with a range of texts and authors. For instance, Southworth derived the name of her cross-dressing Civil War heroine from Sir Edmund Spenser's *Faerie Queene*. The essays in the "Intertextual Southworth" cluster present intensive case studies of Southworth's engagements with literary tradition. In "E. D. E. N. Southworth: An 'American George Sand'?" Charlene Avallone analyzes Southworth's transformation of character types, tropes, and plots from the French novelist George Sand, focusing in particular on Sand's early novels *Valentine*, *Indiana*, and *Consuelo* and on Southworth's early novels *The Deserted Wife*, *The Mother-in-Law*, and *Shannondale*. For American reviewers and for Henry Peterson of the *Saturday Evening Post*, the elements Southworth's fictions shared with Sand's made Southworth and her novels morally suspect and threatening to patriarchal authority. Avallone also argues, however, that Southworth did not merely imitate Sand but "transform[ed]" Sand's models with her own characteristic "hyperbolic style" and "blend of idealism and parody."

In the second essay in the intertextual cluster, "Revising *Uncle Tom's Cabin*: Sympathy, the State, and the Role of Women in E. D. E. N. Southworth's *The Lost Heiress*," Paul Christian Jones argues that Southworth's 1853 serial novel

pointedly rewrites key scenes in Stowe's. Just as Stowe's novel uses a key scene set in the family home of a state senator to argue for the abolition of slavery, Southworth makes a state governor a key figure to promote the abolition of capital punishment. Jones argues, however, that Southworth critiques Stowe's model, in which women influence men in power in the home, and advocates instead that women "take an active role in the public sphere" and participate directly in governance.

Both Avallone and Jones focus on Southworth's intertextual borrowings from and revisions of other nineteenth-century novels, while in "E. D. E. N. Southworth's Tragic Muse" Karen Tracey demonstrates that Southworth reaches back centuries, even millennia, in her intertextual references to plays in *The Brothers* and *The Fatal Marriage*. As her title suggests, Tracey also draws our attention to Southworth's generic range beyond adventure stories or sentimental tales of suffering virtue in two fictions in which she "employs tragic conventions" adopted and adapted from both ancient Greek and British Restoration tragedies. Southworth's intertextual references to these tragedies allow her "to explore how [America's] unjust social mores and abuse of power" threatened the stability of the nation on the eve of the Civil War. In *The Brothers*, first serialized in the *Era*, Southworth makes a male slave her tragic hero and advances one of her most powerful critiques of slavery.

Southworth's engagements with social issues and reform figure prominently throughout the collection, particularly her thinking about race and slavery. The essays in the final cluster, "Southworth, Marriage, and the Law," present a sustained inquiry into how marriage law and the status of women in the nineteenth-century United States engaged her literary imagination. Her difficult marriage and abandonment by her husband feature prominently in Southworth scholarship, and marriage is a central concern of many of her novels. Nevertheless, these three essays apply fresh approaches derived from recent revisionist legal history. In the first essay, "Poe, Southworth, and the Antebellum Wife," Ellen Weinauer considers genre, intertextuality, and legal history in her reading of Southworth's *Discarded Daughter*. Juxtaposing Edgar Allan Poe's tales of dead wives who haunt their husbands (such as "Ligeia" and "Berenice") with Southworth's novel, Weinauer analyzes the "death-dealing dynamics of legal marriage" for both wives and husbands. Previous scholarship (such as Bardes and Gossett's *Declarations of Independence* and Warren's *Women, Money, and the Law*) has argued that Southworth's fiction promotes women's rights and the legal reform of marriage to empower wives. Elizabeth Stockton's "E. D. E. N. Southworth's Reimagining of the Married Women's Property Reforms" diverges, arguing instead that *Ishmael* and *The*

Lost Heiress call for men to be legal protectors of vulnerable women. The final essay, Cindy Weinstein's "'What Did You Mean?': The Language of Marriage in *The Fatal Marriage* and *Family Doom*," analyzes the problematic and unreliable nature of marriage proposals and vows in two of Southworth's later novels. In her seemingly outrageous plotting of failed marriages, Weinstein argues, Southworth anticipates the insights of twentieth-century speech act theory.

The essays in this collection are textual rather than biographical, but the appendix that closes the volume, a new bibliography of Southworth's works, unsettles entrenched notions about Southworth's professional life. Researching the bibliography from the ground up rather than relying on previous bibliographies, Vicki L. Martin and Melissa J. Homestead discovered that in the 1850s, Southworth published in several periodicals other than the *Era*, *Post*, and *Ledger*. By organizing the bibliography chronologically by first publication date (whether serial or book), Homestead and Martin make visible other previously invisible developments in Southworth's career, including the breakdown of her relationship with book publisher T. B. Peterson in the 1870s, the long delay between serialization and book publication for her *Ledger* novels of 1870s and 1880s, and her previously unrecorded newspaper and magazine pieces from the late 1880s and early 1890s. Homestead and Martin also present for the first time an accurate count of Southworth's novels (far fewer than the one hundred Herbert Smith claims).

Together, the essays and bibliography stand the critical commonplaces about Southworth on their head. She was not always a hasty and careless writer, but often composed carefully in response to a variety of serial contexts and equally carefully revised her works for book publication. She supported herself and her children on her literary earnings, so money mattered; however, she was thoughtful and sophisticated in her approach to audience. She did not merely pander, but challenged readers with her wide range of allusions and with fictional representations of difficult social issues, including slavery.

Despite the range of texts, issues, and approaches represented by the essays in this volume, only fifteen of Southworth's novels and novellas are discussed, leaving much work to be done, whether focusing on similar issues of periodical publication, genre, intertextuality, and women's status under the law or considering other interpretive questions. Let us briefly trace out further lines of inquiry, adding several additional works from the 1850s through the 1870s, namely, her novels *The Missing Bride, or, Miriam the Avenger*; *India: The Pearl of Pearl River*; *Allworth Abbey*; *Cruel as the Grave*; and *The Lost Lady of Lone*; and her story "The Artist's Love."

In terms of place and geography, for example, Southworth ranges far beyond the southern United States. In addition to the Caribbean backstories Beth L. Lueck analyzes in her essay, parts of *Retribution* take place in France and Italy. *Allworth Abbey* is set entirely in England, while part of *Ishmael* is also set there. *The Lost Lady of Lone* moves characters from Scotland to England, France, Italy, and back. Stark differences in the legal and cultural constraints on women across these nations allow Southworth to foreground the constructedness of gender. In her American novels, characters move between city streets, farms, and plantations and through a variety of interiors, such as courtrooms, cottages, and nunneries. Caves and ruined chapels in the wilderness bring into focus dichotomies between urban and rural life, and enclosures, whether natural or manmade, metaphorically represent the limits marriage and the law place on women's lives. Although Southworth set none of her novels west of the Mississippi, in works such as *India: The Pearl of Pearl River*, as Annette Kolodny argues, she associates westward movement with independence and renewal.

Southworth moved easily between several genres not discussed in essays in this volume. For example, *The Lost Lady of Lone* deploys devices from detective fiction to present the hero's quest to find his missing wife, and *Cruel as the Grave* draws on the captivity narrative tradition to address one of Southworth's favorite themes, capital punishment. Her ingeniously imaginative and various plots trace storylines for multiple female protagonists of different types and from a range of social classes. The scope of *Miriam the Avenger* is as broad as George Eliot's *Middlemarch*, with both novels encompassing multiple families within a community. Within the interconnected web of *Miriam*, Southworth creates a community of women from various classes and backgrounds with diverse temperaments and motivations. Eudora, the protagonist of *Allworth Abbey*, spends the entire novel in jail, where the law has confined her for a series of murders she did not commit, while various other characters, male and female, work to exonerate and free her. Interestingly, Eudora's parents are a British gentleman and a princess from India, and Southworth suggests Eudora's status as a racial other motivated her conviction. Through its mixed-race protagonist, *Allworth Abbey* both explores British anxieties and allegorizes American anxieties about slavery and race and the dissolution of the Union on the eve of the Civil War. The novel published in two volumes as *Cruel as the Grave* and *Tried for Her Life* also features a heroine falsely convicted of murder, but Southworth creates an entirely different plotline for Sybil Bernes, who is almost constantly in motion. Sybil's husband hides her when she escapes from prison, but the police capture and return her. Subsequently, a robber pirate steals her from prison, her husband finds her again, the police re-

capture her and she is tried and convicted, only to be restolen by the robber pirate and finally reunited with her husband and child. This complex plot demonstrates Southworth's skill in the craft of fiction while critiquing the multiple ways society confined women and constrained their agency.

Southworth did not, as popular wisdom would have it, write only fiction featuring heroines in peril. *Ishmael*, with its male legal hero (analyzed in Elizabeth Stockton's essay in this volume) is a Bildungsroman, and *India* similarly traces the development of a male protagonist (the serial title, *Mark Sutherland*, foregrounds his prominence). Southworth claimed that the title character of *Ishmael* was her best; indeed, she liked him so much that she brought him back as a secondary character in *Miriam the Avenger* and "The Artist's Love." Her female characters run the gamut from southern belles (*India*) to successful teachers (*India* and *Miriam*), nuns (*Lost Lady of Lone*), willful daughters (*Shannondale* and *Miriam*), runaway brides (*Lost Lady of Lone*), evil schemers (*Retribution*, *The Mother-in-Law*, *Shannondale*, *Cruel as the Grave*, *The Lost Lady of Lone*), and innumerable self-sufficient women who save their families from financial disaster through their own ingenuity. Despite Willa Cather's claims, however, there are no factory girls.

Southworth uses a variety of motifs and tropes to develop her plots and characters. For example, in *Miriam* she portrays dominating husbands and fathers as vampires who drain life force and soul from their daughters and wives, and in *Cruel as the Grave* she uses the masquerade motif to tease out issues of identity, class, and the nature of good and evil. Essays in this collection focus on Southworth's engagements through her fiction with the social and legal issues surrounding marriage, capital punishment, and slavery, but she also wrote about poverty, the struggles of orphans and widows, unwed mothers and their "illegitimate" children, social class and conflict between the classes, and conflicts between Euro-American settlers and the Native Americans on whose lands they encroached.

Southworth's social agenda is broad, and her manipulation of literary techniques points to her engagement with her readers and her artistic predecessors and contemporaries. Making available work on previously unexplored complexities in Southworth's works from established and emerging scholars of nineteenth-century American literature, *E. D. E. N. Southworth: Recovering a Nineteenth-Century Popular Novelist* sets a new agenda for Southworth studies in the twenty-first century. Her writing career was as long as that of Henry James, but she was far more prolific than the notoriously prolific "master." The work of Southworth studies, then, has only just begun.

Notes

1. On Cather's life during this period, see James Woodress, *Willa Cather: A Literary Life* (Lincoln: Univ. of Nebraska Press, 1987); and Sharon O'Brien, *Willa Cather: The Emerging Voice* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1987).
2. Willa Sibert Cather, "In Washington," *Nebraska State Journal*, Mar. 3, 1901, 12.
3. Andreas Huyssen, "Mass Culture as Woman: Modernism's Other," in *After the Great Divide: Modernism, Mass Culture, Postmodernism*, by Andreas Huyssen (Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 1986), 46. For an influential account focusing specifically on the American context, see Suzanne Clarke, *Sentimental Modernism: Women Writers and the Revolution of the Word* (Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 1991). As this collection as a whole makes clear, however, Southworth ranged far beyond the sentimental paradigm.
4. Huyssen, "Mass Culture," 47.
5. *Ibid.*, 53.
6. Much critical ink has been spilled over James's sometimes antagonistic relationship to his female predecessors and contemporaries. See, for example, Alfred Habegger, *Henry James and the "Woman Business"* (New York: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1989). Cather's complex relationship to the Jamesian tradition is beyond the scope of this introduction.
7. Her report on the visit to Southworth's cottage appeared with a separate Washington item about the poetry of Helen Hay, daughter of the secretary of state, and Cather reports she has heard "both Mr. Stoddard and Mr. Spofford pronounce" one of Hay's poems to be "excellent." Four years later, Stoddard published his own condescending account of his relationship with Southworth, treating both his boyhood reading of her novels and his friendship with her late in life. "Mrs. Emma D. E. N. Southworth at Prospect Cottage," *National Magazine*, May 1905, 179–91.
8. Frank Luther Mott, *Golden Multitudes: The Story of Best Sellers in the United States* (New York: Macmillan, 1947), 142.
9. Herbert F. Smith, *The Popular American Novel, 1865–1920* (Boston: Twayne, 1980), n.p. (preface).
10. *Ibid.*
11. *Ibid.*, 19.
12. Felicia L. Carr, "Laura Jean Libbey," *American Women's Dime Novel Project*, <http://chnm.gmu.edu/dimenovels/authors/libbey.html>. Libbey was an astute self-promoter whose financial success makes Southworth's pale in comparison.

13. Linda Naranjo-Huebl, "The Road to Perdition: E. D. E. N. Southworth and the Critics," *American Periodicals* 16, no. 2 (2006): 142.

14. Boyle often relies heavily on unsubstantiated anecdote and sometimes seriously misconstrues print and manuscript evidence. For example, on her misreading of copyright records for Southworth's works, see Melissa J. Homestead, *American Women Authors and Literary Property, 1822–1869* (New York: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2005), 44–49.

15. In 1997, Oxford University Press published another paperback edition in its Popular Fiction Series, with an introduction by Nina Baym.

16. Andrew King juxtaposes Southworth with her male contemporaries in the context of the periodical circulation of her works in England. *The London Journal, 1845–83: Periodicals, Production, and Gender* (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2004). Although chapters in this collection consider Southworth's engagements with European literary traditions, much work remains to be done on the transatlantic circulation of her work.

17. Anthologies often drive classroom practice, and because she was primarily a novelist and wrote some very long novels, Southworth has not been well represented. Lucy M. Freibert and Barbara A. White's *Hidden Hands: An Anthology of American Women Writers, 1790–1870* (1994) derives its title from Southworth's novel, but she is represented only by a sixteen-page excerpt from it in the section on "Melodrama." Paul C. Gutjahr includes two of Southworth's early tales, "The Wife's Victory" and "The Married Shrew," in *Popular American Literature of the 19th Century* (2001), but such shorter works of fiction account for a small proportion of her body of work. Southworth does not appear at all in mainstream survey-course anthologies such as the *Norton Anthology of Literature by Women*, *The Norton Anthology of American Literature*, or the *Heath Anthology of American Literature*. Notably, just about every American literature survey anthology includes *The Scarlet Letter* and *Huckleberry Finn* in their entirety, despite their length.

18. Cather perhaps relied on what Stoddard had told her. In his own essay about Southworth and her cottage, he blithely characterizes "most of" her novels as "admirable pictures of life in the Sunny South before the war." Stoddard, "Mrs. Emma D. E. N. Southworth," 103.

19. Mott, *Golden Multitudes*, 138.

20. See, for example, Janet Gabler-Hover, "The Resurrected South: Hagar in Southworth's *The Deserted Wife*," in *Dreaming Black/Writing White: The Hagar Myth in American Cultural History*, by Janet Gabler-Hover (Lexington: Univ. Press of Kentucky, 2000). Gabler-Hover acknowledges Southworth's support of the Union during the war, yet she insists that Southworth's southern-ness—enlisting even the surname she acquired through

marriage as evidence—necessarily made her a proslavery writer who felt “uniquely ordained to produce a ‘worthy’ fictional paradigm of a revitalized South” (38) with slavery intact. For an important corrective, see Paul Christian Jones, “Revising the Romantic Plantation: E. D. E. N. Southworth’s Abolitionist Project,” in *Unwelcome Voices: Subversive Fiction in the Antebellum South*, by Paul Christian Jones (Knoxville: Univ. of Tennessee Press, 2005), chap. 6.

21. See esp. Susan Coultrap-McQuin, “The Place of Gender in Business: The Career of E. D. E. N. Southworth,” in *Doing Literary Business: American Women Writers in the Nineteenth Century*, by Susan Coultrap-McQuin (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1990), chap. 3.